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*The Reasonableness of believing in Christ, and
the Unreasonableness of infidelity:*

IN TWO
SERMONS

Preached at

SALTERS-HALL

May 21 and 28. 1728.

WITH AN
APPENDIX

Containing

Brief REMARKS upon the Case of *Lazarus*, relating to Mr. *Woolston's* fifth Discourse of Miracles.

By *W. HARRIS*, D. D.

L O N D O N:

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T O
Philips Glover, Esq;
O F
Wispinton in Lincolnshire.

S I R,

I Am sorry there is so much reason to complain, tho' 'tis so much the more to your honour, that the profession of the Christian religion, upon a serious and thorough enquiry, and a regular behaviour answerable to it; is become so *unfashionable* a thing among men of character and capacity in the present age; and that 'tis thought an instance of greater freedom

DEDICATION.

dom and genius, to disbelieve the truth, and disregard the obligations of it. Indeed 'tis a wonder that any should think it capable of obliging, or worthy of any respect, if 'tis not true; when its pretensions run so high, and its sanctions are so awful. If 'tis true, 'tis the most important truth, and demands attention and regard: If 'tis an imposture, it ought to be despised; for no man can be obliged to believe a falsehood, or treat it with any respect.

But, blessed be God, there are many *living*, as well as *later* instances of persons of the highest rank of understanding, and station of life, who heartily receive the Christian doctrine, upon the foot of its proper evidence, and submit to the authority of its laws; who think it no dishonour, but their greatest glory, to avow their
Chri-

DEDICATION.

Christianity, and to be governed by the rules of it. And certainly nothing can be a greater proof of its truth and excellence, than its conformity in all its parts, and in the great design of it, to the nature of God, and the good of the world; and its evident tendency to improve our natures and make us happy.

I heartily wish You all the happiness and usefulness of the present Life, for which Your distinguished Virtue and Capacity render You fit; and a large share of the Christian blessedness in the other

If the following Discourses, upon one branch of the Christian evidence, may contribute in the least degree to the satisfaction of the meanest person, or the further confirmation of his faith; it will reach the great design of
the

DEDICATION.

the publication, and I doubt not, be
allowed a testimony of the sincere
and particular respect of,

SIR,

Your obliged humble Servant,

W. HARRIS.



J O H N xi. 45, 46.

Then many of the Jews, who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him; but some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

WE have a particular account, in the former part of the chapter of *Lazarus's* sickness and death, and the miracle wrought by our Lord, in raising him from the dead. This is related with great circumstance, and is the most remarkable of all the miracles he wrought while he was here on earth. It was the last miracle he wrought before his sufferings; and the immediate occasion of the *Jews* consulting together to put him to death; and was upon that account the more likely to make a deep impression upon the mind, and be the better considered and remembered. It was purposely wrought to display his power, and be a reason of faith in him, both to confirm the faith of the disciples of his being the Messiah, and prepare them for the belief of his own

B

resur-

4 resurrection; and to induce others to believe
 on him: It was that the *Son of God might*
 40. *be glorify'd*, and that they might *see the glory*
 of God, i. e. in the manifestation of his pow-
 15. er. And *to the intent that they might be-*
 42. *lieve in him*; and, *because of the people which*
stand by, said I this, - that they may believe
that thou hast sent me. It was done at *Be-*
thany near *Jerusalem*, from whence there
 was a great resort of *Jews* to visit *Mary* up-
 on the death of her brother; and at the
 55. time of the *Passover*, which drew greater
 numbers together from all parts of *Judaea*.
 It was a publick and open fact, in the pre-
 31. sence of many of the *Jews*, who *followed*
 41. *Mary to the grave*, and *saw the things which*
 17. *Jesus did.* He had *lain in the grave four*
 31. *days already*, and was dead at least one day
 before, and was now *ready to stink*; the vi-
 sage of the countenance began to change by
 that time, in those hot countries, and a *great*
 41. *stone* was laid at the mouth of the grave.
 There was not any pretence of mistake or
 deceit, that he was only in a deliquium, or
 not really dead. He purposely delayed his
 coming sooner, when he heard the tidings
 of his sickness; not for want of love to *La-*
 5. *zarus*, for *Jesus loved Martha and her sister,*
and Lazarus; but to give the greater ad-
 vantage to the exercise of his power, and
 render the miracle of his resurrection the
 more unquestionable. It was, to be sure, a
 greater instance of power to raise him from
 the

the dead, than to cure his distemper. He raised him from the dead by the power of his word; when he had *groaned in himself*, and *lift up his eyes to heaven*, he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*: Amazing words, and spoken with divine authority and efficiency; for it follows, and *he who was dead came forth*; there was a plain instance of the power he will exert at the general resurrection, when the *dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live*. He did not only say, as he did to the ruler's daughter, *arise*, but *come forth*. It follows, *bound hand and foot, with the grave-clothes, and his face bound about with a napkin, Jesus said to them, loose him and let him go*, i. e. the same clothes in which he was buried. It must be understood either that he was loosely bound, and so might be capable of moving some steps before he was unbound; or else it must be rendered, he who *had* been bound was now loosed, and came forth, as we read that the *blind saw*, and the *lame walked*. He did not suffer *Lazarus* to attend him that he might not appear to carry him about in triumph, and seek his own glory, or provoke the rage of the Jews against him. And besides all this, *Lazarus* lived several years among the Jews, after he was raised from the dead, and was a living proof of the truth of the fact, and a standing monument of the power of Christ *. This

* This history is not mentioned by the three other evangelists.

This was indeed so wonderful an appearance, and with so many remarkable circumstances, that one would be ready to think it would have carried immediate conviction to the minds of all who were present, and to all others who should come to be well informed of it; that the whole Jewish nation would readily have owned him, and received his doctrine. But we find it was quite otherwise. This is particularly related in the account which is here given of the *effect* which this miracle had upon those who saw and heard it. In the general, we find it was not one and the same; and it had not *alike* effect upon all who were present; so immediate and direct a proof did not satisfy them all: The effect was different according to the different disposition of the subject. 1. Some *believed* on him. 2. Others reported it to the *Pharisees*. I shall consider them both distinctly, and represent the circumstances of each, and then make some practical remarks in the close.

lists, because *Lazarus* was yet living when they wrote their gospels, and that they might not raise the resentments of the *Jews* against him, who were so uneasy at the report of the people to see him, that they *consulted to put him to death*, chap. xii. 10. The last of the other evangelists wrote within fifteen years after our Lord's ascension, and *Epiphanius* reports, that *Lazarus* lived thirty years after he was raised from the dead.

Nor was it needful, while the memory of the fact was fresh and many of the witnesses living. But now when the evangelist *John* wrote his gospel, which was probably sixty years after our Lord's ascension, and long after *Lazarus's* death; and the witnesses who were present were now dead; it became both more safe, and more needful to preserve the memory of so remarkable a fact, by a particular relation of it.

I. Some

I. Some *believed* on him upon this occasion: *Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him, i. e.* Many of them who came to visit *Mary*, and comfort her upon occasion of her brother's death, and were present with her at the grave when our Lord raised him from the dead; fell under conviction by the sight of so great a miracle, and became his disciples; they received his doctrine, and owned him for the Messiah. This was the kindly and natural effect; and what it had a direct tendency and design to promote. They certainly acted herein a wise and reasonable part, and it ought to have had the same effect upon all the rest. This is the rather to be remarked, because some people have been ready to think, that considering the strange appearance of our Lord here on earth, in human flesh, and under the disadvantageous circumstances of meanness and distress, it was a wonder that any of the *Jews* believed on him; and they don't know what they should have done in the same circumstances. Now on the contrary, the reasonableness of their believing on him, will appear from the following considerations.

1. It was an undeniable evidence of the *presence* and *power* of God. The *Jews* certainly argued reasonably against those who said, *This man is not of God because he keepeth not the sabbath: how can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?* And the blind man
John ix.
16.
himself

39. himself makes the same reply, *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing*, i. e. work no miracle. And this account the

Acts x. 38. apostle gives of it, *He healed all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him.*

The miracles he wrought were a certain evidence that God was with him of a truth.

Luke xi.
20.

Our Lord himself plainly insinuates as much, when the *Jews* charged him with *casting out devils by Beelzebub*: *But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.* Another evange-

Matth. xii.
28.

list says, *by the Spirit of God*, or the power of God which was with him. When there-

fore they saw him raise *Lazarus* to life, who had been four days buried, and that he rose out of the grave at the command of Christ; what could be more reasonable than to yield to the evidence of this truth, That God was

with him, and that he acted by the power of God? The reason is, that the power of

life and death, and particularly the power of raising from the dead, is an instance of the

divine dominion, and proper to the Creator and Ruler of the world; nor is there any greater

conceivable exercise of divine power towards the creature, next to that of *creation*, than

to raise the dead. Accordingly we find he assumes it to himself as a peculiar preroga-

Deut.
xxxii. 39.

tive; *See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God besides me; I kill, and I make alive.*

1 Sam. ii.
6.

And again, *The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth*

up;

up; and much more, to bring out of the grave. 'Tis every where ascribed to him. He is the *God of our lives*, and *in him we live and move, and have our beings*: Our life and all our motions depend upon him, and are at his disposal.

We cannot reasonably suppose, that any angel or superior intelligence should share in a divine prerogative, or be capable of raising a creature from the dead, and acting contrary to the settled laws of nature, at its own pleasure, and by its own power, or otherwise than as an instrument in his hands, and by the permission and power of God. And therefore we reasonably conclude, that to cause a departed spirit to return to the body, and go from one world to another, belongs to the *Father of spirits*, to which it is *in subjection*, and who is the Lord of both worlds.

2. It was a confirmation of his *pretensions*. As it plainly shewed at first view, that he must needs be some extraordinary person, who could raise the dead; that he must act by a divine power, and above all the laws of nature; so it was plain too in consequence of that, that he was what he pretended to be, and it was a visible confirmation of it. Thus he tells them here that he wrought this miracle, that the *Son of God might be glorified*, and that they might *see the glory of God*, i. e. a visible instance of divine power. And to the *intent that they might believe in him*,

him, and that *God had sent him*. He pretended to be the *Son of God*, and to be sent by him to act for the *glory* of God, and to be the object of their *faith*. He often declared himself to be the *Messiah*, who came from heaven, and brought the will of God to men. Now this was such an *attestation* from God, as plainly confirmed the pretension, and was an unanswerable proof of it. For why else was the divine power with him? Could the God of truth attest a falsehood? or Almighty power support a forgery? Would he concur by the power of miracles with an imposture, and own one who only abused him, and deceived the people? Can we reasonably suppose so great an absurdity, and what is evidently inconsistent with his moral government of the world, and the perfections of his nature?

John v.
36.

x. 25.

And accordingly we find that our Lord always appealed to his works for the proof of his doctrine, and as evidence that he came from God; *The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works which I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me;* And the works which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. The miracles he wrought by the power and authority of the Father, and according to his will, were a plain testimony from God to him, and a seal of his pretensions. He puts it upon this issue with the *Jews*, and was willing to stand or fall by it: *If I do not the*

the works of the Father believe me not: but if I do, tho' you believe not me, believe the works: Believe me for the work's sake, that you may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. Let this plain fact determine the matter; I am content to be received, or rejected accordingly. 37. 38.

3. It was the *same* evidence they had for the *Jewish* religion, and the authority of *Moses* and the prophets. *Moses* was sent to *Pharaoh* to deliver *Israel*, with a power of working miracles, as the evidence of his mission, and that he came from God. They were clear and undeniable facts, several times repeated in the presence of great numbers, in the court and country of *Egypt*; and remained uncontradicted by any greater miracles, and in defiance of all the attempts of the *Egyptian* Magicians. No *Jew* ever doubted but *Moses* wrought the plagues of *Egypt*, and divided the Red-sea. Thus God directs *Moses* to tell the *Israelites*, *The God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you; and this was the evidence of it, I will stretch out my hand, and strike Egypt with all my wonders.* And when *Moses* was diffident and distrustful, and said, *They will not believe me, and will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee;* he refers him to the wonders he would enable him to work. And upon this foundation the whole *Jewish* nation afterwards, received the law from the hands of *Moses*,
C and

and submitted to all the sacrifices and rites of that burdensome dispensation.

The greatest *prophets* under the old testament, gave no greater proof that they were sent of God, than their working miracles; as *Elijah* restored the widow's son to life, and brought fire from heaven upon the sacrifice, to distinguish him from the prophets of *Baal*; and rain from heaven after a drought of three years and six months. *Elisha* divided the waters of *Jordan* with *Elijah's* mantle, and cured *Naaman's* leprosy. *Isaiah* made the shadow go back ten degrees upon the dial of *Abaz*, as a sign of *Hezekiah's* recovery. Upon this foot stood the *Jewish* religion, and it was allowed a sufficient evidence to *Moses* and the prophets, that they had a divine commission, and came from God. No one pretended to doubt or deny the divine institution, and authority of the law of *Moses*, or the revelations and messages of the prophets from time to time, upon this ground.

