

husband of one wife." Above all others, you that are ministers, and have wives, should be as if you had none in regard of all inordinacy of affection towards them; and let it appear unto all, that, although married, you chiefly "care for the things that belong to the Lord, how you may please the Lord." You need not care, or be concerned at the barking of the impure Papists, like dogs who bark at the moon, so long as your conversations do shine.

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## SERMON XX. (XVIII.)

BY THE REV. RICHARD FAIRCLOUGH, A. M.

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THE PAPAL DOCTRINE IN DENYING THE POSSIBILITY OF ASSURANCE IS FALSE, AND HATH A DANGEROUS TENDENCY TO DESTROY THE TRUE PEACE AND COMFORT OF SOULS IN THE CERTAIN HOPES OF EVERLASTING HAPPINESS.

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THE NATURE, POSSIBILITY, AND DUTY, OF A TRUE BELIEVER'S ATTAINING TO A CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE OF HIS EFFECTUAL VOCATION, ETERNAL ELECTION, AND FINAL PERSEVERANCE TO GLORY.

*Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.—*  
2 Peter i. 10.

THAT I may the more effectually discharge the duty incumbent on me, and the more fully confute that pernicious error of the church of Rome, which hath declared, that "a believer's assurance of the pardon of his sin is a vain and ungodly confidence," † "it being," say they, "impossible for any person to know that he is now pardoned, much less that he shall continue and persevere in the state of grace;" ‡ I have made choice of this portion of scripture, as the foundation of my present discourse; wherein it must be considered, that although controversial and polemical treatises are usually large and full, yet the few moments allowed for our present delivery, and the few pages allotted for the printing, of this discourse, necessitate me to manage things in a very contracted manner; so as I must give you but only hints of some arguments on our side, and also must rather obviate and prevent, than formally answer, all our adversaries' objections. Avoiding all unnecessary amplifications and popular illustrations, which might make our style more smooth and pleasant, I shall only deliver what may rationally convince your judgment;

\* In his "Account of Ministers, &c., ejected or silenced," Dr. Calamy adds this note concerning the authorship of the present sermon: "I cannot be positive whether this last be his or his father's;" who was the Rev. Samuel Fairclough, A. M.—EDIT. † *Certitudo remissionis peccatorum est vana et omni pietate remota fiducia.*—*Conc. Trid. sess. vi.* ‡ *Primus hæreticorum error est, posse fideles eam notitiam habere de sua gratiâ ut certâ fide statuunt sibi remissa esse peccata.*—BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. iii. cap. 3.

leaving the exciting of your affections to the more immediate influence of the Good Spirit of God.

THE SCOPE AND DIVISION OF THE WORDS.

Briefly, then : the words I have read are an earnest exhortation to an excellent duty.

In which exhortation, it will be very much to our purpose to consider,

1. *The person that gives the exhortation.*
2. *The persons to whom it is given.*
3. *The matter exhorted to.*
4. *The motives enforcing.*

THE PERSON EXHORTING,—PETER.

1. *The person that gives the exhortation is the apostle Peter ; one eminent,*

- (1.) *For his frequent temptations.*
- (2.) *For his great falls by these temptations.*
- (3.) *For recovery after those falls.*

*One much tempted.*

(1.) Peter was a person subject to frequent and violent temptations unto sin.—At one time the devil had so transformed himself into an angel of light, that he had almost thereby transformed Peter into an angel of darkness. Peter thought he acted the part of a saint and friend to dissuade Christ from going to Jerusalem ; but Christ intimates that Peter acted therein the part of a devil, when he said to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” (Matt. xvi. 23.) At another time, the devil desired to winnow Peter as wheat ; (Luke xxii. 31 ;) and you know how he was sifted in the high priest’s hall.

*One foully falling by temptation.*

(2.) Peter was one that, being tempted, had greatly miscarried, and fallen into gross sin.—For you do not only read of his dissembling, and of his too great complying with the superstitious Jews in their ceremonies and worship ; (Gal. ii. 12, 13 ;) but appearing like a downright apostate ; \* renouncing of Christ, and forswearing any knowledge of him. (Matt. xxvi. 34, 69—75.) He that shall consider the experience which Peter had of Satan’s power and subtilty, and of his own impotency and weakness, (both which considerations might afford arguments against the possibility of assurance,) may at first wonder that Peter should ever attain to any assurance himself ; much more that he should be the author of such an exhortation as this to others.

*One recovered from temptation by Christ’s intercession, and the Spirit’s efficacy.*

(3.) But Peter, as he had experience of Satan’s malice, of his own insufficiency, so he had experience,

(i.) *Of the prevalency of his Saviour’s intercession.*—Christ had prayed that Peter’s faith might not fail in the habit, although it did fail in the act. (Luke xxii. 32.)

\* In this we deny not but that the pope may be Peter’s successor.

(ii.) He had experience of the Spirit's efficacy in working true sorrow and repentance for his great sin.—And hence, in part, it is, that Peter is most fit of all men to encourage weak believers against their despairing and desponding fears, and to put them upon endeavours after assurance. Moreover, Peter had received a command from Christ; that when he should be “converted,” that is, recovered from his partial apostasy, he should endeavour to “strengthen his brethren;” (Luke xxii. 32;) and probably it is in obedience to this command of Christ that he is thus earnest in this exhortation.

THE PERSONS EXHORTED,—TRUE BELIEVERS.

2. *The persons to whom the exhortation is given are called in the text “brethren.”*—By which title is not only expressed every true believer's dignity, who is a brother to the very apostles themselves; (which fraternity is infinitely more desirable than that bastard nepotism which some Romish cardinals boast of;) but also by this compellation the truth of their grace is declared. For the apostle had before described them to be, (1.) Such as had “obtained like precious faith” with himself. (2.) Such as were endued with saving “knowledge.” (3.) Such to whom God had communicated “all things pertaining to life and godliness.” (4.) Such as God had called to glory and virtue. (5.) Such to whom God had given “exceeding great and precious promises.” (6.) Such as were made “partakers of the divine nature.” Lastly. Such as had “escaped the pollutions of the world through lust.” (Verses 1—4.) These are the persons who, although they had “obtained precious faith,” yet had not attained certain knowledge of their own spiritual state, but were in a possibility, yea, in a very great preparation, thereunto.

It is an abominable falsehood which Bellarmine boldly reports, that we teach, that except men have assurance, they are not true believers, nor shall they ever be saved.\* This is an impudent calumny: for if any particular persons abroad have thought that a special and full persuasion of pardon of their sin was of the essence of faith, let them answer for it; our divines at home generally are of another judgment: bishop Davenant and bishop Prideaux,† and others, have shown the great difference between *fides* and *fiducia*, between recumbence and assurance; and they all do account and call assurance “a daughter, fruit, and consequent of faith.” And the late learned Arrowsmith tells us,‡ that God seldom bestows assurance upon believers till they are grown in grace: “For,” saith he, “there is the same difference between faith of recumbence and faith of assurance, as is between reason and learning. Reason is the foundation of learning; so, as there can be no learning if reason be wanting, (as in beasts,) in like manner there can be no assurance where there is no faith of adherence. Again: as reason, well exercised in the study of arts and sciences, arises to learning; so faith, being well exercised on its proper object, and by its proper fruits, arises to assurance. Further: as by negligence, non-attendance, or some violent disease, learning may be lost, while reason doth abide; so by temptation, or by spiritual sloth, assurance may be lost, while saving faith may abide.

\* BELLARMINUS *De Just.* lib. iii. cap. 3.

PRIDEAUX, *Cer. Sept.*

† DAVENANTIUS *De Sal. Cer.* sect. 3;

‡ *Tactica Sacra*, lib. ii.

Lastly : as all men are rational, but all men are not learned ; so all regenerate persons have faith to comply savingly with the gospel-method of salvation, but all true believers have not assurance."

THE MATTER OF EXHORTATION.

3. The believers in the text were in a state of salvation, but wanted assurance. Hence the apostle puts them upon diligence to attain it ; which acquaints us with *the matter exhorted to*.—Where observe, (1.) *The matter ultimately intended* ; namely, the making of their calling and election sure. (2.) *The means subserviently directed to*, namely, the giving diligence to attain it. (3.) *The order of directing their diligence* : first, to make their calling, and, secondly, their election, sure ; for no man knows any thing of his election further than he is assured of his being effectually called.

THE MOTIVES.

4. The fourth and last part of the text affords us *the motives by which the exhortation is enforced*.—Which are,

*Implied.*

(1.) Either *implied*, in these words : "Wherefore the rather." And if you look back upon the two next preceding verses, you will find in them a double argument. (i.) *Ab utili*, "from the fruitfulness" that accompanies assurance : "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Verse 8.) (ii.) *Ab incommodo*, "from" a double "danger :"—

First. *Of growing more and more ignorant of spiritual truths*.—"He that lacketh these things is blind." (Verse 9.) The word *μωωψ* signifies "purblind." Purblind persons do see ; but they see only things near at hand. Many true believers are weak believers ; not so strong-sighted as Abraham was, that could see Christ's day afar off. (John viii. 56.) Unassured persons are not able to look steadily to those things that are to come.

Secondly. There is danger of *more frequent falling into actual sin*.—For although God will not suffer them to fall into any habitual custom of sin ; yet they are very apt to forget that they were "purged from their old sin," (2 Peter i. 9.) and so are so much the more ready to "return with the dog to the vomit, and the swine that was washed to the wallowing in the mire." (2 Peter ii. 22.) Not that any truly regenerate person doth so ; but there is a moral tendency in spiritual sloth and laziness to procure such apostasy.

*Motive expressed.*

(2.) Which is farther also intimated in this tenth verse, where you have *the motive expressed* in the text itself : "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall ;" that is, "Live you in a diligent exercise of saving faith till you come to assurance, and God will make good his own promise, that you shall be 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ;' (1 Peter i. 5 ; ) perseverance being designed, decreed, and

promised by God in the behalf of all those that he hath effectually called, and did eternally elect.”\*

The words thus opened afford us these two general propositions :—

#### THE FIRST GENERAL PROPOSITION.

*That it is the privilege of a true believer, that it is possible for him, to make his calling sure for present, and thereby to become assured of his election past, and consequently of his perseverance unto glory to come.*

#### THE SECOND GENERAL PROPOSITION.

*That it is a believer's duty to give all diligence to make his present calling, past election, and future perseverance, sure.*

I. The first general proposition doth branch itself into three special propositions.

(I.) *That it is possible for a true believer to make his calling sure.*

(II.) *It is possible thereby to know he was elected.*

(III.) *And by both to become assured that he shall persevere unto glory.*

#### THE FIRST SPECIAL PROPOSITION.

(I.) I begin with the First special proposition, *that it is possible for a believer to make his calling sure.*—Here it is necessary that two things be undertaken and performed : First. Explication : Secondly. Probation.

#### EXPLICATION.

FIRST. Two things are to be opened :

1. *What is understood by our “calling?”*

2. *What is meant by a “sure calling?”*

*“What is an effectual call?”*

QUESTION I. “What is to be understood by our ‘calling?’”

ANSWER. Calling, strictly taken, is an act of a person declaring his desire of another person's approach and access to him. Thus the centurion tells Christ, that he could say to one servant, “Come, and he cometh;” (Luke vii. 8;) and thus Christ bids the Samaritan woman call her husband, and come to him. (John iv. 16.) But the word, more largely taken, is used for any declaration of the will of one person to another, where compliance with that will is required. Thus it is said, that Jacob called his son Joseph, when he declared his will to him, saying, “Bury me not in Egypt;” and he made him swear. (Gen. xlvii. 29.) And in this large sense God is said to call a sinner, when he reveals his own will, and a sinner's duty; as when God calls him to repentance, to faith, to holiness. It is the work of God to make known his pleasure, and it is the duty of men to comply therewith.

The word here, “our calling,” is *nomen participiale* [“a participial noun”]: and it is taken not actively, for our calling upon God, as when it is sometimes put for all that worship which we perform to God, as in that phrase, “Then began men to call upon God;” (Gen. iv. 26;

\* *Stabilis est Dei gratia quâ fulciuntur : ergo immunes sunt a periculo cadendi.*—CALVINUS in loc. “The grace of God by which they are supported, is firm and stable: therefore they are safe from the danger of falling.”—EVI.

1 Cor. i. 2;) but it is taken passively, for God's calling of us, the nature of which act is fully expressed in 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." That which I would have you observe at present from hence is this, that the preaching of the gospel, and the revelation of God's will therein, is God's call. So the apostle saith, Ye were "called by our gospel," that is, our preaching of the gospel.

*God's call of two kinds: 1. In word only; 2. In word and power both.*

But here we must distinguish that the call of God in the gospel is twofold: 1. *In word only*; 2. *In word and power conjoined*. So Paul distinguishes in 1 Thess. i. 5: "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Now according to the different means which God uses in calling, so there follows a different fruit, success, or consequent of God's calling.

*Hence ineffectual or effectual.*

Hence it comes to pass, that *God's call sometimes is ineffectual, and sometimes effectual*. So the same apostle plainly declares in 1 Thess. ii. 13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Observe hence, that it is the work of God's Spirit in the heart, superadded to the word of the gospel, as spoken by men, that makes any call effectual. Without this inward work, God may call, and the soul will never answer; (Prov. i. 24;) but when the Spirit co-operates with the word, the souls of the elect become obedient unto God's call; they so hear his voice as to live; (John v. 25;) there is then an enlivening, yea, a creating, power appearing therein. I grant, there is a sort of men arising among us that scoff at this great work of regeneration, and deny the infusion of principles or habits of grace; but we have not to do with these men at this time, who have totally fallen from the faith, and are greater enemies to the cross of Christ than the Papists themselves.

*The judgment of Thomas Aquinas about infused habits of grace.*

Sure I am, that Thomas Aquinas, that famous person whom the church of Rome have canonized for a saint, tells us, that since there are some men endued with such habits which cannot be attained by the power of nature, because by them some men are fitted for the end of salvation, therefore it is necessary that God be owned as the immediate infuser of these habits.\* And he further adds, that as God produces some natural effects without the help of second causes, (as health is sometimes bestowed without the help of physic,) so God infuses habits of grace without and beyond the power of nature.† And whereas this learned person foresaw that some men might here object, that God's infusion of these habits

\* *Prima Secundæ*, quest. II. art. 4.

† *Ibid.* quest. xii. art. 4.

into some persons and not into others, doth plainly prove discriminating grace; (which doctrine of late hath been denied and derided by the Socinians and some others;) therefore this Angelical Doctor makes his confession plainly, that he, for his part, doth own discriminating grace; and that he doth firmly believe that God, agreeably to his own wisdom, and for reasons reserved to himself, bestows more grace on some than upon others; \* and that though it be most agreeable unto man's nature, that habits should arise from frequent acts and much exercise, yet God may and doth work such habits of grace in some men which nature cannot work; and therefore he concludes, that they are supernaturally produced. I have given you the opinion of this author about an effectual call the more fully, because I am confident, that had some men who oppose the infusion of habits been old enough or diligent enough to have perused the writings of such a person as Thomas Aquinas, before they had divulged their own fond notions and opinions, they would (out of a kind of ambition to be accounted *ὁμοψῆφοι*, "like-minded," with such learned men) not have made such an open scoff and derision of discriminating and effectual grace; wherein they do not only contradict the express words of holy writ, but also oppose the doctrine of the most learned of the Fathers and Schoolmen,\* and that with a most bold as well as blind confidence.

I must beg pardon for this short but necessary digression, because it is this effectual work of God's Spirit, in regenerating the soul by infusing of habits of grace, which distinguishes an internal effectual call of God from a mere external and ineffectual one: and this is the thing which is chiefly intended in the text to be made sure; namely, that it might be known whether or no God hath so called thee by his word, as that also he hath wrought in thee by his Spirit; whether God hath illuminated thy understanding, and inclined thy will, so as thou hast complied with God's will, and hast answered his call; whether, when God did draw thee, thou didst run after him; (Canticles i. 4;) whether, when God did knock at the door of thy heart, thou didst open to him; (Rev. iii. 20;) whether, when God did entreat and persuade thee to be reconciled to him, thou didst consent; (2 Cor. v. 20;) whether, when he did woo thee, he did also win thee; whether, when he invited thee to the wedding-supper of his Son, thou didst make no excuse or delay, but didst accept, and welcome, the offer of the gospel with faith and love. (Luke xiv. 18.) All which if thou didst do, it did arise from the power of an inward call, being superadded to the outward call of the word; the very essence of an effectual call consisting in the Spirit's regenerating the soul, and giving "a new heart," (2 Peter i. 4,) which is scripture-language; or in the Spirit's infusing of new principles and habits of grace, according to the phrase of the Schools. So that now by "calling" here in the text, you must understand an inward effectual change wrought in the heart by God himself in the work of conversion and regeneration, or the Spirit's infusing of habits of grace into thy heart.

\* *Non iniquus est Deus si inæqualia æqualibus præparat.*—*Ibid.* quæst. xli. art. 4. "God is not unjust if he bestows unequal portions upon those who are equal."—EDIT.  
† CHRYSOSTOM, AUGUSTINE, BERNARD. See CATHARINUS and EISENGRENIUS *De Certitudine Gratia*.

“What is meant by ‘sure calling?’”

QUESTION II. “What is meant by ‘sure calling,’ or wherein consists the nature of assurance?”

*Certitudo duplex: objecti vel subjecti, rei vel spei.*

ANSWER. There is “a double certainty” of an effectual calling:

1. One, *the certainty of it in itself.*
2. The other, *the certainty of it unto us.*

1. *Our calling is sure in itself*, so soon as ever God hath effectually called us, whether we know it, or know it not. God may effectually call, and we may have surely answered God’s call; and yet we may not be sure that God hath so called us, or that we have so answered. But yet our calling hereby is made sure in itself; and this the Schools call *certitudo objecti*, “the certainty of the object.”

