



*John Calvin*

INSTITUTES OF  
THE CHRISTIAN  
RELIGION



**John Calvin**

# **Institutes of the Christian Religion**

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# **The Translator's Preface.**

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The English Reader is here presented with a translation of one of the principal theological productions of the sixteenth century. Few persons, into whose hands this translation is likely to fall, will require to be informed that the Author of the original work was one of an illustrious triumvirate, who acted a most conspicuous part in what has been generally and justly denominated The Reformation. Of that important revolution in ecclesiastical affairs, so necessary to the interests of true religion, and productive of such immense advantages even to civil society, Luther, Zuingle, and Calvin, were honoured, by the providence of God, to be the most highly distinguished instruments. It is no degradation to the memory of the many other ornaments of that age, to consider them as brilliant satellites in the firmament of the Church, revolving round these primary luminaries, to whom they were indebted for much of that lustre which they diffused over the earth; while they were all together revolving around one and the same common centre, though, it must be confessed, with considerable varieties of approximation, velocity, and obliquity in their courses; yet all deriving more or less copious communications of light from the great Sun of the moral system, the true Light of the world.

Differing in the powers of their minds, as well as in the temperament of their bodily constitutions, placed in different circumstances, and called to act in different scenes, these leading Reformers, though engaged in the same common cause, displayed their characteristic and

peculiar excellences; which, it is no disparagement of that cause to admit, were likewise accompanied by peculiar failings. It is not the design of this preface to portray and discriminate their respective characters. They alike devoted their lives and labours to rescue Christianity from the absurdities, superstitions, and vices by which it had been so deplorably deformed, mutilated, and obscured, and to recall the attention of mankind from the doubtful traditions of men to the unerring word of God. But while they were all distinguished Reformers, Calvin has been generally acknowledged to have been the most eminent theologian of the three.

Such was the superiority of the talents and attainments of Calvin to those of most other great men, that the strictest truth is in danger of being taken for exaggeration. It is impossible for any candid and intelligent person to have even a slight acquaintance with his writings, without admiring his various knowledge, extensive learning, profound penetration, solid judgment, acute reasoning, pure morality, and fervent piety.

His Commentaries on the Scriptures have been celebrated for a juster method of exposition than had been exhibited by any preceding writer. Above a hundred years after his death, Poole, the author of the Synopsis, in the preface to that valuable work, says, "Calvin's Commentaries abound in solid discussions of theological subjects, and practical improvements of them. Subsequent writers have borrowed most of their materials from Calvin, and his interpretations adorn the books even of those who repay the obligation by reproaching their master." And nothing can more satisfactorily evince the high estimation to which they are still entitled from the biblical student, than the following testimony, given, after the lapse of another century, by the

late learned Bishop Horsley: "I hold the memory of Calvin in high veneration: his works have a place in my library; and in the study of the Holy Scriptures, he is one of the commentators whom I frequently consult."

But perhaps, of all the writings of Calvin, none has excited so much attention as his Institutes of the Christian Religion.

His original design in commencing this work is stated by himself, in the beginning of his dedication, to have been to supply his countrymen, the French, with an elementary compendium for their instruction in the principles of true religion. But we learn from Beza that, by the time of its completion, existing circumstances furnished the Author with an additional motive for sending it into the world, during his residence at Basil, whither he had retired to avoid the persecution which was then raging in France against all the dissentients from the Church of Rome. Francis the First, king of France, courted the friendship of the Protestant princes of Germany; and knowing their detestation of the cruelties which he employed against his subjects of the reformed religion, he endeavoured to excuse his conduct by alleging that he caused none to be put to death except some few fanatics; who, so far from taking the word of God as the rule of their faith, gave themselves up to the impulses of their disordered imaginations, and even openly avowed a contempt of magistrates and sovereign princes. Unable to bear such foul aspersions of his brethren, Calvin determined on the immediate publication of this treatise, which he thought would serve as an answer to the calumnies circulated by the enemies of the truth, and as an apology for his pious and persecuted countrymen.