Now any sincere and considerate *Jew*, who saw our Lord work miracles, and particularly raise *Lazarus* from the dead, had the same reason to believe, that he was a prophet come from God, and was what he pretended to be, as that *Moses* and the prophets were so; and it became as reasonable to own his divine authority, and mission from heaven, as it was to own *Moses* who founded the *Jewish* state, or the prophets

who bore so great a figure in it. If it was a reasonable evidence in one case, it certainly was so in the other; and they could not consistently believe *Moses* and the prophets, and reject *Christ*, because there was plainly the same kind of proof, and the same degree of evidence for the one, which there had ever been for the other.

4. It was foretold of the Messiah that he should work miracles, and was one *mark* by which he was to be known. He is described by this character of excellence in the prophet; *Say to them of a fearful heart, be strong and fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you*, i. e. with vengeance to his enemies, but to save his people: *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame shall leap as a hart, the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert*, i. e. the Gentiles shall partake of the spiritual blessings of the gospel-state. And again, *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness— and given thee for a covenant of the people, and for the light of the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from prison, and them who sit in darkness from the prison-house. And what we render, the opening of the prison to them who are bound, the seventy render, recovering of sight to the blind*. Isa. xxxv. 45.

xlii. 6. 7.

lxi 1. και του φλωις αιδαλεψι.

Agreeably to this prediction, we find when *John Baptist* was informed by his disciples, that our Lord wrought miracles, he sent two of them to *Jesus* to ask him, *Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another?* i. e. art thou indeed the Messiah whom we expect? which probably was more with a design of their satisfaction than of his. *Luke* tells us particularly it was upon occasion of raising to life the widow's son at *Naim*, who was carrying out to be buried; *He touched the bier and said, young man I say unto thee, arise.* Our Lord sent them back only with this answer, *Go your way and tell John what things you have heard and seen, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them, q. d.* Inform *John* of the truth of the facts; of my doctrine and miracles, of which you are ear and eye-witnesses, and he will easily discover who I am, and presently discern the accomplishment of the ancient prophecies, and the marks and characters of the Messiah in me. And we find it had this effect upon the people; for there *came fear on all, and they glorified God saying, a great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people, and this rumour of him went throughout all Judea, and all the regions round about.* And we read upon another occasion it had a like effect, *Then those men when they had seen the miracle which Jesus did, that is, the*

Luke vii.
14.

17.

John vi.
14.

miracle

miracle of the loaves, *said this, is of a truth that prophet which should come into the world.* They rightly concluded from this appearance of things, that he must needs be the Messiah.

If it be said, How was this a sufficient criterion of the Messiah, when the apostles wrought miracles as well as he, and in some sort did *greater works than he*? It may be sufficient to observe, That the prophecies were not confined to the person of the Messiah, but related to the Christian dispensation, or the state of things under the Messiah; and that all the miracles they wrought were professedly done, not in their own name, or by their own power, but always in the name, and by the power of Christ. So the apostles openly told the rulers, who demanded, *By what power, or what name have you done this,* ^{Acts iv. 7.} ^{10.} and by *what means* the impotent man was made whole; *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ, of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole?* Upon all these accounts it appears highly reasonable in those Jews who saw the miracle, to believe on him; it was rather a wonder that any should be found among them who did not believe, and could resist so great an evidence of truth. But this leads to

II. The report which others made to the Jews: *But some of them went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Je-*
sus

hus had done, i. e. as appears by the opposition; some of them who did not believe, but continued obstinate, and were governed by a vicious temper of mind, by the power of unreasonable prejudice, and worldly interest; they carried the news to his implacable enemies, and informed them what had happened, that they might take care of him, and of themselves. Here we are to consider, 1. How it wrought upon them, or what effect it had. 2. The unreasonableness of it, or the aggravation of their unbelief.

§. 1. We are to consider how it wrought upon them. And there were various workings of their prejudice and malice against him.

47. 1. They *consulted* together about it. *Then*
53. *gathered the Chief-priests, and the Pharisees a*
counsel, and said, what do we? And they
took counsel together. The rulers of the people, and the most bigotted and superstitious sect among them, not only met together and consulted with one another, but they summoned the *Sanhedrim*, the great council of the Jewish nation, which consisted of the principal persons among the Jews, and was invested with the highest authority. They considered what was proper for them to do in this extraordinary circumstance. They said, *what do we?* Why do we suffer this person to go on thus without interruption? What further course should we take, since all we have done is without effect, either

Συνήγαγον
συμβούλιον.

to lessen his credit, or weaken his influence? Instead of falling under conviction and yielding to the evidence of truth, they were strangely alarmed at the report which was made, and were considering how to defeat it; and tho' they could not deny the fact they dreaded the consequence of it; *For this man does many miracles; if we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.* At this rate every one will follow him, and we shall be forsaken: Our temple and altars will be deserted; there will be an end of our power and authority in the world, and our credit and interest among the people: This new religion will prevail, and take place every where. If the interested and influencing part of the Jews had stood by, or given fair quarter, the generality of the people had owned the Messiah, and received the Christian doctrine; but instead of acknowledging the evidence of truth, and rejoicing in the success of it, they maliciously envy it, and did all they could to obstruct it.

'Tis added, *And the Romans will come and take away our place and nation.* If we let the people run after him, as the expected Messiah, and make him a king; for that was their notion of the Messiah, tho' he always declared his doctrine was *from heaven*, and *his kingdom not of this world*; it will create sedition and disorder, and give the *Roman* powers, to which we are now subject, a pretence to come upon us with their forces, and seize

seize our temple and city, destroy our religion, and the small remains of liberty which are left us, and bring us under further subjection, or make us entirely slaves. Thus they reasoned and consulted with one another, upon a mistaken ground of his character and doctrine, of his design of coming into the world, and the pretensions he always made; and without any regard to the reason and truth of things, but only to their own fears and dangers, and safety and interest.

49. 2. Here is further observable, *Caiaphas's* opinion and advice. *And one of them named Caiaphas, being High-priest that same year, said unto them, ye know nothing at all; q. d.* You are ignorant of reasons of state and policy, and what is fit to do in so critical circumstances: You are to blame in making any demurr in a matter which requires the utmost dispatch: *'Tis expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and the whole nation perish not. 'Tis more reason-*
 50. *able to put this man to death, tho' never so innocent, than to let the whole nation suffer; and by a foolish and ill-timed tenderness to him, to give umbrage to the Roman powers, and draw their jealousy and vengeance upon us. There is no comparison between the two evils, the putting one innocent man to death, and the whole nation's suffering an inconvenience by his life, and being exposed to rapine and ruin. 'Tis a great weakness to be so scrupulous when all the rules of policy,*
and

and regard to the common welfare require it. What is one man's life to the safety of a multitude? Let us sacrifice him to the peace and safety of our country. This advice of *Caiaphas* is referred to by the evangelist afterward; when the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound him, and led him away to *Annas*, the father-in-law of *Caiaphas*; now *Caiaphas* was he who gave counsel to the Jews; that * one man should die for the people.

The evangelist further observes concerning this speech of *Caiaphas*; *This spake he not of himself, but being high-priest that same year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that⁵¹ also he should gather together in one the children of God, who are scattered abroad.* It appears from hence that they had an High-priest every year, at least, that they had frequent changes; which was contrary to the divine institution, which settled the priesthood upon the house of *Aaron*, during the term of natural life; and was an instance either of the corruption among the Jews, or of the power the *Romans* had over them, who perhaps for political reasons, the same which *Caiaphas* here goes upon, would not suffer so important a charge to be lodged too long in the same hands†. However being
D High-

* Unum pro cunctis dabitur caput. *Virg. Æneid. v.*

† St. *Jerome* says, That *Caiaphas* obtained the Priest-hood of *Herod* by bribery. Perhaps the *Roman* governors were willing to countenance the ambition of the Jews, and to oblige those

High-priest, it gave the greater advantage to what he said, and made it the more remarkable, and the more likely to be attended to by the people ; for God was used to declare his mind in extraordinary cases, by the High-priest. *This spake he not of himself*: He did not intend any such thing by what he said, or design to foretel the death of Christ to save the Jewish nation, and the Gentile world, who were to become the sons of God by believing in him. It was not uttered merely of himself, and of his own motion ; but being High-priest that year, on which Christ was to suffer, God thought fit to over-rule his tongue and speech, as he did the prophet *Balaam's*, to declare the expediency of Christ's death, in such a manner as might fitly be accommodated to the true design of it. He uttered that which had a further sense than he intended, as the ancient prophets sometimes did, and was indeed *oracular* concerning God's purpose of saving his people, by the death of Christ. It was ordered thus by a special providence, and proved a plain prediction of what was quickly to come to pass.

53. 3. Their *agreement* together to put him to death. *Then from that day forth they took counsel together to put him to death.* This was in pursuance of *Caiaphas's* advice, and the result of their debating together. They

those who were best affected to them, or had the greatest interest among the people, by so great a trust.

came

came to this resolution upon the whole, and agreed together to have him executed, tho' he was perfectly innocent of any crime, and had done a beneficial miracle just before. That which should have been a reason of their faith, and a cure of their prejudice, fired them with a bloody rage and unnatural resolution to destroy him. He had just raised *Lazarus* to life, and the consequence was, they plotted together to put him to death. They were blinded with their malice, and inspired with a murderous purpose. They vowed his death, in return to his raising one to life. Nothing would satisfy them short of his blood, and under pretence of zeal for religion and the publick good, to bring him to publick justice.

Indeed our Lord withdrew for a time, and retired from their malice, and lived more privately the rest of his life, and till the time of his sufferings came. *Jesus therefore walked* ^{54.} *no more openly among the Jews:* He did not preach and work miracles among them as he had done before; but retired to a distant place, free from publick resort, that he might not provoke their rage. *He went into a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples ; i. e. in the farther part of Judæa, upon the border of the wilderness.* Herein he was an example of the direction he gave his disciples, *when they were persecuted in one city to flee to* ^{Mat. x. 13.} *another.* And yet this did not secure him,

or abate their rage and ill will against him.
And hereupon again,

4. They endeavoured to *take* him. When they came to this cruel and unrighteous resolution to put him to death, as the only expedient to prevent his success among the people, and the jealousy of the *Romans*, they set all their engines to work; and used all their arts to have him seized; and therefore *when many people went out of the country to keep the passover at Jerusalem, and to purify themselves: i. e. either from such legal defilements which were appointed to be expiated by sacrifice, or to perform some vow which used to be referred to the time of their great festival; They sought for him, and spake among themselves, while they stood in the temple, what think ye, that he will not come to the feast?* Some have thought it was with a desire to see him, but the air of the expression, and the connexion with the following verse, plainly shew, that it was in order to take him. While they *stood in the temple*, i. e. came to worship God, and to the great solemnity of the passover, the commemoration of their own deliverance from the hands of their cruel enemies, they enquired of one another where he was, and were contriving how they might find him. They polluted the temple and worship of God, with purposes and designs of murder and blood. This was in pursuance of an order from the chief priests and *Pharisees; For they had given commandment,*

mandment, if any man knew where he was, he should shew it, that they might take him.

They gave forth this order that he should be discovered and seized wherever he was. And as they were the supreme court of judicatory, and nearly concerned in the matter, no doubt it was under the penalty of severe sanctions, and of their highest displeasure.

§. 2. I am next to consider the *unreasonableness* of it, or the aggravation of their unbelief. This will appear in the following instances, which arise out of the circumstances of the case, as thus represented.

1. The *evidence* it opposed. Here was a plain and great miracle wrought before their eyes, as there had been many a one before. They could not with all their cunning, nor all their malice, deny the fact, or disown the truth of it; which indeed was the only thing which ought to have been done, if there had been any ground for it. It was a plain sensible case that he had raised *Lazarus* from the dead, and many of the *Jews* who were present at the grave, were witnesses to it, and believed on him upon that account. *Lazarus* himself was a living evidence and proof of it. One would wonder indeed they did not conspire to put him to death too, that he might not be a living re-^{10.}proach to them; as we find they afterward did. The case here was the same with that of the apostles afterward, when the *Jews* said

Chap. xii.