2. *Our calling is sure unto us*, when we know that God hath effectually called us; and this the Schoolmen call *certitudo subjecti*, “the certainty of the subject.” The word in the text, *βεβαιον*, signifies “firm, stable, steady, and fixed, and sure;” either, (1.) As a building is sure that hath a good foundation; or, (2.) As a conclusion is sure that is drawn from certain premisses: \* in like manner our calling may be said to be sure, (1.) Either when it hath the efficacy of God’s Spirit as its sure foundation; or, (2.) When it hath the evidence of proper fruits; which are as good premisses or sure arguments, from which we may conclude ourselves to be effectually called.

That the text hath respect both to subjective as well as objective certainty, is beyond all dispute with considerative men. For the persons here exhorted, as I have shown, were true believers; and consequently their calling was sure in itself before the exhortation was here given to them to make it sure; and therefore the exhortation must chiefly respect subjective certainty, as something to be superadded to objective certainty. Hence when Bellarmine would, from this text, prove justification by works, because in some copies the words are read thus: “Give diligence to make your calling sure” *δια των καλων εργαων*, “by good works;” the most learned Chamier answers him, that granting the words be so read, (Beza owning that he had seen such a copy,) yet it is very absurd and illogical for Bellarmine to argue, that men’s persons are therefore justified by good works *in foro divino*, [“in the divine court,”] (as the Jesuit doth contend,) because, according to this text, men’s calling may be justified or made sure by good works *in foro conscientiae* [“in the court of conscience”]. For this there is no colour from these words; because when vocation is said here to be made sure by good works, “it is,” saith Chamier, “to be understood, primarily and properly, of subjective certainty; *ut constet esse efficacem, et ut ejus certitudo ostendatur signo proprio, nempe, bonis operibus*, ‘that it may appear to be effectual, and its certainty may be manifested by its proper signs, namely, by good works:’ and in that sense we also own that men may be justified by works, that is, declared so in conscience. But by ‘a sure calling’ in

\* Thus Plato (*in Timæo*) saith, that God is both *βεβαιως ὢν*, “the most firm Being,” and *βεβαιως γνωστος*, “the most known Being.”



the text, is chiefly to be understood a calling assuredly known by the subject to be an effectual and saving calling."\* See Beza and Calvin on the place.

*Subjective certainty is of two kinds : perfect, and imperfect.*

Now this subjective certainty is two-fold : 1. *Perfect.* 2. *Imperfect.*

1. *Perfect subjective certainty* is when a thing is so known, as [that] it cannot be better known ; or when the subject is so certain of the truth of a thing, as that he cannot be more certain of it, because he hath not the least ignorance of the thing, or the least doubt concerning it. This is perfect certainty. But here are three things to be noted. Let it be considered,

*Note, (1.) There is no perfect certainty amongst men.*

(1.) *There is no such thing as this perfect subjective certainty in this world.*—Perfect certainty is only to be found in perfect men ; and it is folly to say any men are perfect, or that there is any such thing as perfect knowledge in this world. The apostle saith, "We know but in part ;" (1 Cor. xiii. 9 ;) and therefore it is impossible that we should be certain any more but in part, that is, imperfectly certain.

*Note, (2.) Some imperfect certainty is proper certainty.*

(2.) Another thing which I would have our adversaries consider, is, that *imperfect certainty, though imperfect, yet it may be true and proper certainty, and is in many cases to be accounted more than conjectural or mere opinionative knowledge.*—For instance : we are told by God himself, that no man can find out the Almighty to perfection ; (Job xi. 7 ;) and the most holy men in the world have some atheism remaining in them. Yet, I hope, many men have a true and certain knowledge of God, although no man hath a perfect knowledge of him ; so a man may have a true and certain knowledge that he is effectually called, although he hath not a perfect knowledge of it.

*2. Imperfect certainty hath these four properties.*

2. Let it be considered, that the nature of *imperfect subjective certainty is always such a knowledge as hath these four properties* : (1.) *It is built upon or drawn from most certain proofs and evidences ;* and therefore, (2.) *It is such as doth prevail against all irrational doubts ;* and, (3.) *It is accompanied or followed with proper fruits of undoubted certainty, notwithstanding a mixture of ignorance, and some impressed or indiscursive fears which may consist with it.* (4.) *It is such as God doth own for true and proper assurance in holy writ.*

*Founded upon assuring evidences.*

(1.) *When knowledge is built upon rational assuring evidences, then it ought to be accounted certain knowledge, notwithstanding some irrational and unaccountable doubts may arise.*—A man that walks upon the leads of a very high but very strong well-built tower, encompassed with battlements, doth know rationally that he cannot fall, and he is not rationally

\* CHAMIERI *Panstrat.* tom. lli. lib. xv. cap. 15.

in any fear of falling ; but yet when he looks from that height, he hath irrational fears impressed upon him. And yet such fears as these hinder not but that he is still certain that he shall not fall, because he can rationally prove that he cannot fall. Thus a person assured of his effectual calling by good evidence, is really and properly certain ; although possibly when he looks down from the height of future expected glory into the bottomless pit of misery, from whence he hath escaped, some indiscursive or irrational fears and doubts may be impressed upon him, which may lessen but not destroy assurance.

*Prevailing over all irrational doubts.*

(2.) *When assurance is actually stronger than diffidence, and doth certainly prevail against distracting fears, then it is to be accounted certain assurance, though it be still imperfect.*—The truth and the degree of a believer's assurance doth hold proportion to the truth and degree of his grace ; and by this proportion of one to the other they do very much illustrate each other. Thus, First : There is an analogy between grace and assurance, in this, that as grace may be true, although it be not perfect, so may assurance be true assurance when imperfect. Again : As where sin reigns there is no grace, so where doubting reigns there is no assurance ; but as when grace prevails, it is accounted true grace, so when assurance prevails over doubts, it is to be reckoned true assurance. Lastly. Where grace is perfect without sin, (as in heaven,) there assurance will be perfect without all doubt, and not till then.

*Followed with the proper fruits of assurance.*

(3.) *When a true believer's imperfect assurance is accompanied with the proper fruits of true assurance, it is then true assurance.*—Such fruits as these : (i.) Inward peace and satisfaction of mind, the feast of a good conscience. (Phil. iv. 7 ; 2 Cor. i. 12.) (ii.) Joy in the Holy Ghost. (Gal. v. 22.) (iii.) Power and strength over temptations. (James i. 2.) (iv.) Victory over the world. (1 John v. 4.) (v.) Enlargedness of heart in the love of God. (2 Cor. v. 14.) (vi.) Delight in his ways. (Psalm xl. 8.) (vii.) Ready obedience to his will. (Psalm cxix. 32.) (viii.) Patient bearing of the cross, and rejoicing in tribulation. (Job i. 21 ; 2 Cor. vii. 4.) (ix.) Freedom and boldness of access to the throne of grace. (Heb. iv. 16.) (x.) A spirit of grace and supplication. (Gal. iv. 6 ; Zech. xii. 10.) (xi.) Dependence upon God in all states. (Psalm lxii. 8.) (xii.) Great expectations from him. (Psalm lxi. 5.) (xiii.) All willingness to go hence, and a desire to be dissolved. (Phil. i. 23.) When assurance is accompanied or followed with such fruits as these, (and the assurance of many a believer is thus attended,) although it be not perfect, yet it is true and proper assurance.

*Owned by God, and so called.*

(4.) *That assurance which God himself owns as true and proper assurance, and is called so by the Spirit of God in scripture, is to be acknowledged by us as such.*—God hath given divers names to a believer's assurance, which speak it properly to be so. (i.) It is called *πεισισ*, “a sure persuasion.” St. Paul saith, that he was “persuaded that neither life nor death,” &c., “should separate him from the love of God.”

(Rom. viii. 38, 39.) (ii.) It is called *γνωσις*, "certain knowledge." St. John saith, "Hereby we know that we are in him." (1 John ii. 5.) (iii.) *Ελεγχος*, "an evident probation." So a believer's faith is called "the evident proof of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) (iv.) *Ῥποστασις*, "a substantial prepossession" of heaven. So faith is also called by the same apostle in the same place. (v.) It is called *πληροφορία*, "a fulness of assurance," both in Heb. vi. 11; x. 22; and 1 Thess. i. 5. A believer's assurance is owned by God, and said to be full, although not perfect. So that the controversy between us and Rome is not,

*Our controversy with Rome in this point is about the proper, not the perfect, assurance of a believer.*

1. *Whether perfect assurance be possible, but whether certain assurance be possible.*—That is, whether a well-grounded, prevalent, and influential assurance be not attainable. Bellarmine grants, believers may have a conjectural hope; we say, true believers may attain to proper assurance. The Papists grant an assurance of fancy; we contend for an assurance of faith. Theirs is an assurance of opinion; ours an assurance of knowledge. I confess, the philosophic schools have divided all argumentation into demonstrative and opinionative; and they divided all knowledge into perfect science, or mere conjecture; and hence arose two sorts of philosophers amongst them: (1.) The *δογματικοί*, "dogmatists," who thought themselves perfectly certain of every thing, and doubted of nothing, but were as infallible as the pope in his chair. (2.) The *εφεκτικοί*, a kind of seekers that did "restrain their assent," and doubted of all things; like the Popish laity, that are kept in the dark, and are taught to be blind. But the Protestants are of an elective kind of divines, who know a middle way between both extremes; and therefore we do maintain a possibility of certain knowledge, while we own an imperfection also: there being various degrees of a believer's certainty, and of his assurance; and yet the lowest of them is more than moral conjecture or opinion. Bellarmine himself is forced to grant that there are three degrees of certainty; \* and although he doth not admit a true believer's knowledge of his effectual call into any of those degrees, yet I shall prove anon that a believer may attain a very high degree of certainty therein.

*Our controversy not about words or names.*

2. But let it be observed, in the second place, that our controversy is not about words or names of things.—The question is not, whether a believer's assurance is to be called *certitudo fidei*, or *certitudo fiduciæ*, or *certitudo scientiæ*; whether "an assurance of faith," or "an assurance of confidence," or "an assurance of sense or of knowledge:" for, indeed, it is not properly any of these; but an assurance mixed, and arising partly from faith, partly from confidence, and partly from knowledge both of reason and sense.

(1.) It may be called "an assurance of confidence;" inasmuch as the degree of an assured believer's faith and knowledge must be such as

\* *In certitudine tres quasi gradus distinguuntur, &c.*—BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. iil. cap. 2.

excludes all rational and prevailing fears and doubts, according as I have already shown.\*

(2.) It may be called "an assurance of faith," from that special interest that faith hath therein ; inasmuch as no believer can attain to assurance of salvation that doth not first fiducially, and by way of application, believe those peculiar declarations of God's grace and will in the gospel, which are the foundation of a believer's salvation and assurance ; more especially these three : (i.) The way of salvation by Christ. (ii.) The nature and properties of saving faith. (iii.) The certain perseverance of true believers to glory. It is called "an assurance of faith ;" inasmuch as there must be an actual compliance with the way of salvation by an explicit exercise of saving faith upon Christ Jesus ; a believer demeaning himself toward Christ, as toward "the Mediator of the new covenant." (Heb. xii. 24.)

(3.) It may be called "an assurance of knowledge ;" inasmuch as every assured believer must, first, know what are the signs of true faith, and, secondly, must know assuredly that the signs of true faith are in himself.

(4.) It may be called "an assurance of sense ;" inasmuch as a believer knows, not only by way of rational proof, but also by way of spiritual, internal, and experimental sense, that the work of God's Spirit hath been effectual in a saving manner upon him.

All which I shall verify and make good by several arguments, in the order and method following :

PROBATION. THE FIRST ARGUMENT : FROM THE CONCESSIONS  
AND ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

SECONDLY. For proof of this first proposition, I shall, First, argue *from the concessions of our adversaries ; that is, from some special articles of their doctrine ;* which, although we do not grant them to be true in themselves, yet they do afford sufficient argument for conviction of a Papist, in our present case ; evincing that it is possible for a believer to attain to assurance of his being effectually called.

*The first Popish doctrine : that assurance is possible in an extraordinary way, but not in an ordinary way.*

The first doctrine of theirs which we shall take notice of is this : They grant and affirm, *that a believer may be assured of the pardon of his sins by extraordinary means, by some immediate revelation ; that is, either by a voice from heaven, or the mission of an angel sent from thence ; but they deny it to be possible to know this by ordinary means ; that is, by the revelation of God's will and of man's duty in scripture, with reference to eternal life ; although the mind of man be savingly illuminated by the Spirit, and although conscience be enabled thereby to compare a believer's heart and life with the rule of the word.*—Now I would fain know how St. Anthony, St. Galla, or St. Francis, who, Bellarmine saith,

\* *Justi securitas, leonis instar, dum quoslibet contra se insurgere conspiciat, ad mentis sue confidentiam redit, et scit quod cum eos adversantes superet, &c.*—GREGORII Moral. lib. xxxi. cap. 23. "The security of the just man is like that of a lion ; when he sees any adversaries rising against him, he falls back upon the confidence of his own mind, and knows that when he overcomes them," &c.—EDIT.

were extraordinarily assured,\* could be so well assured by a voice supposed to come from heaven, (which may be subject to many delusions of fancy, and to divers cheats and impostures by men or devils, especially when heard by one single person only,) as by the voice of Christ Jesus, who was sent of God to reveal the rule of life, and by the voice of a man's own conscience, assisted by the Spirit, enabling a believer to discern his agreement with that rule. I grant that God gave testimony unto Christ Jesus by "a voice from heaven;" (Matt. iii. 17; Luke iii. 22;) but observe, 1. This voice was frequently repeated. 2. It was given in the hearing of multitudes. (John xii. 28.) 3. God did speak nothing from heaven immediately, but what he had, tantamount, spoken before in the scripture: hence it is that Christ appeals not to this voice, but bids men "search the scriptures," for they testified of him. (John v. 29.) And when Christ tells his followers again, that God had given testimony of him, he makes mention of the works that the Father had enabled him to do, but makes no mention of his voice. (John v. 36.)

And as for assurance given by angels, it must needs fall short of the assurance given by the Spirit of God; for the apostle supposes that an angel from heaven (that is, Satan transforming himself into an "angel of light," 2 Cor. xi. 14) may preach false doctrine, and be accursed; (Gal. i. 8;)† which is blasphemy to suppose of the Holy Spirit. Hence also our Saviour intimates, in the parable of Dives, that the writings of Moses and the prophets in scripture are much more convincing and assuring, than the words of one arising from the dead, or one sent from heaven. (Luke xvi. 29—31.) If men may, then, be assured in Bellarmine's extraordinary way, they may much better be assured by the ordinary way revealed in [the] scriptures.

*The second Popish doctrine: that one man may be assured of another's salvation, but not of his own.*

The second Popish doctrine is this: they say that *one man may be assured of another's salvation, but that no man can be assured of his own.*—The pope declares that he was sure of Bellarmine's salvation when he canonized him for a saint; but Bellarmine was not sure of his own salvation himself when he died; for his own nephew† relates that he trembled at the thoughts of death; and that when some standing by desired him that he would pray for them in heaven, he answered, that for his part he knew not (when he was just expiring) whether ever he should come there. Now of all sorts of men, the church of Rome ought to grant assurance possible to believers themselves, whenas the pope hath declared himself to be so infallibly sure of the salvation of so many millions whom he hath canonized.

*The third Popish doctrine: that the priest can give assurance by his word, but God cannot do it by his word.*

They say that *the priest or confessor can give assurance by his bare word, but deny God's word to be any good ground of assurance.*—Bellarmine saith, that, "after confession, the priest by the word of absolution doth give such evidence of justifying grace, as there can be

\* See BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. iii. cap. 5.

† MARCELLUS CERVINUS.

no mistake therein ;” these are his very words.\* Here he mentions confession as a help to assurance ; yet afterwards he makes assurance to depend wholly on absolution ; for he saith, “ It may often happen that a man may confess few or none of his sins ; and yet the priest may assure him of pardon, and he ought so to believe.”† You see here that the priest can give assurance, and assurance of faith also ; but with him the word of God can give no assurance at all, much less of faith. The Jesuit will acknowledge that some dark conjectures or opinions may be built upon the word of God, but no assurance ; for he boldly, impiously, and blasphemously saith, that “ the certainty of those things that are believed in the word is only dark and obscure, like that of opinion.”‡ Thus he intimates as if God could not, but that the priest could, assure. This is as if Cornelius should have disbelieved what Simon Peter spake to him in the name of God, and should have believed Simon Magus whatever he spake in his own or the devil’s name. Let all men judge, if the priest may give assurance by his word, whether God cannot do it by his word much more infallibly.

*The fourth Popish doctrine : they say, “ Men may attain perfection, yet not assurance.”*

They say, “ *Men may attain to perfection, and yet not to assurance.*” — The words of Soto are these : “ It is possible for us so in this life to fulfil the whole law of God, and the precept of love, that we may avoid all and every mortal sin ;” by “ mortal sin,” he means, as Luidamus interprets, whatever may lessen or violate our friendship with God. Now if men may be thus perfect, certainly then they may know that they are thus perfect ; otherwise, they could be perfect without perfection. It is therefore a contradiction to say that men may be perfect, and not assured.

