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A
VINDICATION
OF THE
FREE INQUIRY
INTO THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS, &c.

SECRET

A

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF

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1954

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A
 VINDICATION
 OF THE
 FREE INQUIRY
 INTO THE
 MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are supposed

To have subsisted in the CHRISTIAN CHURCH, &c.

From the OBJECTIONS of

Dr. DODWELL and Dr. CHURCH.



By the Late CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

L O N D O N :

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 MDCCLI.

ERRATA

- P**AGE 3, Line 7 for Bulkly, read Bulky.
Page 12 l. 15, after the Author *dele the ;*
— 13 l. 22, for any of Proof, r. any Proof.
— 19 l. 23, for begging, r. begs.
— 27 l. 8, for "Hualí μν, r. "Hualí xiv.
— l. 17, for Pthia, r. Phthia.
— 46 In the Greek Note, *dele* the Points of the Semicolons.
— 63 l. 16, instead of given and defended by Irenæus, r. given by Irenæus and defended by these, &c.
— 65 l. 19, instead of written, r. worked.
— 78 l. 25, for or, r. on.
— 88 l. 16, for supplies, r. supply.

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
FREE INQUIRY, &c.

DR. *Dodwell* takes occasion to acquaint us, in his Preface, that his performance was not intended for the public view, but the perusal onely of a private friend; till being communicated to several others, whose judgement he had great reason to value, it was committed to the press by the unanimous advice of them all. Dr. *Church* also, after the example of his partner, could not deny himself the pleasure of declaring; that he likewise had the honor of receiving the approbation of some eminent, learned and judicious persons, who had taken the trouble of revising his papers, and advised him to offer them to the public. This method of puffing their works *a priori*, so flattering to the generality of our writers, is a sort of pride, which I cannot assume to myself; who have no man's judgement to trust to, but my own; no *Clerical Synod* to call around me; no *Episcopal Oracle* to consult. I am acquainted indeed with many of the Clergy, whom I highly esteem; and whose advice might be usefull to me on several occasions; if the subjects, which I have chosen to defend, did not forbid me to seek it: for their sakes, I mean,

not for my own; lest the suspicion of any communication with me, might hurt their fame or fortunes, and expose them to the same envy, which I myself have incurred. For heterodox opinions in the Church, like treasonable words in the State, impart a guilt even to the hearer, and make him an accomplice in the crime, unless he purge himself by a discovery, and impeachment of the author.

But to return to our Doctors; it is certainly a mere impertinence, to talk of the approbation given to their books, before they had passed through the press, since their merit can only be ascertained by the success of that passage, and the reception, which they may afterwards find, not from a cabal of private friends, but from the general voice, and judgement of men of sense; unprejudiced, and unbiassed with regard to the point in dispute. And here again, I must own, these Doctors have received an honor, which I can never hope to obtain, from the public testimonial of a great and famous University, to whose judgement I have ever been disposed to pay the highest regard. On this indeed, they have great reason to plume themselves; but would have had much greater, if that learned Body could stamp the truth of opinions by the same seal, with which it stamps diploma's, and confers honors on the Authors of them. For in the present case, it has fallen out very unluckily both to those, who conferred these honors, and to those also, who now wear them; that even before the collation of them, one of the very books, on the account of
I which

which they were given, was effectually confuted, and, in every article relating to the main question, shewn to be wholly trifling and impertinent; and incapable of adding the least advantage to the cause which it defends, or of doing the least hurt to that which it had undertaken to overthrow. And the confutation of either of the two Doctors may be applied very justly to them both: for in the more bulky volume of the Second, we find nothing more than some little enlargement of the same arguments and objections, the same cavils and evasions, which we meet with in the First.

Now these, I say, are substantially confuted by Mr. *Toll*; a Clergyman of *Hampshire*, bred, I suppose, in the same University; and who would have been a credit to any, though not yet honored with any *Diploma*, nor likely to reap any other reward for his pains, than what an honest mind and honest fame will be sure to give to his disinterested defence, of what he takes to be true, in an Inquiry of no small importance to the Christian Church.

I should have been glad therefore, for the sake of the University, which will ever engage my good wishes, that the zeal, which it has expressed on this occasion, for the primitive Fathers and their miracles, had been a little more patient, and not hurried it on, to crown its champions before the victory; and by giving it's sanction to opinions still in dispute, to make itself a party in a controversy; which may possibly end, as many have done, to the mortification

of those, who have ventured to give judgement in it, before both sides have been heard.

These Doctors begin with an examination of my Preface; wherein I had laid down a few general principles, which might be of use, as I imagined, to prepare the reader to form a right judgement on the subject of the *Free Inquiry*. But here, they meet with many passages, which greatly offend and puzzle them; some as carrying a suspicious meaning; others, a dangerous one; and others as wholly unintelligible, and having no meaning at all [1]. Yet these passages, as they own, have no relation to the question in dispute; and the sole use, which they make of them, is, to give them an invidious turn, and charge them with pernicious tendencies, in order to prepossess the reader with an odious opinion of my character and principles, and, by consequence, a favorable one of the zeal and piety in exposing them, and to warn all good Christians of that poison, which I was covertly intending to infuse. Yet the meaning of these very places will appear, I dare say, to every candid reader, to be both clear, and inoffensive; cloathed with no affected obscurity, nor carrying any other sense, than what I shall ever be ready to avow and openly defend.

For instance; I have said, that this question concerning the miraculous powers of the Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced

[1] *Dod.* 5, 13, 15. *Ch.* Pref. vii. 17.

by those powers, and of the witnesses, who attest them. Then, after some reasons given, why the credibility of facts ought generally to have more weight with us, than the credibility of witnesses, I conclude the paragraph in these words; “ The testimony therefore of facts, as it is offered
“ to our senses, in this wonderfull fabric and constitution
“ of worldly things, may properly be called the testimony
“ of God himself; as it carries with it the surest instruc-
“ tion in all cases, and to all nations, which in the ordi-
“ nary course of his providence, he has thought fit to ap-
“ point for the guidance of human life [1].

There is another passage or two of a similar kind, and of equal offence to these Doctors, in which, after censuring the rashness of forming peremptory arguments, as my adversaries are apt to do, upon the supposed necessity or propriety of a divine interposition, in this or that particular case, I add; “ that the whole, which the wit of man
“ can possibly discover, either of the ways or will of the
“ Creator, must be acquired by a contrary method; not
“ by imagining vainly within ourselves, what may be pro-
“ per or improper for him to do, but by looking abroad, and
“ contemplating what he has actually done, and attending
“ seriously to that revelation, which he has made of himself
“ from the beginning, and placed continually before our eyes,
“ in the wonderful works and beautifull fabric of this
“ visible world [2].” Again, in conformity with this prin-

[1] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 10. [2] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 22. *Ch.* p. 75.

“ ciple, I observe, “ how fallacious the judgement even
 “ of the wisest men has been, and ever will be, when de-
 “ ferting this path of nature and experience, and giving
 “ the reins to fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illus-
 “ trate the secret counsils of Providence [1]”.

These are the passages which chiefly offend them, they declare them to be crude, unguarded, alarming expressions, big with dangerous insinuations, inconsistent with my own concessions, that they prove too much, and seem to assert the impossibility of all miracles; so as to have made one of my Answerers believe, and all the rest of them suspect me, to be a Deist, nay that it cannot be excused from open Deism, from which therefore I ought to purge myself [2]. Since I am called upon then so solemnly, to explain myself on the subject of these passages, I shall take this occasion to open them a little more particularly, and declare my real view in them, tho' persuaded at the same time, that no explication of them can be wanted by any disinterested reader, as well as that none, which I shall give, will ever satisfy these Doctors, who now demand it.

One of them appears to be scandalised, by the title of *Revelation*, which I have given, to that discovery, which God made of himself in the visible works of his creation. Yet it is no other, than what the wise in all ages have given to it: who consider it as the most authentic and indisputable revelation, which God has ever given of himself from the beginning of the world to this day. It was this, by

[1] *Free Inq.* Pref. p. 20.

[2] *Ch.* vii. 17, 65.

which

which the first notice of him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth ; and by which alone it has been kept up ever since, among all the several nations of it. From this the reason of man was enabled, to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of consequences to learn his own nature also, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God, or his Fellow creatures. This constitution of things was ordained by God as an universal Law or rule of conduct to man ; the source of all his knowledge ; the test of all truth : by which all subsequent revelations, which are supposed to have been given by God in any other manner, must be tried and cannot be received as divine, any farther than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original standard.

It was this divine law, which I referred to, in the passages above recited, being desirous, to excite the readers attention to it, as it would enable him to judge the more clearly and freely of the argument, which I was handling. For by contemplating this law, he would discover the genuine way, which God himself has marked out to us for the acquisition of true knowledge, not from the authority, or the reports of our fellow creatures, but from the information of the facts, and material objects, which, in his providential distribution of worldly things, he hath presented to the perpetual observation of our senses. For as it was from these, that his existence and nature, the most important articles of all knowledge, were first discovered

to

to man, so, that grand discovery furnished new light towards tracing out the rest, and made all the inferior subjects of human knowledge the more easily discoverable to us by the same method.

I had another view likewise in the same passages, and applicable to the same end, of giving the reader a more enlarged notion of the question in dispute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifested to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to observe, that they were all of them great, noble, and suitable to the majesty of his nature; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and shewing themselves to be the productions of an allwise and allmighty Being: and by accustoming his mind to these sublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine, whether those miraculous interpositions, so confidently affirmed to us by the Primitive Fathers, can reasonably be thought to make a part in the grand scheme of the divine administration; or whether it be agreeable, that God, who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleases by the same will; should, for the particular purposes of his Government and the service of the Church, descend to the low expedient of visions, and revelations; granted sometimes to boys, for the instruction of the Elders, and sometimes to women, to settle the fashion and length of their veils, and sometimes also to the Pastors of the Church, to injoin them to ordain one man a lecturer,
another

another a Priest; or that he should scatter a profusion of miracles around the stake of a Martyr; yet all of them vain and insignificant, and without the least sensible effect, either of preserving the life, or easing the sufferings of the Saint; or even of mortifying his persecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor Martyr to expire by a miserable death. When these facts, I say, are brought to the original test, and compared with the genuin and indisputable works of the Creator; how minute, how trifling, how contemptible must they appear? and how incredible must it be thought, that, for the instruction of his Church, God should employ ministers so precarious, unsatisfactory, and inadequate; as *the extasies of women and boys, and the visions of interested Priests*; which were derided at the very time by men of sense, to whom they were proposed.

That this universal law was actually revealed to the Heathen world, long before the Gospel was known to it, we learn from all the principal sages of antiquity, who made it the capital subject of their studies and writings. *Cicero* has given us a short abstract of it, in a fragment still remaining from one of his books on Government, which I shall here transcribe in his own words, as they will illustrate my sense also, in the exceptionable passages above mentioned, which appears so dark and so dangerous to my Antagonists.

“ The true law, says he, is right reason, conformable to
 “ the nature of things; constant, eternal, diffused through

“ all ; which calls us to duty, by commanding, deterrs us
 “ from fin, by forbidding ; which never lofes it’s influence
 “ with the good ; nor ever preserves it with the wicked.
 “ This law cannot poffibly be over-ruled by any other ;
 “ nor abrogated in the whole or in part : nor can we be
 “ abfolved from it, either by the Senate, or the people :
 “ nor are we to feek any other comment, or interpreter of
 “ it, but itfelf : nor can there be one law at *Rome*, another
 “ at *Athens* ; one now, another hereafter ; but the fame
 “ eternal, immutable law comprehends all nations, at all
 “ times, under one common Mafter and Governor of all,
 “ God. He is the inventor, propoundor, enactor of this
 “ law : and who foever will not obey it, muft firft re-
 “ nounce himfelf and throw off the nature of man : by
 “ doing which, he will fuffer the greateft punifhment,
 “ tho’ he fhould efcape all the other torments, which are
 “ commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked [].

Our Doctōrs, perhaps will look with horror on all this,
 as rank Deifm ; but let them call it what they please, I fhall
 ever avow and defend it, as the fundamental, effential and
 vital part of all true religion, and what the Gofpel itfelf
 muft adopt, as it’s beft foundation and fupport. The
 fragment was preferved to us by *Lactantius*, who lived in
 the third Century, and was the beft Chriftian writer of
 his age ; who, after the recital of it in his works, makes
 this reflection upon it ; “ what man, tho’ already acquainted
 “ with the myfteries of God, could fet forth the law of

“ God with such force as this? who yet was far removed
 “ from the knowledge of the truth. For my part, I look
 “ upon those, who utter such truths without knowing
 “ them, as persons inspired by a divine Spirit. But as he
 “ clearly saw the force and the ground of the holy law,
 “ so, if he had known or could have explained it's precepts
 “ also, he would then have performed the part, not of a
 “ Philosopher, but of a Prophet [1].” Here we see a Chris-
 tian writer, who lived in the third Century, frankly ac-
 knowledging this law, as it is explained by *Cicero*, to be the
law of God; and which our knowledge, even of the mys-
 teries of God, as propounded to us by the Gospel, could
 not inable us to illustrate with such force, as the improved
 reason of this great and virtuous man: which corresponds
 also with what *Cicero* has elsewhere declared of the same
law, that it was the mind of God, governing all things by eter-
 nal reason; whose substitute or interpretor on earth was the rea-
 son and mind of the wise [2].

This is all the explication which I can give, towards
 healing the scruples of those, who are offended with the
 passages above mentioned, how far it may satisfy our Doc-
 tors, I neither know nor care: for tho' it will ever be my
 desire to give all satisfaction to every candid and liberal in-
 quirer, yet in the present controversy, these Answerers
 have shewn, that they came with no view of inquiring

[1] D. Jus. vi. viii.

[2] Leg. 2. 4.

freely and philosophically, what was true, but to defend with all their skill, what their prepossessions and ambitious views made them resolve to support at any rate, in defiance of all the light and conviction which could possibly be offered on the contrary side. This will clearly appear to all men of sense and candor from the general turn and spirit of their performances, and from their futile, evasive and illiberal manner of treating the most important arguments of the *Free Inquiry*; which I shall now therefore proceed to examine; without troubling the reader with any more of their prefatory objections, which are all chiefly of the same kind; not relating to the main question, but cavilling onely on some incidental points, of little or no moment to it, in order to draw something out of them, that by tainting the credit of the Author, with the weaker part of their readers, may infuse a general distrust of his argument.

Let us enter then into the *Free Inquiry*; where the first argument which I made use of towards confirming my general position, is the silence of the Apostolic Fathers, with regard to any standing power of working miracles, as residing still in that age for the conversion of the Heathen world. This silence is frankly allowed by the first of my Antagonists, Mr. *Jackson*, who insists however and endeavours to shew, that the inference, which I draw from it, is vain and groundless. These Doctors however, more stout than their Leader, and resolving to dispute every

inch of ground with me, utterly deny the fact of their silence, and affirm; that tho' they do not indeed inlarge on their miraculous powers, nor make any direct appeal to them as their successors do, yet that many occasional hints and plain references to them are to be found in their writings.