Acts vi. 16. *said, What shall we do with these men, for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them who dwell at Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it? The more unreasonable and absurd they, who notwithstanding*
 17. *threatned and commanded them, that they should speak to no man in this name.*

Now notwithstanding this plain and unquestionable fact, which was visible to so many, and fresh in their minds, they continued in their unbelief, and were not only obstinate and unmoved by all this evidence, but violent and resolved in their opposition to it. They not only did not yield, or only suspend their assent, but directly resisted. They consulted together to defeat the evidence of an unquestionable fact, and strengthen one another in their opposition to it. It was therefore a wilful and deliberate opposition to the plainest truth, a chosen and affected blindness; a *rebelliing against the light, and loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* It was flying in the face of the brightest evidence, as if a man should deny the sun is up at noon-day; and in the strictest sense of those severe expressions, a *fighting against God, and doing despite to the*
 Acts v. 39. *spirit of grace.*
 Heb. x. 29.

2. The principle from whence it proceeded. This appears from the reason they assign, *If we let him alone all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation.* What does this amount

amount to but great selfishness and cowardice? They were plainly governed in what they did by private views, and the fear of man, not by the love of truth, or any regard to God, from a principle of conscience, or conviction of mind. *All men will believe on him;* And what then? What hurt was that? For the same reason they ought to have believed on him too, and they acted a wise and reasonable part who did so. They ought to have rejoiced in the evidence of truth, and in the success it met with in the world. What then was the harm of it? Where lay the mischief? Why, they were afraid of being deserted, and losing their credit and authority among the people. May all that credit and authority in matters of religion perish for ever, which is founded only in pride and ambition, and not in reason and truth. They were ambitious of praise, and devoted to their interest: *They could not believe because they received honour one of another, and sought not the honour which cometh from God only, and loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* Instead of being governed by the evidence of truth, and the reason of things, they opposed all the reason of the case, by selfish views and worldly interest. And this is the worst reason of any thing which can be, for 'tis the reason of all the wickedness in the world; of all the injustice and oppression among men, and all intemperance and excess, &c.

John v.

44.

xii. 43.

And it was from fear of the *Romans*: *The Romans will come and take away our place and nation.* The fear of temporal inconvenience made them blind to all the reason and evidence of truth, tho' that was a mistaken pretence too. It would really have been no prejudice to the *Jewish* nation, or offence to the *Romans*, if all men had believed on him. The spiritual kingdom of the *Messiah* could no way interfere, but on the contrary, would greatly promote the liberties of their country, and the rights of *Cesar*. And 'tis a very awful and affecting observation, that while under pretence of fear of the *Roman* powers, and to consult their own safety, they conspired together to put him to death, they drew down the vengeance of heaven, which the *Romans* were made the instruments to execute; and a false zeal for the publick good brought on an utter destruction upon them, by the just judgment of God: So he *confounded the wisdom of the wise, and taketh the wise in their own craftiness.* It was not therefore for any good reason, or because they had not sufficient evidence and opportunity, that they rejected the truth, but from mean selfish views, and a base and cowardly, tho' mistaken fear.

3. The *height* to which it rose. It did not rest in simple infidelity or disbelief of the truth, tho' that was a great crime under such powerful evidence; but it rose up to enmity

enmity and opposition; to rancour and malignity of heart against his person, and bloody and murderous purposes against his life. They deliberately contrived his ruin, and consulted together to put him to death, tho' he was innocent of any crime, and so highly useful to the world. Their hearts were fired with rage and revenge against him, tho' he never disturbed the publick peace, or gave just offence to any, who never did them any hurt, and was always doing the greatest good; whose miracles were useful to the bodies of men, and his doctrine tended to save their souls. To such a pitch of malignity did their unbelief arise, that because they would not believe his doctrine, they would not suffer him to live; and because others believed on him, they were filled with a causeless and envious rage.

4. The *methods* they took in order to it. They did not only consult together, and hold a council about it, but they pursued their bloody and unrighteous purpose with craft and violence. Tho' he withdrew from them, and *walked no more openly* among them; he retired into privacy to avoid their envy and offence; and yet they pursued and watched him, and laid in wait for him wherever he could be found; even when they went to the temple to attend the worship of God, and observe the great festival, they enquired after him, and were ready to seize him, as if they meant to profane the sacred place,

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and *mingle* his blood with their sacrifice. This was the command given out by the *Sanhedrim*, and which was attended with proper penalties, to discover and seize him wherever they found him, either to ensnare him by art, or take him by force. *Mark* says,
 Mark xiv. *The Chief-priests and Scribes sought how they*
 1. *might take him by craft and put him to death.* And we find they came with an armed force,
 43. 46. and *laid violent hands* upon him. And this *filled up the measure of their iniquity*, and rendered the aggravation of their unbelief complete.

I should now proceed to infer by way of corollary these two things, 1. The reasonableness of our faith in Christ at this day, upon this ground: And 2. The unreasonableness of modern infidelity, or disbelieving the gospel. And while these things are become matter of publick discourse, and so often met with in books and conversation; many cavils and objections are started and improved to disparage the gospel, and stagger the faith of men; it becomes the more necessary for private Christians to be furnished and fortified, and to understand the evidence of the gospel-doctrine, and the reason of their faith: I shall defer that to the next discourse, and conclude at present with two practical remarks upon what has been said.

1. How *readily* they believed and received the gospel who were *sincere*. The upright and serious among the *Jews*, who had been bred

bred up in the study of the old testament, and the characters of the promised Messiah; who *knew the holy scriptures* from their childhood, and *waited for the consolation of Israel*; they readily received the Christian doctrine, and acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, notwithstanding some national prejudices and mistakes concerning him. They expected indeed that he should be a temporal prince, and deliverer, and mistook the sense of some of the prophecies concerning the nature of his kingdom, and his sufferings: But they were borne down by the greater weight of evidence, and the general agreement of the ancient prophecies to him, and the miracles he wrought before their eyes. They could not *resist the wisdom and spirit* with which he *spake*, and the evidence of his mighty works: When he *spake as never man spake*, and healed all manner of diseases, and raised the dead. So we see in the case of *Nicodemus, Nathaniel, Philip*, and the *Jews* who believed on him upon his raising *Lazarus* from the dead.

The sincere and upright will always readily embrace the divine revelation; whatsoever prejudices and mistakes they may labour under from the weakness of their understanding, and the impressions of education, as soon as ever they discern the evidence of it; they will resign to the superior claims of truth against every lower consideration, or remaining difficulty and doubt: Shew them that it

is the will of God, and they readily yield and submit. When the insincere, on the other hand, governed by their interests and fears, will reject the plainest truths, and greatest evidence, which is against their interest, or expose to danger; they will start little cavils, and raise endless objections, and fortify their minds against the strongest evidence, to support some shadow of false quiet, and appear infidels upon principle; or else, without allowing themselves to reason about it, bear it down by mere force, and oppose it with violence and malice of heart; which was the case of the unbelieving *Jews* here.

2. We may observe here the dreadful *effects* of unbelief; to what a pitch it will rise, and in what instances it will discover itself. When men reject the gospel, and will not believe in Christ, notwithstanding all the evidence of it, and upon such false views; who knows where their unbelief will run, to what neglect of God, or opposition to goodness, either to enmity of heart against divine truth, or to gross wickedness, which was the effect of the *Jews* unbelief here? They first rejected his doctrine, and then sought his life.

And this cannot be wondered at, and is the natural tendency of things; for unbelief is a pregnant and growing evil. The same temper of mind which leads them to reject the gospel, will naturally lead them further. That disregard to God and divine truth, and
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that regard to themselves, and their own interests and inclinations, will make them desert and oppose whatsoever stands in their way; and comply with any thing which will promote and gratify them. Hence we often observe this gradation, men go from scruple and cavil to disbelief; from disbelief to contempt and ridicule; from thence to open enmity and direct opposition. They sometimes run from infidelity to wickedness, and from *deism* to down-right *atheism*, or disregarded of all religion. When mens minds are quite unhinged, they are capable of any impressions, and difficultly brought to fix in any thing. This is evident in fact, as well as in the reason of the thing.

Besides that they must be supposed to offend God by their unbelief, and provoke him to leave them to themselves. They cast off God; and he casts them off. They neglect his appointments, and reject his truth; and he gives them up to the vain imaginations of their minds, or a spirit of delusion. When they lose the love of truth, and the restraints of his fear, they are hurried by the prejudice and passions of their minds to the wildest imagination, and the meanest vice. 'Tis otherwise hard to account for this strange appearance in the moral world, that men otherwise reasonable and wise, sober and just, regular and useful in the relations of life, should be carried from the Christian profession into open and avowed infidelity.

Beware

Beware then of the evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; and of being hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin, ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι, i. e. of apostatizing and forsaking the Christian profession from selfish regard to present interest, and the fear of man which proves a snare. We are required to look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and many are defiled. We are to be watchful and circumspect that we don't depart from the Christian doctrine, and create uneasiness and disorder to our selves and those about us. Beware of the first beginnings, and all the tendencies towards it, of every instance in which it consists, and every degree of disregard to God, and undue regard to our selves, which is the common ground and occasion of it.

JOHN

JOHN xi. 45, 46.

Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him; but some of them went their way to the Pharisees.

I Have, in the former discourse, considered the miracle of raising *Lazarus* from the dead, as it related to the *Jews*, who were present and saw it, and represented the reasonableness of *their* believing on him; and the unreasonableness of their unbelief. I have proposed, as so many *corollaries* from this relation, to infer these two things, which will bring the matter down to our own case. 1. The reasonableness of *our* faith in Christ, upon this ground, at this distance, *viz.* that he raised *Lazarus* from the dead, and wrought his other miracles. 2. The unreasonableness of modern infidelity.

§. 1. I infer the *reasonableness* of our believing in Christ, upon this ground, at this distance. I don't pretend that this is the
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only evidence of Christianity, or the only external one, but one which is much insisted upon in the gospel, and much opposed and cavilled at in the world. Now the proof of this depends upon two things, 1. The truth of the fact, or the evidence we now have of it at this distance. 2. The reasonableness of the consequence, *i. e.* of our believing in him upon this ground.

1. As to the *truth* of the fact, or the evidence we now have of it at this distance. We are now to consider our Lord's raising *Lazarus* from the dead, and the other miracles he wrought, as so many ancient facts which happened in the world many ages ago, and stand recorded in the history of the gospel. The question here is, how it may appear to us at this distance, that our Lord indeed raised *Lazarus* from the dead, and wrought the other miracles recorded in the gospel. In the general, this depends upon the authority of the revelation, or the written records of the gospel which relate them. We have the same evidence of the truth of the facts, which we have of the truth of the gospel-history. If the history is true, the facts are true. And there is no other way of knowing any distant facts, with certainty, but as they are preserved in written records; for oral tradition, in a long course of time, is evidently precarious, and liable to corruption and mistake. This is an unquestionable part of the gospel-history, recorded indeed
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but by one, but the last of the evangelists, who lived the longest, and supplied many relations, which are not in the other. Now here therefore we are to consider, how do we judge of the truth of any other ancient history, and distant fact, many ages ago, and come to be satisfied that such things were done? And if upon due enquiry it shall be found, that we have the same evidence for the truth of the gospel-history, and the facts related in it, which we have for any other ancient history, or distant events; and especially if we have greater evidence for the truth of this, than for any other; it ought in all reason to be allowed, not only a sufficient, but an abundant evidence in the case, and to give an answerable conviction and satisfaction to our minds.

(1.) We have the *same* evidence there is for any other ancient history, and distant fact. Let us consider it in the instance of any the best known and most undoubted history or event. For example; of *Julius Caesar* who wrote his commentaries, or an account of his own expeditions and exploits; or *Livy* who flourished in the time of *Augustus*, and wrote the *Roman* history. I choose to instance in these two, because they are of the clearest credit, and pretty much cotemporary histories, and about the same age and distance, with the history of the gospel. Now what is the evidence which any man has of the truth of *Caesar's* relations

of the gallick or civil war; of the great action of passing the *Rubicon*, or building a bridge cross the *Danube*, notwithstanding the rapidity of the stream, and thro' incredible difficulties: Or of *Livy's* relations of the rise and fortunes of the *Roman* people, the different forms of their government, under their Kings, Consuls, and Emperors, and their remarkable battles and actions under each; what evidence, I say, has any man now of this, but that these things are recorded by these writers, whose names they bear, and have been faithfully transmitted down to us? We believe these things to have been written by these authors, whose names they always bore, because they have been all along, in the substance and principal circumstances of them, owned as the writings of such persons, and as containing such relations in them; and have several testimonies of unquestionable writers of the same age, who had the best opportunity of knowing the truth, and refer to them with approbation and applause; and are without any pretence of a contrary claim, or any other persons being the author of them. We believe their relations to be true, because they writ of things which they had sufficient opportunity of being informed about, and were every way competent and credible witnesses of; the one being mostly an eye-witness and principal agent in the events he relates; and the other writing from the publick records

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of those things preserved in the *Roman* archives.