*The fifth Popish doctrine : they say, “ Men may merit, and yet not know they are sincere.”*

The church of Rome say, that *men may attain to works of merit and super-erogation.*—I ask whether works done ignorantly, and without knowledge of rule or end, can be meritorious. Whatever act is blindly and casually performed, is so far from being a meritorious act, as it is not a moral act of obedience or service : if then men could perform any work of merit or super-erogation, they must know first that they are sincere, and accepted of God as upright, before they can imagine that their works shall be rewarded as meritorious. Yet our adversaries teach, that men cannot be assured of acceptance ; and yet they may not only be perfect, but may be more than perfect ; (so super-erogation implies ; ) that is, that they [may] “ be righteous over-much,” (Eccles. vii. 16,) or they may be not only good, but too good ; which we will grant in the proverbial sense. They mean by it, that men may be so righteous and so good, as to purchase pardon for a thousand of other sinners, and yet may

\* *Confessio penitentis et verbum absolventis sunt signa gratiæ justificantis practica et efficacia, adeo ut falsa esse non possint.*—BELLARMINUS *De Porn.* lib. i. cap. 10. † *Facile potest accidere ut, videlicet, minimam partem suorum criminum quis aperiat ; et tamen esse absolvi ut, et certò absolutus creditur.*—Idem, *ibid.* lib. iii. cap. 21. ‡ *Obscura est certitudo earum rerum, quæ solâ fide vel opinione nituntur.*—Idem, *De Just.* lib. iii. cap. 2.

remain unassured of their own pardon. Is not this strange doctrine? Would you, then, know the reason why the church of Rome holds these absurd opinions, and seeks to maintain that both parts of a contradiction are true, as in our present case they do, and I could evidence it by many more instances? To satisfy you about this spirit of contradiction, I shall at once open the whole mystery of iniquity, and give you a golden key whereby you may unlock their more hidden contrivances; a key of more worth than any of those which the pope holds in his hand, or wears at his girdle; by which he opens the treasures of all his enslaved vassals at his pleasure. The print of our key you have, drawn by the apostle Paul, in 1 Tim. vi. 3—5, whither I must remit you; only let me tell you, that the more you search into the Romish religion, the more you will find it calculated only for gain.\* Assurance is therefore denied by them to be ordinarily possible, because, could the laity attain to it without the extraordinary assistance of the priest, the price of pardons, indulgences, and absolutions would exceedingly fall. But although with them the scripture be an insufficient thing, yet money assures all things; and at Rome you may buy (if you be rich enough) not only assurance, but perfection, and power of merit, and works of super-erogation, and what not? But no more of this.

THE SECOND ARGUMENT: FROM THE NATURE, USE, AND END OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE A GOOD FOUNDATION OF ASSURANCE.

My Second argument to prove that it is possible for a believer to attain to a certain knowledge that he is effectually called, shall be *from the nature, use, and end of the holy scriptures*.—If scripture be a good foundation of assurance, then assurance is possible: But scripture is a good foundation of assurance, upon a double account:

1. *As to the matter revealed.*
2. *As to the manner of revelation.*

*As to the matter of them; namely, the grace of God in Christ.*

1. Scripture is a good foundation of assurance, if you consider *the matter of scripture-revelation*.—The sum and substance of all scripture-revelation is, the manifestation of God's grace in Christ Jesus unto sinners; namely, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Or, in fewer words, "By grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.) Or, in one word, "Grace" is the chief matter of scripture.

Now God's grace, as it is revealed in scripture, is a good foundation of assurance upon two accounts:

- (1.) *As it is free grace.*
- (2.) *As it is engaged grace.*

\* *Pietatem quæstum ducunt illi, &c.* "Those count gain godliness, who think [that] the oracles of God are given to no other end but to serve their avarice, and measure all religion by their own profit."—CALVINUS in 1 Tim. vi. 3—5.

*Scripture reveals free grace.*

(1.) The scriptures reveal the grace of God in *its freeness*, and so it affords a good foundation of assurance. Were sinners to be justified by works, or by their own merits, assurance were impossible; but it is "by grace that we are saved;" that is, by the merits of our Mediator. God freely accepts of that expiation which Christ hath made by the sacrifice of his own blood upon our account. The Papists, that hold justification by works, must necessarily deny the possibility of assurance; for if justification were by works, then if a believer should keep the whole law, and fail but of one particular, he were guilty of all. (James ii. 10.) In that case therefore no man could attain to assurance; "for in many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) But (blessed be God!) believers are "not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. vi. 14.) Now grace accepts, for Christ's sake, sincere obedience, where no perfect obedience can be performed. Wherever sin is neither deliberate nor habitual, it cannot weaken a believer's evidence: neither ought the imperfections of believers to hinder their assurance, because the grace of God in Christ is free, accepting satisfaction from Christ.

*Scripture reveals grace engaged.*

(2.) The grace of God revealed in scripture is a good foundation of assurance *as it is engaged grace*; that is, as it is grace revealed in a covenant or promise. Grace as to any merit of ours is free; but as to the promise of God, it is engaged. And as assurance were impossible, were not grace free, that is, were believers still under a covenant of works; so assurance were impossible still, if believers were under no covenant-dispensation at all. Believers could have no hold of grace, were it never so free in itself, had not God given us assurance of his grace in the covenant, and bound himself by promise. I know, some men do highly magnify the essential goodness and kindness of God as the ground of a natural faith. I grant that this divine benignity and goodness doth afford some lesser hope or expectation of pardon; but it gives no solid ground of assurance. The essential bounty, goodness, and mercy of God is like a deep and wide ocean, upon which the mind of man may, as a vessel at sea, bear itself up in a calm; but if a storm arise, every wise pilot will make toward the shore, or to a safe rock, because it is there only he can find good anchor-hold. Grace in a covenant, or in a conditional promise, may seem to be grace bounded and limited; but yet hope even there hath better anchorage than it hath upon God's general grace and philanthropy, which may bear up the soul in a calm, but afford little peace to an unquiet mind. It is the rock of our salvation revealed in the promise that only can stay that soul which is once thoroughly awakened and convinced of guilt. Now the scripture doth reveal God's grace engaged by covenant to accept for Christ's sake all those that do depend upon his Son's merits, and obey his commands, by an effectual faith.



*Scripture reveals the nature of that faith whereby a believer attains an interest in Christ.*

(3.) And that is another thing revealed in the word; namely, *the nature of that faith by which believers do obtain an interest in God's grace through Christ.*—And upon this account the scripture is a good foundation of assurance, inasmuch as, (i.) It reveals certainly and undoubtedly that by faith in Christ we have an interest in God's most free and promised grace. (John iii. 16.) (ii.) That it reveals certain and undoubted marks of the nature of true faith in Christ. (James ii. 17, 18.) If then a believer be by the word informed that through faith in Christ he may certainly obtain pardon of sin; and if he be also sufficiently therein taught how to discover unfeigned from feigned faith by those certain *κριτήρια* ["criteria"] or *γνωρίσματα* ["marks"] which are laid down in the word; (1 Tim. i. 5;) what can hinder the possibility of a believer's assurance?

*The manner of scripture-revelation shows it to be a good foundation of assurance.*

2. Especially if you shall consider, in the second place, *the manner of scripture-revelation*; which proves it to be a good foundation of assurance, in that it is, (1.) Full. (2.) Plain. (3.) Assuredly divine. (4.) Designed for assurance.

(1.) Scripture-revelation of the way of life is *full*; that is, all things necessary to be known, both for salvation and for the furtherance of assurance, are fully revealed, so as there is nothing wanting. (John xv. 15.)

(2.) All things are revealed *plainly, clearly, and so intelligibly* as that the lowest capacity may reach and know the will of God, so far as concerns salvation; and he that is humble and obedient may understand whatever is necessary to be known concerning salvation or assurance. (John vii. 17.)

(3.) All things are *abundantly assured to us to be of divine authority*, God having been pleased to set the seal of miracles to the patent of every ambassador sent by him, and having attested the commission of every penman of scripture, as appears by Heb. ii. 3, 4. But I do omit the full proof of the sufficiency, perspicuity, and divine authority of the scripture, because it is so abundantly done by others in the discourses annexed.

(4.) A fourth property of scripture-revelation is this, *that it was revealed to this very end,—that men might attain to assurance thereby.* So we are frequently told by God himself, namely, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope;" (Rom. xv. 4.) And lest any one should think that the Spirit of God by "hope" doth only understand a conjecture, as Bellarmine interprets the place,\* the apostle John doth tell us, that the express design of his epistle was, that those who believe might not only hope, but "know they had eternal life." (1 John v. 13.) And Christ himself tells believers that he spoke all those things "that they might have joy, and that their joy might be

\* BELLARMINUS *De Just.* lib. iii. cap. 3.

full." (John xv. 11.) And the author [of the epistle] to the Hebrews gives us this very account, why God did not only make a covenant of grace, but did also confirm and ratify it by an oath; namely, that believers "might have strong consolation," or assured comfort. (Heb. vi. 18.) From all which it is evident, believers have a good foundation of assurance in and by the word.\* And moreover it is evident that the word was designed for this end. Now the rule is most true: *Deus et natura nihil moliuntur frustra*, "God and nature design nothing in vain."

THE THIRD ARGUMENT: FROM THE NATURE OF MAN'S FACULTIES  
AND POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

As God hath given believers a good foundation of assurance in the word, so he hath given them sufficient help and power rightly and assuredly to build upon that foundation; *inasmuch as he hath endued them with such faculties as are able to observe, discern, and judge of their regular building upon that foundation; that is, God hath enabled them to discern certainly whether their hearts and lives agree with the rule of faith and manners.*—If God had created the sun, but had denied men eyes, no man could have known the path which he walks in, or have discerned the end which he aims at: but God hath given both light streaming forth from the word, and he hath given the eye of conscience, that by both these men might come assuredly to know that they are called out of darkness unto light, (Eph. v. 8,) and that they walk in that narrow way that leads to life, (Matt. vii. 14,) because they always make salvation the constant white and mark of their eye. The church of Rome perverts all true religion at once, and destroyeth all rational obedience to God's command, as well as they do undermine all the best joys and comforts of a good man's life,† while they deny that any man can know assuredly what it is which he chooses for his portion, or what he doth mostly prosecute, or what is the chief bent, frame, or complexion of his heart, or what is the tenor or course of his life and conversation; whereas there are few persons living that bear not about them in their own breasts a convincing argument, from the testimony of conscience, how much the general conversation of some men does depart from the rule of the word, and how near other men, in the tendency of their lives, do approach to it. The dictates of most men's consciences do tell them, how great a discerning they have of good and evil, and also of the nature of their own actions. No man can be wholly ignorant of the law of God which is written in his own heart; and few men who live under the preaching of the gospel, but are conscious of the strivings of the Spirit of God with them; and they know in what instance they have complied with its motions, and against what calls thereof they have stopped their ears: how much more then may every true believer certainly know the saving work of God upon him! If an unsanctified person cannot wholly be a stranger to himself, surely, then, the man that dwells much at home, that frequently descends into his own heart, that summons his own soul to

\* Christ is *fundamentum quod* ["the foundation itself"]; scripture is *fundamentum quo* ["the foundation on which"].

† Luther saith, that if there were no other error in Rome but their denying the possibility of assurance, all men ought to reject communion with them.—LUTHER in *Gen. xli*.

appear before him, and to come to trial,—this man cannot easily be ignorant what agreement there is between the rule of God's word, and the method of his conversation. Bellarmine doth much urge that text of the prophet: "The heart" of man "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9.) "If no man can know his heart," saith the cardinal, "then none can attain to assurance." But we answer:

1. That though an unregenerate heart which is desperately wicked be deceitful, and not to be known, yet so are not the hearts of true believers.

2. The question is propounded of one man's knowing the heart of another, but not of a man's knowing his own; so Peter Martyr and others upon the place.

There are three offices of conscience which it is able to discharge, and thereby it doth exceedingly promote a believer's assurance.

1. There is in conscience *συντηρησις*, by which power it is able to eye its rule.

2. *Συνειδησις*, a power to compare man's actions with the rule.

3. *Κρισις*, a power to pass sentence or judgment either of condemnation, whereby it doth *κατηγορεῖν*, "accuse;" or of absolution, whereby it doth *απολογεῖν*, "excuse;" as the apostle speaks, Rom. ii. 15.

Conscience is both a judge, a witness, and an executioner upon the trial of man's heart and life.

*Conscience is a judge according to law.*

1. *Conscience is a judge.*—I will not say, it is a king to give law; but it is a judge to try and to pass sentence according to law. Hence the apostle John doubts not to say that the voice of conscience is one and the same with the voice of God: "Hereby," saith he, "we know that we are of" him in "truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence" even "before God." (1 John iii. 19—21.) That person that is acquitted at the bar by a judge acting according to law, needs not fear to appear before the king himself on the throne.

*Conscience a witness as to matter of fact.*

2. *Conscience discharges the office of a witness.*—St. Paul calls it "a witness:" "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing witness;" (Rom. ix. 1;) and St. John gives it the same title: "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." (1 John v. 10.) Heathens could say, *Conscientia mille testes*, "Conscience is a thousand witnesses;" but the apostle speaks yet more, when he joins the Spirit of God as a co-witness with our spirits: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.)

*Conscience is a rewarder or punisher according to sentence given.*

3. *Conscience is a rewarder or punisher according to the nature of the sentence which it pronounces.*—If conscience doth accuse, no such severe tormentor as conscience is, as is evident in the instances of Cain, and

Judas, and Spira; if conscience doth acquit, no such comforter and rewarder: "Our rejoicing," saith Paul, "is this, the testimony of our conscience," &c.: (2 Cor. i. 12:) no such joy, no such feast, as the joy and feast of a good conscience. (Prov. xv. 15.) Well may it be said, that "a good man is satisfied from himself." (Prov. xiv. 14.) This "bread" is often "eaten in secret:" it is "hidden manna," and is so much the more pleasant: (Prov. ix. 17:) this is joy that a stranger meddles not withal, (Prov. xiv. 10,) and is so much the more secure. The "new name" and "the white stone" none know but those that have them, (Rev. ii. 17,) even "the sons of consolation."

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT: BECAUSE IT HATH BEEN ATTAINED.

Assurance is possible to be attained *because it hath been attained.*—*Ab esse ad posse valet consequentia.\** 1. Job declares his assurance in that he saith, he knew that his Redeemer did live; *his*, emphatically *his*, not another's, Redeemer; *his Redeemer*, as to eternal as well as temporal concerns; so he describes him: "He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," the day of resurrection, after worms had devoured his skin and his flesh; then should he see him owning and receiving of him into glory. (Job xix. 25, 26.) 2. David also was so assured of his interest in God, that he with assured confidence requires salvation from God's hand: "I am thine," saith he, "therefore save me." (Psalm cxix. 94.) 3. Another instance of assurance we have in Hezekiah, who could appeal to God on a death-bed, that he had walked before God in truth with a perfect heart, and had done that which was right in God's sight. And it is evident, his assurance was good; for God accepts of the appeal, and declares it to be true. (Isai. xxxviii. 3—5.) But the most convincing instance is that of Paul, in Rom. viii. 38, 39, where he declares so great a plerophory of assurance, that he was persuaded, neither life, nor death, nor any other thing should separate him from the love of God. The Romanists do variously excruciate themselves to evade the force of this text. Some of them say,† the apostle speaks only of a conjectural persuasion; but Pareus proves that the apostle never useth the word *πεισισμαι*, "I am persuaded," (with reference to his own salvation,) but he intends full assurance by it: so in 2 Tim. i. 12: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded" (that is, "I am assured") "that he is able to keep that thing I have committed to him against that day." God's power is not an object of conjecture, but of knowledge and assurance. Others of that church say,‡ that although Paul was assured that not any creature could separate him from the love of God, yet he was not sure but he might separate himself by the apostasy of his own will. Of these men the learned Chamier doth well demand whether the apostle's will were not a creature; and also, whether God cannot by his own power keep our wills to himself, after he hath made us of unwilling to be a willing people.§ For notwithstanding there may after conversion remain a natural power in men to alienate their hearts from God, yet by Christ's mediation and the Spirit's superintendency in true believers, there remains no moral power actually to do it. And, further:

\* "From actual being to possibility the consequence is valid."—EDIT. † STAPLETON, VASQUEZ. ‡ SALMERO, PERERUS. § *Panstratia Catholica*, tom. iii. lib. xiii.

"Since no creature can do any thing toward our separation from God but by our wills, it is folly," saith he, "to think that the apostle doth not include a believer's will, when he saith, 'No creature shall separate a believer from God.'" Bellarmine, to avoid the text, runs to his old refuge, and grants that Paul was truly assured, but it was by an extraordinary revelation, which no other believer can ordinarily attain to.\* The folly of this evasion I have already in part detected; two things more I desire may here be considered: 1. That when any persons have declared, in the scripture, their full assurance, they have spoken of it not as of a thing of extraordinary revelation, but as of a thing of evident probation. 2. That yet they have spoken of their assurance as of a thing of as great certainty as can be desired. For the proof of both these, I shall instance in the apostle John, who often asserts his assurance; but, 1. He reckons it not grounded upon immediate revelation, but upon rational evidence and probation. His words are these: "Hereby" (*ἐν τούτῳ*) "we do know," saith he, "that we know him, if we keep his commandments." (1 John ii. 3.) And again: "Hereby" (the same word is here used again) "we know that we are of" him in "truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." (1 John iii. 19.) You see, in both places, he speaks argumentatively, not by way of revelation: and yet observe, 2. That his assurance was full and strong; for it is expressed by words importing as great assurance as can be expected: *Γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν*, *Scimus quidd novimus*, "We know that we know him;" and in the other text the emphasis seems greater: *Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμεν, καὶ ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν*. "Hereby we know that we are of" him in "truth, and" we know [that] we "shall assure our hearts before him." (1 John iii. 19.) So that, you see, many believers have attained to assurance; and therefore it is possible.

THE FIFTH ARGUMENT: FROM THE INSTITUTION, NATURE, USE,  
AND END OF THE SACRAMENTS.