The principal instance, which they produce in proof of this assertion, is from the Epistle of St. *Clemens to the Corinthians*; which, as it is paraphrased by *Archbishop Wake*, does expressly assert the subsistence of miraculous powers to that particular age. And upon the authority of this paraphrase, of which I had not taken any notice, they presently reproach me, with the willfull suppression of a testimony, which directly overthrows my argument, and to which I had not attempted to give any answer [1]. And here indeed, I must confess, that the passage, as explained by the Archbishop, is full to their purpose, and contrary to my own, yet knowing it to be such, that I willfully omitted it. But I can plead at the same time, with great truth, that the reasons, which moved me to omit it, were, first, the utter insignificancy, which it appeared to have, as to any ~~of~~ proof or evidence, relating to this question, and secondly, a regard also for the character of that venerable Prelate, which made me unwilling to recall into public light, a paraphrase, which I took to be unworthy of him, and of all others that I had ever observed, to be

[1] D. 27, 28. Ch. 94, 5.

the most palpably forced and dressed up, without any ground or color from the text, to serve the point, which he was inculcating, concerning the continuance of the miraculous powers to the times of these Apostolic Fathers.

The Words of the Text, as they stand in the Epistle, clear of the paraphrase, and translated by the Archbishop himself, are these, “ Let a man be faithfull ; let him be
 “ powerfull in the utterance of knowledge ; let him be
 “ wise in making an exact judgement of words ; let him be
 “ pure in all his actions : but still, by how much the more
 “ he seems to be above others, by reason of these things,
 “ by so much the more will it behove him, to be humble-
 “ minded, and to seek what is profitable to all men, not
 “ his own advantage [1].”

Thus stands the passage in the Archbishop's English Edition of the Epistles of these Apostolic Fathers ; where no man, whose mind was not prepossessed with the same hypothesis, or senses dazzled with the authority [2] of the Archbishop, could find a syllable, which bears any sort of reference to miraculous powers, or suggests the least hint of the continuance of them to that age [3]. How is it then, that the Archbishop has contrived to give such a turn to it ? why, not by any critical art, or grammatical rule, but by forcibly thrusting his own sense into it ; in a manner so gross and arbitrary, as would fix the same sense, or any other upon any passage whatsoever. We see, that the words of the text unparaphrased, are clear of any miracu-

[1] Wake's Ep. S. 48. [2] Ch. 104. [3] T. 19.

lous sense; for in his Preliminary Discourse to these very Epistles, he has shewn us, how easily this may be performed on any proper occasion, by the help of a commodious paraphrase.

The passage then, when opened and illustrated by the Archbishop's explanatory translation, stands thus;

“ Let a man have faith; that is, *says the Archbishop,*
 “ such a faith, by which he is able to work miracles: let
 “ him be powerfull to utter knowledge; that is, mystical
 “ knowledge, *says the Archbishop,* for to that the expres-
 “ sion manifestly relates: let him be wise in discerning of
 “ speeches; for that was another gift, *says the Archbishop,*
 “ common to those times: let him be pure in his actions:
 “ but still, by how much the more he seems to excell
 “ others, that is, *says the Archbishop,* upon the account of
 “ these extraordinary endowments; by so much the more
 “ will it behove him to be humble-minded [1].”

The recital of this paraphrase will readily convince every man of sense, that I could have no other reason for omitting it, than what I have already alledged; nor could I ever imagine, that, in a controversy of this kind, which can be determined onely by the authentic facts and testimonies of antiquity, any one, who professed to be searching into the real ground of it, would attempt to prove by a paraphrase, what he could not prove from the text, and instead of the positive testimony of an Apostolic Father, which his

[1] Wake's Prel. Dif. p. 113.

cause necessarily required, take up with the arbitrary comment of a modern Prelate. Such are the shifts, to which these pretended Champions of truth are driven in their defence of the primitive miracles: on which I shall make no farther remark, but refer my reader to Mr. *Toll*, who has very effectually and particularly exposed the impertinence of all the little arts and sophistry, with which they labor to extort miraculous senses, out of the dark hints and equivocal passages of these Apostolic Fathers.

Dr. *Dodwell* proceeds, in the next place, to defend the particular proofs, which his Father had formerly alledged from these same Fathers, to evince the continuance of the miraculous powers to their days. These proofs, he says, *are recited by me with contempt*: yet I am conscious, that in reciting them, I never had any such intention; and cannot see how my words can fairly be interpreted to imply any. Nor has it ever been my custom, to shew a contempt of any man, who had not justly deserved it of me by some unprovoked and contemptible attack upon myself. In the present case however, I cannot but applaud the piety of a son, in expressing so jealous a concern for the reputation, and such a zeal to defend the opinions of a learned and virtuous Parent.

The first of these proofs is taken from the title or address of *Ignatius's* Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*; upon which I have already said what I thought sufficient for my purpose in the *Free Inquiry*, and the objections, which Dr. *Dodwell* has

has since made to it, are shewn to be wholly insignificant by Mr. Toll [1]. But as his defence of his Father's interpretation wholly turns upon the sense of the word, *charisma*; which he affirms to be a term *peculiarly appropriated to denote extraordinary gifts*; and as he makes much use of the same observation, towards confirming some other objections, in different parts of his work; so I shall add a word or two on this occasion, to shew this favourite criticism to be vain and groundless, and the imaginary conceit of some minute Critic, who happened to want it, as this Doctor here does, for the support of a particular hypothesis. For the word, *charisma*, as well in it's native and proper sense, as in the use, which has ever been made of it both by the sacred, and the Primitive writers, signifies nothing more than a gift, whether it be natural or supernatural; ordinary, or extraordinary: wherefore in order to obviate the application of so silly an observation in our present controversy, I had shewn how one of these Apostolic writers, St. Clemens, had applied the word, *charismata*, or gifts of God, to denote the different talents and abilities, natural and acquired, by which the characters of men are usually distinguished; as *strength, riches, wisdom, humility, continence* [2]. But Dr. Dodwell declares, that *he sees no such thing*; and that the very gifts or *charismata*, here recited, *may strictly be interpreted of supernatural endowments* [3]. What can we say to such perverseness as this? or of what use can it

[1] Toll's Def. p. 23. [2] Free Inq. p. 7. [3] Dod. p. 30.

be to reason with so incorrigible a bigotry, which can reject the clear testimony of our senses, rather than give up a groundless hypothesis?

But my notion of the word, *charisma*, may be confirmed also, as I have said, by many testimonies from the sacred writers, as denoting simply *a gift of God*, of what kind soever it may be: of which it will be sufficient to give an instance or two. The gift of God, or *charisma*, says St. Paul, is eternal life [1], and in other places, where he is speaking of the gifts of God, we find him using the words, *charisma* or *dorema*, indifferently, as terms synonymous, and denoting the same thing [2]. And we sometimes see the same word applied to the gift of worldly riches, or an ability to minister to the necessities of the poor.

On the whole then, as the sole defence, which the Doctor makes of the proof of those numerous miracles, which his Father had drawn out of this passage, is grounded on a mistaken sense of the word *charisma* [3]; so the Father's proof, and the son's defence, must of course fall to the ground. And after all the pains, which they have been taking, to puzzle and confound the obvious sense of the text, it will appear at last to be nothing more than this; that the Church of Smyrna, being blessed with faith and charity, which Ignatius extolls in this very Epistle, as the most excellent of all gifts, and what the Apostles themselves prefer to the whole list of them, was deficient in nothing, which

[1] Rom. vi. 23.

[2] Ib. 15, 16

[3] Ch. p. 98.

could

could be required to the accomplishment and perfection of the Christian Character.

The Doctor leads us on to another of his Father's proofs, on which he observes, that as I am apt to call for facts, so his Father has here presented me one beforehand [1]. But the fact, here referred to, is not of such a sort, as I shall ever be disposed to call for: nor do I find myself to be presented, in this instance, with any thing more, than what had been offered to me in the last; an unnatural and extravagant interpretation of an obscure passage, whence his Father had inferred the existence of a chimerical fact, of which there is not the least example or intimation in all history. But since the Doctor strenuously defends the truth of his Father's interpretation; asserts the words to be incapable of any other sense, and professes a particular contempt of mine; it will be necessary to recur to the passage itself, that by reviewing and comparing the two opposite expositions, we may settle at last it's real and unquestionable meaning.

St. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards that City, where he was going to be exposed to the wild beasts in the Amphitheater, earnestly begging of them, *that they would not shew an unseasonable good will to him, by hindering his martyrdom, but would suffer him to be food for the beasts* [2]. The question now is; what were the means, which he referred to on this occasion, and

[1] Dod. p. 31.

[2] Wake's Ep. of Ign. §. 4.

which the brethren might apply to the hindrance of his martyrdom? Mr. *Dodwell* the Father, affirms them to be prayers: which had a power, he says, of disabling the beasts from assaulting the Martyr, when exposed to them in the Amphitheaters. But if that had been the meaning of *Ignatius's* request, it would imply, that the efficacy of such prayers had been tried in other cases of martyrdom, prior to that of *Ignatius*: yet no such fact is to be found in all history, nor any mention made of it by the Apostles or Apostolic writers, except by a single intimation in this very Epistle, where *Ignatius* says, that he would *encourage the wild beasts, that they might be sure to devour him, and not serve him, as they had done some, whom out of fear, they had not touched* [1].

But the whole tenor of the Epistle seems utterly to confute this *Dodwellian* hypothesis. In which the Martyr acquaints *the Romans*, that he had written to the other Churches, and signified to them all, that he was willing to die for God, unless they, the *Romans*, should hinder him [2]. Now if this hindrance was to be effected by their prayers, surely the prayers of every other Church must have been as effectual, and as much to be apprehended by *Ignatius*, as those of the *Romans*: yet, tho' in this journey from *Asia*, he wrote to the *Ephesians*; to the *Magnesians*; to the *Trallians*; to the *Philadelphians*; and to the *Smyrneans*, as well as to the *Romans*; yet it was from the *Romans* alone, that

[1] Wake's Ep. of Ign. §. v.

[2] Ibid. §. iv.

he feared any obstruction to his martyrdom, and whom he entreats to forbear it; to the rest he signifies no fear of hindrance from them; nor any request, that they would not attempt to give him any: which clearly shews, that the hindrance, which he so much dreaded, was not to arise from prayers, but some other means, which were peculiarly practicable to the Christians of *Rome*, and of no other Church whatsoever.

I have already explained my sense of the passage in question, in the *Free Inquiry*, and shewn, that the request of the Martyr, related to the intercession and interest, which the Christian brethren of *Rome* proposed to make among their friends and fellow citizens to preserve him from his cruel fate. And this I have confirmed by the express testimony of the original narrative of this martyrdom, written by persons, who were present at it, and who for that purpose had accompanied the Martyr from *Asia*. I have added the authority also of Dr. *Carve*, a writer in the highest esteem with these admirers of the primitive Fathers, who in the *Life*, which he has written of this Saint, gives the same interpretation to the case now before us. Yet all this is of no weight with Dr. *Dodwell*, who contemns the notion of any interest or intercession that could be made for the life of the Martyr, as extravagant and impossible, and what will not bear an examination [1], and goes on to observe with great gravity, that *Ignatius* was sentenced by the Emperor him-

[1] Dod. p. 33.

self,

self, who was now absent from *Rome*, and had left no authority there which could mitigate the punishment: that no interest whatsoever could avail against an Imperial decree, nor, all the power of the Court of *Rome* prevent the Saint from being thrown to the wild beasts, when *Trajan* had commanded it: so that the only possible method of saving him, which remained, was a miraculous interposition in his favour to be obtained by the efficacy of prayer. This is the sum of his reasoning, by which he confirms his Father's interpretation: and this the examination, which my account of the matter will not bear: yet it is all trifling and declamatory, grounded on loose conjecture, and an imperfect knowledge of the history of those times, as I shall presently shew, by opening a little more explicitly the real nature and circumstances of the case.

These persecutions of the Church, as the writers observe, were frequently brought on and forced as it were upon the Government, by the rage and clamors of the populace: whose hatred to the Christians, was ever exerting itself by seizing and dragging them to the tribunals of the Magistrates, and calling loudly for vengeance and punishment upon them: and when this spirit was once raised it was not easily appeased till it had drawn on a general persecution. This we may suppose to have been the case under *Trajan* and his successors the *Antonines*, the most virtuous and just of all the *Roman* Emperors, yet all of them successively persecutors of the Church. It was the same

sort of indulgence to the humour of the populace, which obliged all the Emperors on some of the greater Festivals to entertain them with public shews and sports in the Circus and Amphitheater, the chief of which were the combats of Gladiators and of wild beasts, and the production of notorious criminals to be thrown to those beasts. This at present was the unhappy lot of the Christians, whom the mob were often demanding to be produced on these occasions for their sport: and for this *Ignatius*, as the leader of the Christians in *Asia*, was now sent to *Rome*, to be exposed to the beasts in the Ampitheater, for the delight of the Roman people, as the Emperor *Trajan*, who condemned him, is said to have expressed it [1]. For one of those Festivals was now approaching, for the celebration of which the diversions above mentioned were always provided and supplied from all the provinces of the Empire.

When *Ignatius* approached towards *Rome*, guarded all the way by soldiers, the Christians who came out to meet him, offered to employ all their interests and endeavours to prevent his execution, by moving the people, when assembled in the Amphitheater, to join with them in a common cry and demand to have his life spared. This was agreeable to the custom of *Rome* in these very shews; where in the combats of the Gladiators, tho' the conquered party was doomed of course to die, yet if he had behaved so, as to excite the compassion of the people, and raise a general

[1] vi.

clamor in favor of his life, it was always granted to the demand of the assembly: and as the chief end of all these shews was to keep the multitude in good humor, so the case was the same with regard to persons condemned to be thrown to the beasts: where if the mob had taken a fancy to reserve the life of any one in the same manner, they would certainly have been gratified in it.

This was the experiment, which the Christian brethren proposed to try in favour of *Ignatius*; nor was the proposal improbable: their number was now considerable in *Rome*, and many of their friends and acquaintance might have been prevailed with to assist in so compassionate an attempt: so that when an infirm old man came to be produced in the Amphitheater, incapable of giving them any diversion, by any sort of resistance to the beasts, the Christians hoped, that the united voice of their whole party, strengthened by the help of particular friends, as well as of many others, whom compassion would naturally join to them on such an occasion, would be of force enough to procure the life of the saint, from the presiding Magistrate: who from the nature of his office was intrusted always of course with a discretionary power of gratifying the people in any demand of that sort.

I shall now leave our Doctor to the quiet possession of his *Father's proofs*, as he calls them, which he may hang up in his parlor with the escutcheons of his arms, as a record of perpetual honor to his family, by inabling them to boast

of an ancestor, who by his singular skill and sagacity, had recovered to the Christian Church, after a succession of seven centuries an illustrious miracle, wholly unknown and unobserved by all the primitive Fathers. Nor can I omit on this occasion to take notice of the management of Dr. Church, with respect to these *Dodwellian proofs*, for since they came from his partner's Father, he thought it improper for him to meddle with them, and contented himself with the satisfaction of seeing them *defended at large*, as he says, *by the learned, judicious, and ingenious son* [1]. In which he gives us a little specimen of the arts and craft of these Answerers: for tho' by dropping the defence of those proofs, he betrays a consciousness of their weakness, yet he excuses that step with such complements to the Defender of them, as may persuade a common reader, that he takes them to be really strong and completely defended, which yet he dares not venture to affirm.