And that these things were in the original writings, and not altered or inserted since, but faithfully transmitted down to our times, appears by the great credit they were in at the time they were writ, and the regard paid them; the many copies which were early taken of them, and the concurring testimony of every age since, without any ground of suspicion, or mark of imposture upon them.

Have we any greater proof of the truth and authority of these histories? and does any man yet pretend to doubt, whether *Cæsar* wrote his commentaries, or *Livy* the *Roman* history; and whether the relations concerning the foundation, and great turns of government, or the remarkable battles and events which happened, were true? Would any man be allowed to be sober and reasonable, who should call in question the reality of the facts, and the authority of the relation? He would certainly be thought most unreasonably prejudiced, and unaccountably singular, who affected to oppose the common sense of all the sober world.

To apply this to the present case; the evangelical history is of as clear and unquestionable authority, as any other ancient history whatsoever; and in that respect stands, at least, upon an equal foot with *Cæsar*, or *Livy*. They have been always owned to be the authors of those books whose names they

bear, without any rival, or tolerable pretence to the contrary; and been quoted and used as such by cotemporary writers, and from age to age, ever since, as much as any other history has ever been. They writ of things in their own time, and which they had the best opportunity of knowing, and were persons of unquestionable probity of mind and manners. Their writings were spread and preserved by the Christian churches to whom they were sent, and held in high esteem; and there is no more ground of suspicion from any external circumstance, or internal marks of deceit, than in any the clearest and most authentick history in the world. So that if it be said, the gospel-history is not true, or the facts related in it real; the same may be said, with at least equal reason, of any the most undoubted relation of the *Greek* and *Roman* historians. And that would be to call the faith of all history into question, and to cast all human credit and testimony out of the world; and would be cried out upon as unreasonable prejudice, and shameless incredulity, in any other case.

(2.) We have *greater evidence* for the truth of the *gospel*-history, than for any other ancient history, or distant fact. For besides that the Christian dispensation was long before predicted by the prophets, under the old testament; the same kind of facts are related by four several evangelists, and confirmed by the testimony of *Peter*, and *Paul*,
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the great apostles of the *Jewish* and *Gentile* world, in the *Acts*, and in their *Epistles* to the churches. It does not rest upon the credit of a single writer, and is without any appearance of design, or possibility of mistake, in the things which they relate; for they were eye-witnesses, and agents of the principal facts, which is more than can be said of many other writers and facts which yet are reckoned undoubted. They write not with the countenance of authority, and the favour of the world about him, but against their worldly interest, and at the greatest hazard. They were under the strictest obligations to truth, and under the highest penalties, by their own doctrine; and uniform and invariable in their testimony to the last †.

And as the facts related in the gospel-history are of a higher nature, and greater importance, than any relations of *Heathen* history: They related to the abolishing the old and established religion, and the setting up a new religion in the world; to the laying the foundations of our faith and hope in God, and the measures of acceptable worship and service of him; of obtaining his favour at present, and a state of blessedness hereafter; so they have been all along preserved with greater care, and with more unquestionable concurrence of authority; than any other writing whatsoever. They

† Quia nec fas est ulli de sua religione mentiri, Tert. Ap. 21.
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have been kept as a sacred treasure and *depositum*, were constantly read and used in the Christian assemblies, as the great rule of life, and charter of all their privileges; were early translated into several languages, and spread thro' all the Christian world, which rendered all collusion and corruption impossible; are referred and appealed to by all Christian writers, in every age, immediately after, and all along: And the publick memorials of them perpetuated by solemn actions, in all the Christian churches ever since. *Tertullian* in his apology appeals to the authentick writings of the prophets themselves as then extant†.

I might add the testimonies both of *Heathen* and *Jewish* writers, to the truth of the facts, who made the greatest opposition, and were the most implacable enemies of the Christian name; who were filled with prejudice and ill-will to it, and bent upon rooting it out of the world, whose interest it was to have it crushed, and wanted neither opportunity nor power to expose and punish a forgery; as *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, *Pliny* among the *Romans*, and *Philo* and *Josephus* among the *Jews*. And what history beside in all the world, can all this be said of, or comes to us so attested and supported?

† *Prophetæ de officio præfandi vocantur; voces eorum itemque virtutes, quas ad fidem divinitatis edebant, in thesauris literarum manent, nec istæ nunc latent, Tert. Apol. 18.*

I think by this time we may be allowed to conclude from so many concurring circumstances, the testimony of so many persons of the clearest character, of different interests, in a continued series, and course of time; that either we must own the Gospel-history, and the truth of the facts contained in it; or disown all history of past times and distant events, if we would act reasonably, and be consistent with ourselves. And tho', after all, I confess, that this does not amount to the same degree of evidence, as being *eye-witnesses*, and having *sensible* proof, or to *mathematical* certainty, and strict demonstration, of which the subject is not capable, and is in the nature of things impossible; yet it does amount to a *moral* certainty, and is as great an evidence as the nature of things admits, and is to be found in any the like case; and consequently is sufficient to induce a firm persuasion, and give a rational conviction to our minds; and to render our unbelief unreasonable and absurd. But this leads directly to

2dly, The *reasonableness* of the consequence, *i. e.* of believing in Christ upon this ground, or supposing the fact to be true. There is the same evidence to us, upon this supposition, which there was to the Jews in that age. The whole *rational evidence*, or proof by argument, is the same to us it was to them. The miracles he wrought are a plain proof to us of the power of God which was
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with him; and an attestation to his mission, that he came from God, and brought his will to men; 'tis the same proof which God gave to the Jewish religion before; and which was foretold concerning him in the records of the *Jewish* church. This was the whole evidence to the Jews; and a very just and reasonable one; for there never was such an attestation given to any one who did not come from God, nor so great a one to any other who did. We have the same evidence of this kind, which they had, and every argument has its full force still.

And tho' they indeed had the advantage of us in this single point of *sensible* evidence, or being *eye-witnesses*; for no evidence of fact is so great as the testimony of sense, and no report of others can be so certain, as seeing it with our own eyes: That is undoubtedly the first and nearest degree of evidence. But then that is sufficiently made up to us, partly by the testimony of the eye-witnesses, which is the very next step to seeing them ourselves, and but one remove from it: *That*

Luke i. 2, *which they had seen and heard they declared*
 • John i. 3. *to us; and they delivered them to us who*
from the beginning were eye-witnesses. They
 have left this well attested record behind them who saw him work miracles, and conversed most intimately with him; and besides were chosen witnesses by divine appointment, and had the power of working miracles themselves. And partly by the concurring testimony

mony of many intervening ages, and all after enquiries of the sober inquisitive world; and notwithstanding all the cavils and exceptions made by the skill and malice of Jews and Heathens, in former and latter times. This is *our* peculiar advantage, and in some respects above theirs; for they had not the same opportunity of seeing things sifted and examined, the credit of them justified and supported with the unprejudiced world, against all the more sober enquiries and reasonings, or the bolder cavils and attacks which have ever been made upon them. Besides the standing effects of it, which are visible in the world, and a sensible proof; as the accomplishment of several prophecies, and the spreading and preserving of Christianity through all opposition, to this day. And as it has met with very laboured and subtile opposition, in this critical and rational age; so it has been set in a clearer and stronger light than perhaps it ever appeared in, since the first ages of Christianity. Many truly learned, and unquestionably wise and sober men, of the clearest characters, and brightest understanding, who have used the greatest diligence, and been most impartial in the enquiry; and some of them, with the least suspicion of bias or interest from their character and condition of life; have not only embraced and adorned the Christian doctrine by their faith and obedience, but defended it in their writings with admirable clearness and strength.

Upon the whole therefore I conclude, That we are as truly obliged to believe in Christ, by the credible evidence of the Gospel-history, as those Jews who saw him raise *Lazarus* from the dead, or were convinced by any other miracles they saw him work.

If any should say after all, I don't much depend upon the truth of any ancient history, or any facts related in them, there is a great mixture of fable and falshood in them, and doubt and uncertainty in the proofs of them: I answer, What other way possible is there to know antient facts? Is there no criterion between truth and falshood, credible and fabulous relations? Can't we distinguish between unquestionable authors, and their genuine works, and the spurious or doubtful? Are there no rules of criticism, or measures of judging, sufficient to determine? And then we must necessarily confine ourselves wholly to the present age, and to things we see with our own eyes; we must believe nothing but what happens in our own times, and falls under our own sense, and reckon all the transactions of former times fabulous, or doubtful. And surely this would prove a great deal too much, and introduce great inconvenience into all the affairs of human life, as it argues the greatest distrust of mankind, and the most suspicious and incredulous humour, which is so far from being amiable or desirable, that 'tis one of the most forbidding and disagreeable in all the world: And
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one would not wish an adversary to be reduced to a greater absurdity.

§. 2. The *unreasonableness* of infidelity in our circumstances, who have the Christian evidence fairly proposed and laid before us. I would represent this matter a little distinctly, and offer it to the consideration and consciences of the sober *Deists* of the present age.

1. Consider the *reasonable evidence* they oppose. We have now a right to suppose the facts to be true; that our Lord did raise *Lazarus* from the dead: I might add, That he afterwards rose from the dead himself, and sent down the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, in extraordinary and miraculous gifts, and planted and propagated *Christianity* in the world by the exercise and evidence of them. Here was a plain proof of a divine power, and an immediate attestation from heaven; such a peculiar exercise of divine power, and evidence of a divine presence, which was never known in any false religion, or in all the circumstances of it, on any other occasion whatsoever.

Here is the greatest motive of credibility, and reason of faith which we can reasonably suppose, and which was ever given for the proof of any thing. For what would any man require in attestation of any person's coming from God, and bringing his will; but to see such a person raise the dead, and restore them to life; and that we have all the proof

of the fact which the nature of the thing admits, and can reasonably be expected. And is it not highly unreasonable to reject a revelation so attested and confirmed; and to say, "I will not believe in Christ, tho' he raised men from the dead, and wrought many unquestionable miracles; and tho' there is no mark of imposture and deceit in the relation, or room to question the truth of the fact?" for this is now to be supposed the case. And what is this but to *rebel against the light*, and *resist the Holy Ghost*, and to *fight against God*? If the fact is true, the evidence is unquestionably great, for 'tis an undeniable interposure of the divine power in testimony to the truth; and the unreasonableness of rejecting it must necessarily arise in proportion to the degree of evidence to the truth of it*. This will farther appear if you consider,

2. The *insufficient reasons* upon which they reject it, or the *principles* from which it must be supposed to proceed. Why do men reject the Gospel, and refuse to believe in Christ, when there is so great evidence

* Spinoza, a Jewish Infidel, and a great oracle of Infidelity and Atheism in the last century, owns, That the writers of the New Testament were sincere and in earnest, but only deceived and mistaken in the accounts they give of the miracles of the Gospel: And would sometimes confess to his intimate friends, That if he could believe the fact of Lazarus's being raised from the dead, he would give up his system of Infidelity, and embrace the Christian religion. Bayl. Dict. art. Spinoza.

of the one, and firm a ground for the other? What can be supposed to be the reason of it, or the principle upon which they act. The pretence is, want of evidence, and motives of faith: But can that be reasonably said where the evidence is so great? indeed as great as the wisdom of God thought fit to give, or the sober reason of men could desire; and when the exceptions to it are evidently unreasonable, not only without any counter-evidence, or direct proof to the contrary, by any mark of imposture, or opposite testimony; but against all the evidence of truth in the relation of the Gospel, and the concurrent testimony of other writers all along.

This, I say, is the pretence; but, I doubt, the real reasons are of another nature. I think we may reduce them either to the prejudice and disorder of their own minds, or their dislike of the Christian doctrine itself. Does it not often proceed from some disorder of mind, as the want of sincere love of truth, which lies open to evidence, and readily receives it wherever it can find it; they *receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved*; or of diligent enquiry and examination, and carefully looking after, and looking into the evidence which is proposed, and weighing the moment and importance of things; or an undue opinion of themselves, and *thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think*: A vanity and conceit
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of mind which prescribes to itself the measures and grounds of its faith, and is not content with the reasonable evidence proposed; and affects an air of superiority and contempt, and to see further into things, and appear wiser than other men; or indulging a captious cavilling humour, which greedily catches at any shadow of difficulty, or lesser exception, and overlooks in the mean time the greater weight of evidence, or the balance of the whole account. Indeed, I think, their skill and their strength lies in cavil and exception, not in evidence and proof. And perhaps it is not enough considered, that such dispositions as these are as great a disorder of a reasonable mind, and as highly criminal in the sight of God, tho' not so scandalous in the eye of the world, as grosser acts of wickedness.