The Dedication to Francis is one of the most masterly compositions of modern times. The purity, elegance, and



energy of style; the bold, yet respectful, freedom of address; the firm attachment to the Divine word; the Christian fortitude in the midst of persecution; the triumphant refutation of the calumnies of detractors; with other qualities which distinguish this celebrated remonstrance, will surely permit no reader of taste or piety to withhold his concurrence from the general admiration which it has received.

The Author composed this treatise in Latin and French, and though, at its first appearance, it was little more than an outline of what it afterwards became, it was received with uncommon approbation, and a second edition of it was soon required. How many editions it passed through during his life, it is difficult, if not impossible, now to ascertain; but it obtained a very extensive circulation, and was reprinted several times, and every time was further improved and enlarged by him, till, in the year 1559, twenty-three years after the first impression, he put the finishing hand to his work, and published it in Latin and French, with his last corrections and additions.

The circulation which it enjoyed was not confined to persons capable of reading it in the languages in which it was written. It was translated into High Dutch, Low Dutch, Italian, and Spanish.

Soon after the publication of the Author's last edition, it was translated from the Latin into English. In this language it appears to have reached six editions in the life of the Translator. A reflection on the small number of persons who may be supposed to have had inclination and ability to read such a book at that period, compared with the number of readers in the present age, may excite some wonder that there should have been a demand for so many editions. But no surprise at this circumstance will be felt by any person

acquainted with the high estimation in which the works of the Author were held by the venerable Reformers of the Church of England, and their immediate successors, as well as by the great majority of religious people in this country. This is not a question of opinion, but an undeniable fact. Dr. Heylin, the admirer and biographer of Archbishop Laud, speaking of the early part of the seventeenth century, says, that Calvin's "Book of Institutes was, for the most part, the foundation on which the young divines of those times did build their studies." The great Dr. Saunderson, who was chaplain to King Charles I., and, after the restoration of Charles II., was created Bishop of Lincoln, says, "When I began to set myself to the study of divinity as my proper business, Calvin's Institutions were recommended to me, as they were generally to all young scholars in those times, as the best and perfectest system of divinity, and the fittest to be laid as a ground-work in the study of this profession. And, indeed, my expectation was not at all deceived in the reading of those Institutions."<sup>1</sup>

The great changes which have taken place in our language render it difficult to form a correct opinion of the merits of Mr. Norton's translation, which was first published about two hundred and fifty years ago. It must give rather a favourable idea of its execution, that it was carefully revised by the Rev. David Whitehead, a man of learning and piety, who, in the reign of Henry VIII., was nominated by Archbishop Cranmer to a bishopric in Ireland, and, soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, was solicited by that Princess to fill the metropolitan see of Canterbury, but declined the preferment. But, whatever were the merits or defects of that translation at its first appearance, it has long been too antiquated, uncouth, and obscure, to convey any just idea of the original work, and abounds with passages

which, to the modern English reader, cannot but be altogether unintelligible.

The intrinsic excellence of the book, its importance in the history of theological controversy, the celebrity of the Author, the application of his name to designate the leading principles of the system he maintained, and the frequent collision of sentiment respecting various parts of that system, combine with other considerations to render it a matter of wonder, that it has not long ago been given to the English public in a new dress. The importance of it has also been much increased by the recent controversy respecting Calvinism, commenced by Dr. Tomline, the present Bishop of Lincoln, in which such direct and copious reference has been made to the writings of this Reformer, and especially to his Christian Institutes. These circumstances and considerations have led to the present translation and publication, which, from the very respectable encouragement it has received, the Translator trusts will be regarded as an acceptable service to the religious public.