There is another article, or two, relating to the miraculous gifts of this age, which it will be proper to clear up, before I take leave of these Apostolic Fathers. I have observed in the *Free Inquiry* for the prevention of all unnecessary cavils, that if from any passages which may be found in these Fathers, it should appear probable to any; that they were favored on some occasions, with extraordinary illuminations, visions, or divine impressions, I shall not dispute that point with them, but remind them onely, that

[1] Ch. p. 97.

the gifts of that sort were merely personal, and did not in any manner relate to the question before us [1]. But in this, my adversaries insist that I have overthrown my whole argument. "Are not these, says Dr. *Church*, the instances "of miraculous powers? and if there were any such after the "days of the Apostles, does not the new scheme fall to the "ground [2]?" Yes; I own them to be of a miraculous kind, if, as Dr. *Dodwell* says, *they be real* [3]. Who, by that expression, seems to entertain some doubt about them himself, but whether they be real or not, it is certain, that they are nothing to the purpose of our present controversy; as not being the effect of any standing power granted to the Church, for the conversion of the Heathens. All that I have allowed or supposed in this case is, that there may be a passage or two in these Apostolic writers, of a dubious signification, which weak and pious minds, persuaded of the frequency of divine impulses and illuminations, indulged to private Christians, in all ages of the Church, may imagine, to denote something of that extraordinary kind. Yet if they should be strictly interpreted to that sense, the very matter of them would render the notion contemptible to all men of judgement. In one of these passages, St. *Ignatius* intimates, that he had been instructed by the Holy Spirit, concerning *the divisions of the Church of Philadelphia* [4]. And in another, St. *Polycarp*, by means of a
vision,

[1] Free Inq. p. x.

[2] Ch. p. 107.

[3] Dod. p. 42.

[4] He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing
from

vision, is said to have foretold his own death, and the manner of it, three days before it happened [1]. To which I can

from any man. But the Spirit spake saying on this wise; *do nothing without your Bishop.* Epist. to the Philad. §. vii.

[1] *Socrates* also, as *Plato* relates, had a vision, while he lay in the public prison under sentence of death: in which a beautifull woman appeared to him, and calling him by his name recited this verse of *Homer*.

Ἡμαίη μὲν τριτάτῳ φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἰκοίμην. Il. IX. v. 363.

Upon this, he declared presently to his friend *Crito*, that he was certainly to die on the 3d day: which fell out accordingly. His vision therefore was as prophetic as *Polycarp's*, and equally confirmed by the event: yet they both probably flowed from the common source of all such dreams or visions; the strong impression, which the sense of their uneasy and uncertain condition, perpetually occurring to their waking thoughts, would naturally leave upon the fancy even in sleep. Some Critics of great name seem to have been puzzled to discover, how *Socrates* could collect from this verse, that he was to die on the 3d day; and have imagined it to be intimated to him by the word *Phthia*, as being derived from the verb *φθίω* or *φθίω*, which carries in it the sense of perishing and dissolution. But it was the natural and literal sense of the verse, as it was spoken by *Achilles*, that gave him the hint; in which *Achilles*, on account of the affront which he had received in the *Grecian* camp, declares himself resolved to quit it and return to *Phthia*, his native home, where a voyage of three days would land him in ease and peace. This *Socrates* took to himself as an admonition, that he likewise should be *at his home*, in the same time; for his philosophy never considered this earth as his home, but promised him another world, where the souls of the just after death were to enjoy a perpetual state of peace and felicity.

Again; it is said of *Polycarp*, that he was a prophetic teacher, and that every word that went out of his mouth, either had been fulfilled or would be fulfilled. [See *Martyr*. §. xvi.] The same is said of *Cicero*, by *Corn. Nepos*, who personally knew him, and long survived him. *Such was Cicero's prudence*, says he *that one would imagine it to be a kind of divination: for he foretold not onely those things, which happened, while he himself lived, but gave warning, as a Prophet, of the things, which we now see in common practice.* [Vit. Attic. 6.] Now *Cicero's* predictions are ascribed onely to his prudence, *Polycarp's* to inspiration. But

can apply nothing better than what Mr. Toll has already said in answer to Dr. Dodwell on this very point; where after a brief review of the nature, the subject, and the evidence of these predictions, he adds; *to cut off therefore at once all reasonings and inferences about them, let it be understood, that we dispute the facts* [1].

But on this article of visions, I am charged by my adversaries with a gross inconsistency: for after I have declared the pretended visions of these Apostolic writers to have no relation to my argument, yet in the progress of my work, I have taken much pains in combating the credit of such visions as having a close connection with it. *How are these things reconcileable?* says Dr. Church, *visions and revelations are one of the five kinds of miracles, which he examines. If such visions, &c. do not at all relate to the present question, then all that part of the Inquiry, where these are considered, no less than sixteen pages, are nothing to his purpose* [2]. Yet these things are all consistent, and reconcileable at once to every one, who does not, either willfully or inadvertently, overlook the true state of the fact.

It is allowed on all sides, that the Apostolic Fathers make no mention of any standing miraculous powers, as in-

where's the difference? *Polycarp* foretold his own death, or some calamity perhaps, which was likely to happen to the Church. *Cicero* foretold the important events and revolutions, which happened after his death to the greatest Empire in the world: for the defence of whose liberty he sacrificed his life.

[1] Toll's Def. p. 38.

[2] Ch. p. 108.

dulged to the Church in their days: and that the visions, which are ascribed to them, are collected onely from an incidental hint or two, of an obscure and precarious meaning: and as such visions also were onely of a private and a personal kind, without any use or effect towards the conversion of the Heathen world; so it is evident, that they could not in any sort belong to the question in dispute. But in the following ages, when an appeal was expressly, constantly, and openly made by all the Fathers, to a perpetual power of working miracles, as actually subsisting among them; and to which the Heathens themselves were invited to come, and be eye-witnesses: and when in the catalogue of these miracles, *visions* and *prophecy* are particularly enumerated, as common in the Church; and granted to women, and boys, and all sorts of Christians whatsoever; then visions became the proper subject of my work, and required an examination of them, as well as any other gifts, which are claimed by the same Fathers. This is the genuin state of the case, which clearly shews, that the inconsistency with which it is charged, flows wholly from the blunders and inattention of those, who charge it.

But there is another argument still for the miraculous powers of this age, which our Doctors have kept in reserve, as their forlorn hope, in order to rally, and renew the fight, with it, if their first attack should prove unsuccessful. They were aware, that all the positive evidence of miracles, which could be drawn from the Apostolic Fathers,

thers, would be found too weak at last, to make any impression in favour of their opinion: so that after all the pains, which they have been taking to push that sort of proof as far as it would go, they now change hands; take up the contrary side of the question, and attempt to confute me by that very silence of these Fathers, with which I had been pressing them. *Cicero* in one of his youthful orations, speaking of certain witnesses, whom he had been examining, says; *tacendo clamant*; he condemns the expression afterwards, as too puerile; but the application of it made here by our Doctors is certainly much more so. No proof of an affirmative kind can reasonably be drawn from mere silence, whatever force it has with regard to facts of history, is chiefly negative, oftner detracting from their credit, than adding any strength to them in the present case, therefore, when we reflect, that immediately before the times of these Apostolic Fathers, miracles are allowed to have subsisted in great abundance; yet that the said miracles have long since been withdrawn, at some time or other which remains still unknown, and unsettled, we cannot be at a loss to determine, whether the silence of half a century, which immediately succeeded to that age of miracles, should incline us rather to believe, that they were continued still to the Church, thro' that silent period, or that they were actually withdrawn at that very time and no other.

Dr.

Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, reasons thus; “ If their
 “ filence were as total and uniform, as Doctor *M.* con-
 “ tends, it might be urged strongly on our side of the
 “ question. For it is scarce credible, that they should no
 “ where take any notice of so great and sudden an altera-
 “ tion, as must have happened, if the principal leaders of
 “ the Christian cause, and Governors of the Church had
 “ all at once been deprived, in those times of adversity, of
 “ the privileges and succours, which common converts en-
 “ joyed in the generation immediately preceding [1].”
 Now it is granted by all Protestant Doctors, and in parti-
 cular by these two: that the Governors of the Church were
 in some age or other actually deprived of those miracu-
 lous succours, which their predecessors had enjoyed, yet
 the time, when this alteration happened, is a secret, which,
 as Dr. *Church* says, it is very difficult and perhaps impos-
 sible to us, to discover [2]. And if I should ask the reason,
 he would tell me presently, because the Fathers, as if
 ashamed to tell us how they had forfeited those favours,
 were wholly silent on that article. And thus Dr. *Dodwell’s*
 argument is utterly confuted by fact and experience as well
 as their own concessions.

But the most remarkable circumstance in the present
 question is, that tho’ all Protestants are agreed in allowing
 and believing, that after the third or fourth century at
 least, all true miracles actually ceased, yet in all the suc-

[1] Dod. p. 41.

[2] Ch. p. 4.

ceding ages, there is not a single leader or Governor of the Church, who either owns any such cessation, or does not in the most grave and solemn manner attest the continuance of them in great abundance to his own age. Wherefore, as the silence of the Apostolic Fathers is singular, and not to be found in any other age whatsoever, from the days of the Apostles, down to the time of the Reformation; so ~~that~~ their circumstances and characters, we may imagine, were singular also, and unlike to those of every other age: by being destitute of those extraordinary powers, which their predecessors the Apostles had enjoyed; yet unwilling to supply them by forgeries as their successors are supposed, and the greatest part of them allowed to have done.

Thus we see, how these Doctors, after all their efforts, to strain and wrest to their purpose, two or three obscure passages of these Apostolic Fathers, have not been able to draw out the least proof, of the subsistence of any miraculous powers among them; especially of those, which are the proper subject of this inquiry. For this is a distinction, which I find myself obliged to repeat, since all these Answerers, who appear to have known nothing of the state of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, have not yet learnt from it, as in the first place they ought to have done, a right state of the question. The position, which I affirm, is; that, after the days of the Apostles, no standing power of working miracles was continued to the
Church

Church, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of unbelievers. This is what the title of my work implies ; what my whole reasoning turns upon ; and what I have often signified in the course of it, to be my precise meaning. Yet all my antagonists treat my argument, as if it absolutely rejected every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within the Church by the agency of men, or on any other occasion, by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles whenever he pleases, no body, I dare say, will deny : but whether he has wrought any or not, since the days of the Apostles, is an inquiry, which I do not at all enter into : the single point, which I maintain, is, that the Church had no standing power of working any.

This distinction was seen at once by those writers, who have appeared in the defence of my book, and who have justly rebuked these Answerers for their neglect of it ; as being necessary to a right management of the dispute, and obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this admonition, they still declare it to be a mere evasion and subterfuge, never intended by me at first, but an after thought, contrived to elude the force of some objections, which were found to press me [2].

The distinction however, tho' just and clear, was not marked out by me, for the sake of any advantage, which I might derive from it to my cause, for I know none,

[1] T. p. 29. Let. 16.

[2] Ch. Pref. p. 8, 9.

which it could give, but merely to shorten the dispute, and to prevent unnecessary wranglings, on facts and instances, which do not belong to it. For tho' I have no better opinion perhaps of the Miracles, said to have been wrought without the Church, than of those, which are affirmed to have been performed within it; yet as I confine my argument intirely to the latter sort; I would not be drawn away, to an examination of facts, forein to my purpose, and but little regarded at present in the Christian world, from my more important task, of dissolving a chain of pretended Miracles which at this very day enslaves and ties down the whole Christian Church, to certain doctrines and practices, which tend to debase the simplicity of the Gospel, and to give a superstitious turn to the piety and devotion of it's professors. If my adversaries therefore had paid a due regard to the distinction just mentioned, it would have saved them some trouble in many instances, and especially in the story of *Polycarp's* Martyrdom, and the Miracles which accompanied it: on the defence of which they now exert all their zeal, declaring them to be decisive, and to have utterly overthrown my whole Scheme [1]. Whereas in truth, whatever be the real character of them, they are nothing at all to the purpose, as being neither wrought by any standing power in the Church, nor carrying any sort of evidence, that any such power was then subsisting in it.

[1] In. p. 9. D. p. 36.

But

But if these Miracles have no relation, as I say, to the present dispute, it is asked, for what reason then did I introduce them into it? To which I answer, that it was for no other, than to expose the trifling and frivolous nature of them; and to shew, how fondly the Christians of this early age were disposed to give a miraculous turn to every unusual incident, which might happen to take place on any important and affecting occasion. My manner of introducing them declares my contempt of them; and I thought, that a bare recital of them would render them as contemptible to others as they appeared to myself [1]. But I have missed my aim with these Answerers, who have the confidence still to affirm, that I do not dispute the reality of them, but leave them in possession of Miracles, as great and wonderfull as any in the Christian Church; that I stand convicted by my own concessions and by acknowledging the genuineness of the Epistle, confirm the genuineness of the facts related in it: than which nothing can be more senseless and absurd. For tho' I call that piece one of the most authentic in all antiquity, I shew at the same time, that I am not declaring my own opinion, but that which was generally held of it by the Church: and when I mention the advertisement annexed to the end of it, concerning the miraculous discovery of the same piece by a revelation from *Polycarp*, will any imagine, that I could believe so silly a fiction, tho' I made no reflection

[1] Free Inq. p. 124.

upon it? No, I took the very mention of it, as I have said, to be a clear detection of it's forged character.

Wherefore all, which I now propose to add on the subject of this wonderfull Martyrdom, shall be restrained to the article of *the Dove*, said to fly out of the wound, that was made in the body of the Saint; this all my Antagonists give up at once as incredible, and consider it either as the blunder of the transcriber, by putting one word for another; or as an interpolation craftily inserted into the text, after the time of *Eusebius*, who, in the abstract, which he has given of this same narrative, takes no notice of this flight of the Dove. They are all aware, that if this article should be thought genuin it would overthrow the credit of all the other Miracles in the same narrative; which for that reason they take great pains to clear from this fable, as they call it, which yet in defiance of all their efforts, will, upon a fair and critical examination, appear to be as authentic a part of the original piece, as any other miraculous fact related in it.

The first edition of the intire Epistle was published by Archbishop *Usher*, with the passage of the Dove in it, from a Latin version, the oldest copy, as he tells us, of the whole piece, that was any where extant; supposed to have been written soon after the time of *Eusebius*, and to be the same, which is mentioned to have been publicly read in the Churches of *France*, till the sixth century: which Copy Archbishop *Wake* also declares to be so well attested, that

we need no further assurance of the facts which it contains [1]. All the Greek copies are of a later date, than the Latin version, yet all of them retain this article of the Dove: and from a collation of these the learned *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart* published their several editions of this same Epistle; both of them tho' Papists, very candid and judicious inquirers into the genuin monuments of Christian antiquity: and in the last edition also, set forth by that eminent and protestant Critic *M. Le Clerc*, who was never suspected either of superstition or credulity, the Dove still keeps it's place, without any reflection or censure upon it by the Editor.

Archbishop *Wake* indeed has omitted it in his English Translation, for which he makes the following apology; " I confess, I am so little a friend to such kinds of Miracles, that I thought it better with *Eusebius*, to omit that circumstance, than to mention it from Bishop *Usher's* Manuscript. And indeed besides the strangeness of such an adventure, I cannot think, had any such thing truly happened at his death, that not onely *Eusebius* should be ignorant of it, but that neither St. *Hierom*, nor *Ruffinus*, nor the *Menæa* of the Greek Church should not have made the least mention of it. Wherefore there must have been either some interpolation, or because that does not appear, it may perhaps be better accounted for by the mistake of a single letter [2]." This mistake M.

[1] *Wake's Prel. Disc.* p. 59. [2] *Ibid.* p. 57.

Le Moyne has endeavoured to correct by an ingenious emendation; which some of my Antagonists lay hold of, and others reject and prefer the notion of an interpolation as the best solution of the matter [1].