It is possible to attain to assurance, *because God hath designed our assurance in the instituting of those ordinances which do properly tend to the begetting and increasing of assurance; that is, God hath therefore confirmed his promises and the covenant of his grace by visible signs and seals, for the begetting and promoting [of] our assurance of his love and favour to us.*—There could be no greater reason of the institution of circumcision and the passover under the law, and of baptism and the Lord's supper under the gospel, than God's intending thereby the giving all necessary and useful helps and furtherance of subjective assurance. Hence it is that the apostle Paul tells us, that the promise and the blessing was sure in itself to Abraham long before he was circumcised. (Rom. iv. 11.) It may then be inquired, To what end was circumcision instituted? The same apostle tells [us that] the end was, that it might be a ground of greater assurance; for so he saith, "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Now unto this seal of circumcision under the law the seal of baptism answers in the gospel:

\* *De Justif.* lib. iii. cap. 5.

and as the striking of the blood of the paschal lamb on the door-posts of the Israelites gave farther assurance, after the promise was made, that the destroying angel should not smite the first-born of any Israelite ; so the institution of the Lord's supper was intended for a begetting [of] the greater assurance in the heart of a true believer, that God will not destroy him for the sake of the blood of his Son that is thereby represented : both sacraments being intended as seals of the covenant of grace, more visibly ratifying thereof to sense, and confirming faith thereby.

Moreover, God in the sacraments doth confirm a believer's faith, inasmuch as he doth therein, by his ministers, make a more particular and personal offer and application of his grace to every true believer. In the sacraments there are to be considered, 1. The confirmation ; and, 2. The more special application of the benefits of the covenant of grace ; and by both these a believer's faith is strengthened, and his assurance is promoted. It is one argument that Becanus, the Papist, useth against the possibility of assurance ; namely, because God hath not by name declared to any person that his sins are forgiven any where in scripture. But this cavil and objection we have already obviated, and told you that all universal and general propositions do include singular and particulars. It is nowhere said, that Thomas or John shall not do any murder, or shall not steal ; but the command is as binding as if they had been named : the case is the same in promises as in commands. But we might answer *sano sensu* ["in a sound sense"] farther, with St. Bernard, that in the sacrament of the Lord's supper there is an actual exhibition and particular application made of the grace of God, whereby all true believers are personally and actually invested into that grace by a direct and immediate assurance given. The father explains himself thus : "The priest," saith he, "in the eucharist doth as it were invest the receiver with an assurance of pardon, as some men are invested into an estate by a rod or staff, or as a woman is invested into an actual interest in her husband's estate by her husband's putting a ring upon her finger, or as a canon is invested by a book put into his hand, or as an abbot is invested by a staff." \* We do not say, with the Papists, that the sacraments do actually confer grace by virtue of the external application ; but we say, that in the sacrament there is an assured "offer" of grace made to every receiver, and unto all true believers they do "sign, seal, and assure" a certain and undoubted interest in pardon.† Bellarmine saith, that "after the receiving of the sacrament," as he calls it, "of absolution, very many believers have, and all believers ought to have, a certain and confident assurance of pardon of sin."‡ In which words of the Jesuit, I desire three things to be observed : 1. How openly and plainly Bellarmine contradicts himself. 2. How he hath incurred the anathema of the Trent council. And, 3. How he hath conceded what we plead for.

1. This admired doctor takes liberty to contradict himself, as so great a scholar may much better than another ; for if you consult his third

\* *Domino passioni appropinquans, investiri suos de gratiâ suâ curavit, &c.*—BERNARDUS De Cordâ Dom. serm. 1. † *Offerunt, non conferunt ; signant et obsecrant.* ‡ *Post receptum sacramentum plurimi fidei habent, et habere debent, fiduciæ certitudinem de remissione peccatorum.*—BELLARMINUS De Pæn. lib. iii. cap. 2.

chapter of his third book "Of Justification," he there tells you, that "it is a gross error to say that any believer can have any such sure knowledge of their own grace, so as that they can, by an assured faith, determine that their sins are forgiven:" \* but in the second chapter of his third book "Of Repentance," now quoted, you see that he had said before, that "after absolution, many believers have, and ought to have, an assurance of faith that their sins are forgiven." If these things be not contradictions, I know not what are. Some of his friends would help him, by saying that there is difference between an assured faith in one place, and an assurance of faith in another; or between *certâ fide statuere*, and *fiduciæ certitudinem habere*. If any one shall so distinguish, he will but farther discover his own folly; because *certitudo fiduciæ*, "assurance of faith," is, of the two, more large and comprehensive than *certa fides*, which we translate "sure faith." Assurance or confidence doth always suppose sure faith, or certain assent, as the ground, root, and foundation thereof.† There may be faith where there is no confidence, but there can be no confidence where there is no faith: he that therefore saith, that "it is possible for a man to be assuredly confident of the pardon of his sin," doth contradict him that saith, "It is not possible for any man to believe his sins are pardoned." Bellarmine, by saying both these things, doth plainly contradict himself.

2. But we shall wonder at this the less, because, in the second place, we may observe that he makes bold to contradict in most express terms his most holy council of Trent; the words of which council I quoted in the entrance of this discourse; wherein they declare that *certitudo fiduciæ*, "assurance of faith,"—or "assurance of confidence," translate it as you please,—concerning pardon of sin is vain and impious. But Bellarmine saith, that "many believers have (and all ought after absolution to have) this" *certitudinem fiduciæ*, "assurance of faith" or "confidence:" call it by what name you will; yet the contradiction is direct, the same word being used by the council and by the Jesuit. Now who can by any distinction reconcile these two contradicting positions? And therefore I suppose, none can free our poor doctor from the anathema passed upon him by the council. For my part, I always thought a council to be more infallible than the pope; (though I will try before I will trust either of them;) I am therefore confident that the pope did err when he made a saint of this cardinal, whom we find accursed by the council.

3. But we Protestants ought to pardon and absolve the Jesuit from this anathema, pronounced for his contradicting the pretended general council, since he doth not in this contradict the truth, but doth grant all that which we plead for, even almost in the very words and terms by which the Protestants themselves express it; for there is little or no difference between the very phrase which I have quoted out of Bellarmine's second book "Of Penance," and the very words of his adversary Chemnitius, in his *Examen*, which are these, that "a true penitent, or

\* *Primus hæreticorum error est, posse fideles eam notitiam habere de sua gratiâ ut certâ fide statuunt sibi remissa esse peccata.*—BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. iii. cap. 3.

† *Fides est fiduciæ fundamentum: fiduciæ est fidei actus.*—PRIDEAUX, *Lectio vii.* "Faith is the foundation of trust and confidence: confidence is faith in exercise."—EDIT.

one that acts true faith on Christ, may by an assured confidence determine that his sins are pardoned." \*

I shall conclude this argument with this NOTE, that if it be granted, that after the pretended sacrament of penance and absolution by a priest, a believer may become assured of the pardon of his sin; he may much better conclude his sins to be pardoned after the right use of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which was designed to be a seal and confirmation to his faith.

THE SIXTH ARGUMENT: BECAUSE IT IS POSSIBLE TO ATTAIN TO ALL ASSURING EVIDENCES.

The sixth argument is this: *It is possible for a believer to prove that he is effectually called by all assuring evidences; and therefore it is possible for him to attain to a certain knowledge that he is effectually called.*—There are three, and but three, sorts of assuring evidences: 1. *Demonstrative argument*: 2. *Unerring sense*: 3. *Infallible testimony*. Now it is possible for a believer to prove that he is effectually called by all these several sorts of evidences.

*By demonstrative argument.*

1. *By demonstrative argument*; that is, a demonstration which proves either the being and existence of a thing by its inseparable and distinguishing effects, or proves the nature and kind of a thing by the special and essential properties of it. Now a believer may prove that he is effectually called, or that he is regenerated, and that the Spirit of God hath infused the habits of saving grace into him,

*From the proper effects of infused habits of grace.*

First. *By peculiar, proper, and distinguishing effects of infused habits of saving grace.*—The effects of all habits are their respective acts; and although all sorts of gracious acts do not prove habits of true grace, yet God hath declared in his word that there are some acts and some exercises of grace, which do demonstratively prove infused habits of grace, and do evidence an effectual call. This is proved by 1 Thess. i. 3, compared with verse 5. In the fifth verse Paul tells the Thessalonians, that "the gospel came not to them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;" that is, he tells them they were effectually called. But how may this be proved? What evidence is it built upon? See verse 3. He proves it by two things: (1.) By the indwelling habits of grace; namely, faith, love, and hope. (2.) By the distinguishing acts of those graces; namely, working, labouring, and patience: "Remembering," saith the apostle, "your work of faith, your labour of love, and patience of hope." Now in the same manner (as Paul doth) it is possible for many true believers to prove demonstratively also the truth of their grace.

*The work of faith.*

(1.) *They may prove the truth of their faith by its work.*—The apostle James saith, that works "do show," or, as the word (δείξον) signifies,

\* *Peccator in serâ penitentia ex fide in Christum possit certâ fiducia statuere sibi remissa esse peccata.*—CHERNITII *Examen*, ad sess. vi.



"demonstrate," the truth of faith. (James ii. 18.) All sorts of works do not prove faith to be saving; but some works do manifest it, and by them it is possible to prove an effectual call. (1 Peter i. 7.) I will name (and I must but name) some works of faith, which are all as so many demonstrations of true faith. (i.) Prizing the Lord Jesus above all things. (Phil. iii. 8.) (ii.) Receiving him in all his offices as offered in the gospel. (John i. 12.) (iii.) Victory over the world. (1 John v. 4.) (iv.) Quenching of Satan's fiery darts. (Eph. vi. 16.) (v.) Purifying of the heart. (Acts xv. 9.) Wherever these works or effects of faith are, there certainly is saving faith.

*Labour of love.*

(2.) *Love may be demonstrated by its labour; that is, by its exercise and peculiar fruits and effects.*—The word *κοπος της αγαπης*, "labour of love," mentioned by the apostle, (1 Thess. i. 3,) is used not to signify any irksomeness or burden that love feels; for nothing more delightful and pleasant than the work of love; but to intimate the diligence, constancy, and universality of love's exercise. Where love to God is sincere, there love commands the heart; the interest of God in such souls is superior to all other interests. Hence God's "commands are not grievous;" (1 John v. 3;) and this is a property of love that demonstratively proves it to be the work of the Spirit in an effectual call. If the apostle John had any logic in him, he thought this to be a demonstration, that "he that keepeth his word, in him verily" (that is, certainly, undoubtedly) "is the love of God perfected;" (1 John ii. 5;) that is, evangelically complete and sincere. The nature of true love is such, that it will make itself manifest. If men would design to conceal it from others, it is difficult to be hid; but for a man to hide it from himself, it is impossible. The consideration of which forces Bellarmine to confess, that "love to God, or charity, is a most certain note whereby alone the children of God may be distinguished from the children of Satan." \* Thus again, while our adversary opposes the possibility of assurance, he doth contradict himself, and most fully grant it to be possible; because there are confessedly some certain marks and signs of the children of God, and by these fruits they may be known. We have instanced in two graces, of faith and love; we shall instance but in one other, namely,

*The patience of hope.*

(3.) *Hope: this grace may be demonstratively proved to be wrought by the Spirit in an effectual call, by that distinguishing effect or consequence of it, which the apostle mentions also in the fore-quoted place; namely, a constant, patient submission to the will of God, in parting with any or all the enjoyments of this life, and in bearing whatever affliction God in his wisdom shall think fit to try a believer with.*—I do not say that either hope or patience, when separately taken, but only in conjunction one with the other, are certain signs of true grace. There is a great deal of presumption or false hope in the world; but false hope is never fol-

\* *Charitas est ipsa sola certissima nota, quæ filii Dei a filiis diaboli decernantur.*—BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. iv. cap. 15.

lowed with self-denial, or with an entire resignation to the will of God, so as to forsake all and to follow Christ. On the other hand, there may be some kind of patience which may be nothing but a stoical apathy, and a senselessness under sufferings, or only a blind boldness to engage with difficulties. Now this oftentimes arises from pride, not from evangelical hope, nor from a sense of interest in the love of Christ. Now we do not say that such hope or patience, when so divided, are certain arguments of regeneration, but [that] they are only so in conjunction; and we say that patience, when it is a fruit of gospel hope,—it is then an effect of the Spirit's work, who hath infused that hope as a habit of saving grace; and it is demonstratively proved to be so, because this hope is of the same nature as saving faith,\* and it hath many evidences which certainly manifest it to be saving: (i.) This hope purifies the heart. (1 John iii. 3.) (ii.) This hope rejoiceth the heart. (Rom. v. 2.) (iii.) It assures the heart. (Heb. vi. 11, 19.) (iv.) It saves the soul. (Rom. viii. 24.) Now these effects are able to distinguish presumption from right hope, and also argumentatively to evidence an effectual call.

*From the essential properties of saving habits.*

Secondly. *It is possible to prove by demonstrative argument that the Spirit of God hath infused the habits of saving grace into the heart by the special and essential properties of these habits.*—There are four properties of some acts which do prove the existence of habits; and do evidently show, that those acts and exercises do flow from principles or habits either, (1.) Naturally; or, (2.) Acquired; or, (3.) Infused; and the four properties are these: (1.) Facility and promptness or preparedness to act. (2.) Delight and pleasure in acting. (3.) Universality as to the object about which it acts. (4.) Constancy as to continuance in acting. Now it is possible for a believer to discern that the exercise of his grace hath all these properties,† and thereby he may demonstratively prove that his graces are habitual, and consequently that they were infused in an effectual call; for I have proved that they cannot be natural or acquired habits, and therefore they must be infused. That it is possible for a believer to attain to these properties, and to discern them, I shall briefly prove (although I could be large) in the instance of David, who attained to and discerned, (1.) A facility and readiness, a fixedness and preparedness, in the exercise of his grace, as you may see in Psalm cviii. 1; lvii. 7. (2.) A joy, delight, and pleasure in acting or doing the will of God. (Psalm xl. 8; cxix. 16, 35, 47, 70, 92, 143.) (3.) An universality in his obedience, and in that respect which he had to all God's commands. (Psalm cxix. 6.) (4.) A constancy and continuance (not as to every particular, but as to the general course) of his obedience. (Psalm lxxiii. 25; cxix. 44, 117.)

That other believers may attain to the same properties as David did, none can deny; and that they may discern them as David did, can be as

\* Our adversaries grant a certainty of hope, and therefore must grant a certainty of faith; for scripture useth often to speak of both these as one grace, and the Hebrew word, בטח, signifies both "to believe" and "hope." † All these properties are comprehended in those two words in Psalm li: רוח נדיבה "a free spirit;" רוח נכון "an established spirit."—MAIMONIDIS *More Nevochim*.

little denied; and therefore it is possible to prove an effectual call by demonstrative argument.

*Unerring sense.*

2. It is possible for a true believer to prove that he is effectually called *by an unerring sense*. Every kind of life is endued with a sense proper to its nature; \* for there is a certain connexion between life and sense; and the more high and noble any principle of life is, the more clear and perspicuous are the sensations and perceptions of that principle. The senses of the animal life are evident, and the perceptions of the rational life are more discernible than they; but no sense so quick and clear as that of the divine life, because the principle thereof is more high and noble. Here possibly a half-witted pretender to reason will cry out, that "to discourse of spiritual senses and the perceptions of the divine life, is to speak nothing but enthusiasm, and things which none understand." I answer, Monsieur des Cartes was far enough from enthusiasm; yet that master of reason builds all his philosophy upon a principle of inward sense; namely, *Cogito; ergo sum*, "I know I think; therefore I know I am." And he farther tells us, that the idea, or inward sense, of a God, is the best argument to prove that there is one.† Again: I ask, Were the philosophers of old, Plato and Aristotle, enthusiasts, who agreed in this, that all men are naturally endued with a double faculty of discerning? One they called *facultas διανοητική*, "a discursive faculty;" the other, *facultas νοητική*, "an intellective faculty;" by the latter of which, some truths, they said, were intuitively and directly seen, *οὐ μετὰ λόγου*, "not by argumentation," but by internal sense:‡ and this all men know and acknowledge, who are self-acquainted in any measure. And agreeable hereunto the Spirit of God is pleased to represent the perceptions of the divine life by expressions of sense; as, of seeing the Just One; (Acts xxii. 14;) of hearing and learning of the Father; (John vi. 45;) of smelling a savour and sweet odour in gospel-revelations; (2 Cor. ii. 14;) of tasting that God is good; (Psalm xxxiv. 8;) of touching and handling the word of truth. (1 John i. 1.) Now as it is folly to strain scripture-allusions too far, and to take its metaphors in the literal and proper sense; so it is madness and gross ignorance, on the other hand, to think that by these expressions the Spirit of God did not intend to inform us, that every true believer doth as truly discern spiritual objects by an internal sense, as any man doth discern material objects by his bodily senses.

*Three acts of sense, whereby a believer may know that he is effectually called.*

I shall instance but in three acts of divine sense, whereby it is possible for a believer to prove sensibly that he is effectually called.

\* The lord Herbert saith, "Every being is endued with sense, even the very elements:" *Est in quovis inarticulato et incauto elemento instinctus quidam naturalis.*—HERBERT *De Veritate*. The Pythagoreans thought it equal cruelty to cut off the branch of a tree, as to break the leg of an ox or the arm of a man; affirming that all trees were endued with sense.—DIOGENES LAERTIUS *De Vita Philos.* † CARTESIUS *De Methodo.* ‡ ARISTOTELIS *Analyt. Post. lib. II. cap. ult.*

*By discerning a divine light illuminating his understanding.*

(1.) *Many believers do see such a light breaking-in upon their understanding, as doth manifestly declare itself to be the especial work of God's own Spirit.*—For by two properties the teaching of God's Spirit may be distinguished from the common teachings of men, or from the sole convictions of a natural conscience :

(i.) *By the clearness and fulness of this light.*—When the Spirit co-operates with the word, then a believer in God's light sees light, as the Psalmist phraseth it ; (Psalm xxxvi. 9 ;) he sees "eye to eye," as the prophet Isaiah expresses it. (Isai. lii. 8.) Divine light is full, and descends deep, and enters far into the minds of men : "Wisdom enters into the soul." (Prov. ii. 10.) God shines into the heart. (2 Peter i. 19.) And hence truth is said to be written, (Heb. viii. 10,) to be engraven, (2 Cor. iii. 3,) to be sealed, (Job xxxiii. 16,) on man's heart and soul.