Or else does it not proceed from some dislike of the Christian doctrine, and disaffection to the purity and strictness, the precepts and spirit of it; the renovation of the mind, and restraint of appetite; the denying themselves, and mortifying sin; and living in a constant dependence upon God thro' a Mediator, and under a governing regard to him in all our ways; in the daily exercises of meekness, patience, temperance, submission to the divine will in affliction and suffering, which the gospel requires; and the awful sanctions and denunciations of wrath, against all indulged and reigning sin; which

is at the same time a plain evidence of the excellence of the doctrine, and the real prejudice and insincerity of their minds; and amounts at the bottom to thus much, "that they will not believe in Christ, because 'tis inconsistent with their prejudices and lusts, and cannot be always reconciled with their wills and their interests." And in this temper of mind no evidence would be sufficient, or any proof convincing. And are these sufficient reasons to justify the choice and conduct of any reasonable men, or to be laid in the balance against all the evidence of miracles, and all the proofs of divine authority?

3. The *unreasonable evidence* they demand. For what must they be supposed to expect, who reject the evidence of the gospel? What do they further require, in order to their satisfaction? 'Tis not possible to suppose any thing more than the original evidence, i. e. to be eye-witnesses of the miracles themselves, and see them with their own eyes. No sober man would venture to say, if they had seen Christ raise *Lazarus* from the dead, it would not have been sufficient evidence, or that they ought not to believe in him notwithstanding: There is no colour of reason for such a pretence. This then is what they would have, to be eye-witnesses of the miracles which are pretended to be wrought, that they may be sure of the fact, and that they are not deceived and imposed upon.

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But how unreasonable is the demand in order to their faith, when the same thing is already done, and is certainly done; and there is clear and unquestionable evidence of the truth of it? We have the testimony of the eye-witnesses, and with all the circumstances of advantage. And how would it suit with the nature of a miracle, which is an immediate interposure of the divine power, producing some extraordinary and uncommon effect; to have it done every day, and for the satisfaction of every one. That would alter the settled course of nature, and introduce another system of things, or cause a perpetual disturbance and disorder in it. It would destroy the nature of a miracle, for then it would cease to be an extraordinary thing, as well as the excellency of faith, or believing God upon proper evidence, or the testimony of his word; the great homage of our understandings to the Deity; upon which account our Lord tells *Thomas* who was incredulous and slow to believe; *blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed*, i. e. upon credible testimony and report.

John xx.
29.

And because there is no end of unreasonable jealousy, and groundless cavil, even that evidence would not, upon this principle, be beyond all exception. For why might they not still say, how shall we be sure our senses don't deceive us, and that we are not imposed upon by slight and trick? To this purpose 'tis very observable, that some of the

Jews who were present when our Lord raised *Lazarus* from the dead, did not yet believe on him, but rejected him notwithstanding: And the report of those who saw it to the *Pharisees*, was so far from convincing them, that it only provoked and enraged them the more. When men are not satisfied with reasonable evidence, there is no end, no bounds to unreasonable expectation. Truth is reasonable and modest, but jealousy is infinite and endless. And because the same prejudice and disorder of mind will have the same effect, in like circumstances, at all times; there is reason to conclude, that such men would reject the gospel, from the same principles and temper, tho' they had seen him raise *Lazarus* from the dead: *If they believe* Luke xvi. *not Moses and the prophets, neither would* 31. *they be persuaded, tho' one rose from the dead.*

4. Their *inconsistency* with the principles they allow, and by which they are governed in like cases themselves. These same persons who are so nice and delicate, so squeamish and cautious; that they can't see reason enough to believe the gospel, do yet at the same time, believe the truth of many facts, at as great a distance upon the same kind of evidence, and a much lower degree of it. Who, for example, don't believe that there was such a person as *Alexander* the great, a famous captain and commander among the *Greeks*; or such a person as *Julius Caesar*,
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the first *Roman* emperor, upon the credible and concurring testimony of the *Greek* and *Roman* historians; that the one conquered *Darius* the king of *Persia*, brought all *Asia* in subjection, and erected the third monarchy; and the other, *Mark Anthony* in the plains of *Pharsalia*? Who doubts whether the *Roman* army besieged and sackt the city of *Jerusalem*, and destroyed the temple, under *Vespasian*, as related by *Josephus*? or whether such a person as *William* Duke of *Normandy* invaded and conquered *England* about 700 years ago, or there was such a thing as the reformation of religion in the fifteenth century; upon the credit of the *English* historians? Don't men travel and trade to places they have never seen, and venture their substance and estates to a great distance, sometimes upon the credit of history, and the report of others, even of them who have never been there themselves?

And why should not they believe that *Christ* wrought the miracles related in the gospel, that he abolished the *Jewish* religion by his doctrine and death, and set up the *Christian* religion in the world by the ministry of the apostles, for the same reason, upon the credit of undoubted history, and the testimony of the eye-witnesses? Is it not strangely unreasonable and perverse to deny their assent only here, and repugnant to all the principles they allow and practise upon in other cases? Either allow the evidence

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in the one case, or reject it in the other: Either believe the gospel, or renounce the faith of all other history too. If it is said, the matter is of greater importance in the one case than in the other, and it much more concerns us to be satisfied of the facts of the gospel, than of the actions of *Alexander* and *Cæsar*. I answer, the question at present is about the *truth* of the facts, not the *importance* of them. Allow the same weight of evidence in one case which is allowed in the other. And the reason is strong the other way; for the greater the importance of it is, the more careful we should be of rejecting the truth.

Besides, that the principles of *natural* religion would fairly lead them to do so. If indeed they believe in God, and desire to know his will; if they are heartily disposed to proper regards to every discovery he makes of himself, that would lead them to believe in Christ, and receive the Christian revelation, when 'tis proposed to them. For such a one, in consequence of this principle, will be always solicitous to know the truth wherever he can find it, and willing to be satisfied upon proper evidence. He will be afraid to be ignorant, or mistake, thro' his own neglect or fault. His reverence of the divine being and perfections, his regard to the will and the favour of God, will dispose him to embrace the Christian doctrine, so every way worthy of God, so well attested, and so con-

ducive to real happiness. And therefore we find the virtuous *Pagans*, as well as the devout and religious *Jews*, generally received the gospel every where, upon the plain marks of divine authority, which were imprest upon it, and attended it; when the vicious and the worldly, the conceited and the careless, rejected and opposed it. And tho' the vicious part of mankind have reason to dislike the Christian doctrine, and be unwilling to have it true; yet 'tis highly unreasonable and absurd, for any virtuous man to reject the gospel, which has so much evidence of truth, and which he has all the reason in the world to *wish* were true. Hereupon again consider,

5. The *opposition* they make to it, or what they must be supposed, upon their principles, to think of it. We see this in the instance of the *Jews*, who refused to believe on him, in this and many other places. They looked upon him as a blasphemer of God, and deceiver of the people, and treated him with all the expressions of reproach and contempt, and all the marks of malignity and ill-will.

If men think they have sufficient reason for their infidelity, and to reject the gospel, what must they be supposed, in consequence, to think of it, and how must they be obliged to treat it? Why they must necessarily be supposed to look upon it as a *cunningly devised fable*, and a cheat put upon the world; they must consider Christ as an im-

postor and deceiver, and all his followers in every age, as a parcel of deluded fools, or designing knaves. If 'tis not the truth of God, 'tis the invention of men: If 'tis not of God, 'tis of the devil, for it pretends to come from God, and claims an answerable regard. If 'tis not to be believed, 'tis to be hated and despised, and treated, as an imposture ought to be, with indignation and contempt. And thither indeed it commonly runs. We find it often not only rejected, but scorned, treated with jest and sneer, not only without reverence, but without decency. Men don't fairly propose their doubts, and soberly reason upon the evidence offered, but cavil and quarrel, and trifle and laugh: 'Tis the *foolishness of preaching* to them who don't believe. 1 Cor. i. 21.

And shall the pure and holy religion of the gospel be rudely touched with such profane and polluted hands; and the most wise and useful institution in the world, so admirably calculated in the whole frame and design of it, for the glory of God, and the good of men, be used with scorn? Shall the glorious author of it, the son of God, and the wisdom of God, be treated again as a blasphemer and impostor? Will men *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*, and *trample* under their unhallowed feet, his spotless and precious blood? Will they do *despite to the spirit of grace*, by rejecting the evidence of all the miracles, and all the gifts of the holy Ghost,
and

and charging them upon the weakness of men, or the power of the devil? How horrid and astonishing is the thought ! How tremendous and frightful the wickedness !

6. The unspeakable *loss* they sustain, or the good they deprive themselves of. They who refuse to believe Christ, and own his doctrine, of course cut themselves off from all the advantages of the Christian revelation ; from all the benefit of the death of Christ, and the blessings of the new covenant, for they are *enemies to the cross of Christ*, and *strangers to the covenant of promise*. They have no concern with favour and *acceptance with God in the beloved*, the rest to weary souls under the burden of guilt ; the aids of the divine Spirit in the difficulties and service of life ; the conquest of the world and the devil, the triumph over death and the grave ; and the glorious hopes of the Christian blessedness. A man who rejects the Christian doctrine deprives himself at once, of all the peculiar advantages of it, of all the encouragement and help, of all the comfort and hope, it affords. He cannot reasonably expect the blessings of the Gospel who rejects it, or claim any benefit by it when he does not own it, and which are all suspended upon our believing it ; any more than a man can plead a right to the favour and protection of a government which he does not own, and is an avowed enemy to.

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No, he is left to the naked guidance of reason in the conduct of life, and the feeble supports it is able to give, under the troubles of it, and the uncertain views and prospects before him. And how weak are all its succours under the present disadvantages, of great guilt, unruly appetite, and surrounding snares. Let men consult their own experience and the observation of the world about them. He casts away his *confidence toward God*, and the springs of consolation to his mind, under the deepest distress of life, and the approaches of death. In the language of the wise man they *love death*, and *hate their own souls*: And in the language of the Gospel, *They reject the counsel of God against themselves, and put away from themselves eternal life*. And how unreasonable is it to deprive ourselves of our best succours, and our highest and surest hopes, and leave ourselves exposed to the absolute uncovenanted mercy of God, to a restless uneasiness and uncertainty of mind, under the greatest burdens, and in the greatest time of need?

7. The extreme *hazard* they run. Tho' I would choose to be the last man living who should rashly pronounce upon the hearts and state of other men, and usurp the province of the final Judge, or pretend to say precisely, who cannot be saved, and will certainly perish hereafter; that is a great and awful thing, and which I always think of with trembling and pain: Nevertheless we may
safely

safely go as far as the revelation goes, and are obliged in faithfulness to do so. Tho' we must not take his work out of his hands, yet we may safely speak after him, and upon the ground of the Gospel revelation. Now they who reject the Gospel, and believe not in Christ, upon proper evidence, and especially after the knowledge and profession of it; not only lose the Christian blessedness, all the present great advantages, and the greater happiness in another world, which Christ has purchased by his blood, and promised in the Gospel, to all his faithful followers; but they fall under the divine displeasure, and the misery threatened in the Gospel revelation.

John iii.
18, 19.

36.
viii. 24.

Mark xvi.
16, 17.
2 Cor. iv.
3.

So our Lord tells us, *He who believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of his only begotten Son: And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. And again, He who believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* And he told the Jews, *If ye believe not that I am he (the Messiah) ye shall die in your sins.* And 'tis the express and standing law of the Gospel, *He who believeth shall be saved; and he who believeth not shall be damned.* Agreeable hereunto the apostle says, *If our Gospel is hid, 'tis hid to them who are lost.* And he represents the state of those who thro' fear of suffering, or love of the world,

world, apostatized from their Christian profession in these severe expressions; *'Tis impossible to renew them again to repentance*; and he ^{Heb. vi. 6.} says, *They draw back unto perdition*: And the ^{x. 39.} *fearful and unbelieving have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.* ^{Rev. xxi. 8.}

When Christ shall appear at last, with all the marks of tremendous glory, and awful state, in the characters of Majesty, and the authority of universal Judge, surrounded with flames of fire, and mighty angels; he will take vengeance on them who *obey not the Gospel*, and sentence the *unbeliever* to the lake of fire. And how will the trembling infidel, as well as the hypocrite, and wicked man, appear in judgment, and behold the face of the angry Lamb? With what surprize and terror will they look upon a Saviour, whom they rejected and reviled? With what resentment and disdain will he look upon them who slighted and despised his authority and love? How fatal will be the disappointment to make the Saviour an enemy, and instead of an impostor to find a Judge? *Behold ye despisers and* ^{Acts xiii. 41.} *wonder and perish.* Let men consider that notwithstanding their unsupported confidence and unbecoming gayety of life; there are few unbelievers upon a dying bed, and none at the day of judgment.