There is one reflection however added here by the Archbishop, which might have induced him, one would think, to have given us this story as intire, as he had found it in all the editions; for if it has any weight in it, it refutes at once all the vain conjectures of these minute Critics, and proves the circumstance of *the Dove* to have been an original part of the manuscript. For he observes, upon the authority of M. *Le Moyne*, that *Lucian*, in his raillery on the death of *Peregrinus*, who voluntarily committed himself to the flames, in the fight of all *Greece* at the *Olympic* games; and out of whose funeral pile he makes a Vultur to ascend, is supposed under the character of that frantic Philosopher, and his Vultur, to ridicule the Martyrdom and Pigeon of *Polycarp* [2]. The reflection is allowed by the Archbishop to have *something of a foundation*: and men of sense, I dare say, will think it to have a good one, when they consider, that the death of *Peregrinus* happened about the same time with that of *Polycarp*; and that *Lucian* was contemporary with them; an Apostate from Christianity, and ever after it's bitter enemy; and taking all occasions, to deride the doctrines, the rites, the credulity and superstition of it's professors. There is a second observation,

[1] Ch. p. 277.

[2] Wake's Prel. Disc. p. 57.

intimated also by the same Archbishop, which seems to give a further confirmation to the genuineness of *Polycarp's Dove*: for he refers us, in a marginal note, to *Prudentius*, who celebrating, in one of his hymns, the Martyrdom of a noble Virgin, called *Eulalia*, makes a *Dove to fly out of her mouth*, at the very moment, in which she expired. Now a fiction of so strange a kind would hardly have been hazarded, one would think, by so pious a writer, if there had not been a precedent for it, in the more famous Martyrdom of *Polycarp*.

There is nothing now left, to discredit the story of *the Dove*, but the silence of *Eusebius* with regard to it; whose account of this Martyrdom is allowed to be the oldest of any other whatsoever. But it must be observed, that *Eusebius* does not give us here the entire narrative, but an abstract of it only, or an abridgement, proper to be inserted into his general history; in which the writer, according to his own discretion and judgement, always omits whatever he thinks insignificant, or unnecessary, or of suspicious credit, or improper to be offered to public view. In the abstract then; which was not written by him till about two hundred years after the fact, he has thrown out many passages which he found in all the earlier copies, and which are still found in all the modern editions, and among the rest, even one of the miraculous kind, in which the body of the Saint is said, *to have stood in the midst of the flames, not as flesh, which is burnt, but as bread, which is baked.*

baked [1]. Now the sentence here omitted, is found in all the editions, in common with the article of the Dove; yet is not imputed to any mistake, or interpolation of a later date, but to the design and choice of the compiler, who might think the comparifon of *Polycarp's body in the flames with bread baked in an oven*, too coarse and unnatural to deserve a place in his History.

But whatever reason *Eusebius* might have for the omiffion of this paffage, he had certainly a much greater for the omiffion of *the Dove*. The copies of this narrative appear to have been very rare, fo that the fcandal which this particular ftory might have given, had not yet reached far, but lain dormant as it were and obfcure among a few onely: but if *Eusebius* had tranfcribed it into his History, it would foon have been fpread into all hands, and even of the chief perfons of the Empire, which was now become Chriftian. We cannot doubt therefore, but that he willfully dropt it out of his abftract, as thefe champions are now endeavouring to throw it out of all the copies: yet not on the account of it's being a miftake or interpolation of any tranfcriber, but becaufe every body would fee it to be a moft flagrant and fhamefull fiction. In fhort; as the ftory is of a kind, which was much more likely to be dropped, when found in any copy, than after it had been dropped to be recalled into it again; fo it is not credible, that, after fo great a man as *Eusebius* had published the narrative itfelf without it, any

one would have the hardiness to insert or interpolate it, if it had not been found in all the other copies, which lay dispersed in different hands, and believed to be a genuine part of the original piece. As to the silence of the later writers about it, it is of no weight at all: they followed only the transcript of *Eusebius*, and were glad to get rid of so ridiculous a fiction, when they had so good an authority to plead for the omission of it.

I shall now dismiss the miracles of *Polycarp's martyrdom*, on which, tho' they have no relation to the question in dispute, and are in themselves utterly contemptible, my Answerers lay the greatest stress, as if they were subversive of my whole argument. They have my leave however, to enjoy them and insult me with them as much as they please; but will find in the end, that the more pains they take to hold them up, the more they will hurt their own cause and strengthen mine. Since men of sense will never be brought to believe that any true Miracles could be subsisting in that age, which has no better specimen of them to give us, than this: nothing but a perplexed and patched up story of a few trifling facts, of a precarious interpretation, which may reasonably be imputed to the fiction of an Enthusiastic piety, ever flattering and deluding itself with a vain persuasion of the present influence and interposition of the Deity.

And that this will certainly be the fate of these Miracles is confirmed to us already in some measure by the autho-

rity of a very learned and judicious writer, who, without any respect to the present controversy, treating on the proper credibility of Miracles in general, and taking occasion, in the course of his argument, to consider the narrative of *Polycarp's Martyrdom*, finds it necessary to declare, from the impertinence and inconsistency of the miraculous facts related in it, *that there is great reason to be jealous of the veracity of the compiler, and just ground to suspect the credit of a story, in which we see, that there has been tampering* [1].

As

[1] See Two Previous questions impartially considered. p. 26, 30.

N. B. The Martyrdom of Bishop *Hooper*, in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, is compared by the Compiler of it, *J. Fox*, to that of *Polycarp* from a similitude of several circumstances, which are ascribed to them both. I thought it proper therefore to present the reader with a short abstract of it, and a reflection or two to illustrate the comparison.

When this Bishop was fastened to the stake, and the officers were going to bind his neck and legs with hoops of iron, he utterly refused them, as *Polycarp* is said to have done, and would have none; saying; I am well assured, that I shall not trouble you, and doubt not, but that God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire. The fire did not presently kindle, being made of green faggots, which were mingled with reeds to quicken them: at length however it burned about him, but the wind having full strength in that place, blew the flame from him, so that he was no more but touched by the fire. Within a space after, a few faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with them, which burned at the nether parts, being driven about by the wind, save that it did burn his hair, and scorch his skin a little.—When the second fire was spent, he wiped both his eyes with his hands, and, beholding the people, said with an indifferent loud voice, for God's love, good people, let me have more fire. All this while his nether parts were burning, but the faggots were so few, that the flame did not strongly burn his upper parts till a third and more vigorous fire being kindled some time after, put an end to his life. Thus he stood three quarters of an hour or more in the fire, even as a lamb, and patient-ly

As to the testimonies of the succeeding Fathers, which come next to be considered, it is agreed on all sides, that they strongly and explicitly affirm the continuance of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, as constantly exerted in the Church through each succeeding age. On this head then my Answerers allow, that I have fairly

ly abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards nor backwards, nor to either side, till his nether parts being burnt, and his bowels fallen out he died as quietly as a child in his bed. See *Fox Chronic.* vol. iii. p. 156.

Now there is as much reason to imagine a miraculous interposition in the Martyrdom of this Bishop, as in that of *Polycarp*. The flame blown all about him by the wind, scorched his skin, yet burnt his hair; which shews, that in some turnings of it, it must have made the resemblance as it were of an arch, as it is said to have done around *Polycarp*, or it could not have had that effect of burning the hair of his head, while it onely scorched his body, which may be said therefore, as truly as *Polycarp's*, to have stood in the midst of it, not as flesh, that is burnt, but as bread that is baked. But when the second fire was found ineffectual to burn him, if the executioner had then dispatched him with a sword, there would have been a better pretence for a Miracle, than in the case of *Polycarp*: for he suffered the trial onely of one fire without being burnt, but this Martyr of two. There is another circumstance observed by the Historian, which made *Polycarp's* Martyrdom less grievous than this of *Hooper*, for when the fire did not burn, they ministered a quick dispatch to *Polycarp* by a sword, moved probably by some compassion, but the tormentors of *Hooper* suffered him without compassion, to stand three quarters of an hour in the fire. As to a voice from heaven to encourage the Martyr, whatever use it might be of in *Polycarp's* case, there was no occasion for it here: *Hooper* had an assurance within his own breast, which he accordingly declared, that God would give him strength to endure the extremity of the fire: and the event shewed that such strength was actually given to him, and that his declaration therefore was prophetic: and the patience and fortitude with which he bore his sufferings, may justly be thought as miraculous, as of any the most celebrated Martyrs of the primitive ages.

drawn out all the principal testimonies, which relate to our question, and enumerated all the extraordinary gifts and powers which these Fathers declare to have subsisted among them. Nay instead of charging me with the suppression of any, their sole exception is, that I have added one to the list, which does not belong to it, and which none of the Fathers have any where claimed, *viz. the gift of expounding the Scriptures*. As this therefore is the onely point which these Doctors here dispute with me, and which, as we shall presently find, is a point of no small importance to my main argument, so it will be necessary to employ a little pains in examining and clearing up the truth of it: where by opening the ground and reason of ascribing this gift to the Church, I shall shew the reason also for which my Adversaries so stiffly reject it.

Irenæus, speaking of the miraculous powers which were frequent in his time, says; we hear many in the Church indued with prophetic gifts; speaking with all kinds of tongues; laying open the secrets of men for the public good; and *expounding the mysteries of God* [1]. Now as by the mysteries of God, which are said here to be expounded in the Church, nothing else can reasonably be understood, but the mysteries proposed to us in the scriptures, so in a recital of this gift in another part of my work, I call it *the gift of expounding the scriptures*; as I think myself warranted to do, by the manifest sense of the words, which

[1] 2. vi.

seem incapable indeed of any other. Dr. *Dodwell* on the other hand declares; that in all the passages that I had cited, he does not find any such claim of an extraordinary power of expounding the Holy Scriptures. *Irenæus* indeed speaks of expounding the mysteries of God, but says not one word of the Holy Scriptures [1]. Dr. *Church* affirms the same thing, and says; that *in looking over the accounts, he finds nothing like any claim to a miraculous gift of expounding the Scriptures* [2]. But what a pityfull way of quibbling is this? the word, *scriptures*, is not expressly mentioned in the testimony, therefore, the gift of expounding them cannot be implied in it. But if *the mysteries of God*, do not mean the same thing, I should be glad to know what other meaning they can possibly have: for tho' our Doctors reject this, they give us no other in it's place, but leave the words to shift for themselves, and the reader to take them in what sense he pleases, provided, that he does not take them, for *the mysteries of the Gospel*, which it is their business to deny.

But besides this passage of *Irenæus*, from which alone the thing itself may fairly be inferred, we learn from the express and direct testimony of *Gregory*, called the wonder-worker, that the gift of expounding the Holy Scriptures was actually claimed and reckoned as one of the most esteemed and excellent gifts of those primitive times; and was poured out, in the largest measure, upon his Master *Origen*.

[1] *Dod.* p. 57. [2] *Ch.* p. 127.

His words are; “ *Origen* has received this greatest gift
 “ from God, with an abundant share of it from heaven;
 “ to be the Interpreter of the words of God to men; to
 “ understand the things of God, as if God himself were
 “ speaking, and to expound them to men, that men also
 “ might hear them [1].”

This then is the gift, to which we are referred by *Ire-
 naeus*, whose words cannot possibly be understood of any
 other, unless we suppose those early ages to have been en-
 trusted with some secret mysteries, peculiar to themselves,
 and unknown to their Successors, and which God had not
 thought fit to revele to us in the sacred Scriptures.

St. *Paul* calls himself and his fellow laborers, *Apollos* and
Cephas, the stewards or dispensors of the mysteries of God [2].
 and in another place, alluding to the doctrines of the Gos-
 pel, great, says he, is the mystery of godliness; God was mani-
 fested in the flesh; justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preach-
 ed unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into
 glory [3]. Again, speaking of the Gospel and the preaching
 of Jesus Christ, he calls them, the revelation of the mystery,
 which was kept secret since the world began [4]. I could
 mention several other places, where the mysteries of God, or
 of his will, or of the Gospel, are applied by Christ himself,

[1] Δῶρον τὸ μέγιστον ὑπὸς Θεοῦ ἐχει λαβών, καὶ μοῖραν πασκάλην ἑρανόθεν; ἑρμηνεύς εἶναι τῶν τῷ Θεῷ λόγων πρὸς ἀνθρώπους; συλλέγει τὰ Θεῷ, ὡς Θεῷ λαλῆναι; καὶ διηγεῖσθαι ἀνθρώποις, ὡς ἀκούσῃν ἀνθρώποι. Vid. Greg. Thaum. Orat. Panegyri. in Orig. p. 73. D.

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 1. [3] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [4] Rom. xvi. 15.

to denote the doctrines taught by the Gospel. And surely a divine faculty of expounding the mysteries of God, which run through both the Testaments, and constitute the noblest and most sublime parts of each, must have been one of the most usefull and important of those miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have been indulged to those primitive ages. Since *the mysteries of God* then, as they are mentioned by *Irenæus*, must be understood to refer to the same mysteries, which are affirmed by Christ and his Apostles, to be reveled to us in the Holy Scriptures, the gift of expounding them cannot possibly signify any thing else, than the gift of expounding the most abstruse and difficult passages of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament.

This point being thus settled, it opens my way to the defence of another, which I had affirmed in consequence of it; that *Justin Martyr* lays claim to this gift of expounding the Scriptures, as indulged to him in an extraordinary manner, by the special grace of God. In proof of this, I have alledged three several passages from *Justin* himself, which I took to be strong and expresse to my point, and which had led several learned men before me into the same opinion. But with these more learned Doctors, my three testimonies from *Justin* are nothing at all to the purpose, nor imply the least claim to any extraordinary gift; they insist, that I wholly mistake the matter, and through my ignorance of the proper sense of the words, imagine them to signify something divine and supernatural, when they signify nothing more than

the ordinary grace of God, and the ordinary assistance of the Spirit, common, as they say, to all believers, and what every good Christian was intitled to as well as *Justin* [1].

And here indeed I must confess the ignorance, with which I am charged by them of the proper sense of these expressions, *the ordinary grace, and the ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost*. They are used, I know, frequently among Christians, but chiefly by that sort, who know not what they mean, or rather mean nothing at all by them. But when Doctors of Divinity apply them, in the way of proof or argument, they ought surely to define the precise meaning of them, or otherwise, we cannot judge of the propriety, of what they pretend to deduce and infer from them. I looked therefore into Dr. *Dodwell's* book, to discover, as well as I was able, in what sense I might suppose him to have applied these phrases; but instead of any satisfaction, I found nothing there but perplexity and confusion. He says, “ that the word *χάρις* or grace is never used to describe a supernatural gift, but known to mean that ordinary cooperation of the Holy Spirit with our best endeavours, which is common to all believers; yet in the next words he treats it as having no meaning at all, but as a common way of speaking, which pious persons accustom themselves to, of ascribing every good thing, which they possess, to the grace of God: and so *Justin*, he says, when he speaks of his knowledge of the Scrip-

[1] D. p. 62. Ch. 131.

tures,

“ tures, as wholly obtained by grace, produces such in-
 “ terpretations of them as appear to have been drawn
 “ from his reason: yet in contradiction to all this, he de-
 “ clares at the same time, that the assistance of the Spirit,
 “ being a power added to our nature, may therefore in
 “ some sense be called *supernatural* [1].”

Dr. *Church* is just as confused, as his partner, in his account also of this *ordinary grace*: he reasons upon it through a page or two, without giving us any hint of what he means by it, and without knowing it, I dare say, himself. The sole explication which he attempts of it is, *that in general it is necessary to open men's understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, and embrace the truths of the Gospel contained therein, but implies nothing infallible, or miraculous, or any thing more than what any one might attain by his own power* [2], and enjoy if he would. Now the onely idea, which I can form of the meaning which these Doctors would have us give to their phrase, *of ordinary grace*, is, that we should take it for a principle, neither absolutely natural, nor supernatural, but of a mixed kind between both, and partaking alike of each: for under that character, it would be of excellent use in Theological controversies, where the disputants might make something or nothing of it, just as their argument may require; might advance it to supernatural, when it wanted any help of that sort, or when it demanded the contrary, might depress it to the

[1] Dod. p. 62, 3.