Among the different methods of translation which have been recommended, he has adopted that which appeared to him best fitted to the present undertaking. A servile adherence to the letter of the original, the style of which is so very remote from the English idiom, he thought would convey a very inadequate representation of the work; such extreme fidelity, to use an expression of Cowper's, being seldom successful, even in a faithful transmission of the precise sentiments of the author to the mind of the reader. A mere attention to the ideas and sentiments of the original, to the neglect of its style and manner, would expose the Translator of a treatise of this nature to no small danger of misrepresenting the meaning of the Author, by too frequent and unnecessary deviations from his language. He has,

therefore, aimed at a medium between servility and looseness, and endeavoured to follow the style of the original as far as the respective idioms of the Latin and English would admit.

After the greater part of the work had been translated, he had the happiness to meet with an edition in French of which he has availed himself in translating the remainder, and in the revision of what he had translated before. Every person, who understands any two languages, will be aware that the ambiguity of one will sometimes be explained by the precision of another; and, notwithstanding the acknowledged superiority of the Latin to the French in most of the qualities which constitute the excellence of a language, the case of the article is not the only one in which Calvin's French elucidates his Latin.

The scriptural quotations which occur in the work, the Translator has given, generally, in the words of our common English version; sometimes according to the readings in the margin of that version; and, in a few instances, he has literally translated the version adopted by the Author, where the context required his peculiar reading to be preserved. Almost all the writers of that age, writing chiefly in a dead language, were accustomed to speak of their adversaries in language which the polished manners of the modern times have discarded, and which would now be deemed illiberal and scurrilous. Where these cases occur, the Translator has not thought himself bound to a literal rendering of every word, or at liberty to refine them entirely away, but has adopted such expressions as he apprehends will give a faithful representation of the spirit of the Author to modern readers.

Intending this work as a complete system of theology, the Author has made it the repository of his sentiments on



all points of faith and practice. The whole being distributed into four parts, in conformity to the Apostles' Creed, and this plan being very different from that of most other bodies of divinity, the Translator has borrowed from the Latin edition of Amsterdam a very perspicuous general syllabus, which will give the reader a clear view of the original design and plan of the treatise.

He would not be understood to represent these Institutes as a perfect summary of Christian doctrines and morals, or to profess an unqualified approbation of all the sentiments they contain. This is a homage to which no uninspired writings can ever be entitled. But the simplicity of the method; the freedom from the barbarous terms, captious questions, minute distinctions, and intricate subtilties of many other Divines; the clearness and closeness of argument; the complete refutation of the advocates of the Romish Church, sometimes by obvious conclusions from their professed principles, sometimes by clear proofs of the absurdities they involve; the intimate knowledge of ecclesiastical history; the intimate acquaintance with former theological controversies; the perspicuity of scriptural interpretation; and the uniform spirit of genuine piety, which pervade the book, cannot escape the observation of any judicious reader.

It has been advised by some persons that the translation should be accompanied by a few notes, to elucidate and enforce some passages, and to correct others; but, on all the consideration which the Translator has been able to give to this subject, he has thought it would be best to content himself with the humble office of placing the sentiments of Calvin before the reader, with all the fidelity in his power, without any addition or limitation. He hopes that the present publication will serve the cause of true religion, and that the

reputation of the work itself will sustain no diminution from the form in which it now appears.

London, May 12, 1813.

# **The Author's Preface to An Edition Published In The Year 1559, With His Last Corrections And Additions.**

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In the first edition of this work, not expecting that success which the Lord, in his infinite goodness, hath given, I handled the subject for the most part in a superficial manner, as is usual in small treatises. But when I understood that it had obtained from almost all pious persons such a favourable acceptance as I never could have presumed to wish, much less to hope; while I was conscious of receiving far more attention than I had deserved, I thought it would evince great ingratitude, if I did not endeavour at least, according to my humble ability, to make some suitable return for the attentions paid to me—attentions of themselves calculated to stimulate my industry. Nor did I attempt this only in the second edition; but in every succeeding one the work has been improved by some further enlargements. But though I repented not the labour then devoted to it, yet I never satisfied myself, till it was arranged in the order in which it is now published; and I trust I have here presented to my readers what their judgments will unite in approving. Of my diligent application to the accomplishment of this service for the Church of God, I can produce abundant proof. For, last winter, when I thought that a quartan ague would speedily terminate in my death, the more my disorder increased, the less I spared myself, till I had finished this book, to leave it behind me, as

some grateful return to such kind solicitations of the religious public. Indeed, I would rather it had been done sooner; but it is soon enough, if well enough. I shall think it has appeared at the proper time, when I shall find it to have been more beneficial than before to the Church of God. This is my only wish.