If it is said, There was greater evidence and proof to them who were eye-witnesses of the miracles of the Gospel, and to whom these things were said, than to those of after
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ages, and who have only the standing evidence; and these terrible denunciations, in their case was more just and fit. I answer, upon the most serious enquiry, I can find no reason to think, that this will alter the *whole* case, or affect the nature and *kind* of the punishment, but only the *degree* of it. The utmost, I doubt, we can warrantably say, is, That if their unbelief was more aggravated by their greater advantages, their punishment will be proportionably greater; not that ours will be none. If we have sufficient reason to believe the Gospel, the punishment of rejecting it will be, in the same proportion, just and reasonable still; and it plainly appears to be a standing law and declaration of the divine will in proportion to the knowledge and evidence we have of divine truth. And this is the most awful and affecting consideration in all the world, and most apt to impress the minds of considering persons; and tho' I confess, this does not carry direct evidence, or proof along with it, yet 'tis proper to dispose the mind to close attention and consideration, and to *fact*, not with superficial slightness, or careless indifference, but with thorough seriousness and impartiality, and answerably to the weight and consequence of things. We should be the more afraid of mistake where the miscarriage is so fatal: I am sure these considerations are proposed by Christ and his apostles, and used in the Gospel, to this purpose.

I shall only add two practical *reflections* upon the two parts of this discourse.

1. Let this serve to *confirm* our faith in Christ, and belief of the Gospel, that there is sufficient evidence and ground for it at this day, and at this distance, from the facts which were the proof of it, as well as to them who saw them. You have the same proof of them which you have of any other facts of a like kind, and with far greater advantage. Let us then upon due enquiry and consideration of the matter, say, in our measure, *We know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed: And We know and have believed.* Let us review the evidence and ground upon which we stand, that we may stand the firmer, and be proof against all assaults upon our faith from every quarter, and under every disguise.

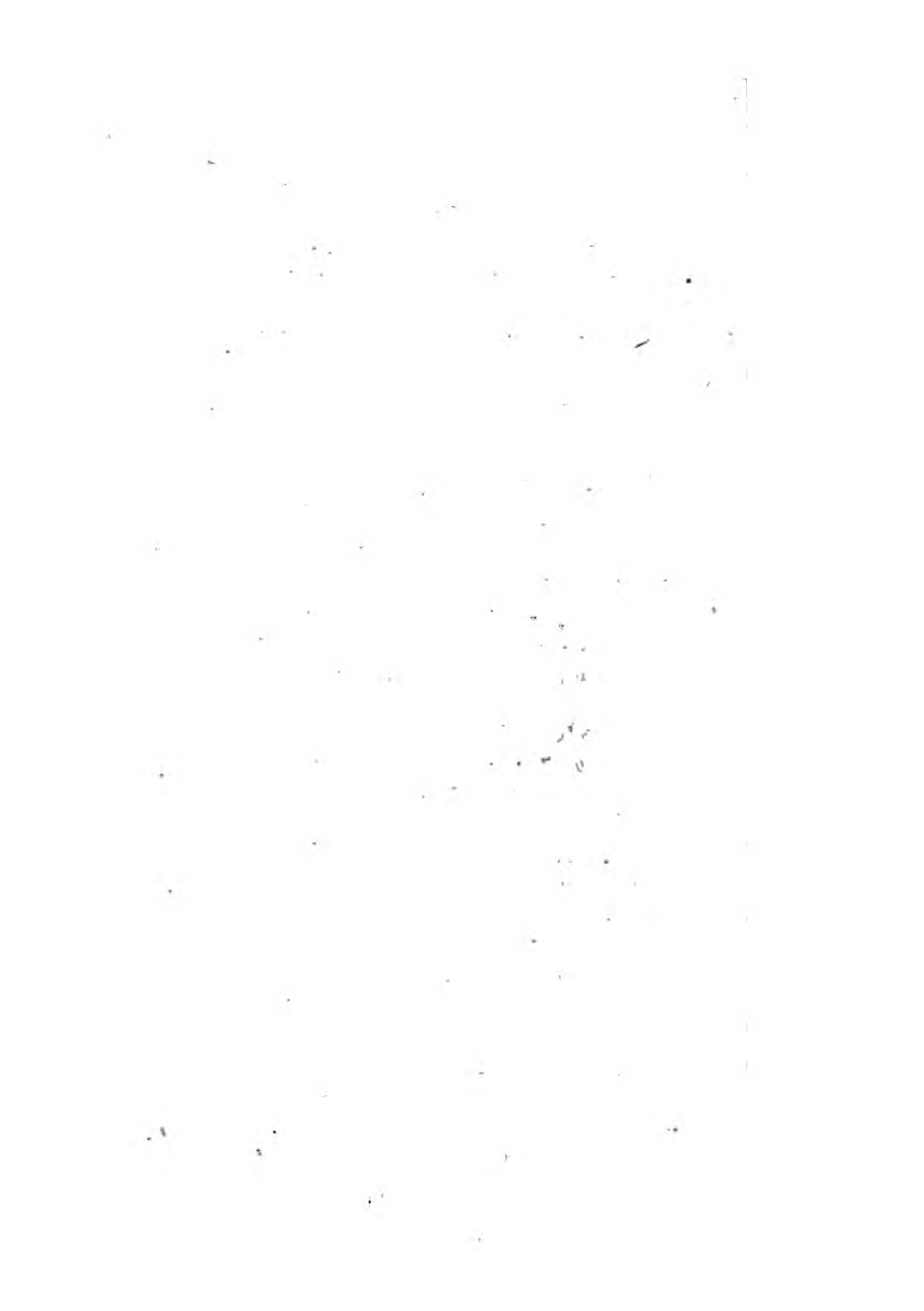
And let us see that our faith be the faith of the Gospel, and answerable to the grounds upon which it stands; not only the faith of *Hypocrites*, or the faith of *Devils*, a mere profession of faith, or faith without any kindly fruits of it, and consistent with real wickedness; but a firm effectual faith, which makes an answerable impression, and engages the subjection of the soul. See that you *believe with all the heart*, and are his *disciples indeed*, and *show your faith by your works*; let your faith *work by love*, and appear in the *obedience of faith*, and in *keeping the commandments of God*.

2. Let men be entreated to consider the *unreasonableness* of infidelity, and rejecting the Gospel, where 'tis proposed in all its evidence, and to the greatest advantage. 'Tis not a light matter, or of little moment; but a thing of the highest nature, and most awful consequence in all the world; and that man ought to be very clear and very sure who rejects the Gospel, after so great an evidence, and at so great an hazard. Let me earnestly entreat men by all that is dear and sacred in both worlds; as they value the favour of God, and their own souls, and their eternal welfare; to give the matter a serious review, weigh it in an equal scale, and with a steady hand; with the greatest seriousness and impartiality, without prejudice and disgust, or levity and vanity of mind, or pride and carnal affection, as men possess with the moment of the case, and not afraid to know the truth. I would only propose it here, That they would not reject the Gospel till they can fairly answer all the evidence brought for it, and find something better in its room, which will answer all the ends of the Gospel revelation, and is supported with better evidence, and less liable to exception. Give us a *system of Infidelity*, and the proper evidence to support it; and not only carp and cavil at the Gospel. Draw out your own *Scheme*, and propose it to examination, instead of urging particular difficulties in ours,
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and neglecting the main and direct evidence of it. And I am verily persuaded in my own mind, tho' I would not challenge the credit of any man's integrity, any more than limit the mercy of God; that upon this reasonable proposal, no sincere and considerate man would ever be found to reject it.



Remarks



R E M A R K S

*On the case of Lazarus, with relation
to Mr. Woolston's fifth discourse of
miracles.*

I Have thrown together the following brief Remarks, for the satisfaction of private Christians ; not from any great opinion of moment, either in the occasion of them, or in the performance. And tho' my present concern is only with the case of *Lazarus*, they will in a good measure affect the rest.

§. 1. We are to consider the unquestionable *Authority* of *St. John's Gospel*, in which this relation is contained. 'Tis an history of the actions and ministry, the sufferings and death of Christ, by one of his apostles, who was peculiarly beloved by him, and most intimate with him, who lived the longest, as he was the youngest of all the apostles, and designed to correct some errors which had sprung up in the Christian church ; and supply what had been omitted by the other evangelists. Of this we have the fullest historical evidence, and the clearest tradition of any other.

Thus

Thus we find it contained in all the ancient catalogues of the canon ; was publickly read in the Christian assemblies, and frequently quoted and referred to, by the most antient writers of the Christian church ; *Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus*, &c. who lived in the second and third

Iren. l. 3. centuries. *Irenæus* says, It was written while
C. 24. he was at *Ephesus*, at the desire of the *Asi-*
Hær. 51. an Bishops, and by the impulse of the Holy
 12. Ghost. *Eusebius* calls it *Ἀνανιρρήτους γραφάς*,
Euseb. writings which were never denied, or con-
Eccl. Hist. 3. c. 24. contradicted. *Origen* says, They were *ἀνανιρρήτα*
 25. *Orig. Exp.* *ἐν τῇ ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, writings
 in Matt. lib. i. which were received without contradiction,
 Sand. de by all the churches under heaven. *Sandius*
Scrip. Eccl. more lately, with all his critical caution, says
 expressly, “ The Gospel of *John* was always
 allowed to be authentick. ” The exceptions
 of the *Alogi*, a small sect of heretical
 Christians, at the latter end of the second
 century, who pretended it was written by
Cerintus, because of some expressions in this
 Gospel, which they thought favoured their
 opinion, were always reckoned absurd and
 inconsiderable. Several of the ancients, as
Irenæus, and *Epiphanius*, expressly declare it was
 written against the errors of *Cerintus*. Nor
 do *Celsus* or *Julian*, the most ancient and
 virulent, as well as learned and sagacious,
 adversaries of Christianity, ever question
 the genuineness of the writings, but only dis-
 pute

pute against the doctrine contained in them *.

Let this then be first settled, that the Gospel is an authentick writing, and belongs to the person whose name it bears, and was always owned in the Christian church; against the rude insinuations of this author, that he wrote a story entirely of his own invention, and in his dotage, and had lived beyond his reason and senses. p. 11. 12. 38.

§. 2. We are next to consider the *evidence* of the fact, supposing the truth of the Gospel. The raising *Lazarus* from the dead is a plain matter of fact, related particularly by the evangelist in a great variety of circumstance, in a long historical narration. *Lazarus* whom *Jesus* loved was sick: He died; was buried; after he had been dead four days *Jesus* visits his sisters: He found them weeping with several of their friends who came to condole with them upon this sorrowful occasion: *Jesus* goes with them to the grave, and in the presence of his sisters and their friends, raises him from the dead: This made a great noise in the world; some of the *Jews* believed upon the sight and report of the miracle, but some, obstinate in their infidelity, maliciously informed against him: The *Sanhedrim* met upon this occasi-

* Let the *English* Reader who desires further satisfaction, consult Mr. *Nye's* and Mr. *Richardson's* Answers to *Amyntor*, Dr. *Williams's* Defence of Archbishop *Tillotson*, and Mr. *Jones's* learned and laboured work, *The method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament.*

on, and consulted to put him to death; and afterwards to put *Lazarus* to death, to blast his credit, and prevent the spreading his doctrine: Hereupon Jesus and his disciples retire from their rage.

This is the substance of the story, related with all the circumstances of fact, in an history of the life and actions of Christ. The miracle was wrought before a mixed multitude, denied by none who were present, recorded by one of the evangelists, and always received in the Christian church. This is all the evidence which any distant fact can possibly have; and can no more reasonably be questioned, or turned into allegory, than any relation of ancient history, or any remarkable event, or great transaction which ever happened in the world.

§. 3. I remark further, that the *main purpose and end* of such a relation is to be chiefly attended to, and always kept in view. The design of raising *Lazarus* from the dead, and the other miracles wrought by Christ, was to be a confirmation of his mission and doctrine, and a ground and reason of faith in him. This is particularly expressed in the case of *Lazarus*; it was *for the glory of God*, and that the *Son of God might be glorified*. And *to the intent that you might believe*; he adds, *That they may believe that thou hast sent me*. He designed to display the divine glory and power, and dispose the minds of men to believe his doctrine.

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And he frequently appeals to his miracles, as a reason of faith, and an evidence that God was with him; and often he reproaches their infidelity upon this account. *The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works which I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me: Believe me for the works sake.* And he upbraided the cities where most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: *Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida, for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sydon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes, and Sodom would have remained to this day.*

The great end he evidently proposed was the conviction and satisfaction of the world, that he was a person who came from God, and brought the revelations of his will; and we are concerned to receive and entertain his doctrine upon this ground. If the miracles he wrought are a sufficient proof of the divine power with him, they are a good ground of embracing his doctrine, and render our faith in him reasonable, in opposition to every imposture, or false pretension to revelation. As he was to bring a new religion into the world, and further revelations of the will of God, as well to abolish and set aside a former; it was reasonable to expect he should confirm it by miracles, and produced the seal of his commission. When we are brought to believe in him the great design of

them is answered, and our great concern with them is over.