[2] Ch. p. 132.

state of a mere human faculty. Being thus prepared and enlightened by the instruction of these Doctors for a right interpretation of the passages alledged from *Justin*, I now procede to a particular review and examination of them.

On the first of these passages, Dr. *Dodwell* observes, that I have not cited the whole, but referred to it onely, for which reason he thought it necessary to translate the whole at large, which he has accordingly performed in the following words; “ I will endeavour, says *Justin*, in his confession with a Jew, to explain to you the Scriptures, without laboring to shew merely any artificial ornament of language; for I have no talent of that sort, but grace onely is given to me of God, to understand the Scriptures, of which grace I will pray, that all may be freely and fully partakers, that I may not for this, be liable to judgement, in that dispensation of it which God the Creator of all things will exercise by my Lord Jesus Christ [1].”

Now in this passage *Justin* declares, that in the interpretations of Scripture, which he was going to lay before the Jew, he had no power or faculty of adorning them by any artfull or elegant composition of words, *but that grace alone was given to him by God, to understand his Scriptures.* And here I shall once more affirm; that this is the express claim of an extraordinary gift, and that the context also, from which our Doctors labor to draw a contrary sense, clearly

[1] Dod. p. 60.

confirms mine. They insist on the other hand, that *Justin* had not the least thought of claiming any extraordinary endowment in this place, or any thing more, than such a knowledge of the Scriptures, as every good Christian might acquire by his own strength as well as *Justin*: for he was not obliged to pray, says Dr. *Dodwell*, that all might be inspired, if he had spoken of his own proficiency in the Scriptures in that sense, but he thought himself bound to pray, that all might be favoured with the knowledge of those sacred writings [1]. But the most surprizing circumstance in this case is, how the notion of *Justin's* praying, as the translation here makes him to do, could enter into the Doctor's head: or how it was possible, for any man, who has the least tincture of Greek, to translate the word παρακαλῶ, by *I will pray*. A verb, which implies no sort of reference or allusion whatsoever to prayer, or to any act or office, which can be addressed to God, but to man only, in the sense of exhorting, admonishing, and entreating, &c. but besides this blunder; which is of the grossest kind, he makes a second also, and that no slight one, in the same verb, by giving it the sense of a future time, when it absolutely indicates the present. Dr. *Church* indeed has rightly translated the verb, by *I exhort and beseech all*, to become partakers, &c. but the turn which he gives to the whole, and the inference which he draws from it, is the same with his Partner's, weak and false. They both rea-

[1] Dod. p. 60.

son upon it in the same manner ; the one, that *Justin* could not have prayed ; the other, that he could not have exhorted the Jews, with whom he was discoursing to partake of a gift, which they could not acquire by any endeavours of their own : for to exhort a man to acquire what is not in his power, is a flagrant insult upon him [1]. But *Justin's* exhortation carries no absurdity of that sort in it, but confirms the sense, which I have given of his claiming here a divine and extraordinary gift : to which he immediately adds, of which grace, thus given to me, I exhort you all, without reward or envy, to become partakers, that I may not be found liable to punishment in the day of judgement. Where the exhortation has no sort of reference to the acquisition of any gift, either ordinary or extraordinary, nor any other meaning than to move them to take the benefit of that gift, which was given peculiarly to *Justin*, by attending to those interpretations, which he was offering to them, and embracing that true sense of the scriptures, which he was now qualified to teach them. For on what other account could he be apprehensive of any punishment from God at the last day, but for the neglect of imparting and communicating to others the benefit of that extraordinary gift, which had been indulged to himself of unfolding and explaining the mysteries of God ; of which duty he was now discharging his con-

[1] Ch. p. 131.

science, and throwing the guilt upon those onely, who refused to pay a proper regard to it.

There are two other testimonies, which I have produced likewise to the same purposes and from this same dialogue, in one of which *Justin* says to the Jew; *Do you think, that I could ever have been able to understand these things from the Scriptures, if by the will of their author, I had not received the grace to understand them* [1]? In the other place, speaking of Christ, as *the sole reveler of the Father to all those, who know him*, he says, *he has reveled to us therefore all those things, which, by his grace, we have understood from the Scriptures* [2]. But to these testimonies our Doctors answer, that *Justin* is not speaking here of himself, but of the whole body of *the Christians*. The words *ἡμᾶς* and *ἐλάβομεν* are plural, says Dr. *Church*, and seem plainly to relate to the Christians in general [3]. And Dr. *Dodwell* has taken care to distinguish the plural sense in his translations of them. Yet they might have observed, that one of these same testimonies, begins with a plural verb, which yet cannot admit any other interpretation, than of the singular number, as being addressed onely to the single person of *Trypho*. And this indeed is a common custom with all writers, to use the plural terms *we* and *us*, when they expect to be understood as speaking onely of themselves. Dr. *Dodwell* himself will supply us with many instances of it. Speaking of my opinion, he says, it appears to us to

[1] Di. p. 390. [2] Di. p. 352. [3] Ch. p. 132.

be a dangerous error. And in several places we find him saying ; if *we* were disposed to make reprisals ; if *we* interpret strictly ; this might strongly be urged *on our side*, &c. [1]. If I had a mind therefore to trifle here, as these Doctors do, I might contend that Doctor *Dodwell* could not be the author of this book, but the secretary onely of some little Synod, who jointly compiled it, for the plural expressions which he so frequently uses ; *it appears to us*, &c. are the true synodical stile, and cannot be applied to a single person ; were I disposed therefore, I say, to cavil and divert the reader from the proper subject, I should not be more impertinent than these Doctors have actually been ; for as it is nothing to my purpose, whether Dr. *Dodwell's* book was written by himself or with the assistance of friends, the matter of it being what alone I am concerned with ; so it is not more to the purpose of these Doctors, whether *Justin* speaks here onely of himself, or of a number of Christians : for if he affirms either of himself or of all, that they were inspired by God with the right interpretation of his Scriptures, that is the whole, which I contend for : and that he actually does affirm it, will appear, I think, unquestionably to every man unprejudiced, who considers the joint force of the three testimonies, which I have produced in the proof of it : and yet *Justin* is not talking of any common or ordinary points of the Scriptures, but of the most abstruse and recondite passages of the Old Testament, in which, as in a veil, the chief evidences of the Messiah

[1] Dod. p. 4, 30, 41.

were

were supposed to have been wrapped up. The same testimonies, as I have already hinted, have ever been understood in the same sense, which I have given to them, by all men of learning, who have any esteem for the Antient Fathers; and especially by those, who were the most eminently acquainted with the principles and monuments of primitive Antiquity. Thus the learned *Halloix*, in his *Life of Justin*, affirms; that in his Dialogue with *Trypho* he several times declares, “ that the gift of understanding the
 “ Scriptures, was conferred upon him in a divine or extraordinary manner; and that so great and beneficial a
 “ talent, intrusted to his hands, made him extremely solicitous, lest it should prove unfruitfull, and be kept up
 “ by him as an uselefs and hidden treasure [1].” Mr. *Tillemont* also, who, of all men, has published the most exact and voluminous collection, of the writings, the doctrines, the characters, and the lives of those primitive Fathers, observes, “ that of all the extraordinary graces, which the
 “ Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Church in those times,
 “ there were few so considerable, as that of *understanding*
 “ the Scriptures, which was communicated by singular favor
 “ to *Justin* [2].

This then will appear at last to be the genuin case of the gift of expounding the Scriptures or the mysteries of God. It is expressly attested by *Irenæus*; was ever reckoned among the extraordinary gifts of those times; was

[1] 4. p. 23. not.

[2] p. 2, 358, 380.

claimed especially by *Justin*; and is affirmed to have been largely poured out upon *Origen*. Yet the most learned and inquisitive of our Protestant Divines, and even those, who pay the greatest reverence to the characters of the Fathers, are forced to confess, that they cannot discover the least instance or trace of any such gift in the writings of those Fathers; but on the contrary, that their interpretations of the Scriptures are generally so unnatural, and extravagant, that instead of being the dictates of a divine inspiration, they seem to be the effects rather of an unsound mind and disordered reason. Wherefore the falsehood and imposture so manifestly discovered, and even confessed in the claim of this particular gift, must needs leave a strong suspicion, upon the authority of all the rest. Yet these shall be heard likewise for themselves, nor be implicitly condemned, till they have had a fair trial. For which purpose I shall proceed to review two or three of the principal of them, and examine, what pretensions they can justly make to that credit and belief which they still generally obtain among Christians.

The next miracle, which I propose to examine is, that of *raising the dead*. Which *Irenæus* expressly affirms, *to have been frequently performed in those days on necessary occasions, by great fasting and the joint supplications of the Church of the place: and that the persons he raised had lived afterwards among them many years* [1]. Now on this article, as Dr. *Dod-*

[1] p. 186. 88.

well rightly observes, *there is great stress to be laid* [1]. I shall lay as much upon it therefore, as he pleases; shall consent, that the issue of the whole may rest upon it, and that the proofs and evidence of this capital Miracle, may determine the fate of all the rest.

By way of objection to this testimony of *Irenæus*, I had observed, “that if a Miracle of so surprising a nature
 “ had been *so frequent*, as he declares it to have been;
 “ performed, as it were in every parish, or place, where
 “ there was a Christian Church, it must have made a
 “ great noise in the world, and been celebrated not only
 “ by the Primitive Fathers, but by all Historians or Wri-
 “ ters of those times [2].” But here they cavil a while at the frequency, which I ascribe to this Miracle: *To suppose this Miracle*, says Dr. Church, *to have been common in every place, where there was a Society of Christians, or a Church, is a mistake grounded on a false construction of Irenæus’s words* [3]. Which, tho’ confidently affirmed and repeated by him, is utterly false. *Irenæus* attests it, as we have seen, to have been *frequently performed on necessary occasions, by the fasting and joint supplication of the Church of the place*: which words, as they limit it to no particular place, so they necessarily imply it to have been common alike to all places, wherever there was a proper occasion, and a Society of Christians to pray for it; which is the very sense, that I had given to them. And from the same words, Mr. *Dodwell*, the Father, has inferred, that the instances of this Miracle

[1] Dod. p. 78.

[2] Free Inq. p. 72.

[3] Ch. p. 189.

were more numerous in this age, than in that even of the Apostles: *They raised the dead*, says he, *in the Apostolic Churches, yet we have few examples of it, in the genuin acts of the Apostles; but in Irenæus's days, they raised not a few, but very often* [1].

As to the other part of my objection, that so wonderful a fact, if it had been frequent, must have made great noise in the world, and been celebrated by all writers, they treat it with much contempt. "Who should be expected to record these instances? says Dr. *Dodwell*, the Heathen Historians would not, if they had known and believed them, for it would have been an act of self-condemnation in them; neither would Christian Historians, if such there had been; for this would have been drawing down unnecessarily persecution upon those particular persons; when a general assertion of the facts would serve their argument as well [2]." "By what Historians, says Dr. *Church*, would this gentleman have had these Miracles celebrated? By Jewish or Heathen ones? this was not to be expected. Could they have disproved such accounts, no doubt but they would have been glad to do it, and we may depend upon it, that this had been done; but to celebrate them, was what they were little inclined to, if indeed they gave themselves any trouble to examine them [3]." Another of my Answerers argues also in the same strain: "'Tis not probable, says he, a Heathen Historian would have related such a fact, had he known

[1] p. 42.

[2] Dod. p. 78.

[3] Ch. p. 186.

" it.

“ it. 'Tis equally improbable, he should know it :
 “ seeing the Christians knew, with whom they had to
 “ do ; and that, had such an instance been made publick,
 “ they would not long have enjoyed him, who had been
 “ given back to their prayers [1].” The reader surely
 must think it strange, that men who know any thing of
 human nature, or the history of past ages, can reason at
 so wild a rate, or imagine, that an Heathen, tho' he had
 seen the fact performed before his eyes, could resolve to
 stifle the impresson, and persist to deny the reality of it.
 Had the Heathens no curiosity, no love of truth, no de-
 sire of knowledge in points of the highest importance ?
 Yes ; they possessed those principles in a very great degree.
 The Superstition and Idolatry of the popular religions,
 had long been contemned by all the wise and virtuous
 among them, who were perpetually searching after a more
 perfect and excellent rule. These searches gave birth to
 various sects of Philosophy ; some of which maintained
 the existence, the unity, and providence of God ; the im-
 mortality of the soul, &c. Others also taught the same
 doctrines, but as probable onely, not certain : while some
 still doubted, and even flatly denied them all. On these
 points therefore, continual disputes and arguments were
 carried on, in all the politer parts of the Heathen world ;
 and especially in *Greece and Rome* ; so that, in such circum-
 stances, the sight of a person raised from the dead, offered

[1] p. 114.

in such a manner, as carried with it a demonstration of it's reality, must have been, of all spectacles, the most desirable to a sober and inquisitive Heathen; as it would have settled all their disputes, and corrected their philosophy at once; and convinced them all, not onely of the certainty of a resurrection; but of that very sort, which all philosophy had ever held to be impossible, *the resurrection of the body.*

Mr. Millar, in his *History of the propagation of Christianity*, a work particularly recommended to his readers by Dr. Church, observes, "that by the good providence of God, philosophy began to flourish among the Heathens, a little before the coming of Christ, which was of great use to refine the minds of men, and render them capable of receiving the celestial and sublime truths of the Gospel [1]." But these narrow minded Answerers, whose thoughts never reach farther, than the contrivance of an expedient, how to clear themselves of a present difficulty, insist; that an Heathen, tho' he had been an eye-witness of so striking a fact, and intirely convinced of it's truth, yet, in spite of all conviction, would have been insensible of the force of it, and incited onely, to persecute and destroy the particular actors in it. Nay, their whole representation of the matter tends to persuade us, that if the Heathens had been invited to see the Miracle performed in their presence, they would have knocked the man down,

[1] Millar's Hist. p. 1.

as soon as he began to rise, and smothered him again in his grave, before he was got out of it.

Such nonsense as this, which they would put upon us here for argument, can hardly fail of persuading every intelligent reader, that a claim of Miracles, which wants such a defence, must necessarily be fictitious: yet they proceed with great complacency, to confirm it by several curious observations. “ We may observe in the next place, “ says Dr. *Church*, that this Miracle differs from others in one “ thing; that there is no occasion for it’s being openly per- “ formed. Because Infidels, who never had an opportunity of “ seeing it, yet if they have sufficient evidence of it, ought in “ reason and conscience to believe it. And sufficient evi- “ dence of it’s reality may easily be had, even tho’ no one “ witness was present at the working of it [1].”

This observation indeed is new and purely his own; never heard, I dare say before, or thought of by any man, but is so contrary to all the notions, which History and experience have taught us on this article, that I cannot help wondering, whence it could come into this Doctor’s head, or what facts and instances he can have to ground it upon. If the end of all Miracles be to create faith and conviction: and if when performed before our eyes, they impart a stronger conviction, than an hundred witnesses can give, who had not seen them, it cannot be the peculiar difference of the greatest of all Miracles, that it need

[1] Ch. p. 187.

be reported onely, not seen; and that, in distinction from all other Miracles, it should require our belief, upon the testimony even of those, who themselves had not seen it: for surely, the more uncommon and surprizing the nature of any miracle may be, the more it will always want to be openly performed.