(ii.) *By its influence on practice.*—No truly divine teaching is or can be detained in unrighteousness ; (Rom. i. 18 ;) and hereby it is distinguished from common teaching : sun-light is distinguished from moon-light by its brightness, and by its warmth also. A mere natural conviction is like a flash of lightning in the night, which makes a short discovery of some objects, but vanishes before a man takes one step of his journey ; but when the Spirit teaches by the word, the Spirit makes the word "a light" to a believer's "feet and a lamp to his paths ;" (Psalm cxix. 105 ;) that is, it becomes a practical light ; and hereby it is also known to be effectual.

*He feels a divine power prevailing upon his will.*

(2.) *A true believer feels a divine power prevailing upon his will, which he proves to be supernatural both by the exceeding greatness of it in its principle, and also by the mighty working of it in its effects.*—The apostle Paul desires of God, that the Ephesians might know that they were effectually called, and that they might also know the hope thereof, in Eph. i. 18. And in verse 19 he declares how this might be obtained ; namely, (i.) *By discerning "the exceeding greatness of God's power toward them that believe ;"* that is, in its principle. (ii.) *By discerning "the working of this mighty power" in them that believe ;* that is, in the effects thereof. *God's power exercised upon and toward believers* is said here in itself to be "great ;" nay, more, it is "greatness ;" farther yet, it is "greatness of power ;" higher yet, it is "exceeding greatness of power :"  
 Τὸ το ὑπερβαλλον μεγεθος της δυναμεως αυτου εις ημας τους πιστευοντας κατα την ενεργειαν του κρατους της ισχυους αυτου. (Eph. i. 19.) Can this power be put forth upon man, and man be wholly insensible thereof? It is impossible ; especially if you add the other consideration of *the effects that are wrought by this power in believers* ; such as these : the "quickenings" of lifeless sinners, and the raising of them from the "dead ;" (Eph. ii. 1 ;) the "renewing of the spirit of the mind ;" the "putting on the new man, which is created after the image of God in Christ Jesus, in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 23, 24.) These signal effects,

which a believer cannot but feel, do as certainly prove an effectual call, as the works of the old creation do prove the existence of a God, or the miracles wrought by Christ did prove him to be the Son of God.

*He hath a spiritual taste of the goodness of God and his ways.*

(3.) *A true believer hath a spiritual taste of God's love and favour, and of the goodness of his ways; and by it he is able to prove that he is born of God.*—According to that of the apostle in 1 Peter ii. 1. But Bellarmine here doth object, that hypocrites and apostates are supposed in Heb. vi. 4, 5, to have a taste of the good word of God.

*Bellarmino's objection from Heb. vi. 4, 5 answered.*

I answer: (i.) A hypocrite may have a taste of the word, but it is but a taste; whereas a true believer drinks so deep of these waters of life, that they become “a well of living water springing up to everlasting life.” (John iv. 14; vii. 38.)

(ii.) Although a hypocrite may have some taste of the sweetness of the word, yet he always tastes a greater sweetness in the world; but it is contrary in believers: David tasted the word to be “sweeter than honey,” and more precious “than much fine gold.” (Psalm xix. 10.) The stony ground received indeed the word with joy at first, but parted with it again, rather than undergo the sorrow of persecution. (Matt. xiii. 20, 21.)

(iii.) A hypocrite may taste some sweetness in the promises and privileges of the word, and the gifts of the Spirit; but not in the precepts of the word, or graces of the Spirit. Simon Magus would part with the world, and give money for the miraculous power of the Spirit; but he regarded not the sanctity of the Spirit, or obedience to its laws: (Acts viii. 18, 19;) but a believer thinks that in the very “keeping” of God's commands “there is great reward;” (Psalm xix. 11;) and David professes his delight to do the will of God. (Psalm xl. 8.)

*Sense is a certain and an unerring evidence.*

So that by these and many other acts of sense, which I must not name, a believer is able to prove that he is effectually called, and that certainly, and without error or mistake. For the rule holds good in the due exercise of spiritual as well as bodily sense, that *sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*, “sense cannot be deceived about its proper object.” Bodily sense is so certain, as that Christ himself appeals to it in a proper case: reason discerns that spirits have neither flesh nor bones; and Christ bids his disciples to exercise their sense, and to feel that he had both.\* (Luke xxiv. 39.) From the certainty of outward sense, we do most justly reject the doctrine of transubstantiation: the receiver sees bread, feels bread, smells bread, tastes bread; and yet the senseless priest would have men believe that it is flesh.

But a Papist will tell you, that there may be *deceptio visus*, “a mistake in sight and sense,” both external and internal. I answer: The

\* The Papists are of the opinion of Heraclitus: *Κακοί μαρτυρες ανθρώπων ὀφθαλμοί*: “No man must believe his eyes.” Like as the Philistines dealt with Samson, they would put out our eyes, that we might grind in their mill, or bring grist to it: like the Pharisees, that would persuade the man born blind that he was so still, because they were unwilling to own Christ the author of his sight. (John ix. 25.)

evidence of sense in general is certain and unerring, (although there may be some mistake in particular acts of sense,) upon two accounts : First. Because the causes of particular errors may always be known to be, (1.) Either the ill disposition of the organ, as in a jaundice-eye ; or, (2.) The distance of the object, as the apparent smallness of heavenly bodies ; or, (3.) The different medium through which the object is beheld, as a staff half in water and half out seems crooked. Secondly. Because, by much experience, observation, and guidance of reason, men have been able to form and establish certain rules whereby to rectify all these mistakes. In like manner, by the guidance of the Spirit, God hath given in his word most certain rules whereby men may know from whence the mistakes of internal sense do arise, and in what manner, and by what means they may be corrected. From all which I may safely conclude, that as there are certain sciences built upon the certainty of bodily sense, (as optics, and many other mathematical sciences,) notwithstanding particular mistakes in some acts ; so it is possible, by experience and observation, together with the guidance of the word and Spirit, for a believer to prove, that his spiritual sense doth not err, and consequently that he is effectually called. (2 Peter i. 19.)

*By infallible testimony of the Spirit.*

3. In the last place. I say, It is possible for a believer to prove that he is effectually called, *by infallible testimony of the Spirit*.—This sort of evidence, by authority or witness, logicians call *argumentum inartificiale*, “an inartificial argument ;” but in our case it is *argumentum certissimum*, “a most certain proof :” for if God hath said, that “in the mouth of two or three” human “witnesses every word is established,” (Deut. xvii. 6 ; Matt. xviii. 16,) that is, made sure, how much more sure is the evidence that is given in by the Spirit of God who cannot lie ! (Heb. vi. 18.)

*This testimony either written or real.*

Now the testimony of the Spirit of God is either *written* in the word, or *real* in its works. How far *the written testimony of the Spirit* in scripture, which is *θεοπνευστος*, [“divinely inspired,”] is a foundation of assurance, I have already declared.

*The real testimony is either, 1. Material, mediate, and objective.*

*The real testimony of the Spirit* is two-fold : First. *Material, mediate, and only objective* ; namely, when the Spirit of God, by the work of sanctification wrought in a believer, doth thereby afford to a believer objectively (and mediately by the fruits of the Spirit) matter of proof or evidence, whereby he may evince by argument that he is effectually called. This sort of evidence I have also already spoken to ; therefore it is yet another kind of testimony of the Spirit that I would here more especially insist upon ; namely,

*Or, 2. Formal, immediate, and efficient.*

Secondly. *The efficient, immediate, and formal testimony* of the Spirit of God. Several divines call it by several names ; but they all under-

stand one and the same thing. That there is a witnessing work of the Spirit distinct from the regenerating work and from the sanctifying work thereof, is evident by that plain text of the apostle to the Romans, where he saith, that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.)

*Three things considerable in these words.*

Where observe, (1.) *The testes* ["witnesses"]; (2.) *The testimonium* ["testimony"]; (3.) *The modus testificandi* ["manner of witnessing"].

*The witnesses.*

(1.) First. Observe *the witnesses*.—These are two: (i.) The Spirit of God; (ii.) Our own spirit. These are two distinct witnesses; and we ought always to consider them as truly and properly distinct. For as the Spirit of God is really and personally distinguished from our spirits; so the act of the Spirit in witnessing is as truly distinct from the act of our own spirits. A believer's own spirit doth sometimes prove, and may witness actually and truly, its effectual call; and yet the Spirit of God may at that time suspend its immediate testimony *pro hic et nunc* ["for the present"]. Now all those things which can be really separated are to be considered as distinct, even then when they are conjoined; and that the testimony of the Spirit of God is distinct from the testimony of our spirits, is evident from the words themselves, being duly considered: for the apostle saith, that "the Spirit itself witnesseth with our spirits."\* But of this more, after we have considered,

*The testimony or thing witnessed.*

(2.) *The testimony, or the thing witnessed*.—Which is this, "That we are the sons of God;" which phrase comprehends, (i.) A believer's regeneration. (ii.) His relation, of an adopted son of God. (iii.) His "partaking of the divine nature," or being "conformed to the image of Christ." (2 Peter i. 4; Rom. viii. 29.) (iv.) His obtaining of a right of co-inheritance with Christ. (Rom. viii. 17.) Now regeneration, and an effectual call, I have shown, are one and the same thing. The matter of this testimony therefore, witnessed both by our spirits, and also by the Spirit of God, is this,—that we are effectually called.

*The manner of witnessing.*

(3.) *The manner of witnessing* is expressed by the word *συμμαρτυρεῖ*. "the Spirit doth co-witness;" which cannot be meant, as some would have it, only of the Spirit's using the faculties of our mind instrumentally, as a scribe useth a pen as his instrument to attest any writing. It is true, that "the Spirit of God doth bear witness *with* our spirits," (Rom. viii. 16,) that is *by* our spirits, inasmuch as our own faculties are employed in receiving and discerning the testimony of God's Spirit; but yet we must be careful that we do not confound the act of God's Spirit with the acts of our own faculties in this testimony; for so we should also confound the distinction of the witnesses themselves; and we should hardly

\* Not το αὐτο Πνεῦμα, ["the same Spirit,"] but αὐτο το Πνεῦμα ["the Spirit itself"].

escape confounding the distinction that is between the Spirit's objective or material testimony, and its efficient and formal testimony.

*Opened in three parts.*

For avoiding of which, and for opening of the manner of the Spirit's immediate witnessing, I desire that these things may be considered :—

*First part.—It is by some operation, not voice : spirits speak the language of spirits, and of their own region.*

*That the Spirit of God, when it is said to witness with our spirits, is not to be supposed to give its testimony by any external voice or words ; but it gives even its immediate testimony by some work or operation upon the mind of man.*—That all sorts of spirits can express themselves to spirits without words, is manifest in the acknowledged converse or communion that is between angels amongst themselves, good angels with good, and bad with bad ; as also by the suggestions of good angels and bad angels upon the minds of men ; \* as also by that which the scripture saith of mental or unexpressed, unuttered prayer, in Rom. viii. 26 ; and by the instance of Hannah. (1 Sam. i. 13.) If created spirits can express themselves to spirits without words, much more may the Eternal Spirit reveal himself to the mind of man how or as he pleases. (Ezek. xxxviii. 10.) He that created the faculties of man's mind can put them into act and exercise by what ways or means soever he pleases : he that knows our thoughts before we think them, can cause us to think or know whatever he pleases to impress upon them.

*Second part.—It is by rational conviction.*

*As all the revelations of God's Spirit are harmonious, and consonant one with another, so are all the works of God's Spirit always agreeable and concurring, so as one work thereof destroys not another work of the same Spirit.*—And thence it is that God, having endued men with faculties of judging and discerning of truth by its proper evidences, doth never cause the soul of man to believe any truth, but he gives them a ground or reason of its belief. I do not say, that he gives always a reason of the thing, but he gives a reason of our belief : the supernatural works of the Spirit do not destroy, but restore and perfect, nature. Now the natural way of conviction of man's mind being by evidencing the reason of things ; hence, when the Spirit convinces man of any thing, he doth [it], as it were, by argument. The Spirit of God convinces men of righteousness, and of pardon of sin, in the same manner that it convinces of sin and its guilt ; which is by way of argument, as the word *ελεγχει* doth signify, in John xvi. 8. Hence faith also (which is wrought by the Spirit) is said to be *ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων*, the argumentative “evidence of things not seen.” (Heb. xi. 1.) I hope no man is so weak as to think that the Spirit convinces by verbal expression of the terms of three propositions of an argument ; but yet it doth something equivalent thereunto. For,

\* Some philosophers have undertaken to show the way whereby the angels and spirits do converse.



*Third part.—It is by special illumination.*

*The proper work of the Spirit in giving this testimony, is to illuminate the mind of man, both in a greater degree, and to another end, than it did illuminate it in its first work of conversion.*—In conversion, the objects revealed are those that, being once discovered, do engage the soul to put forth the direct act of faith; but in this witnessing work, the Spirit reveals those objects that by their discovery do enable the soul to exercise the reflex act of faith; and withal the Spirit doth immediately assist the mind of man in its act of reflection upon the work of sanctification formerly wrought by the Spirit.

You may understand both the nature and distinction of the Spirit's testimony, how it is different from the testimony of our own spirits, by this similitude: Suppose a purblind person reading a small print by the light of a farthing-candle, by which he knows, and is able to testify truly, what is written in that book which he so reads; yet when he considers how apt he may be in those circumstances to mistake, he still doubts comparatively to what he knows when a skilful oculist hath repaired his sight, and hath by glasses magnified the characters of the book, and hath let into the room the beams of the sun, which were before withheld. Thus the work of the Spirit is to assist our faculties, and strengthen them, to irradiate and illustrate its own work of sanctification, and also to bring-in a fuller light from the word, making it speak more clear and full: by all which the Spirit of God may be said to give a different and distinct testimony from that which our unassisted faculties, or gradually unenlightened minds, could give of themselves.

*“Why is this called a co-witness?”*

QUESTION 1. If it be asked why this act of the Spirit of God is called “a co-witnessing with our spirits,” I answer, First. Because the Spirit adds its special assistance to our spirits, in all and every exercise of our faculties about their giving-in their testimony. In particular, (i.) It irradiates the mind. And, (ii.) It more emphatically reveals to the soul the truth of the promise,—that every one that believes shall be saved. (iii.) It more fully makes known its own work, and shows to the soul by good evidences that it doth believe. (iv.) It assists the reason of man more convincingly to draw the conclusion, that therefore it shall be saved. And in this manner the Spirit witnesses to every proposition of the assuring argument. Secondly, and more especially. The Spirit is said to witness with our spirits, because the matter witnessed by the Spirit of God is the same which is witnessed by our own spirits: and this properly speaks it to be a co-witness; for it witnesses not only in the same manner, but it also witnesseth the same matter which our spirits do witness.

*“How is a believer certain that the Spirit doth witness?”*

QUESTION 11. If it be demanded how a believer may be assured that the Spirit doth certainly witness with our spirits; I answer: He may be assured by two things: First. By that special distinguishing light

that accompanies the testimony of the Spirit, which doth manifest itself so as to overbear all doubts and disputes both about our spiritual estate and about this testimony itself: just as the light of the sun doth not only discover other things, and reveal them; but doth manifest itself by its self-evidencing property, which is able to convince every beholder. Secondly. By the harmony and agreement that is between the testimony of the Spirit of God and our spirits; just as we know the testimony of our spirits to be certain and true by its agreement with the word. Except all these three agree in one, there can be no full certainty: but a believer's assurance is always confirmed by the concurring testimony of these three:—(i.) *Of the word*, (ii.) *Of conscience*, and, (iii.) *Of the Spirit*, all witnessing one and the same thing. (i.) *The sure word of God* lays down certain signs and marks of true grace, and witnesses these signs to be good evidences. (ii.) Then *conscience*, or our own spirit, witnesses that these signs are sound in a believer. (iii.) Then God super-adds *the witness of his own Spirit*, which enables us yet more fully to know the things which are freely given us of God. And now “what doubts can remain?”\* It is true, we are bid to “try” every spirit, (1 John iv. 1,) and we have a way to try them by; namely, the agreement of their testimony with the testimony of scripture and conscience. Although there may be such things as *παρηλίοι*, or “mock-suns,” and sometimes the glory of the true sun (which yet is a prodigiously rare instance) is not able to distinguish itself from its apes: yet in this very case, by the rules of calculation, an astronomer is able to distinguish the true sun from the false; so that the science of astronomy is never a whit the less certain. It is so as to the Spirit's testimony: it is certain that by the word and conscience a believer may infallibly prove the testimony of the Spirit to be true, and not false, because there is and must be an universal agreement between all these three.