§. 4. The *unconcerning circumstances* of the main fact, not particularly related in the Gospel, are not to be curiously pryed into, or presumptuously determined; much less turned into exceptions to the main fact, which is particularly related. Suppose now that we could not account for some other circumstances of the present fact, or answer every curious or captious enquiry, must we therefore call in question the main fact, plainly represented, upon unquestionable authority? 'Tis the *main fact* only we are concerned with, and of that we have a sufficient account; not the lesser circumstances of it, of which we have no account. What a wanton curiosity, or bold presumption is it to ask, where was *Lazarus's* departed spirit, while his body was in the grave? What became of him after he was raised from the dead? Why so mean and obscure a person? &c. And what does this concern us? If it had been needful for us to know, God would have told us, and why should we expect a useless gratification in a divine revelation? How should we be the better for it, if we were able to tell? What would that contribute to the greatness of the miracle, or the great end of it, the conviction and satisfaction of our mind?

'Tis evidently unreasonable to make that an exception to the truth of the fact, which is only extrinsick and circumstantial to it,
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and wholly immaterial and unconcerning to us. The question plainly is, Was *Lazarus* really raised from the dead by the power of Christ; not why he was raised rather than another, or what became of him after; which we have nothing to do with, and the history makes no mention of. Is the account we have a true one, not what account can be given of other things about it, with which we are not concerned?

§. 5. Any reasonable or *probable supposition* ought to be allowed, where nothing is exprest in the relation, provided it be not inconsistent with the main fact, or contradictory to any other truth. If I can give a probable account, or make a reasonable supposition, in every instance of his exceptions let him disprove them, and shew them either impossible or absurd, that they cannot be true, or don't agree with the main fact.

Thus for example: *Why was not the story of Lazarus's resurrection related by the other three evangelists, but only by John, a great many years after?* Because of the rage of the *Jews* at that time; which appears in the relation; and there were many living witnesses of the fact remaining: But it was afterwards recorded by *John*, agreeably to the design of his Gospel, to preserve so memorable a fact entire, for the benefit of all after-ages. The greater the miracle was, the more provoking to the *Jews*, and the greater reason they had to forbear recording it, without
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p. 6.

any pretence of ignorance or forgetfulness. And this will be thought a sufficient reason, till he has been able to disprove it. Whether it was first or last recorded, does not affect the *truth* of the relation. Would he have believed it ever the more, if it had been recorded by *Matthew*? If not, what right has he to insist upon it? There are some remarkable facts in the *Roman* history, recorded only by one historian, and omitted by all the rest, perhaps sometimes for the same reason, without impeaching the credit of the history, or the truth of the fact. How many passages are preserved in *Dionysius Halicarnassæus*, which are omitted by *Livy*, and all the *Roman* historians? I think that was never construed by any critick to the discredit of the history, but always made it the more esteemed.

p. 17. 19. But *what became of him after his resurrection*? He lived to glorify God in the world, and to be a standing monument of the divine power, and the truth of the Christian doctrine. How frequently in all ancient history do we meet with relations of some remarkable actions and events concerning particular persons, without any other account of their lives or fortunes in the world: And their silence in other matters was never thought any reason of suspecting what they did relate of them. And it was well worth the while even to *call him from Paradise for thirty years to the miseries and trouble of this*
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wicked world, to be a standing proof to all after-generations, of the power of Christ, and the truth of his doctrine. Why might he not be deprived of some degrees of present happiness, for a short time, for so great an end of lasting and important good to the world? Besides, that this would be an objection against raising any from the dead at all, and affect not only the case of *Lazarus*, but the reasonableness of the thing itself.

But *why was a private person raised from the dead, and not some more eminently publick and useful person, as a magistrate? &c.* *Lazarus* was a friend of Christ, one whom *Jesus* loved; a proper object of his favour and power. Perhaps there was no instance so early of the death of any magistrate, or publick person, who believed in Christ. But 'tis not the *quality* of the person, but the *certainty* of the fact, we are concerned to enquire after. There was the same display of the divine power, and proof of the Christian doctrine, whatsoever was his personal character, or condition of life; whether publick or private, rich or poor, that alters not the case. Why might he not have the liberty to choose the objects of his special power and favour? Must we prescribe to divine wisdom? Is not that wise which is fitted to its end?

He adds here, but *why not John the baptist, rather than Lazarus, a person of greater worth and merit, his dearest friend and chosen*

p. 22.

p. 26.

sen minister? But what would that have added to the truth of the miracle, or the power of Christ, or the conviction of the world. He may as well ask why only three were raised under the old testament; and why *Elijah* and *Elisba* did not raise *Abraham* and *Moses* to convince the *Jews* of their idolatry, rather than such obscure persons as the widow of *Sarepta's* son, and the *Shunammite's* son? Let his *Rabbi* account for that. Besides, there is a very good reason to the contrary, to be collected from the history itself. As *Jesus* did not appear so publickly till *John* was put into prison, *From that time Jesus began to preach*; and *John* heard of the fame of *Jesus's* miracles, while he was in prison; so upon the tidings of *John's* death by his disciples, he retired into a desert near *Bethesda*. He fled from the rage of *Herod*, and out of his dominions, who was alarmed by the report of his miracles, and thought that *John* the Baptist whom he had beheaded, was risen from the dead. So that to have raised *John* the Baptist in these circumstances, would have been only to have provoked *Herod* to put him to death, at the beginning of his publick ministry, and before he had finished his work, or the hour of his suffering was come. If it be said, but why did he not raise *John*, when he raised *Lazarus*? I answer. *John* preached and baptised beyond *Jordan*, and was imprisoned and beheaded by *Herod*, who was governor of *Galilee*.

Matth. iv.
17.

Luke iv.
10.

Our

Our Lord was now at *Bethany*, which is *nigh to Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs*, or two John xv. 18. miles: And as the time of his sufferings now drew nigh, it was much more proper the miracle which was to give the immediate occasion to them, should be wrought near *Jerusalem*, where the scene of his sufferings was laid, than in *Galilee*, which was a great way off.

But he *was not long enough dead*. Surely p. 29. four days was a sufficient time to prevent any reasonable suspicion of trick or deceit. He was kept as long as was convenient in those hot countries, and was usual among the *Jews*. *When Jesus came he found that he had lien in the grave four days already*: Now supposing him to have been one day dead before his burial, and the four days in the grave complete, and then it will be the sixth day in which Jesus raised him from the dead. And *Mary* says, *By this time he stinketh*. 17. What longer time was necessary to a reasonable satisfaction? And what thinks he of *Moses* and *Elias*, who had been dead so many ages before, and appeared and conversed with him upon the mount, at his transfiguration? Or the *many bodies of the saints which slept, which arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many?* 39.

He says, they told no tales of a separate existence. Decently exprest! But how does he know that? Why, 'tis not related by the Math. xxvii. 52; 53.

evangelists. But they did not relate every circumstance of things, but the main fact, and designed to give a *reasonable* satisfaction to sober and honest minds, not all that was *possible*. And it was not to their purpose to relate it neither. The resurrection of *Lazarus* was designed to be a display of the power of Christ, not a proof of a future state: That was not the point in view. It was not designed for the *confutation* of the *Sadduces*, but the confirmation of the Gospel, which often asserts a future state. The apostle *Paul* when caught up into the third heaven, made no other report, but that he heard *unutterable things*. And 'tis agreeable to the present state of distance and trial, that in this respect we should *walk by faith and not by sight*.

§. 6. There is no reasonable pretence of *absurdity* and *incredibility*, in any of the circumstances which are related. Tho' he allows all along the instance of *Lazarus* to be more unquestionable, and clear of exception, than any of the other instances of raising from the dead; yet in this respect, he makes it more exceptionable than any of them, and in his elegant and civil expression, *brimful of absurdity*; and such a *texture of folly and fraud in its contrivance, execution, and relation, as is not to be equalled in all romantic history*. This is a bold and heavy charge, and would justly challenge the truth of any fact, if there was sufficient reason to support it.

it. Let us examine a little the grounds of this confident boasting.

Jesus wept and groaned for his death when he was about to raise him to life again. p. 39. True, but where is the absurdity? It was the working of natural affection to a beloved friend, and the evidence of proper humanity. This is agreeable to the construction of the Fathers. Perhaps too, he recollected, upon this occasion, the condition of mankind by sin, which brought death into the world. It would have been really unnatural not to have done it, and unsuitable to the circumstances of the case. Nor was it any way inconsistent with patience, or resignation to the divine will, or unbecoming his character, or his doctrine, which did not forbid the exercise of the natural passions upon proper occasions, but only restrain and regulate it. But he was *about to raise him from the dead*. What then? Might he not shew sentiments of humanity to one he loved for all that, and act suitably to the present case however, and *weep with them who weep*? As God is said to repent and grieve, and pity and complain, where yet he sees it reasonable to punish or destroy. It was as natural an exercise of the passions to weep while he was dead, as it was to rejoice when he was raised to life.

He called him with a *loud voice*, — *could* p. 40. *be not hear a still and low voice*? Yes, but perhaps the company who were about him

could not. He spake with a *loud voice*, that all who were present might more easily hear.

— Besides, there was power went along with the voice, as it will at the last day, when

John v. 28. *all who are in their graves shall hear his voice,*

Matt. xxiv. 31. *and come forth; and the Angels will gather together his elect from the four winds, with*

a great sound of a trumpet. It was an extraordinary power, which was to be exerted,

and why might it not be with a *loud voice*, as suitable to the circumstance of the case,

and the capacities and apprehension of the people? 'Tis plain he had a great regard to

15. *them in it; I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent you might believe.*

But how does this make an absurdity? Jesus cried with a loud voice, therefore he did

not raise *Lazarus* from the dead. The question is about the truth of the fact, and

he alledges a circumstance to the contrary, which is in perfect agreement with it, and

well suited to it.

P. 41. He objects, That the *napkin was not taken from his face, before he was raised, that it might appear he was really dead.* But what

need was there for it? Did any doubt whether *Lazarus* was dead? None were so un-

reasonable to make a question of it, when he had been now *dead four days*, and was ready to

stink, and their friends had come to comfort his sisters, and were mourning with them

upon that occasion, among which there were some who were so far from being *confederate*

with

with the sisters in favour of Christ, that they informed the *Sanhedrim*, with a design to raise their resentment against him, and seemed to flout at his former miracle of curing the man *born blind*. 37.

He lays together several circumstances of the relation in the evangelist, which I suppose he thinks most capable of an invidious turn. And here he aggravates the matter, and loads it with rude and malicious cavil, under the cover of a letter from a *Jewish Rabbi*, which he with equal modesty and consistence, pretends to *publish* to the world, lest Christianity should suffer by *clandestinely* handing it about.

He asks, *Why the council should be so incensed as to consult to put Jesus and Lazarus to death?* To be sure there was no reason, and the miracle was *enough to stop their mouths*. But do men always act reasonably, especially prejudiced and worldly-minded men, and when their religion and interest is affected, and thought to lie at stake? Is there any reason for men to be wicked? The case plainly was, Their malice blinded them, and led them to act unreasonably. Did he never hear of a good man unreasonably persecuted? Not any of the best and most useful men in the ancient *Grecian* and *Roman* states; not to descend to later instances? Nor was this the only instance of *barbarity* and *inhumanity* to Jesus; for we find they once attempted to *cast* him down a precipice; and

and several times laid in wait to *kill* him, and took up stones to stone him, only for telling them the truth, and reproofing them for their wickedness. In the height of their malice when they could not deny his miracles, they charged him with working them by the power of the devil. Yea, they put him to death at last, upon a false accusation, and by suborned witnesses, tho' *Pilate*, the *Roman* governor, no way prejudiced in his favour, after a publick tryal, and full hearing of the matter, declared in open court, That he was a *just man*, and that he *found no fault in him*; and knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Mat. xxvii.
18. 24.

P. 44. But why did they abscond and run away, both *Jesus* and his disciples? To avoid the malice of the Jews, who were so far provoked as to contrive to put him to death, and were bent upon their ruin. They consulted their own safety, by retiring from their unreasonable rage, which indisposed them to attend to any thing they could say, or receive any evidence which could be given. Besides he had further work to do, and his *hour was not yet come*: It was not want of courage and resolution, for he made a publick triumphant entrance into *Jerusalem*, and probably appeared again at the time of the passover, when there was the greatest resort of the people, and notwithstanding the order of the council to take him. He bore witness to the truth at the proper season, without

57.

without any marks of *guilt* or *fear*, and left the world a standing example of heroick suffering, in the most perfect exercise of meekness and patience, submission of soul, and prayer for his enemies, under the greatest injury and violence, the vilest reproach and abuse, and the most painful sufferings and death.