In the history of the Gospel we find the Miracles of this kind, which were wrought by our Lord, to have been performed by him, in broad day light and the midst of crouds. Thus in the City of *Nain*, the widow's son was raised from the bier, as they were carrying him to his grave, *in the sight of much people: so that the rumor of it went forth through all Judæa, and all the region round about* [1]. *The daughter also of the Ruler* was raised by him in such a manner, *that the fame of it is said to have gone abroad into all the land* [2]. And in raising *Lazarus*, *Jesus lift up his eyes, and said; Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew, that thou always hearest me; but because of the people, which stand by, I said it, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me. Upon which many of the Jews, who had seen the things, which he did, believed on him* [3].

What was it then, that could possibly suggest so crude an observation to our Doctor? Why nothing, but the character of this very primitive Miracle, which we are considering as it is stated and described by *Irenæus*. With this indeed his observation perfectly tallies: for this, we must

[1] Luke vii. 17. [2] Matt. ix. 26. [3] John xi. 41, &c.

own, was of a kind, which had no occasion to be openly performed: the very report of it rendered it suspected, and the production of it would have blasted it. For as they themselves allow, it was not designed for the public, nor the conversion of the Heathens; but to be performed onely in the dark, among a few of the faithfull; on certain necessary occasions; which are neither specified, nor discoverable to any man. All which is so palpably contradictory to the character and effects of this particular Miracle, that it can hardly fail of convincing every reader, that the original claim of it was false; and the instances of it, which are said to have subsisted among the Christians, mere fictions, contrived by the crafty and political, to feed the credulity of the pious and the simple.

But in what ever light we consider the account of this Miracle, as it is given and defended by Irenæus by these Advocates, it will appear to be nothing else but a ridiculous and contemptible tale. For since the conversion of the Heathens, the most important of all ends, and to which all other Miracles were chiefly applied, was not intended by it, what *necessary occasion* could there be for it, among the private and dispersed Societies of the Christians, or what cause of weight enough, to engage a whole Church in a course of fasting and prayer for the performance of it? The Christians of this age, instead of being fond of life, were longing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; were thirsting after an immortality of glory,

glory, and offering themselves forwardly to Martyrdom, that they might obtain it a few years the sooner: they wanted no Miracle for the confirmation of their faith; the firmness of which was the ground of God's favour to them, and of their own fortitude, in suffering those persecutions, to which it exposed them: they were persuaded of the resurrection of the body, and to pray therefore, to see an instance of it, would not have been an act of piety, but of levity. And to suppose, that a whole Congregation should be induced to fast and pray, that a departed friend, or parent, or husband should be restored to life, to relieve the present grief, or gratify the fond affection of particular persons or families, cannot be thought a *necessary occasion*, or an end worthy of the interposition of God.

Then as to the persons, who were so raised; they could not possibly receive any imaginable benefit from a favour so extraordinary: for after they had been delivered from all the troubles of this life, it must have been an occasion of misery and mortification to them, to have been thrown back again into the midst of them: and when they were arrived at their journey's end, and within the reach of that bliss, which had been the object of all their hopes, and the end of all their wishes, to be thrust back from it again at the very moment of fruition, must have been a disappointment, of all others, the most grievous to a pious soul. And for this, what amends could they receive in being restored to so wretched a life, as they must have led from the
time

time of their resurrection; feulking perpetually, and hiding themselves among a few friends, since if they happened to be discovered, they were sure, as these Answerers tell us, of being destroyed by the Heathens.

But after all these evasive expedients and senseless conceits of these Doctors, it is not possible, from the nature of the thing, that this Miracle could have been concealed; or that the persons, who were raised, and lived many years after it, could live undiscovered by the Heathens. In every place, where there was a society of Christians, whether in a City, Town, or village, the Heathens were by far the majority, and surrounded them on all sides; so that a Christian could not die, or be carried at least to his grave, without being observed by some or other of his Heathen neighbours, much less could he be called again into life, without astonishing all those, who had ever seen or known him before, and whose astonishment would presently have been communicated through the whole neighbourhood; and as the same miracle is affirmed to have been ^{or} ~~written~~ ^{written} indifferently in every place, where there was a necessary occasion, and a number of Christians, to fast and pray for it, so the fame of it must needs have reached, as far as the Gospel itself was then spread.

It is allowed however in the present case, that the Heathens knew nothing at all of the matter, but constantly held the fact itself to be impossible, which I have urged as a clear proof, that they had never seen or heard of it's

being performed, except in such a manner, as carried with it a suspicion of fraud and collusion. But *this prepossession*, says Dr. Dodwell, *was the very thing, which prevented their attending to it at all; for they could not think, that they needed particular circumstances to disprove that, which they thought impossible in itself* [1]: which, like all the rest of his remarks on this article, has neither sense nor force in it. For let us suppose the claim of this same Miracle to be made by any Christians in our own days; in which there is not a single Protestant of any judgement, who is not as strongly prepossessed, as the Heathens antiently were, with a persuasion, that no mortal now living, nor any number of them, can possibly raise the dead. Yet if he was well informed, that it had been done by any particular congregation, and upon an invitation to see it done by the same, should there receive a full conviction of its reality, by seeing a person actually raised from the grave before his own eyes; he could not help adoring the power and majesty of God, in a work of so wonderfull a nature, and revering at the same time the sanctity of those men and their prayers, by which God was moved to interpose, in so extraordinary a manner. And this the Heathens themselves would certainly have done in the same case; a Miracle of this sort offered to the conviction of their senses, would have stifled all their prejudices at once, how strong soever they had been: for human nature was ever the same in all ages; and it was as impossible, for men of judgement, to with-

[1] Dod. p. 79.

stand

stand the clear evidence of their senses in antient times, as it is, for men of the same character, to reject it in the present.

But I had offered one objection to the reality of this miraculous gift, which, of itself, I take to be decisive, and a sure proof, that the claim of it must have been false. The objection is this; “ that in the very same age, in “ which *Irenæus* declares this Miracle to be often per- “ formed, and that persons so raised had lived afterwards “ among them many years; yet when *Autolytus*, an emi- “ nent Heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, Bishop of “ Antioch, to shew him but one, who had been so raised “ among the Christians, with a promise of turning Chris- “ tian upon it himself, *Theophilus* discovered by his an- “ swer, that he was not able to give him that satisfac- “ tion [1]”. Dr. *Dodwell* allows this objection to be plau- sible, and the most to my purpose of any in my whole performance [2]. And in order to refute, or at least to weaken it’s force, recurs to his usual expedient of affirm- ing, that *I have mistaken the answer of Theophilus, given a wrong turn to it, and misrepresented it in several points*; to con- firm which, he gives us a translation of the whole, cooked up to his own sense in the following words.

“ Farther, you deny the resurrection of the dead. For “ you say, shew me even one raised from the dead, on “ the sight of which I will believe. But in the first place,

[1] Free Inq. p. 73.

[2] Dod. p. 79.

“ what great thing is it, if you do believe, what you
 “ see yourself. Farther, if you can believe, that *Her-*
 “ *cules*, that burned himself, does still live; and that *Ef-*
 “ *culapius*, that was killed by lightning, was raised again;
 “ can you disbelieve the things, which are reported to you
 “ by God himself? In like manner, if I should shew you
 “ one raised from the dead and still living, even this you
 “ would disbelieve, &c. [1].”

From this passage, as it is here translated, the Doctor attempts to shew, that *Autolycus's* demand was, not to see a person, *who had been raised from the dead among the Christians*, but to see one actually raised upon the spot, and in his presence, by *Theophilus* himself; and that the onely point, which he was here speaking of was *the general resurrection of the dead; which he at present denied, but owned he would believe, if he could see an instance of it* [2]. An interpretation wholly forein to the purpose, and utterly inconsistent with the genuin sense of the words. For the first part of them, which chiefly relate to the point in question, should be rendered thus: *But farther; you deny, that the dead are now raised; for you say, shew me but one, who has been raised from the dead, and by seeing him I will become a believer.*

This is the indisputable sense of the words, and exactly conformable to the representation, that I had given of them: in which we see a plain reference to a report, which was then current and affirmed by all the Christians

[1] Dod. p. 83.

[2] Dod. p. 84.

of those days, that there were several persons actually living among them, who had been raised from the dead. This was the fact, which *Autolycus* could not believe, and on which therefore he required satisfaction from his friend *Theophilus*, by seeing an instance produced before him of any one who had been so raised: in which *Theophilus*, how desirous soever he might be, to gratify him, was not able to do it. Every school-boy would readily tell us, that *νεκρῶς ἐγείρεσθαι* [1], denotes an action of the present time, *ἐγερθέντα* one, that is past. Yet our Doctor to support this paultry shift, of putting *the general resurrection* upon us, as the sole point here referred to, has quite reversed the matter; and of the two capital words, on which the force of the whole sentence turns, has given a future sense to that, which indicates the present, and a present, to that which indicates the past; and to say the truth, his whole translation betrays either such a bigotry, as will not allow any sense, in any words, which does not tally with his own prejudices; or such an ignorance of the Greek, as is incapable of discovering what their sense really is.

But what surprizes me the more in this translation, is, that it flatly contradicts his Father's exposition of it, from which, as being the same with my own, I hoped to have gained some little authority with him in an argument,

[1] Our Lord uses the same form of expression, in his answer to the message sent to him by *John the Baptist*, where among the other proofs of his Messiahship he adds *νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται*, *the dead are raised up*. Matt. xi. 5.

which

which he owns to be plausible. In other instances, we have found him stiffly adhering to the interpretations of his Father, and strenuously defending them, tho' manifestly erroneous; which I could not help imputing to his piety, and zealous regard for the reputation of a learned and worthy parent. But what shall we say to him now, when we find him rejecting his Father's sense, and declaring it to be *wrong*, tho' it be demonstrably right, and what he ought to have embraced, if it had come from an adversary. His Father perfectly knew, that the participle, ἐγεθέρησα, could not possibly mean any thing else, in it's proper and grammatical sense, but a person, who had *already been raised from the dead*: but the son affirms it to signify one, who was about to be raised, or in the act of rising, which shews, that he had nothing of that filial tenderness, with which I had imagined him to have been indued, but the true spirit of a controversial zealot, whom neither the authority of Grammar, nor of a Father, nor of truth itself can move, whenever they thwart the System, which he had undertaken to defend.

But that *Autolycus's* demand wholly relates to a person, who *had been actually raised*, is proved beyond all doubt by *Theophilus's* answer to it, as it stands here translated, even by the Doctor himself: *for if I should shew you one, says he, raised from the dead, and still living, even this you would disbelieve*: which directly corresponds with that sense of it, and cannot possibly do so with any other. As to
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the character of *Autolycus*, we know nothing more of it, than what may be collected from the writings of *Theophilus*, who addressed three books to him, containing an Apology for the Christian religion, drawn with a particular view of satisfying *Autolycus's* scruples, and making him also a convert, as *Theophilus* himself was. From his familiarity and friendship with this eminent Bishop, we may justly infer, that he was of a candid, reasonable, and inquisitive disposition; a contemner of the Idolatry and Superstition of the public religion, and desirous to embrace a more rational worship if he could any where find it. In these circumstances Christianity was proposed to him, to which he seems to have been inclined, but the miraculous pretensions of the Christians appear to have shocked him, and infused certain scruples, which were first to be removed. He could not believe, that they had the power, of which they boasted, of *raising the dead*; or that there were any persons then living among them, who had been so raised: this was the point, in which he required to be satisfied; and if *Theophilus* would shew him an instance of any such person, so as to convince him of the reality of the fact, he promised to turn Christian upon it [1].

[1] Dr. *Dodwell*, with his usual obstinacy, flatly denies, that *Autolycus* makes any such promise, in the passage above recited; yet the words themselves are express, *ἵνα ἰδῶν πιστεύσω*, and cannot possibly be interpreted to any other sense: and we find the same verb *πιστεύω*, continually applied in the New Testament, in the same manner, to denote a man's becoming a believer, not of this or that particular point, but of the whole faith of Christ. *Mark* xv. 32. *ἵνα ἰδῶμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν*. *Matt.* xxvii. 42. *John* ix. 38. *ὁ δ' ἔφη, πιστεύω, &c.*

The demand was certainly reasonable, and suitable to the character of a discreet, and sober inquirer. And if the claim of this Miracle had been true, as it is affirmed by *Irenæus*; it could not have been difficult to have produced one; nor could there have been an occasion more worthy of it, than the conversion of an illustrious and virtuous Heathen, who sought and offered to become a believer on that very condition. Nor can we imagine, but that *Theophilus*, who was taking so much pains to convert him, and addressed three books to him with that very view, would not have been glad to have gratified him in this request, if it had been in his power, and so procured his conversion at once. For it is very remarkable, that *Theophilus* does not excuse himself from giving the satisfaction, which was desired by alledging, what these modern Advocates take it into their heads to suppose, that the persons who had been raised some years before were now dead again the second time; nor does he plead any difficulty in the production of an instance, on account of their being all dispersed and removed to any distant countries; and much less, would he have said, what our ingenious Doctors have contrived to say on this occasion, that the production of such a person, would have *exposed him onely to persecution, or to have been knocked on the head upon the spot*: but he insists onely, that if he should produce one, *Autoly-cus* would not still believe it. Which shews, that all their pretended instances of this great Miracle were of a kind,

that could not stand the test of a fair examination, nor give any satisfactory proof of their reality, to a candid and impartial inquirer. And this opinion will be the more clearly confirmed to us, by considering the shuffling, futile, and inconsistent account, which these Doctors have given of the conduct of *Theophilus*.

Dr. *Dodwell*, who by a gross mistake contends, that *Autolycus's* demand was, to see the Miracle of raising the dead, performed before his eyes by *Theophilus* himself, tells us, “ that to ask, why such a power was not granted on
“ this occasion, for the satisfaction of *Autolycus*, is enter-
“ ing into the counsels of Providence, who might have
“ good reasons for not vouchsafing this method of convic-
“ tion to him. That after the other evidence, which had
“ been offered to him, it might not be indeed proper to
“ offer a Miracle for his conviction. But that if such a
“ Miracle had been wrought^{up} in his presence, he would have
“ found some way or other to evade it; would probably
“ have suggested, that there was a confederacy, between
“ them, or have imputed the recovery to the force of art,
“ or offered some such evasion, as hardened infidelity can
“ always suggest [1].”

Dr. *Church* observes, “ that Mr. *Dodwell*, the Father,
“ thought this answer of *Theophilus* a proof, not onely that
“ this Miracle had then ceased, or at least was no longer
“ common; but also, that those, who had been raised,

[1] Dod. p. 78. 84.

“ had, in the space of forty years, been dead again.
 “ Which suppositions answer the difficulty, and are nei-
 “ ther of them disproved by me. However, it must be
 “ owned, adds he, that *Autolycus's* demand was unreason-
 “ able, especially, if the case be, as Mr. *Dodwell's* son
 “ has endeavoured to shew, that *Autolycus's* demand was
 “ to see one raised from the dead in his sight, and not one,
 “ who had been raised before; which would have been
 “ little or no satisfaction to him. By this way of consider-
 “ ing the passage, the foundation of the objection is re-
 “ moved. On the whole therefore, tho' *Theophilus* did not
 “ produce any instance of this Miracle, to gratify the
 “ vain humour, and idle curiosity of his Antagonist;
 “ this cannot set aside the positive and express testimony
 “ of *Irenæus* [1].”