Our adversaries have, many of them, endeavoured to enervate the single testimony of scripture, because of the “mysteriousness” of scripture, as they call it. Others seek to debilitate the testimony of conscience, because men are apt to be partial. Others would weaken the testimony of the Spirit, because it is apt to be mistaken. But should we grant that none of those three witnesses were separately sufficient, yet when they are conjoined, from thence there doth arise an undoubted assurance. Although the strength of one pillar, or the soundness of the foundation alone, do not prove a house to be well built; yet the strength of all the pillars, and of the foundation, considered together, doth fully prove it to be strong. What, if one single soldier be not sufficient to secure a fort? yet may not many soldiers do it? How much then do our adversaries trifle, while they seek to engage one single combatant as no good witness of assurance! But they dare not look our army in the face. Behold, we are “compassed about with a cloud of witnesses;” (Heb. xii. 1;) let them dispel this cloud if they can. Although no man can be made sure of the time of the day by a dial that hath no figures upon it; and although a blind man cannot know the hour when there are figures upon the dial; and although one that hath good eyes, and seeth the figures, yet cannot

\* Ὅταν το Πνεῦμα μαρτυρῇ, ποία λοιπὸν ἀμφιβολία;—CHRYSOSTOMUS in *Rom.* viii.

know the time if the sun shines not : yet from hence it doth not follow but that, if there be a concurrence of lines and figures, of sight and sun-shine together, and the dial be made and placed by infallible rules of art, it will then certainly evidence the time of the day. In like manner, the graces of God's Spirit imprinted on the heart, the eye of conscience open in examination and observation, and the light of the Spirit as the sun-shine,—these three concurring together, and all of them agreeing with the word, which is the standing rule of judgment, by which all the others are regulated and ordered ; I say, from hence ariseth a demonstrative, undoubted, and infallible certainty ; and this concurrence being possible, it is therefore possible for a believer to attain to an assured knowledge that he is effectually called.

**THE SECOND SPECIAL PROPOSITION, " THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR ONE THAT IS ASSURED OF HIS CALLING, TO BE THEREBY ALSO ASSURED OF HIS ETERNAL ELECTION ; " PROVED FROM THE NATURE OF ELECTION AND THE DEPENDENCE EFFECTUAL CALLING HATH THEREON.**

(II.) I proceed to the proof of the Second special proposition : *That it is possible for a believer who is sure of his effectual vocation in time, to be assured also of his election in eternity.*—I shall need to be but brief in the proof of this, having already in part proved that there is such a thing as special and discriminating grace, whereby one call of God proves effectual, another not. Now our adversaries themselves grant, that if God doth exercise a discriminating grace in special effectual vocation, it is necessary that he should eternally decree to exercise that special grace upon those persons. The proof of this proposition will depend upon these two arguments :

*An effectual call depends upon eternal election, as upon its necessary principal cause.*

**ARGUMENT 1.** *If an effectual call doth depend upon God's eternal election as upon its necessary cause, then he that knows that he is effectually called, may know he was eternally elected : (no man of reason will deny this consequence, and therefore I need not prove it :) But an effectual call doth depend upon God's eternal election, as upon its necessary cause : And therefore he that knows the one, may also know the other.*—This I shall prove from some plain and express texts of scripture. See Eph. i., in the beginning of which chapter you have the nature of election opened in all its causes and properties, which I must not particularly name ; in brief, you may observe that, according to the apostle's description thereof, election is that decree of God whereby, out of the mere good pleasure of his own will, he did eternally choose some certain individual persons out of the corrupt mass of mankind, unto the infallible attainment of grace here and glory hereafter. Now if this be the nature of election, namely, that grace, or an effectual call, was thereby eternally decreed to be conferred and bestowed, it will then necessarily follow, that grace, or an effectual call, doth depend upon election as its cause ; which is plainly expressed in verse 4, where holi-

ness and blamelessness, which are inseparable properties of an effectual call, are said to be the effects of God's election and choice. It is a very good note of Thomas Aquinas, who observes "that love and choice in God doth very much differ from love and choice in men: for love in men," saith he, "doth not cause loveliness in the beloved; but men first discern a loveliness, and this causes a love and choice: whereas God first exercised a free love in his eternal election, predestinating the way and means of farther manifestation of his love, and then in time he effects his own purpose, making the objects of his love to become lovely, by his renewing his own image upon them in an effectual call." \* Agreeable hereunto is that expression of the council of Orange: "God loved us not as we are by our desert, but as he designed to make us by his gift." †

He that would rightly understand the relation [that] vocation in time hath unto election in eternity, and he that would know the dependence which that effect hath upon this cause, must first consider, that although all the decrees of God are in themselves but one simple act of God's will; yet, as to human apprehension, many men have conceived that there are three distinct acts of the divine will comprehended in his decree of election. 1. *Εκλογή*, "a choice," or a separating and singling out of some individual persons to be the objects of his love. 2. *Προθεσις*, "a purpose," or an intention and design of bestowing saving grace in effectual calling of those chosen ones. 3. *Προορισμος*, "a predestination," or a pre-determination of bringing those called and gracious persons unto glory. I shall not here meddle with the controversy which is agitated about the priority or precedency of these last two acts of the divine will; only you must consider, that as the decree of God, whereby he purposed to bestow both grace and glory, was truly in itself but one eternal act of his will; (and so there could be no priority of time amongst them;) so we ought not in our conceptions to distinguish between glory and grace, as if one were designed as the end, and the other as the means; which is too common a mistake. For, in truth, grace and glory differ only as lesser and greater measures of the same thing; ‡ and therefore we say, that God's absolute and inconditionate purpose effectually to call some persons, and to give them grace, passing by others, doth declare the whole nature of God's decree of election, inasmuch as the selection of the objects of God's love, and also the nature both of the act and end of his love, are all comprehended in that one purpose of effectual calling; which the Salmurian divines do show more fully in their explication of election. § All which, being duly considered, do abundantly manifest that vocation in time was a most assured effect of election in eternity, according to that of Rom. viii. 23, where almost in express words our calling is said to be the effect of God's purpose. And agreeable also is that of 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14, where sanctification and faith, wrought in an effectual call, are declared to be the fruit of being chosen from the beginning: "We are bound to give thanks

\* THOMÆ AQUINATIS *Summa*, pars prima, quæst. xxiii. † *Tales nos amat Deus, quales futuri sumus ipsius dono, non quales sumus nostro merito.*—*Conc. Arrian. II. can. 2.* ‡ "Grace is glory begun: glory is grace perfected."—PRENTON "On the New Covenant." § *Theses Salmurienses, De Electione*, lib. i. sect. 29, 30.

always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth : whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." Observe here, First. That God hath designed to bestow grace and glory on some men. Secondly. That God actually accomplisheth his design by effectual calling of these persons ; that is, by working of faith, or a belief of the truth, and of sanctification in them. Thirdly. That the original and primitive ground or cause of an effectual call, is God's eternal election and choice of them. Therefore doth the Spirit bring the elect into the state of sons, because God hath predestinated them to the adoption of sons. The Spirit is the immediate cause of regeneration ; but that the Spirit works otherwise in one person than it doth in another, is the effect of eternal election : and there is always so certain a dependence which an effectual call hath upon election, as that they are sometimes put for one and the same thing. (Rom. ix. 11.)

*Vocation depends upon election as its rule or measure.*

ARGUMENT II. Secondly. We prove that all those that know they are effectually called may know that they were eternally elected, because *effectual calling depends upon God's eternal election as its rule or measure* ; that is, effectual calling, as to the persons called, is commensurate with the objective matter of God's eternal election. My meaning is this : that all those, and only those, persons that were eternally elected, shall be effectually called ; and therefore whoever knows that he is effectually called, may know he was eternally elected. The very essence of an effectual call consists, as I have shown, in the Spirit's working of saving faith in those whom it doth call ; but the Spirit works saving faith in all the elect, and only in them. This is plainly manifest in Acts xiii. 48 : *Και ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed ;" so many, and no more, "as were ordained," or "fore-determined : " if the word be translated "fore-disposed," as some would have it, it must be meant of God's disposing, not of man's disposing himself. Some men talk much of a *tempus congruum*, "a fit season" for conversion ; but the decree of God depends not upon our pre-disposition, but upon God's election ; as appears in the instance of St. Paul, who, being "a chosen vessel,"\* was converted when he was in the height of his persecution. The working of faith depends so much upon God's election, as that saving faith bears the name of "the faith of God's elect," (Titus i. 1,) it being proper only to them. Moreover, it appears that only those that are elected shall be effectually called, because only the elect shall be saved. It is expressly said, that all those whose names "are not written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." (Rev. xx. 15.) It was the custom of old to write down the names of persons designed to places of honour in books or registers ; † hence the Spirit of God compares God's election of persons to grace and glory to that known custom ; in allusion unto which also St. Paul saith, that the names of Eudius, and Syntyche, and Clement, were written "in the book of life ;" (Phil. iv. 2, 3;) and Christ

\* *Σκευὸς ἐκλογῆς*, "a vessel of election." (Acts ix. 15.)

† Roman senators [were] called *patres conscripti* ["conscrip't," or "enroll'd," "fathers"].

bids his disciples rejoice that their names were "written in heaven;" (Luke x. 20;) that is, that they were elect. On the contrary, the non-elect are said not to have their names "written in the Lamb's book of life," in Rev. xiii. 8, and Rev. xvii. 8; and the doom of all such is to be "cast into the lake of fire;" for these shall never be called effectually here, or saved eternally hereafter.

I know, Socinus and Crellius, and some others,\* by "the book of life," do understand "the scripture," wherein God hath declared that all penitent believers shall be saved, and all impenitent and unbelievers shall be damned; and consequently, say they, all believers have their names written there; but unbelievers have not their names written, inasmuch as they come not under the qualifications written in the word. But to this I answer: 1. That by "the book of life" must be meant God's eternal decree, not any declaration made by him in time: for the non-elect are described, in Jude 4, to be men, *παλαὶ προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα*, "of old ordained," or eternally decreed, "to this condemnation," as bishop Davenant observes; and, on the other hand, the elect are said to be "saved, and called with an holy calling, not according to works, but" *κατ' ἰδίαν προθεσιν καὶ χάριν τὴν διέθεσαν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*, "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began." (2 Tim. i. 9.) 2. Again: In the book of life, there was an absolute election of persons recorded, and not a conditional declaration of qualities declared.† For by "names," in all the fore-quoted places, are understood persons, as appears by many other texts of scripture; as Num. i. 2, by "taking the number of names," is meant the number of persons, "every male by poll." So, Acts i. 15: "The number of names," that is, persons, "were about a hundred and twenty." And Sardis had "a few names," that is, a few persons that were upright. (Rev. iii. 4.) In vain therefore do either Papists or Socinians seek to divide those things that God hath conjoined, namely, eternal election, and effectual vocation; which have that relation one to another, as that he that knows one, knows both. For if vocation depends on election as its necessary cause, and as its adequate rule and measure, I hope, I shall not need to prove the consequence, since all men grant that those things that are commensurate, and of equal extent, do necessarily make each other known.

He therefore that would make his election sure, may do it by making his calling sure; and that is the order he must proceed in. For although God at first chooses, and then calls; yet we must first know our calling, and then our election. God descends from love to choice, from choosing to calling, or to infusing of the principles of saving grace, then to sanctifying, or adding of greater measure of grace; (Rom. viii. 29, 30;) but in the trial of our state, and in our evidencing of our interest in God's love, we must ascend from sanctification to vocation, and from vocation to election. Election is as the spring-head of all consequent acts of divine

\* EPISCOPIUS, VORSTIUS, &c.

† *Numerus electorum est Deo certus; non solum ut cognitus, sed ut electus et prædefinitus.* "The number of the elect is certainly determined with God; not merely as being known to him, but as chosen and predestined."—EDW. See THOMAS AQUINAS, pars i. quest. xxiii. art. 7. "The elect," a determinate number as elect; seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal; (1 Kings xix. 18;) one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed. (Rev. vii. 4.)

love: he that would find the fountain must begin at the stream, and so trace it upward to its first source. Election is (as the root or seed) hidden, and unknown in itself: he that would know the nature of a tree, let him not uncover the root, but let him observe the fruits; for by them it may best be known. Weak eyes may better behold the beams of the light reflected, than by looking on the body of the sun; which many having presumed to do, have lost their sight wholly: and so it comes to pass when men search directly into the decree of election, without considering that it is better and more easily manifested by an effectual call.\* It is not lawful for any man to look into this ark, or to attempt to read the law of God's eternal purposes, as they are there locked up in his decrees: it is sufficient that we may see the transcript of them written on our own heart. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children." (Deut. xxix. 29.) No man must enter into the council-chamber, that he may know the will of his prince; but must wait for its discovery in the published proclamation. Mordecai understood little of the king's love to him, when Ahasuerus consulted "what should be done to the person whom the king delighted to honour;" but he well knew that he was a favourite, when he saw himself clothed in royal robes, and beheld the king's signet upon his hand: (Esther vi. 10, 11:) so when a believer finds himself clothed with the white linen of the saints, (Rev. xix. 8, 14,) and hath once received the seal of God's Spirit, (2 Cor. i. 22,) he may safely conclude that God from eternity decreed to honour him here, and glorify him hereafter.

Let me therefore, for a close of this second proposition, give all believers the same counsel that Elihu gave to Job and Job's friends: "Desire not the night;" that is, pry not into the dark secrets of God's decrees; but "remember thou magnify God's works which thy eyes do behold;" (Job xxxvi. 20, 24;) that is, the fruits and consequences of those decrees appearing in an effectual call. It is boldness to break open the seal of a decree till thou hast read thy name written in the superscription: election is love under a seal of secrecy; but an effectual call opens this most fully, and evidently makes known the purpose of God from eternity,

#### THE THIRD SPECIAL PROPOSITION.

(III.) The Third special proposition which remains to be proved is this: *That all true believers that do assuredly know they are called and were elected, may also know they shall persevere unto glory.*—Many have been the disputes concerning the possibility of a believer's falling from grace; but most of the arguments that are used with design to prove the possibility thereof will fall to the ground, if the question be rightly stated. To which purpose I shall, in the first place, lay down some premisses, which may obviate the arguments and objections of our adversaries; and then give you our arguments to prove the proposition. When we say, then, that some believers may assuredly know that they shall persevere, and that they shall not fall from grace, we do premise that,

\* *Inter gratium et prædestinationem hoc tantum interest, quod prædestinatio est gratiæ preparatio; gratia verò est ipsa donatio.*—AUGUSTINUS *De Prædest.* cap. 10. "Between grace and predestination there is this sole difference,—that predestination is the preparation for grace; but grace is the very gift itself."—EDIT.

PREMISS I. *We do distinguish between grace actively taken for God's favour to us, (gratia gratis dans, as the Schools call it,) and (gratia gratis data) grace passively taken, grace wrought in us, which is the effect of the former.\**—For it is not from the nature of grace passively taken, or from grace inherent in believers, that they do persevere, and not fall away; but it is from the nature of that grace, actively taken, that dwells in God's bosom; this is the ground that believers persevere to glory, as it is clearly expressed by Christ himself: He "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." (John xiii. 1.)

PREMISS II. Concerning this active grace of God, *we do distinguish between the exercise of it, and the manifestation of that exercise.*—We deny not but [that] God may seem to be angry; but yet we say, he never casts off his people, or forgets to be gracious. The sun may be muffled for a time in a cloud; yet some heat will be communicated during the time it is hid, and in due time the beams of light will break through and disperse the cloud also. Christ may stand behind the wall, yet then he will "show himself through the lattice;" (Canticles ii. 9;) and in time the wall of separation also shall be broken down. God may correct his children, but will not disinherit them.†

PREMISS III. Concerning grace in us, passively taken, *we do distinguish between acts and habits of grace.*—No man did ever say, that a truly regenerate person cannot omit the performance of some acts of grace which formerly he performed, and is still bound to perform; but this we say, that the habits of grace are never lost, or wholly eradicated; and we say, that those acts of grace which were interrupted, do abide in their principle, and will again exert themselves when opportunity is afforded.‡ It is one thing to fall in the way; another thing to deviate from the way. It is one thing *semel recedere a pietatis tramite*, "to take a step awry from the path of holiness;" another thing *semper discedere a pietatis viâ*, "to forsake the ways of God wholly:" a believer may be guilty of the first, not the second.

PREMISS IV. Again: *We distinguish between a show of grace, and true grace.*—There are several instances in the word of God of persons falling from a show of grace;—Demas, Judas, Saul, Hymeneus, fell from hypocrisy into open profaneness and impiety;—but "no sincere person ever fell from true grace."§ Paint may be soon washed off, when a healthful, beautiful complexion will abide. A Bristol-stone is soon broken; but a true diamond will abide the smartest stroke. Many professors have suffered shipwreck as to faith; (1 Tim. i. 19;) and others have lost their first love: (Rev. ii. 4:) but it is such faith as had no root, like that of the stony ground; (Matt. xiii. 20, 21;) and such love as had no principle; it was only a passion and transport; and such hot love

\* *Xapis et χαρισμα differunt sicut causa et effectus, vel ut lux in sole et lumen in aère.*—BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. ii. cap. 13. "The two Greek words which are severally translated 'grace,' differ from each other as the cause and the effect, or the light contained in the sun and the brilliance diffused through the air."—EDIT. † Nebuchadnezzar lost possession of, not right to, his crown.

‡ *Actio pervertitur; fides non evertitur.*—BERNARDUS *De Gratia et libero Arbitrio*. "The action is perverted; but faith is not subverted."—EDIT. § *Charitas quæ deperditur, nunquam fuit vera charitas.*

—ANSELMUS *De Concor. Præscien., Prædest., et Gratiæ, cum Libert.*



may be soon cold. Common fire is soon extinct, but the fire of the sanctuary never went out.

PREMISS V. As for those texts that Bellarmine urges, that "the just do fall seven times a day," (Prov. xxiv. 16,) and that "in many things we offend all;" (James iii. 2;) the very words themselves carry a full answer to his objections: for if the just fall seven times a day, it is supposed he rises as often; and if in many things we offend all, then it is in some but an offence or a stumble, not a final falling.\* There is difference between foils and falls; and there is difference between falling into sin, and lying in sin. There is difference between recession from grace, and excision of grace: the first is possible to happen for a time to a believer; but God will never suffer the second to come upon him: for although a believer may fall, yet he falls only as cork falls into the water, which may for a time be immersed, but it will rise again, and get aloft; but a hypocrite falls as lead into the water, which sinks, and rises no more.

Having premised these things, I proceed to the arguments which evince the perseverance of all that are effectually called unto glory.