I should indeed be ill requited for my labour, if I did not content myself with the approbation of God alone, despising equally the foolish and perverse judgments of ignorant men, and the calumnies and detractions of the wicked. For though God hath wholly devoted my mind to study the enlargement of his kingdom, and the promotion of general usefulness; and I have the testimony of my own conscience, of angels, and of God himself, that, since I undertook the office of a teacher in the Church, I have had no other object in view than to profit the Church by maintaining the pure doctrine of godliness; yet I suppose there is no man more slandered or calumniated than myself. When this Preface was actually in the press, I had certain information, that at Augsburg, where the States of the Empire were assembled, a report had been circulated of my defection to popery, and received with unbecoming eagerness in the courts of the princes. This is the gratitude of those who cannot be unacquainted with the numerous proofs of my constancy, which not only refute such a foul calumny, but, with all equitable and humane judges, ought to preserve me from it. But the devil, with all his host, is deceived, if he think to overwhelm me with vile falsehoods, or to render me more timid, indolent, or dilatory, by such indignities. For I trust that God, in his infinite goodness, will enable me to persevere with patient constancy in the career of his holy calling; of which I afford my pious readers a fresh proof in this edition.



Now, my design in this work has been to prepare and qualify students of theology for the reading of the divine word, that they may have an easy introduction to it, and be enabled to proceed in it without any obstruction. For I think I have given such a comprehensive summary, and orderly arrangement of all the branches of religion, that, with proper attention, no person will find any difficulty in determining what ought to be the principal objects of his research in the Scripture, and to what end he ought to refer any thing it contains. This way, therefore, being prepared, if I should hereafter publish any expositions of the Scripture, I shall have no need to introduce long discussions respecting doctrines, or digressions on common topics, and therefore shall always compress them within a narrow compass. This will relieve the pious reader from great trouble and tediousness, provided he come previously furnished with the necessary information, by a knowledge of the present work. But as the reason of this design is very evident in my numerous Commentaries, I would rather have it known from the fact itself, than from my declaration.

Farewell, friendly reader; and if you receive any benefit from my labours, let me have the assistance of your prayers with God our Father.

Geneva, 1st August, 1559.

# Dedication.

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To His Most Christian Majesty, Francis, King of the French, and his Sovereign, John Calvin wisheth peace and salvation in Christ.

When I began this work, Sire, nothing was further from my thoughts than writing a book which would afterwards be presented to your Majesty. My intention was only to lay down some elementary principles, by which inquirers on the subject of religion might be instructed in the nature of true piety. And this labour I undertook chiefly for my countrymen, the French, of whom I apprehended multitudes to be hungering and thirsting after Christ, but saw very few possessing any real knowledge of him. That this was my design, the book itself proves by its simple method and unadorned composition. But when I perceived that the fury of certain wicked men in your kingdom had grown to such a height, as to leave no room in the land for sound doctrine, I thought I should be usefully employed, if in the same work I delivered my instructions to them, and exhibited my confession to you, that you may know the nature of that doctrine, which is the object of such unbounded rage to those madmen who are now disturbing the country with fire and sword. For I shall not be afraid to acknowledge, that this treatise contains a summary of that very doctrine, which, according to their clamours, deserves to be punished with imprisonment, banishment, proscription, and flames, and to be exterminated from the face of the earth. I well know with what atrocious insinuations your ears have been filled by