Such is their way of refuting a positive fact; by a num-
 ber of suppositions, either wholly vain and fancifull, or
 grounded on their own blunders and ignorance of the sub-
 ject, which they are treating. The fact however is
 incontestable. *Autolycus* demanded to see a person, who
 had been raised from the dead; could not be gratified in
 that demand, for which our Doctors think it a sufficient
 apology, to say; “ that Providence might judge it im-
 “ proper, to give that conviction, to *his vain humour and*
 “ *idle curiosity*; that there was evidence enough of another
 “ sort, which ought to have convinced him; and if a

[1] Ch. p. 189.

“Miracle had been wrought for the purpose in his presence, he was such an *hardned Infidel*, that it would have made no impresson upon him.” Whereas the whole, which we can fairly collect, either of the nature of the man, or of his demand, is; that he was a candid inquirer after truth, and ready to embrace it, where-ever it could be found; and that his demand, instead of being the effect of any idle humor or curiosity, was the result of a serious and deliberate intention, to become a convert to Christianity, if he could be convinced onely of this single point, *that there were any persons then living among the Christians, who had been raised from the dead.* And the sole inference, which we can reasonably draw from the inability of this Bishop to give him that satisfaction is; that there were no such persons then in being: and consequently, no such miraculous gift then subsisting in the Church, how positively soever it may be attested by *Irenæus*. *Theophilus* lived in the same age with him; and tho’ we should suppose him to have been somewhat younger, and to have lived some years longer, yet if the Miracle itself had ceased, after it had been exerted for some short time, according to the testimony of *Irenæus*; or if the persons, who had been raised in the days of *Irenæus*, were all dead again before *Theophilus* wrote, it is certain, that he would have mentioned either the one, or the other to excuse his want of power to satisfy his friend. But he had no such excuse to make; and the conceits of this sort, to which our mo-

dern Advocates now recurr, are but the vain expedients of men, laboring to prop up a lame cause, unable to support itself, by the help of fictitious circumstances, of their own invention.

Besides all these various improbabilities, which appear upon the very face of this miraculous gift; I have observed, that it stands upon the single testimony of *Irenæus* [1], and is not mentioned or referred to in any manner, by any of the succeeding Fathers, through the three first centuries: which circumstance alone seems to be sufficient to blast it's credit. For it is scarce possible to conceive, if this gift had really subsisted in *Irenæus's* days, and in so full a measure, as he affirms it to have done, that all the later writers, and the Apologists especially, could have omitted the mention of it, or suffered the memory of a fact, so reputable to their cause, to have been lost and buried in oblivion, when they make it their business to display, in the strongest terms, every other miraculous power, which they pretend to have been indulged to them from heaven; of *casting out Devils, curing diseases, prophetic trances, &c.* This, I say, might reasonably incline us to suspect, that this attempt of some of the more crafty Christians, to assert and keep up a pretension to this primary Miracle, having been found vain and impracticable, and without any other effect, than of drawing the greater derision and contempt upon them from the Hea-

[1] Free Inq. p. 188.

thens,

thens, they prudently chose to drop and bury it for the future in utter silence.

I have further observed, that in the earlier times also, after the days of the Apostles, there is no intimation of the subsistence of this Miracle in the Church, except in a single instance, found in the writings of *Papias*, which *Eusebius*, who slightly touches it, seems to rank among the other fabulous stories, recorded by that weak man [1]. But here my Answerers flatly contradict me; “*Eusebius*, says Dr. *Church*, cites *Papias* as saying, that this Miracle had been done in his time. Neither can I discern the least doubt or distrust in the Historian, tho’ this Gentleman is pleased to say, *he seems to rank it among the other fabulous stories, delivered by that weak man.* And however weak *Papias* was, he may be a good witness of such a fact: no wisdom was here required [2].” Another of them says, it is plain, that *Eusebius* was not diffident about the Miracle of raising the dead, related by *Papias*, nor ranks it among fables [3]. I shall employ a few words therefore to clear up the state of this fact.

Eusebius, in the chapter of his History here referred to, sets forth the particular character of *Papias* and his writings, of whom he says; “that he was a diligent collector of unwritten traditions, which he gathered chiefly from those Elders, who had conversed with the Apostles; especially from *John, the Presbyter, and Aristion*:

[1] p. 72. Ch. p. 185. [3] p. 46.

“ and besides these, he relates some other wonderfull
 “ things on the authority of tradition; particularly a sto-
 “ ry reported to him by the daughters of *Philip, of a*
 “ *dead person, who had been raised to life*; and another story,
 “ of *Iustus, surnamed Barsabas*, who happened to drink a
 “ cup of deadly poyson, yet by the grace of God received
 “ no harm from it. After which, he goes on to tell us,
 “ how *Papias*, from the same source of unwritten tradi-
 “ tion, had recorded some strange parables and doctrines
 “ of our Lord, and several other *fabulous tales*: especially
 “ that, of a *corporeal and sensual millennium*, in which Christ
 “ was to reign with the Saints upon this earth, for a thou-
 “ sand years after the general resurrection: which he at-
 “ tribes to the mistake and blunder of *Papias*, who gross-
 “ ly and literally interpreted, what the Apostles had de-
 “ livered in a typical or mystical sense. For *Papias*, says
 “ he, was of a *very shallow understanding, as is evident from*
 “ *his writings*; yet the greatest part of the Ecclesiastical
 “ Writers or Fathers, who succeeded him, were led by his
 “ authority into the same opinion, on account of the age
 “ of the man, as *Irenæus* in particular, as well as every
 “ other writer, who asserts the like doctrines [1].”

Now from this account let any unprejudiced man judge,
 whether *Eusebius* can be thought to have laid any sort of
 stress or an *bearsay-story*, as it was recorded by *Papias*,
 concerning a person unknown; who had been raised from

[1] Euseb. p. 339.

the dead : and whether he does not put it upon the same rank, with all the other *strange parables and tales*, which he mentions to have been delivered by the same weak man, and expressly declares to be *fabulous*, *μυθικώτερα* ; this at least is certain, and sufficient for my purpose ; that after the character here given, of *the little understanding*, and *great credulity of Papias*, no man of judgement will think his testimony of any weight in the present case ; or venture to affirm, as Dr. Church has done, that *how weak soever he might be, he may still be a good witness of such a fact*. For all that can be allowed to such a character is, that he may be a *very good believer of an hearsay-story* ; but to call him a *good witness* of it, is absurd, and contradictory to the common sense and experience of mankind.

But before I dismiss this instance of *Papias*, I shall just remind the Doctor once more, of what the learned Mr. Millar, his own favorite writer, has said, concerning the credit of his testimony, in a similar case of a questionable fact. “ Tho’ many of the Antients, says he, have given
 “ some ground for this story, yet it flows originally onely
 “ from *Papias*, called *Bishop of Hierapolis*, as cited by *Eusebius*, for *Papias’s* books are lost. But if they were ex-
 “ tant ; according to the same *Eusebius*, the Author of
 “ them was but a *person of a mean character ; a rude simple*
 “ *and vain man, who believed and reported things upon common*
 “ *tradition, even things, that were μυθιώτερα, liker to fables*
 “ *than truths. He was a millenary, and introduced fabulous*
 “ *stories*

“ stories into the Church, which a multitude of writers after
 “ him licked up [1].”

Thus we see, how the character of *Papias* stands between these two Authors, Mr. *Millar*, and Dr. *Church*; men of the same principles; of the same reverence for the primitive Fathers; and writers after each other's own heart. Mr. *Millar*, being led by his argument, to combat the reality of a fact, which was supported chiefly by the testimony of *Papias*, frankly sets forth the true character of the man, as it is represented by *Eusebius*, and shews him, to have been utterly void both of judgement and veracity, and unworthy therefore of any credit. Dr. *Church*, on the other hand, being engaged to defend a system, where the testimony of *Papias* is of some little use to him, resolves at all adventures to hold up his character, and how many lies soever may have been told, and fables invented by him, affirms him to be a good witness, even of a fact, which, of all others, is in its own nature, the most surprising and incredible.

But to return to the Miracle, which we have been examining: it not only stands, as we have shewn, upon the single testimony of *Irenæus*, but I have shewn also, that this single witness was of a character, on which we cannot reasonably depend for the truth of a report so extraordinary. I have shewn him to be so credulous, superstitious and enthusiastical a turn of mind, as would dis-

[1] *Millar*, p. 280.

pose him to embrace and assert any fabulous tale, which tended, as he thought, in any manner, to advance the credit of the Gospel, or to confute an Heretic. That he has actually affirmed several facts, doctrines and traditions, as delivered down to him directly from the Apostles, which are allowed even by his advocates, to be absolutely false and groundless: all which I have confirmed by such clear and undeniable instances, as would utterly blast the credit of the most esteemed and eminent writer now living. In short, I have shewn him to be a second *Papias*, whose scholar he was; and by whom, as *Eusebius* tells us, he was *imposed upon, and drawn to believe, and teach those spurious doctrines and traditions*, with which his writings abound, and which his authority continued to impose likewise upon the Fathers, who succeeded him.

To these exceptions urged by me against the credibility of his testimony, our Champions have not attempted to give any particular answer: but since his authority must by all means be supported, or their argument would sink at once, they affirm still with one voice, that *his testimony is superior to all exception*; and they lay it down as an indisputable maxim; *that the positive evidence of a witness, so pious and so sincerely devoted to the Christian cause, must necessarily demand our belief in all Cases, how extraordinary or incredible soever they may be in their own nature*: This is the general answer which they give to all objections of this

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kind; and on this maxim, as extravagant as it is, the merit of their cause and reasoning is intirely grounded.

And now I cannot help flattering myself, that every sensible and unprejudiced reader will be of the same mind with me, with regard to the claim of this primary Miracle, as it is set forth by the testimony of *Irenæus*. For if a strict and impartial examination can qualify me to form a proper judgement of it; or if I have any ability to distinguish between true and false; probable and improbable; I may safely pronounce, that there is not a grain of truth in it, nor a single circumstance belonging to it, which a *free Inquirer*, or a *Free Answerer*, if he was sincere, could justly think probable. As to my Antagonists, the impotence of their attempts to confute my argument is a strong confirmation of the truth of it. While they defend these Miracles to be true, their very defences prove them to be false; and while they assume to themselves the title of *Free Answerers*, their answers shew them to be slaves to systems, and listed for the perpetual defence of received and established opinions, whether true or false. Lastly, since this is a point, on which, as Dr. *Dodwell* has observed, *great stress ought to be laid*; I here freely stake the whole merit and credit of my work upon it; and if this Miracle at last should be adjudged to be true, shall quit the field to my adversaries, and own myself unable, to prove any of the rest to be false.

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The Gift of tongues also, as well as that of raising the dead, stands upon the single testimony of *Irenæus*, without the least notice or mention of it in any succeeding writer through the three first centuries. I have offered several objections to the reality of it, sufficient to expose the falshood of that claim, which is made of it by *Irenæus*, and shall now consider, what my Answerers have offered towards the confutation of those objections. I cannot help observing however in the first place, how ignorant they were of the nature of this particular gift, till they had acquired some little insight into it, from the perusal of my work. Before the publication of my *Free Inquiry*, the Answerers of my Introductory Discourse, affirm it to have been absolutely necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, and without which no success could be expected; and urge that necessity as a sure proof of it's continuance after the days of the Apostles, and consequently, as a confutation of my general argument. And this indeed has ever been the universal sense of all Divines, without exception, from our Archbishops down to our Vicars, as oft as they had occasion to touch upon this subject in their Sermons or other Discourses, of which I could produce many instances, but shall content myself with one for the present.

The late Bishop *Burnet*, speaking of the Romish missions of these later ages, among the remote and barbarous nations, says; "It is so sublime a mystery to think

“ on God, and his attributes and works: or to think of
 “ another state, and the way, that leads to it; that till
 “ God furnishes out a new mission of Apostles, with a
 “ measure of those extraordinary gifts, which were pour-
 “ ed out on the great Pentecost, it is not easy to imagine
 “ how the conversion of the Heathen nations should be
 “ made. And since the chief grounds on which we
 “ prove the Christian religion, are taken from the prophe-
 “ cies of the Old Testament, and their accomplishment in
 “ the New---to the *Barbarians*, who know nothing of this,
 “ and have no way of informing themselves concerning it,
 “ all this proof can signify nothing.---So that in order to
 “ the convincing their understandings. --- I do not see, how
 “ we should expect, that they should yield easily, unless there
 “ were a new power of working Miracles, conferred on
 “ those, who labour in it: for what noise soever their
 “ Missionaries make, with their Miracles in those remote
 “ parts, it is plain, that these are all impostures: for the
 “ most necessary of all Miracles for the conversion of
 “ strange nations being *the Gift of tongues*, with which the
 “ Apostles were furnished at first; and since they are all
 “ forced to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them, we
 “ have all possible reason to conclude, that God would
 “ not change his method, or qualify men to work won-
 “ ders, and not give them that, which is both the most
 “ sensible and most usefull of all others, towards that end,
 “ for which he authorises them [1].”

[1] Bishop Burnet's Pref. to Lactant, p. 12, 13, 14, 15.

This,

This, I say, was the established notion and character of this particular *gift of Tongues*, among all our Divines till the publication of *the Free Inquiry*. But since this has taught them, that, how necessary soever this Gift might be, it was either not continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles, or withdrawn at least within a generation or two after, we now find our Doctors in a quite different tone, from all who wrote before them; and as if the nature of this Miracle had been wholly changed at once, treating it, as of much less use, than any other Miracle, and assigning that, as the very reason, why it was one of the first, which God thought fit to recall. “ It might be serviceable, says “ Dr. *Dodwell*, in the propagation of the Gospel, yet was “ the least convincing of any to gainfayers --- and could be “ no proof antecedently to the unconverted. As soon as this “ use of it ceased, or was attainable by human means, the “ supernatural gift itself ceased also, and therefore ceased “ the first of any [1]”. “ This gift, says Dr. *Church*, would “ enable them to preach the Gospel to people of different “ nations, but would not evince the authority of their mission. If this be allowed, we shall soon discern the reason, “ why the gift of tongues might cease before other Miracles. “ When once a sufficient number of converts was made in “ any country, and instructed in the nature of our religion, “ these or at least the principal part of them, were ordained, “ and sent to teach their countrymen. And as they wanted

[1] Dod, p. 91.

“ no gift of tongues, to enable them to do this, so we have
 “ no reason to think, that God would continue such a Mi-
 “ racle any longer than was necessary : whereas these very
 “ persons might want and did want the assistance of other
 “ Miracles then, not onely to confirm the word, but to sup-
 “ port themselves and others, who were eminent sufferers
 “ for the truth [2].” Dr. *Dodwell* had given the very same
 reason before him, and must therefore have the honor of it.
 “ When the Apostles, says he, and others the first Martyrs
 “ of Christianity, qualified with this endowment, had once
 “ propagated the Gospel, and made converts in many places,
 “ the natives of those places were able to carry on the de-
 “ sign, and without any Miracle were qualified to teach
 “ their own countrymen, in the several languages, wherein
 “ they were born [1].”

Thus we see, how readily they can dress up an hypothe-
 sis, and apply it presently as an allowed fact, to support the
 opinion which they are defending. They suppose, that when
 the first and gifted Preachers of the Gospel, had made a
 number of Converts in any barbarous country, they imme-
 diately left the whole care and administration of it, to those
 barbarous Converts, who, by preaching the word to their
 countrymen in their own native language, superseded all
 farther use of *the gift of tongues*. A mere imaginary scheme,
 without the least foundation in reason, history or experience !
 The Jewish converts indeed, who were previously instructed

[1] Ch. p. 74.