THE FIRST ARGUMENT: FROM THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD'S DECREES.

[The] first argument is *from the immutability and unchangeableness of God's purposes and decrees*.—I have already proved that God did from before the foundation of the world decree to make some particular persons the objects of his love; and that these persons were fore-ordained of God to be effectually called in time, and to be glorified in eternity. Now "the gifts and calling of God are," saith the apostle, "without repentance," *αμεταμελητα*, (Rom. xi. 29,) such as God never can or will repent of. There is a necessary connexion between every decree of God, and its full execution and performance. All the powers of hell are not able to break by force, nor all the subtilty of the Jesuits of Rome able to dissolve or untie by skill, that strong and necessary connexion of all those links of that golden chain that is drawn forth in that fore-quoted Rom. viii. 29, 30. Foreknowledge, or election, vocation, justification, and glorification, are inseparably conjoined; so that whoever hath hold of one of them, hath hold of all; and he that knoweth one, knoweth all. The apostle, in Rom. ix. 11, doth fully assert, that God did exercise sovereign discriminating grace in his eternal decree of election; and withal he declares the immutability and unchangeableness of that decree. Mark his words: "The children," saith he, "not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of" him that "works, but of him that calleth; it is said, The elder shall serve the younger," &c. God's purpose must "stand," *μνη*, must "remain steadfast," as Beza, or "confirmed," as Castalio, translates it. The decrees of God are compared to mountains of brass, (Zech. vi. 1,) unremovable, because situate in the eternal will. Consider the expression used by Samuel: "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." (1 Sam. xv. 29.) God is strength itself, and able to

\* Vide AUGUSTINUM *De Correctione et Gratia*, cap. 9.

préserve all his decrees made in eternity. The word  $\pi\upsilon\lambda\lambda\iota\varsigma$ , translated "strength," may also be translated "eternity" or "victory;" intimating the victorious power that accompanies eternal decrees. See AUGUSTINI *Confessiones*, lib. i. cap. 6. God loves "with an everlasting love," (Jer. xxxi. 3,) and he works with an invincible power. (Isai. xiv. 27.)

THE SECOND ARGUMENT: GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF "THE ELECTION"  
A GROUND OF PERSEVERANCE.

Secondly. I argue *from that special knowledge that God hath of all those that he hath built savingly upon the right foundation,—the Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor. iii. 11.)—God is no foolish builder, to lay the foundation, and not carry on the superstructure. And this is the apostle's own argument for the perseverance of saints, in 2 Tim. ii. 19; where the apostle, having observed the apostasy of some non-elect persons, adds, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Amongst many other uses of a seal, this is one, that it gives ground of assurance. Now the apostle therefore useth that expression of God's knowing of his, that, from the consideration thereof, believers might have greater confidence, that, they being God's husbandry, and God's building, God will never suffer them to be removed, and *that* because he "knows" them; which phrase signifies these six things:—

*For God to know, signifies, 1. To foreknow.*

1. *That God did foreknow them.*—So the word is used in Acts xv. 18: "Known unto God are all his ways from the beginning of the world;" that is, God did from eternity foreknow and decree whatever should in time come to pass. Now this is a ground of the saints' perseverance; namely, that God did foreknow the elect, or decree that all those that he should effectually call should be justified, sanctified, and persevere unto glory, as I have already shown from Rom. viii.

*2. Peculiarly to own.*

2. "To know," sometimes signifies *to own in a peculiar manner.*—So, in Amos iii. 2, God, speaking to his people Israel, saith, that he knew them above all the families on earth. God knew Egypt, and Babylon, and Moab, and Edom; but he did not know them to be his peculiar people above others; but so he did know Israel. Thus those that God hath elected, and effectually called, God knows them as his  $\text{קָדְשׁוֹ}$  *segullah*, his "peculiar people;" (Deut. xvi. 18;) and this is a seal that they shall persevere.

*3. To approve of, and delight in.*

3. "To know," in scripture, sometimes signifies *for God to approve of, and to delight in.*—"The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." (Psalm i. 6.) God knows the way of wicked men, but so as to curse it; "it shall perish:" but God knows the way of the elect, and of those that are effectually called, so as to approve of it, and delight in it. And this

is a seal, assuring them that they shall not perish, but persevere in their way to glory.

4. *To oversee and take care of.*

4. "To know" is *to oversee and take care of*, as a shepherd knows his sheep.—So, John x. 27: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them," that is, I take care of them. Christ is such a shepherd as he himself describes,—that if he hath a hundred sheep, and one of them go astray, he leaves the ninety-and-nine, and goes after the lost sheep till he find it. (Luke xv. 4, 5.) And this is also a ground of a true believer's perseverance,—that, if, through non-attendance, or inanimadversion, or through the violent persecution of roaring lions or wolves, they stray from the fold, yet Christ reduces them again.

*To deliver from, or to succour and support in, trials, afflictions, and temptations.*

5. "To know," is *to deliver from, or at least to support and succour in, afflictions, trials, and temptations*.—"I will be glad," saith David, "and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my soul in trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities;" (Psalm xxxi. 7;) that is, God did both support him in affliction, and deliver him from it in his own time. It is an assuring seal of the perseverance of believers, that God will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; or else with the temptation will make a way to escape, that they may bear it. (1 Cor. x. 13.)

*To teach and instruct, to enlighten and inform.*

6. Lastly. For God "to know," sometimes is as much as for God *to teach and enlighten*.—So the apostle uses the phrase: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?" (Gal. iv. 9.) The Galatians had been taught of God; but seducing teachers would have brought them to join Jewish ceremonies with gospel-worship. Now the apostle wonders at the very thought of such a thing, upon this very account, namely, because they were "known of God," that is, savingly enlightened by him.\* It is a most assuring seal of perseverance, to have been rightly enlightened by the Spirit of God, which is here called, "a being known of him." So that you now see the saints' perseverance grounded, as, in the first place, upon God's election, so, secondly, upon his knowing of believers in a special manner.

THE THIRD ARGUMENT: PERSEVERANCE GROUNDED UPON THE  
VERITY OF GOD'S COVENANT.

The third ground of a true believer's perseverance is, *from the nature of God's covenant*.—Perseverance is one article of the new covenant that God hath made with the elect, the terms of which are these: "I will," saith God, "make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jer. xxxii. 40.) God hath absolutely engaged that elect believers shall not depart from him,

\* Hence it becomes impossible to deceive the elect.

that is, not finally; because in an effectual call he will put his fear into their hearts: they may wander, but not depart; they may in some acts deviate, but they shall not be backsliders in heart: and the reason is, because though there may be a tendency in them to turn away from God, yet God stands engaged not to turn away from them.\* Hence that expression of God to the prophet: "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return to her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." (Jer. iii. 1.) God will not permit that to be done by men, which he may do himself in this case: and the reason is, because God can purge an adulterous heart, which it is not in the power of man to do: rather than the marriage-covenant between Christ and a believer shall be dissolved, God will put forth his mighty power, to make and keep the hearts of believers faithful and loyal to him.† What a clear and full promise of perseverance is that also revealed by Christ in John x. 27, 28!—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Both the Father and Son stand engaged by promise to preserve elect believers unto life. Another express promise of perseverance we find in 1 Cor. i. 8, 9: He "shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." All those that are called have the promise of a most faithful God to preserve them blameless, even to the day of the Lord; and therefore they shall persevere.

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT: FROM THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION, AND THE MUTUAL PROMISES MADE BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON.

A fourth ground of their perseverance is *the stability of the covenant of redemption*.—Or, the certain performance of every promise made mutually between the Father and the Son, between the Lord of hosts and "the Branch," when the council of peace was betwixt them both, mentioned in Zech. vi. 12, 13. When the Father and the Son agreed about the redemption of fallen man, there were many articles of this covenant and council of peace mutually consented unto; some of them relating to the work of redemption itself, others relating to the reward of the Redeemer, as you may read in Isai. liii. Now this was one promise which the Father made unto the Redeemer; namely, that he should not die in vain, but that he should "see of the travail of his soul, and should be satisfied." (Verse 11.) Now, should true believers finally fall, Christ Jesus should not attain that satisfaction which is here promised. The mother is not satisfied with an abortive birth; nor would the Hebrew women have been satisfied if their children had been murdered as soon as born: neither can Christ be willing that those for whom his

\* The mercies of God's covenant are both *τα ὀρα* and *τα ἁγία*, "sure" and "holy" concessions: so the Septuagint translate Isai. lv. 3. † God saith concerning his people's sin, as he said of Israel's, "I have seen his sins, and I will heal them." (Isai. lvii. 18.)

soul was in agony should finally perish. The end of Christ's sufferings was not only to bring forth sons unto God, but also to bring those sons unto glory. Now should Christ fall short in this latter work, first, he could not, according to the author [of the epistle] to the Hebrews, be a perfect Captain of salvation: "For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. ii. 10.) Secondly: Christ could not be able in the day of judgment to say, as it follows in verse 13, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." But Christ is a perfect Saviour, and will at that great day say to God, as he doth in John xvii. 6, 12, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. I have kept them, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." In which words there is not only intimated a covenant and an agreement between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect, but there is also expressed in them the faithful discharge of the mutual agreement on both sides; so that not one of those that were God's by election, and intrusted in Christ's hand by donation, shall be lost. Judas was therefore a "son of perdition," because given only externally, and not eternally, into Christ's hand.

THE FIFTH ARGUMENT: BECAUSE CHRIST HATH PRAYED THAT  
THEY MIGHT PERSEVERE.

The fifth argument I shall use is this: *If Christ did pray while he was on earth, and doth now intercede in heaven, that all the elect, who are effectually called, may persevere; then they shall persevere.*—The ground of this argument you have in John xi. 42, where Christ tells us, that the Father did hear him always. So that if I prove that Christ hath prayed for the perseverance of believers, I shall thereby prove their certain perseverance.\* I beseech you, therefore, consider a few verses of John xvii.; and you will find that in verse 9, Christ expressly tells us, that he did pray for all the elect, and for them only; and in verse 11 he tells us, that perseverance was the very matter of the petition which he put up: "Holy Father, keep them through thy name;" and in verse 15 he explains how he would have them kept; namely, "from the evil," or from all evil. And lest any one should say that this prayer was made only for some few that were then called, Christ adds, verse 20, that he prayed for all that should believe, or be effectually called, at any time after. And as perseverance was fundamentally petitioned for, so Christ, upon that foundation, doth carry his petitions higher; for, in verse 21, he prays for them that they might attain a higher degree of union with himself; and in verse 22, that they might attain a likeness of glory with himself; and in verse 23, that they might attain to be loved as he himself was loved of the Father. Now if all these petitions which Christ made for all the elect shall be infallibly granted, (as I have proved they shall, from Christ's own words,) then it doth necessarily follow that all the elect shall persevere unto glory. And yet I shall add one thing more for a farther confirmation of this argument; namely, that as the perseverance of believers is secured by the prayer which Christ made for them

\* See AMENII *Corona Colloquii Hagiensis.*

when he was on earth, so they are yet more secured by the intercession that Christ makes for them now in heaven. The author [of the epistle] to the Hebrews doth most fully prove that Christ is "able to save," *εἰς τὸ πάντας*, "to the uttermost all that come to God by him," (which he should not be, if all true believers should not persevere to glory,) by this strong argument: Because "he ever liveth to make intercession for them:" (Heb. vii. 25 :) as he prayed on earth, so he prays in heaven, and will ever live to pray for them. I conclude this argument thus: If Christ's prayer were effectual to keep Peter from final falling, and to raise him up when he had fallen foully; if it kept the habit of his faith from failing when it failed in the act;\* upon the same account the faith of every believer is certainly secured, as to its principle, by the prayer which Christ did make for him on earth, and now makes for him in heaven.

THE SIXTH ARGUMENT: FROM THE INHABITATION AND INOPERATION OF THE SPIRIT.

My last argument for the saints' perseverance shall be taken *from the constant inhabitation, and powerful inoperation,† of the Spirit of God in and upon the hearts of true believers.*—Believers are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and God lives in them, and walks in them. (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16.) The Spirit infuses grace, and he also actuates grace, in them; and this preserves and keeps them from falling. Not the grace wrought, but the Spirit working grace, doth preserve grace. Every prudent person will secure the place of habitation: the Spirit of God, dwelling in believers, &c., doth superintend their minds by a constant inspection over them: Christ assures believers, that he would "pray the Father, and he should give them another Comforter that should abide with them;" namely, "even the Spirit of truth that should dwell in them." (John xiv. 16, 17.) If the Spirit of God abides and dwells in believers for ever, then they cannot finally fall. The work of the Spirit in believers is an abiding work, or an abiding anointing; it abides in them, and it causes them to abide in God.‡ In the great work of regeneration, the Spirit doth infuse radicated and fixed habits of grace, and it works such a principle as continues and abides for ever: hence it is called an "incorruptible seed," (1 Peter i. 23,) and a "remaining seed." (1 John iii. 9.) Moreover, the Spirit of God is said to establish believers unto salvation, inasmuch as it is given as a seal and earnest thereof into our hearts, according to 2 Cor. i. 21, 22: "Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;" *ὁ καὶ σφραγισάμενος ἡμᾶς, καὶ δούς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν* "who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts." Observe here, First, That all true believers are confirmed and established, and therefore they shall persevere. Secondly. That the way of God's establishing them is by God's pouring upon them a holy unction, or the anointing of his Spirit. Thirdly. That this anointing gives security in

\* *Petrus negans Christum non perdidit fidem, sed peccavit contra ejus confessionem.*—CORNELIUS A LAPIDE in *Exod. xxii. 5*. "Peter, when he denied Christ, did not lose his faith, but sinned against his confession."—EDIT. † *In-operation*, "inward working."—EDIT. ‡ See GREGORIUS DE VALENTIA in *Primum Secundæ Aquinatis*, quæst. iii.

the nature of a *seal*, and an *earnest* : a *seal* both obliges the insurer, and also manifests the assurance : an *earnest* doth so much also, and more ; for it implies also something given in present possession.\* God, working true grace by his Spirit, secures us of heaven, as he secured Israel of Canaan, by giving them Eshcol, some “clusters” of Canaan’s vineyards in the wilderness ; which was a kind of livery and seisin, as when possession of an estate is given by a twig or rod. God’s giving of his Spirit is called his giving of “the first-fruits,” *την ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος* (Rom. viii. 23 ;) thereby indicating our assured full harvest, whereof this is an actual part. All those must needs be assured of glory, who have a possession of grace : and this seems to be the argument of the very text ; namely, “If ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Why ? Because hereby “an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom.” (2 Peter i. 11.) Possession is the best assurance ; it is eleven points. Now, by the Spirit’s indwelling in believers, they have a kind of pre-possession of glory.

THE SECOND GENERAL PROPOSITION. IT IS A BELIEVER’S DUTY TO GIVE DILIGENCE TO MAKE HIS CALLING, ELECTION, AND PERSEVERANCE SURE.

II. It remains now only that I speak to the Second general proposition included in the text, *That it is the duty of every believer to give all diligence to make his calling, election, and perseverance sure.*—This proposition being of the nature of an inference drawn from the former proposition, and being also rather matter of practice than of controversy, I shall but briefly, and by way of APPLICATION, speak unto it. Yet here also the great Goliath of the Philistines stands in our way ; for when Bellarmine is no more able to maintain the impossibility of attaining assurance, he then retreats to this second redoubt, and tells us, that “no man is bound to gain this assurance, although perchance he might possibly attain to it if he would labour after it.”† I must, with as few words as may be, drive him out of this hold, and we shall draw towards a conclusion. I shall therefore prove, “that it is a believer’s duty to give diligence to make his calling, election, and perseverance sure,” from a double necessity incumbent upon him.

*Diligence is necessary* necessitate præcepti.

(I.) It is a believer’s duty, *necessitate præcepti*, from “the necessity of the command.”—There can be no plainer or more express command than the words in the text ; and a parallel place with the text is that of the author [of the epistle] to the Hebrews : “We desire,” that is, In God’s name we require, “that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.” (Heb. vi. 11.) Brethren, I might have used it as a strong argument for the possibility of attaining assurance, because God hath so strictly enjoined us to effect it ; for, *Nemo tenetur ad impossibile*, that “no man is bound to impossibilities,” is a true rule, taking it of natural impossibility. Now there is nothing more

\* *Ἀπαρχὴν est pars pretii persoluta.*—BEZA *in loc.* “An ‘earnest’ is part of the price paid down.”—EDIT.

† *Nemo tenetur ad habendam hanc certitudinem, etiamsi forte possit habere.*—BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. viii. cap. 3.

clear than that we are bound to endeavour after assurance, by virtue of God's precept; which is so full as that many other duties are therefore enjoined because they are necessary means for our attaining assurance. Thus we are commanded, 1. To "search the scriptures." (John v. 39.) 2. To "search and try our ways." (Lam. iii. 40.) 3. To search and "examine" our hearts. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) The end of all this searching of the word as the rule, and of our hearts and lives as the things to be regulated by the word, is but that we might come to an assured knowledge of the agreement or disagreement that is between them.

Many duties are enjoined believers, because it is supposed diligence hath been given, and assurance thereby attained. Such as these: a believer is commanded, 1. To come with boldness and humble confidence "to the throne of grace." (Heb. iv. 16.) 2. To "rejoice in the Lord always." (Phil. iv. 4.) 3. To give God glory by believing. 4. To tell others what great things God hath done for their souls. 5. To comfort one another, and strengthen the faith of one another. All which duties are commanded, because the attaining of assurance is first commanded; and that first command is supposed, by these other commands, to have been obeyed: for no man can come in the Spirit of adoption, and with a filial confidence, cry, "Abba, Father," who first knows not himself to be a son by the image he bears. (Gal. iv. 6.) No man can rejoice in the Lord as he ought to rejoice, till he knows his name to be "written in heaven," because the law of God is written in his heart. (Luke x. 20.) How can a captive triumph, or a man in chains dance? How can a Hebrew song be sung in Babylon, "in a strange land?" (Psalm cxxxvii. 4.) Again: when it is required that we should live in perpetual adoration of divine goodness, and in admiration of free grace, and that we praise, and bless, and magnify the name of God, giving him glory by believing, this supposes that we do believe, and also that we know we do believe; for it is the joy of the Lord that gives us strength to do his will, and doth enlarge our hearts to speak good of his name. (Neh. viii. 10.)