He says, It was *unnatural to hate a miraculous healer*. Malice to good men is unnatural; yet how common is that among wicked men, from the first enmity of *Cain to Abel, who slew his brother, because his deeds were righteous, and his own evil*. How notorious was this among the Jews, who killed the prophets, and stoned them who were sent unto them. This was foretold by Christ and the apostles, and has been experienced ever since: *Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. And marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.* And tho' miraculous healing was a benefit to the world, and was not the reason of their hatred; yet it must be considered, That his miraculous healing was in confirmation of his doctrine, and they hated the miraculous healer, who had declared so freely against their hypocrisy and wickedness, and was setting up a new dispensation in the world. But there *was no parallel to such a story*. There were many instances besides this of their unreasonable rage and persecution of Jesus. But what if this was the
 4 greatest

greatest instance, and beyond all parallel? The crucifying the *Lord of life* is charged upon them as the greatest crime which was ever committed, and which filled up the measure of their iniquity, and brought destruction upon the whole nation.

P. 46.

He says, *Such a real indisputable miracle as the raising Lazarus from the dead, would convert the present Jews to a man.* But that is more than he can tell: I suppose he has no commission from the present Jews to say it. However that be, we contend there were many who were not converted by the sight of it, and upon the credible testimony of the evangelist in the Gospel-history. And why must fresh miracles be wrought, and repeated in every age, when the former are so little regarded? Why may not the present Jews be supposed to be governed by unreasonable prejudice and ill-will to Christ, as well as their fore-fathers? He adds, 'Tis a tradition among the Jews, *That the Chief-priests and magistrates required him to react the miracle over again upon another person.* But what have we to do with the traditions of the Jews, a prejudiced people, and famous for idle traditions?

Qualiacunque voles Judæi somnia vendunt.

Juv. Sat. 6.

How little likely is it they should desire it, and not rather be afraid of it? And what reason was there for *reacting* it, when they shewed so much malice at his acting it, before

fore so many, and with such unquestionable circumstance? He designed to give men a reasonable satisfaction, not to gratify their humour, or curiosity. Nor was it reasonable his divine power should be at the beck of unreasonable prejudice, and idle capricio: That were to prostitute the highest favour to the meanest purposes.

There are no *memorials of Jesus's miracles*, P. 50.
but what were written by his own disciples.

But what then, if they are well attested, and of good authority? If it appears by all accounts, that they were the best qualified to write his history, as being always present with him, and *eye-witnesses* of what they relate; that they were men of unquestionable sobriety, and uprightness of mind, who acted in their whole course, agreeably to their doctrine and profession, with openness and simplicity, and without any appearance of guile and deceit; who denied all their worldly interests, and acted entirely upon the views of another world; who bore an agreeing testimony thro' all the distance of place, and difficulties of life, and sealed their doctrine with their blood at last: If all this appear, where is the force of this exception? Suppose I should say, That none have given an account of such a part of the *Roman* history but the *Roman* writers, the friends of the *Roman* state; that is, they who best knew their affairs, and were fittest to write it; or that *Cæsar's* war with the *Gauls* was written

by *Cæsar* himself in his commentaries, would that make it the less credible, or the more?

Besides, what reason was there to expect that either the Jewish or Heathen writers, should undertake to write the life of Christ, or impartially record the miracles he wrought, when the one were his determined enemies, and the other at a great distance, who knew little of the matter, and had a great contempt of it? Their prejudice and ill-will to the new religion, was much more likely to make them conspire together to conceal, or to blast the credit of his miracles, than record and transmit them to posterity,

And some account, after all, is given of them too. * Some principal facts are owned, and referred to, by other writers, as *Philo* and *Josephus*, who were Jews; by *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, *Pliny*, *Macrobius*, who were Heathen writers; and by *Celsus* and *Julian*, the keenest adversaries of Christianity. But the world expects in due time, a particular account of the ancient testimonies to the main facts of the Gospel, from a learned friend, which will fully answer this cavil, and give great satisfaction to the world.

* Of the miraculous eclipse of the Sun at the full Moon, which is demonstrably impossible by the known laws of nature: *Tertullian* tells the Heathen adversaries. Eodem momento dies medium orbem signante sole subducta est deliquitum utique putaverunt, qui id quoque super Christo prædicatum non sciant ratione non deprehensa negaverant; & tamen cum mundicatum & relatum in arcanis vestris habetis. i. e. was preserved in their archives. *Mr. Lardner*.

§. 7. *Allegorical interpretations* of matter of fact are plainly unreasonable and absurd; that is turning them all into allegory. There is a great difference between fact and allegory, between history and fable. We have several instances of the latter in the old and new Testament. *Jotham's* parable of the trees anointing a king over them. *Nathan's* Judg. ix. 8. parable of the *poor man's ewe lamb*. *Solomon's* 2 Sam. xiii. 3. allegorical representation of *old age*. The several parables of the gospel; and *St. Paul's* Ecc. xii. 1, 2. allegory of the *bond woman*, and the *free*. Gal. iv. 22. This was an ancient method of instruction very frequent in the eastern countries. But who ever mistook them for history, or real matter of fact, or understood them in the literal sense? They carry their own evidence along with them, and may be safely trusted to every reader's understanding.

But cannot we then distinguish history from allegory, and plain matter of fact which happened in the world, such as the miracles of Christ, which make up a great part of the history of his life, from parable and fable? To deny the literal sense of plain history, and turn it all into allegory, is more preposterous and absurd, than any thing he can fasten upon any part of the Gospel history. For this is to confound the evident distinction of things, to destroy the great design of miracles, which was to be a proof of the Christian doctrine, and to render all the instruction from them remote, uncertain,

and fanciful. At this rate he may as well allegorize all the history of the old Testament, and make all the relations of the wars and captivities of the Jews, and their miraculous deliverances and preservation, mere allegories, and capable only of mystical interpretations.

And tho' St. *Paul's* allegory of the *bond woman, and the free*, is grounded upon a real fact, viz. *Abraham's* two sons by *Hagar* and *Sarah*, yet that does not destroy the fact upon which 'tis grounded, but supposes the truth of it. It only shews the further signification of it, or the use which may be made of it. And it would be very absurd to allegorize his allegory, or draw a further mystical sense from his mystical representation; as he does by the miracles, which he supposes to be allegories. And if this is the best way of proving the truth of Christianity, I should not wonder, if no single proselyte were ever made to it more, and it should quickly cease, and be quite extinguished out of the world; which one would hope is no part of this author's design, who sometimes professes himself to be a Christian.

§. 8. The *authority of the Fathers* is impertinently insisted upon, and unfairly pretended to. Why must the Fathers be made the standard of truth, and the rule of interpretation of scripture, when they never pretended

tended to any such thing themselves, and were not always of one mind about it? I confess the early Writers of the Christian church, especially of the three first centuries, are very considerable, and of great use, above any later writers, as *witnesses* of ancient facts, and of the faith and practice of the church at that time; as they lived in the purest ages of Christianity, and nearest the fountain head. But then as *interpreters* of scripture they stand upon a level with other Christians; for tho' they were excellently pious, and some of them very learned, yet they were not inspired men. Their interpretations must be judged of by the evidence of truth, and the reasons they alledge for the proof of them, that is a subject of reason not of authority. They had no advantage peculiar to themselves in this respect, except the *Greek* Fathers with respect to the *Greek* language. 'Tis the critical meaning of words, the scope and design of the writer, the train and connection of the thought and argument, must lead us into the true sense of scripture, as it does into the sense of any other author. In these respects, I suppose, they did not excel all others, but some of the writers of later ages have far exceeded them. We allow their testimony in matter of fact, but not their authority in the interpretation of scripture, but only the reasons of their interpretation.

Besides

Besides the Fathers are not always rightly quoted, nor their sense fairly represented; but sometimes curtailed and suppressed, and sometimes mistaken*. Nor do any of the Fathers come up to his point, or serve his purpose; that is, deny the literal sense of the miracles, and make them only allegories, how much soever some of them indulged to allegorical interpretations, chiefly too in later ages. They all allow the truth of the facts, and argue from them in their apologies for their religion, against their *Heathen* adversaries, whatsoever further signification they supposed they might have, or what other use might be made of them†. They never denied they were real facts, or pretended they must be either *allegory* or *fable*.

§. 9. There is a *reverence* and *decency* in treating things sacred and important, which ought never to be dispensed with, and the contrary to which is immoral and offensive. If a man would convince me of a mistake, or inform me of an important truth; he has a right to be heard and regarded: I am beholden to him for his kindness, and obliged to attend to his reasons: But if he rudely insult me because I am not of his mind, and

* See Mr. *Atkinson's three Letters*, where this matter is particularly considered.

† See the Bishop of *London's Pastoral Letter*, particularly the judicious view of the Christian evidence, in a narrow compass, for the use of common Christians, p. 14.

vilifies my opinion, which I think important, and for which I think I have good reason; he is guilty of a breach of good manners, and forfeits all civil regard. If he tells me my fault in order to reclaim me, he does a kind office, and challenges my attention; but if he revile me to all the world, and attempts to blast my reputation; I shall not scruple to reckon it a *malicious slander*. If he disputes my Sovereign's right to the crown, I shall readily argue the matter with him, and endeavour to satisfy his scruples: But if he reproach him as an usurper and impostor, as a *jugler* and a *cheat*; I should think my self bound to resent it.

Let the *Deists* enquire with the greatest freedom into the Christian religion, and propose their objections with the greatest strength; I only wish it may be with greater diligence and impartiality. Let their arguments be weighed and considered: If they are able to disprove the Christian doctrine, and destroy the proper evidence of it, well and good. Let them try their strength. I am content to stand the trial, and abide by the greater evidence upon the whole. I thank God I am in no pain for the issue. I should for my self be glad to see the utmost efforts of the whole party against the resurrection of Christ, with which we are threatned. If we cannot support it against any attempt they are able to make against it, we must be
content

content to fall with it. I'll venture to say, it must be a much stronger attempt than this, which can shake the Christian faith. That which spread so wide, and prevailed so long by the single evidence of truth, was embraced by so many good and wise men in every age, and sealed by the blood of so many martyrs; and triumphed over all opposition of the wisdom and violence of the *Heathen* world; will not so easily yield at last to little cavil and sophistry, much less to sneer, and banter, and jest. Let them make the best of their cause, and push their advantages to the utmost, it will only rouse the Christian world to closer attention and stricter enquiry, and make the Christian evidence appear in a stronger light, and be more generally understood.

Let not men under a pretence of free thinking, and liberty of examining and publishing their sentiments; run into scandalous and provoking licentiousness; talk of Christ and the Gospel, not only with indecent levity, but with evident marks of scorn and contempt, and reproach and ridicule; as if they designed to revile the religion of their country, and affront all who profess it. Nothing can justify rudeness and scurrility, profaneness and blasphemy in treating of the Christian religion in a Christian country. We have the same right to be tender of its honour, which they can pretend to have,

to be so free with it. I believe we enjoy a greater liberty in this respect, than any nation upon earth, Christian, Mahometan, or Pagan, by the happiness of our laws, and the wisdom of the administration; and I heartily wish that gentlemen who plead so well for the liberty of the press, would allow themselves to consider how much they endanger the *invaluable privilege* to all about them, by their profane and licentious abuse of it. And tho' I can sincerely say, I wish neither this gentleman, nor any one else the least harm of any kind, but every kind of good; yet I cannot but observe, that 'tis with great *impropriety*, and with a very ill grace, that a *Jew* is introduced representing these things in a Christian country, when he knows the *Jewish* nation, under the peculiar dispensation of the *Theocracy*, would never allow that liberty among themselves, and that blasphemy against the God of *Israel* was punished with death by the law of *Moses*.

§. 10. I might observe in the last place, his *ill-will* to the *clergy*, which runs thro' all these discourses. What injury or provocation he has received from that reverend body, I am not able to say; but I am sure he has often exprest that rudeness and reproach, that rancour and spite against them, which the Christian religion severely forbids against the worst enemies, and for the greatest injuries. He treats them ill without discrimi-

N

nation,

nation, tho' 'tis well known that some of them are of the first rate of mankind, for capacity and acquirements, for virtue and usefulness, as well as for their dignity and stations in life. But I ask *their* pardon for intermeddling here, who are better able, if they think it worth the while, to defend themselves.

E R R A T A.

P. 42. l. 7. and p. 70. l. 25. r. histories. p. 57.
l. 7. r. believe *in* Christ.

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