[2] Dod. p. 91.

in all the main principles, on which Christianity is founded, might soon become masters of the mystery of the Gospel, and be qualified to teach it, as it was opened and explained to them by their own scriptures. But to converts of barbarous nations and strange languages, utterly unacquainted with every principle, which bore any relation either to Judaism or Christianity, the case was quite different, and to acquire a competent knowledge of the Christian doctrine must have been a work of much time and great difficulty, so as to be hardly attainable at all in any degree of perfection except to a very few. It is incredible therefore, that any of those Barbarians, though converted to a general belief and profession of faith in Christ, should ever have been intrusted by the primitive planters of the Gospel, with the important charge of converting the rest of their country, by preaching it, and administering it's sacred rites and offices. Nay, experience has evinced the contrary, and shewn that either no such custom had ever obtained, or that it was wholly fruitless and ineffectual from the very beginning; since in all the barbarous nations of the world, no footstep has ever been discovered of any succession of native Preachers, nor any remains indeed of Christianity itself, though it is confidently affirmed to have been preached to them all. Nor have I ever read or heard, that any such method has ever been practised, or thought to be practicable, by the Missionaries of these modern ages, for how great soever their harvest may have been found, yet all the labourers in it have

have constantly been supplied from time to time from Christian countries.

The first care of all modern Missionaries, in qualifying themselves for a due discharge of their mission, is by great study and pains to acquire a competent skill of the language of that country, to which they are destined, for without this, all their labors, they know, would be vain and fruitless. *Francis Xavier*, called *the Apostle of the Indies*, as I have elsewhere observed, complains in one of his letters, that he found himself to be nothing better than a mute statue among the barbarians, till he had learnt the rudiments of their tongue. This previous use of the language, acquired by the modern Missionaries, answers the purpose of the gift of tongues in the primitive Missionaries; and the arts and sciences with which they are commonly well furnished, supplies the place of their Miracles. For in barbarous nations, whatever exceeds that degree of power or skill in man, which they had ever seen exerted before, it will have the same effect as a miraculous gift, in exciting admiration, and a reverence to the persons who perform it. Yet, with all these qualities and endowments, managed with the utmost art and dexterity of Jesuitical policy, the whole, which the Romish Missions have been able to effect in *China*, where they have long had a sort of establishment, under the protection and encouragement of the Court itself, is, to compound the matter as it were between the two religions, by forming a motley sort of worship out of the rites of them both,

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and

and humoring the genius of the country, so as to admit their *Confucius* to a partnership of honor with *Jesus* himself.

But let us return to the state of the primitive Church, in which the *gift of tongues*, according to the opinion of all Divines, has ever been held the most necessary of all others to the propagation of the Gospel. And this same necessity of it was so far from having been superseded in those primitive ages, that it continued in it's full force through all the succeeding ages, and appears to be as much wanted at this day, as it was in the very earliest days, as it is confirmed and declared by the experience of all Missionaries. It is surprizing then, that these two Miracles of raising the dead and of Tongues, so usefull and important to the cause of the Gospel, should vanish of a sudden and cease together so early in the Christian Church: and if one of them, as these Doctors contend, was withdrawn, because it was no longer of any use; how will they account for the cessation of the other, which as themselves own, continued still to be usefull and even necessary for those new converts among the *Barbarians* whom they talk of, and to whom the preaching of the Gospel was committed, tho' they had no occasion for the gift of tongues, yet wanted, as they tell us, the assistance of other Miracles on many accounts? And none surely could be more serviceable to them, than that of *raising the dead*. On the

whole then. After all the real difficulties, which are found on the one side, and all the evasive shifts, which are offered on the other, what can we reasonably think or say of these two Miracles, which are supposed to have been withdrawn, as soon almost as they were claimed, but what I have already intimated of one of them, that they never subsisted at all after the days of the Apostles, but having been rashly claimed by *Irenæus*, or imposed upon him by others of more craft, yet found upon trial, too difficult to be maintained, were presently laid aside, and suffered to expire with their Author ?

But I have offered one particular objection to the reality of this gift of Tongues, which I take to be of the greatest weight, as it is expressed by me in the following words. “ It is very remarkable, that this primitive Bishop, “ who ascribes it so liberally to others, appears to have “ been in great want of it himself, for the propagation of “ the Gospel in his own Diocese among the *Celtæ* or *Gauls* ; “ where, as *Dr. Cave* interprets his words, *It was not the “ least part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the “ language of the country, a rude and barbarous dialect, before “ he could do any good upon them [1].”*

To this *Dr. Dodwell* answers, “ that I mention this objection in such a manner, as betrays a consciousness, on “ my part, that *Dr. Cave* had here made a mistake, and “ said more for *Irenæus*, than ever he had said for him-

[1] *Free Inq.* p. 120.

“ self; yet because it founded for my purpose, I could not
 “ pass it over [1].” And in the next page he adds;
 “ Dr. *Middleton* did not chuse to take this interpretation
 “ upon himself, but leaves it upon Dr. *Cave*, and we must
 “ place it among the *few oversights* of that excellent wri-
 “ ter. --- But if this be *a gross mistake*, and nothing to his
 “ purpose, he makes an observation of his own, on this
 “ head, which he thinks important.” --- Dr. *Church* an-
 “ swers also in the same strain, and says; “ Our Author af-
 “ ferts, that *Irenæus* wanted this Miracle himself for the
 “ propagation of the Gospel among the *Gauls* --- and Dr,
 “ *Cave* indeed says, that this is plainly intimated by *Ire-*
 “ *næus*, that he was forced to learn the language of the
 “ country --- but *Irenæus’s* words express onely, *that he*
 “ *was for the most part employed in a barbarous language* [2].”

For my own part, since my interpretations, how right and clear soever, are sure to be suspected and contradicted by all writers of the same zeal and genius with these Doctors, so I have always been glad, as oft as I have found it in my power, to confirm them by the testimony of some more favored Author, whose learning they admire, and whose principles and orthodoxy they reverence. This I have done in the present case, by sheltering myself under the authority of Dr. *Cave*, a writer after their own hearts, and whose judgement is usually decisive with them in all cases, and ought certainly to be so in this, where

[1] Dod. p. 88.

[2] Ch. p. 262.

it appears to be unquestionably true. For in flat contradiction to these Doctors, I here affirm, that I was so far from being conscious of any mistake made by Doctor Cave, in his exposition of *Irenæus's* words, that it then appeared, and still appears to me, as certain and demonstrable, that he has given us the true meaning of them, and the only one indeed, which they will bear.

This sense however, tho' plain and obvious, is rejected by our Doctors, it does not suit with their scheme: and Doctor *Dodwell*, according to custom, presents us with the whole passage, and his own translation of it, of which I shall here transcribe, as much as relates to our purpose. "But you will not expect from us, who reside among the
" Gauls, and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect, any
" artificial composition of words, which we have not
" learned; nor the force of an Orator, which we have
" not aimed at, &c." Now the words with which alone we are concerned, and on which the question wholly turns, are these, *καὶ περὶ βάρβαρον διάλεκτον τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσχολουμένων*, which Dr. *Dodwell* has rendered, and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect. A translation flat and insipid, and carrying no distinct sense or idea, which a reader will easily perceive: yet the words themselves have a force in them, which evidently declares their proper meaning, and which I translate thus; you will not expect from me, who reside among the Celtæ, and the greatest part of whose leisure is intirely employed, upon a barbarous dialect, any artificial composition of words, &c.

Now

Now the single question arising from this passage is, *in what way could Irenæus's leisure be so greatly occupied by this barbarous dialect?* to which Dr. Dodwell makes no other Answer but this, "If any man can find out in these words, *that Irenæus was put to difficulties in learning the language of the Gauls*, he will discover, what I cannot perceive is alluded to. The words have no reference at all to that question; and if we were to draw inferences from them, I think they would rather incline to the contrary [1]." Dr. Church is somewhat more explicit, and tells us, "that his leisure may full as well be understood to have been taken up *in using, and speaking, and writing a barbarous language, as in learning it*. Nay the former, says he, is a better excuse, and more to his purpose, than the other would have been, as continually conversing in a rough and unpolished language, is more apt to spoil the stile, than the learning it [2]."

But nothing surely can be more weak and frivolous, than this account of the matter. To imagine, that *Irenæus's* leisure was taken up *by writing this barbarous dialect*, is quite ridiculous, for what can we suppose him to have written in it? Our Doctors perhaps would tell us, his Sermons; which they find a task of some trouble to themselves: but these early Preachers had no such custom: were no slaves to the labor either of writing, or even composing them: they delivered with all simplicity, what they conceived upon the spot,

[1] Dod. p. 89.

[2] Ch. p. 262.

and poured out those lessons of piety and Christianity, which they themselves practised, and were desirous to infuse into the people. Besides; all the works, which *Irenæus* ever wrote for the public, and which remained after his death, are declared by all the Antients, to have been written in Greek: and the five books against Heresies, his capital work, is still extant in that language, which was his native tongue. So that his leisure could not be so much taken up by writing the *Celtic* dialect; and much less could the mere use of speaking it, or of preaching in it occasionally to the people, engross so large a share of it, as to be the occasion of that difficulty, and continual employment to him, of which he seems to complain.

But here, another question naturally occurs, in which the reader, by this time, may be impatient to be satisfied,--- that is, *by what means Irenæus could acquire the use of this barbarous dialect, which gave him so much trouble?* On this head our Doctors are wholly silent: they do not chuse to affirm directly, that it was infused into him *by inspiration*; yet that is the thing, which they propose to insinuate; since they have not suggested the least intimation of any other way. But this notion of its being the effect of *the gift of tongues* or *of inspiration*, is absolutely inconsistent with *Irenæus's* own account of it. A dialect infused by God could not possibly create any difficulty to him, either in learning, speaking or writing it, since the perfect use of it would be communicated at once, and it would flow from him as freely as his

his native tongue: much less can we imagine, that it would debase the purity of any other more valuable or useful language, of which he was previously possessed, since that would be a real injury to him, and while it enabled him to preach the Gospel in one particular place, would render him less able to preach it with the same force in another.

To sum up this argument therefore in a few words. Since *Irenæus* expressly declares, that the greatest part of his leisure was employed upon a barbarous dialect: and the word ἀχολογμένων, which he here uses, implies a leisure particularly devoted to literary studies; and since he intimates at the same time, that his continual attention to this dialect had disqualified him in some degree from writing with any elegance in the Greek tongue, it is impossible, that he could be speaking of any language inspired into him, or of any thing else, but of the necessity, which he was under of learning this rude dialect, to which he was an utter stranger, by his own pains and study: a task of much time and labor, and what would not only create infinite trouble to him, before he could acquire a free use of it, but would naturally corrupt his style and manner of writing in any other language. And thus, after all the silly cavils and evasive shifts of these answerers, Dr. *Cave*, we find, has given us the true interpretation of this passage, where he tells us, *that it was not the least part of Irenæus's trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the Celtæ, a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].

[1] *Cave*, p. 120.

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I have dwelt the longer on this article, because all my antagonists insist, that these very Fathers, who attest the miraculous gifts of their several ages, were, above all other Christians, the most eminently indued with them, tho' they themselves make not the least claim to them, but ascribe them always, either to *the Christian people* in general, or to *mean and illiterate laymen, women and boys*. For these Advocates of the miraculous gifts are very sensible, that it would go a great way towards destroying the general claim of them, if, while the lowest of the Christians are affirmed to have possessed them in a large measure, *the Martyrs, Pastors, and Bishops* of the Church should appear to have been in want of them, even for the necessary discharge of their pastoral functions; for which reason they attempt, as far as they are able, to invalidate the credit of this fact, or to elude the force of it at least, by several different expedients.

Dr. *Dodwell* observes, how in a testimony, which I have cited from *Irenæus*, it is said, " *that all, who were true Disciples of Christ, wrought Miracles in his name*; in which character *Irenæus* himself, and the rest of the primitive writers before him must be included;---and that there was a plain reason why they should usually lay the stress on the meanest people, as working them, not as excluding their superiors, but because the mention of these, who were the least capable of craft and fraud, must be most convincing to Gainfayers---then he adds what he calls the true reason, why the Primitive Fathers did not mention themselves

" selves

“ selves on this head, which really was, to avoid any ostentation, and to do the greater honour to Christianity, by shewing, that the meanest of the Christian professors had the same gifts, when they happened to have any contest with the Heathens [1].” Dr. Church also, according to custom, entertains us with the same story, and says; “ that tho’ some of these powers are represented as common to Christians in general, yet we may easily apprehend, that they were more eminently vouchsafed to the Pastors and Governors of the Church, who were under the greatest difficulty, and to whom the business of converting the Heathen world peculiarly belonged [2].” “ And if God was pleased to communicate such divine gifts at that time to any persons for the benefit of the Church, he would favor these principal persons with them. Some indeed are said to have been imparted even to private Laymen. But ’tis hard to think, while these possessed them, that the Bishops and Martyrs of the Church should be without them, and that those who succeeded the Apostles, in the great work of propagating the Gospel, did not also succeed them in being favored with Miracles. And the reason, as he imagines, why none of these venerable Saints made any pretension to them, either for themselves or the Apostolic Fathers before them, was the mere Effect of their modesty and humility, and to avoid the very appearance of vanity and ostentation [3].”

[1] Dod. p. 47, 51.

[2] Ch. p. 110.

[3] p. Ch. 116, 117.

But from this single passage, which I have been examining, all this refined reasoning is overturned at once; for it clearly informs us, that *Irenæus*, tho' he affirms this gift of tongues to have been common in his days, and *that he had heard many speaking all kinds of languages in the Church*, was himself still destitute of it, tho' the Bishop and leader of them all, and obliged with great difficulty to learn *the barbarous dialect of the Celtæ*, among whom he resided, before he could do any good upon them, or was qualified to propagate the Gospel in his own Diocese. Our Doctors however, tho' they think it necessary at present to deny this fact; yet being aware, that they may be driven at last to own it as true, seem to be providing a sort of retreat beforehand, by changing their tone, and reducing their answers to a pitch more conformable to such a concession: for after all which they have been alledging, to prove these Fathers to have been chiefly instructed with the Miraculous Powers of the Church, it is pleasant to observe, with what ease and calmness, Dr. *Church* seems prepared to give it all up again: for speaking to this very point of *Irenæus's want of the gift of tongues*, he treats it as a thing of no importance, nor worthy of our inquiry, *whether he wanted it or not*: and if the whole difficulty were granted, and *Irenæus* allowed to have been destitute of it; *it could not amount*, he says, *to an objection, nor overthrow his positive testimony*, that such a power was really subsisting in the Church, and indulged to many other persons, wholly obscure and unknown [1]."

[1] Ch. p. 263.

And

And now after an impartial review and comparison of all, that has been alledged in this controversy, on the one side or the other, I have laid before the reader the genuine state of three miraculous gifts, the most important, and useful of any, which were claimed by the primitive Church. It will be needless therefore to trouble myself with the examination of any more of them; since the rest, as our Doctors themselves will allow, must follow the fate of these three, and all of them stand or fall together; as being all built upon the same foundation, and supported by the same evidence. But in the article of healing the sick, since Dr. *Dodwell* seems to lay a singular stress on one particular Miracle, and the clear attestation which is given to it by *Tertullian*, I shall just add a word or two, which may help to illustrate the true nature of it.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The greatest part of the foregoing work was composed by Dr. MIDDLETON, during his last illness: He died before he could complete, and correct it, and add all the references. It is printed from the only copy, that was left, which is in the Author's own hand writing, and may now be seen at the Booksellers.