them, in order to render our cause most odious in your esteem; but your clemency should lead you to consider that, if accusation be accounted a sufficient evidence of guilt, there will be an end of all innocence in words and actions. If any one, indeed, with a view to bring an odium upon the doctrine which I am endeavouring to defend, should allege that it has long ago been condemned by the general consent, and suppressed by many judicial decisions, this will be only equivalent to saying, that it has been sometimes violently rejected through the influence and power of its adversaries, and sometimes insidiously and fraudulently oppressed by falsehoods, artifices, and calumnies. Violence is displayed, when sanguinary sentences are passed against it without the cause being heard; and fraud, when it is unjustly accused of sedition and mischief. Lest any one should suppose that these our complaints are unfounded, you yourself, Sire, can bear witness of the false calumnies with which you hear it daily traduced; that its only tendency is to wrest the sceptres of kings out of their hands, to overturn all the tribunals and judicial proceedings, to subvert all order and governments, to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the people, to abrogate all laws, to scatter all properties and possessions, and, in a word, to involve every thing in total confusion. And yet you hear the smallest portion of what is alleged against it; for such horrible things are circulated amongst the vulgar, that, if they were true, the whole world would justly pronounce it and its abettors worthy of a thousand fires and gibbets. Who, then, will wonder at its becoming the object of public odium, where credit is given to such most iniquitous accusations? This is the cause of the general consent and conspiracy to condemn us and our doctrine. Hurried away with this impulse, those who sit in judgment

pronounce for sentences the prejudices they brought from home with them; and think their duty fully discharged if they condemn none to be punished but such as are convicted by their own confession, or by sufficient proofs. Convicted of what crime? Of this condemned doctrine, they say. But with what justice is it condemned? Now, the ground of defence was not to abjure the doctrine itself, but to maintain its truth. On this subject, however, not a word is allowed to be uttered.

Wherefore I beseech you, Sire,—and surely it is not an unreasonable request,—to take upon yourself the entire cognizance of this cause, which has hitherto been confusedly and carelessly agitated, without any order of law, and with outrageous passion rather than judicial gravity. Think not that I am now meditating my own individual defence, in order to effect a safe return to my native country; for, though I feel the affection which every man ought to feel for it, yet, under the existing circumstances, I regret not my removal from it. But I plead the cause of all the godly, and consequently of Christ himself, which, having been in these times persecuted and trampled on in all ways in your kingdom, now lies in a most deplorable state; and this indeed rather through the tyranny of certain Pharisees, than with your knowledge. How this comes to pass is foreign to my present purpose to say; but it certainly lies in a most afflicted state. For the ungodly have gone to such lengths, that the truth of Christ, if not vanquished, dissipated, and entirely destroyed, is buried, as it were, in ignoble obscurity, while the poor, despised church is either destroyed by cruel massacres, or driven away into banishment, or menaced and terrified into total silence. And still they continue their wonted madness and ferocity, pushing violently against the wall already bent, and



finishing the ruin they have begun. In the mean time, no one comes forward to plead the cause against such furies. If there be any persons desirous of appearing most favourable to the truth, they only venture an opinion, that forgiveness should be extended to the error and imprudence of ignorant people. For this is the language of these moderate men, calling *that* error and imprudence which they know to be the certain truth of God, and *those* ignorant people, whose understanding they perceive not to have been so despicable to Christ, but that he has favoured them with the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom. Thus all are ashamed of the Gospel. But it shall be yours, Sire, not to turn away your ears or thoughts from so just a defence, especially in a cause of such importance as the maintenance of God's glory unimpaired in the world, the preservation of the honour of divine truth, and the continuance of the kingdom of Christ uninjured among us. This is a cause worthy of your attention, worthy of your cognizance, worthy of your throne. This consideration constitutes true royalty, to acknowledge yourself in the government of your kingdom to be the minister of God. For where the glory of God is not made the end of the government, it is not a legitimate sovereignty, but a usurpation. And he is deceived who expects lasting prosperity in that kingdom which is not ruled by the sceptre of God, that is, his holy word; for that heavenly oracle cannot fail, which declares that "where there is no vision, the people perish."<sup>2</sup> Nor should you be seduced from this pursuit by a contempt of our meanness. We are fully conscious to ourselves how very mean and abject we are, being miserable sinners before God, and accounted most despicable by men; being (if you please) the refuse of the world, deserving of the vilest appellations that can be found; so that nothing remains for us to glory in before God, but his

mercy alone, by which, without any merit of ours, we have been admitted to the hope of eternal salvation, and before men nothing but our weakness, the slightest confession of which is esteemed by them as the greatest disgrace. But our doctrine must stand, exalted above all the glory, and invincible by all the power of the world; because it is not ours, but the doctrine of the living God, and of his Christ, whom the Father hath constituted King, that he may have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth, and that he may rule in such a manner, that the whole earth, with its strength of iron and with its splendour of gold and silver, smitten by the rod of his mouth, may be broken to pieces like a potter's vessel;<sup>3</sup> for thus do the prophets foretell the magnificence of his kingdom.

Our adversaries reply, that our pleading the word of God is a false pretence, and that we are nefarious corrupters of it. But that this is not only a malicious calumny, but egregious impudence, by reading our confession, you will, in your wisdom, be able to judge. Yet something further is necessary to be said, to excite your attention, or at least to prepare your mind for this perusal. Paul's direction, that every prophecy be framed "according to the analogy of faith,"<sup>4</sup> has fixed an invariable standard by which all interpretation of Scripture ought to be tried. If our principles be examined by this rule of faith, the victory is ours. For what is more consistent with faith than to acknowledge ourselves naked of all virtue, that we may be clothed by God; empty of all good, that we may be filled by him; slaves to sin, that we may be liberated by him; blind, that we may be enlightened by him; lame, that we may be guided; weak, that we may be supported by him; to divest ourselves of all ground of glorying, that he alone may be eminently glorious,

and that we may glory in him? When we advance these and similar sentiments, they interrupt us with complaints that this is the way to overturn, I know not what blind light of nature, pretended preparations, free will, and works meritorious of eternal salvation, together with all their supererogations; because they cannot bear that the praise and glory of all goodness, strength, righteousness, and wisdom, should remain entirely with God. But we read of none being reprov'd for having drawn too freely from the fountain of living waters; on the contrary, they are severely upbraided who have "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."<sup>5</sup> Again, what is more consistent with faith, than to assure ourselves of God being a propitious Father, where Christ is acknowledged as a brother and Mediator? than securely to expect all prosperity and happiness from Him, whose unspeakable love towards us went so far, that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us?"<sup>6</sup> than to rest in the certain expectation of salvation and eternal life, when we reflect upon the Father's gift of Christ, in whom such treasures are hidden? Here they oppose us, and complain that this certainty of confidence is chargeable with arrogance and presumption. But as we ought to presume nothing of ourselves, so we should presume every thing of God; nor are we divested of vain glory for any other reason than that we may learn to glory in the Lord. What shall I say more? Review, Sire, all the parts of our cause, and consider us worse than the most abandoned of mankind, unless you clearly discover that we thus "both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God,"<sup>7</sup> because we believe that "this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent."<sup>8</sup> For this hope some of us are bound in chains, others are lashed with scourges,

others are carried about as laughing-stocks, others are outlawed, others are cruelly tortured, others escape by flight; but we are all reduced to extreme perplexities, execrated with dreadful curses, cruelly slandered, and treated with the greatest indignities. Now, look at our adversaries, (I speak of the order of priests, at whose will and directions others carry on these hostilities against us,) and consider a little with me by what principles they are actuated. The true religion, which is taught in the Scriptures, and ought to be universally maintained, they readily permit both themselves and others to be ignorant of, and to treat with neglect and contempt. They think it unimportant what any one holds or denies concerning God and Christ, provided he submits his mind with an implicit faith (as they call it) to the judgment of the Church. Nor are they much affected, if the glory of God happens to be violated with open blasphemies, provided no one lift a finger against the primacy of the Apostolic See, and the authority of their holy Mother Church. Why, therefore, do they contend with such extreme bitterness and cruelty for the mass, purgatory, pilgrimages, and similar trifles, and deny that any piety can be maintained without a most explicit faith, so to speak, in these things; whereas they prove none of them from the Word of God? Why, but because their belly is their god, their kitchen is their religion; deprived of which they consider themselves no longer as Christians, or even as men. For though some feast themselves in splendour, and others subsist on slender fare, yet all live on the same pot, which, without this fuel, would not only cool, but completely freeze. Every one of them, therefore, who is most solicitous for his belly, is found to be a most strenuous champion for their faith. Indeed, they universally exert themselves for the preservation of their kingdom, and the repletion of their

bellies; but not one of them discovers the least indication of sincere zeal.

Nor do their attacks on our doctrine cease here; they urge every topic of accusation and abuse to render it an object of hatred or suspicion. They call it novel, and of recent origin,—they cavil at it as doubtful and uncertain,—they inquire by what miracles it is confirmed,—they ask whether it is right for it to be received contrary to the consent of so many holy fathers, and the custom of the highest antiquity,—they urge us to confess that it is schismatical in stirring up opposition against the Church, or that the Church was wholly extinct for many ages, during which no such thing was known.—Lastly, they say all arguments are unnecessary; for that its nature may be determined by its fruits, since it has produced such a multitude of sects, so many factious tumults, and such great licentiousness of vices. It is indeed very easy for them to insult a deserted cause with the credulous and ignorant multitude; but, if we had also the liberty of speaking in our turn, this acrimony, which they now discover in violently foaming against us with equal licentiousness and impunity, would presently cool.

In the first place, their calling it novel is highly injurious to God, whose holy word deserves not to be accused of novelty. I have no doubt of its being new to them, to whom Jesus Christ and the Gospel are equally new. But those who know the antiquity of this preaching of Paul, “that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification,”<sup>9</sup> will find no novelty among us. That it has long been concealed, buried, and unknown, is the crime of human impiety. Now that the goodness of God has restored it to us, it ought at least to be allowed its just claim of antiquity.

From the same source of ignorance springs the notion of its being doubtful and uncertain. This is the very thing which the Lord complains of by his prophet; that “the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,”<sup>10</sup> but that his people know not him. But however they may laugh at its uncertainty, if they were called to seal their own doctrine with their blood and lives, it would appear how much they value it. Very different is our confidence, which dreads neither the terrors of death, nor even the tribunal of God.

Their requiring miracles of us is altogether unreasonable; for we forge no new Gospel, but retain the very same whose truth was confirmed by all the miracles ever wrought by Christ and the apostles. But they have this peculiar advantage above us, that they can confirm their faith by continual miracles even to this day. But the truth is, they allege miracles which are calculated to unsettle a mind otherwise well established, they are so frivolous and ridiculous, or vain and false. Nor, if they were ever so preternatural, ought they to have any weight in opposition to the truth of God, since the name of God ought to be sanctified in all places and at all times, whether by miraculous events, or by the common order of nature. This fallacy might perhaps be more specious, if the Scripture did not apprize us of the legitimate end and use of miracles. For Mark informs us, that the miracles which followed the preaching of the apostles were wrought in confirmation<sup>11</sup> of it, and Luke tells us, that<sup>12</sup> “the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace,” when “signs and wonders” were “done by the hands” of the apostles. Very similar to which is the assertion of the apostle, that “salvation was confirmed” by the preaching of the Gospel, “God also bearing witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles.”<sup>13</sup> But those things which we are told were seals of the Gospel, shall we pervert