*Diligence is necessary neccessitate medii.*

(II.) The second argument, proving it the duty of believers with diligence to endeavour after assurance, is, *because this diligence is necessary neccessitate medii, "as a necessary means."*—Here I desire you to consider these two things: 1. *That diligence is a necessary means for attaining assurance.* 2. *That assurance is a necessary means for the effecting some ends which we are bound to accomplish; but [which] are such as, without a certain knowledge of our interest in God,—they are not possibly attained.*

*Diligence a means to gain assurance.*

1. *Diligence is a most proper and necessary means for attaining assurance.*—"Faith of adherence," as one says, "comes by hearing; but faith of assurance comes not without doing." In God's giving [of] first grace, we are truly passive; but before God causes all grace to be in us, and to abound, he makes us active and diligent. Both in the direct act of faith and also in the reflex act of it, it may be said, that *acti*



*agimus*, "we act being acted." Yet there is some difference between our living, and moving, and having our being in God: (Acts xvii. 28 :) for as the child owes the first principle of its life wholly to God and its parents, wherein it is wholly passive in itself, but, afterwards, the exercise of those principles depends upon God's enabling of the child to put forth those acts that properly flow from a vital principle; so first principles, or the habits of grace, are, as I have already shown, infused by God alone, but the acts and exercise of grace are from God's concurrence [concurrence] with our faculties and powers. We are bidden to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," notwithstanding it be most true that "God works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) You see, a just acknowledgment of God's grace may be conjoined with a clear revelation of man's natural power before conversion, and of a believer's moral power after regeneration; and both of them enforcing and engaging unto the greatest diligence, even from their conjunction and concurrence. For these things are very harmonious in themselves; it is man's ignorance or perverseness that divides the things that God hath conjoined. Acknowledgment of free grace in its power, efficacy, and discriminative prerogative, when duly considered, doth most effectually put us upon diligence. Men can easily reconcile those two texts, where in one place it is said, "The hand of the diligent makes rich;" (Prov. x. 4;) in the other, "The blessing of God maketh rich." (Verse 22.) Men understand these things as they concur in natural things: I think they might as well be understood as relating to spiritual riches, "riches of assurance;" diligence, with God's blessing, being a proper means for gaining assurance. (Col. ii. 2.)

*Assurance a proper means helping us to attain more grace.*

2. *Assurance is a most proper means for the more speedy attaining many excellent ends, which without it are most difficultly accomplished.*—And here I might enumerate many particulars; for indeed there is scarcely any one act of grace that can be, in any measure or degree, so well exercised by a person ignorant of his spiritual estate, as by him who knows that relation which he stands in to God; neither is any duty so well performed before assurance, as after that God hath sealed to a believer the pardon of his sin. But I must mention only some consequences of assurance, so many as may stop the mouth of that Rabshakeh, Bellarmine, whose last argument against assurance is this, that "it is not convenient that men attain to assurance ordinarily of the truth of grace in their hearts;"\* and his reason is, "Because it tends to carelessness and sloth." And Petrus a Soto saith, that "it is not only most humble, but most safe, to doubt of the grace and favour of God." For confutation hereof, I shall instance in three effects or consequents of true assurance, which are of great import, but are difficultly obtained by those that want assurance.

*Victory over sin.*

(1.) *A more complete victory over the actings of remaining sin and corruption.*—This is much furthered by assurance. It is with believers

\* *Non expedit ut homines certitudinem de gratiâ propriâ ordinariè habeant.*—BELLARMINE'S *De Just.* lib. iii.

as it was with the Israelites : they bowed down under the oppression of Egypt so long as they despaired of deliverance ; but when God had assured them of his love and favour, and had given them a promise of bringing them forth from bondage, a new spirit immediately came upon them, and they suddenly vindicated themselves from slavery ; they cast off their oppressors' yoke, and went forth to liberty, not leaving one hoof behind them. (Exod. x. 26.) Thus despondent persons, who nourish their own fears, like Issachar, may "couch down between" these "two burdens : " (Gen. xlix. 14 :) (i.) Sight of guilt, and, (ii.) Sense of strong corruptions : but when gospel-grace appears, and a sight of the soul's interest in the strength and power of Christ is once manifest, presently the soul lifts up its head, and breaks this yoke off from its neck, and bids defiance to its old lusts, and goes forth "conquering, and to conquer." (Rev. vi. 2.) Our adversaries do indeed speak evil of the things they know not : (Jude 10 :) and because they want this experience,—that assurance doth most effectually purify the heart ; (Acts xv. 9 :) and are ignorant that he that hath the most assured hope, does most industriously design to "purify himself, as God is pure ; " (1 John iii. 3 :) therefore they blaspheme this most sacred truth ; they deny scripture ; and, were it not for shame, would accuse Christ and his apostles, Peter and Paul, for libertines, as the Pharisees sometimes did. But was it not Christ's common method, first to say to afflicted souls, "Your sins are forgiven," (Mark ii. 5,) and then, "Take up thy bed, and walk?" (Verse 9.) And again : did he not first say, "Thou art made whole," and then said, "Sin no more?" (John v. 14.) Christ's opinion (or rather, his certain knowledge) was this,—that the sense of forgiveness was the most potent principle of love and obedience ; Christ tells us, that Mary Magdalene therefore "loved much," because much was forgiven her. (Luke vii. 47.) If Paul understood any thing of gospel-principles, it was his doctrine, that the more clear "the grace of God doth appear," the more effectually it doth "teach to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and holily in this present world." (Titus ii. 11, 12.)

Our adversaries forget, that assurance is attainable by none but true believers : now it is impossible that true believers should turn the grace of God into wantonness. We affirm, that this "new name," and the "white stone," (Rev. ii. 17,) is never given to any but those that are "partakers of the new nature," (2 Peter i. 4,) to such as are regenerate. God first principles the heart with holiness, and then smiles upon it ; and for a holy person to know that he is so, can be no occasion to disobedience. I ask, Who is more obliged, or who feels the obligation to observance most cogently,—the son who knows his near relation, and knows his father loves him, or the servant that hath great reason to doubt thereof? God's Spirit seals none but those it hath in measure sanctified ; neither would God reveal his love, but that he knows the constraining power of it. Fear is a weak and impotent principle, in comparison of love. The apostle saith, "The law was weak ; " (Rom. viii. 3 :) the terror of its curse weakened and enfeebled the hands of those that should have obeyed it ; but the gospel-declaration of grace is mighty and prevailing, because it comes in the power of love. Terrors

may awaken; love enlivens. Terrors may "almost persuade;" love over-persuades. Felix may tremble, and remain unconverted; (Acts xxiv. 25;) Zacchæus hears of certain salvation, and makes haste to come down, and receives Christ gladly. (Luke xix. 5, 6.) Legal terrors may move affections, and storm the passions; but they make no change upon the will; and therefore there is no saving or thorough work effected; \* as, when a party of soldiers only storm the out-works of a garrison, they are soon again repelled: but the gospel takes the heart, the main fort, upon friendly articles and voluntary surrender, and the soul becomes a most willing tributary and subject to its new Governor. Fear may force and offer violence, and commit a rape upon the heart, but can effect no contract or marriage-covenant; for that is wrought only by love, and that in its clearest evidences and manifestations.

It is true, the Papists, who are great enemies to marriage, will here be ready to object, that "oftentimes affections cool after marriage, which were strong before; and so it may happen after a believer's knowledge of his interest in Christ." I answer, that the apostate church of Rome, to which the Spirit of God gives the title of "the great whore," and of "the mother of fornications and adulteries," (Rev. xvii. 1, 5,) both spiritual and civil, doth much delight to cast all the blemishes they can upon the state of marriage, civilly or spiritually considered; but more innocent persons do know, that interest did never lessen love, nor the knowledge of interest abate affection, but rather increase it.† All persons find [that] *that* relation hath a strange influence upon men's minds to endear those objects that might otherwise be but little taking. Sure I am, that a believer's knowledge that his Beloved is his, and he is his Beloved's, (Canticles vi. 3,) is found by experience to lay the most strong and cogent obligation upon him to loyalty and faithfulness unto the Lord Jesus: for as, to him that believes, Christ is precious; (1 Peter ii. 7;) so, to him that knows he believes, to him Christ is so much the more precious, even "the chiefest of ten thousand." (Canticles v. 10.)

*Victory over temptations of the world.*

(2.) As assurance furthers our love to Christ, and so gives power over sin, so *it gives strength to overcome the world, and all the temptations of it*, of what kind soever; be they either,

*On the right hand.*

(i.) First. *On the right hand*; namely, the smiles, flatteries, allurements, and enticements of the world: assurance of an interest in God very much facilitates our conquest over all these. The foresight and prospect of heaven carry the soul so high in its contemplation of glory, as when it looks down upon worldly enjoyments, they appear small, little, and very inconsiderable. Moses, after God had assured him of his love, and had caused his glory to pass before him,—how did he scorn to be tempted with the bait of being reckoned and accounted the son of

\* *Oderint dum metuant* ["Men will hate whilst they fear"] cannot be divided.

† *Amat ille non immeritò qui amatur sine merito. Amat sine fine qui cognoscit se amatum fuisse a principio.*—BERNARDI *Epist. ciii.* "He loves not without cause, who is loved without merit. His love is without end, who knows that he was loved from the beginning."

-- EDIT.

Pharaoh's daughter! "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin" that are but "for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." (Heb. xi. 24—26.) Whence arose this braveness and true greatness of mind? The text tells you, "He had respect to the recompence of reward:" he knew the reward was great, and his title to it good. St. Augustine tells of himself, that after he had attained assurance of God's love and favour, he was so ravished therewith, as he could not but cry out with a holy exclamation, "O how sweet is it to be without the world's sweets, since I enjoy all sweetness in God! Those things that once I was afraid to lose, I now let go, and want with joy, because hereby I enjoy thee the more." \*

*Temptations on the left hand.*

(ii.) As to temptations *on the left hand*, namely, the world's frowns, threats, and persecutions, how little doth an assured person regard them! They are all now accounted and considered as "light" and momentary "afflictions," because they are known to "work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.) We read of true believers that endured "the spoiling of their goods with joy." (Heb. x. 34.) To suffer with patience to some is very hard; but to others it is "joy," even when they "fall into divers temptations." (James i. 2.) But who are these? The Spirit of God tells us, that they are those that know within themselves, (mark! within themselves; that is, by inward evidences, and the testimony of the Spirit witnessing with their spirits,) that they have "a better and more enduring substance" in heaven; these can both forego and undergo cheerfully whatever God requires of them. Excellent is the saying of St. Cyprian: "There lives in us," saith he, "the strength and power of an immovable faith; and hence it is that amongst all the ruins of this tumbling and rolling world, our mind bears up, and our patience always triumphs, because our souls are sure and secure in reference to the eternal love of God." †

*Victory over the fear of death.*

(3.) Assurance of our salvation procures *victory over the fear of death*.—Old Simeon, with Christ in his arms, could pray for a dismissal hence. (Luke ii. 29.) He that hath gotten good evidences in his bosom, and the Spirit's testimony of the pardon of his sin sealed upon his conscience, will join with Simeon in this his petition. Until assurance be attained, it is impossible but that men should "all their lives long be kept in bondage through the fear of death;" (Heb. ii. 15;) but an assured person can wish for death, and say, with Paul, *Cupio dissolvi*, "I desire to be dissolved." ‡ Assurance carries the soul to the top of Pisgah; and from thence a believer, as he hath a general view of the whole Land of Promise, so by the eye of an assuring faith he is able to espy his own lot and portion in heaven and glory: and can he be unwilling to go through

\* *Quam suave est deliciis hinc carere, &c.*—AUGUSTINI *Confess.* lib. iii. † *Viget apud nos spei immobilis virtus et firmitas, &c.*—S. CYPRIANI *Sermo de Patientiâ.* ‡ See 2 Cor. v. 1: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Jordan, or the channel of the grave, to take possession thereof? As the least degree of true faith takes away the sting of death, because it takes away guilt; so plerophory ["full assurance"] of faith breaks the very teeth and jaws of death, by taking away the fear and dread of it. When evidences of an estate are once sealed and attested, men are not afraid of that turf and clod, which, whilst it defiles their hands, gives them livery and seisin of large revenues. When a true believer knows his interest in those eternal mansions of glory to come, he is not troubled that his cottage of clay must first be pulled down. The nature of death to a believer is quite altered from what it was; and it seems to be another thing, in his present apprehension, differing much from what he once thought it to be. It once appeared only "the wages of sin;" (Rom. vi. 23;) but now it appears as the reward of patience. It was once thought the beginning of sorrow; but now the end of sin, and the consummation of grace. To a despairing person, death appears like a grim sergeant haling to prison; to an assured person, it acts the part of a master of ceremonies, who introduces foreigners into the presence of the great King. Death holds forth a crown to an assured person; it holds forth an axe to a despairing person. Such a change doth assurance make. I shall therefore add no more but the words of Cyprian, who, discoursing of death, hath these words: "Beloved," saith he, "the kingdom of heaven is begun already in us in joy and peace. There is no place left for fear, or doubting, or sorrow. He only can fear death, that is unwilling to go to Christ; and none can be unwilling to go to him, that know they shall reign with him." \*

And thus I have abundantly shown how instrumental assurance is for the increase of sanctification, and obtaining a more complete victory over sin, the world, and the fear of death; and I have thereby confuted Bellarmine's grand argument against assurance, as if it tended to licentiousness. The rest of his objections and arguments I have also sufficiently obviated, so as I hope every considering person will be able, from what hath been spoken, to defend the truth: although the style, of necessity, hath been more concise than might have been desired; yet I hope those that are intelligent will be satisfied with the matter of argument therein contained, although I have been forced to abbreviate my discourse.

#### USE.

I must make but little other application than,

1. To desire you to change the arguments by which I have proved the necessity of diligence, into motives to put you upon the practice.
2. I shall conclude with some necessary DIRECTIONS for the better attaining to assurance.

*Make it more and more sure in itself.*

**DIRECTION I.** *Give diligence to make your calling more sure in itself, by "adding unto faith virtue; unto virtue knowledge; unto knowledge temperance;" and the rest of those graces here mentioned by our apostle. (2 Peter i. 5.)—"Although now your calling may be sure and saving,*

\* CYPRIANUS *De Mortalitate.*

yet it may be more assured : " \* the promises were sure before Christ's coming, yet he is said to confirm them, and make them more sure. (Rom. xv. 8.) A believer, the more he grows in grace, the more effectual is his calling made ; and the more sure it is in itself, the more easily may he attain to his assurance of it. The more effectual it is, the more visible and conspicuous always is a believer's call. Little grace may be true grace ; but little grace is next to no grace ; and therefore weak grace is seldom discerned. Just as those "motes" or "atoms," as they are called, which are small particles of dust, and fly abroad in the air, are true bodies, but they are invisible bodies ; thus while faith is but as "a grain of mustard-seed," (Luke xiii. 19,) it may be true, but it will be hardly seen. When love to God is (as a small spark of fire covered with a heap of ashes) smothered with too great a mixture of sensual and carnal affections, it is not easily discovered or found without much search ; but faith grown-up to a tree, and love blown-up to a flame, cannot be hid ; for thus they render themselves most visible and manifest. That poor woman that had lost her δραχμη, her groat, was forced to "light her candle," and "sweep diligently her house," and to look long before she found it, because it was but a drachm, a very small piece ; (Luke xv. 8 ; ) had it been a talent, or shekel of the sanctuary, it would have been more easily found. Let the print be true and exact, yet if small, it is often not legible, especially to weak eyes. If you would attain to assurance, labour to make your calling more sure in itself, by growing eminent in grace.

*Make it sure to yourselves by special assuring graces.*

**DIRECT. 11.** *Labour to make it sure to yourselves, by attaining to, and living in, the exercise of those graces that are properly and more especially assuring graces.*—The Spirit of God in scripture hath declared that a believer's assurance of salvation depends upon the exercise of three assuring graces : 1. Πληροφορια συνεσεως, "a full assurance of knowledge and understanding." 2. Πληροφορια πιστεως, "a full assurance of faith." 3. Πληροφορια της ελπιδος, "a full assurance of hope."

*A full assurance of knowledge.*

1. *Labour for "full assurance of knowledge."*—When St. Paul is declaring to the Colossians, how much he desired that the believers of Laodicea might have their hearts comforted and assured, he reveals the way of attaining this to be, by attaining "all riches of full assurance of understanding : " 'Ινα παρακληθωσιν αι καρδιαι αυτων, εις παντα πλουτον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως, εις επιγνωσιν, &c. ; (Col. ii. 1, 2 ; ) which phrase implies two things :

(1.) *That all those things be known upon which a believer's assurance and comforts are built.*—And these fundamentals are many : there are several προλεγομενα, or *præcognita* ; several things must be "fore-known and understood" before assurance can be attained : † as, (i.) You must

\* *Vocatio, etsi primò et per se certa sit, complementum tamen adhuc expectat.*—CHAMIERUS, tom. iii. lib. xiii. cap. 15. † There is one more fundamental of assurance than there is of salvation.

labour to know the way of redemption and salvation by the mediation of Christ. (ii.) You must know the way of a person's obtaining an interest in that mediation; that is, you must know that faith, effectually owning of Christ as Mediator, and deporting itself toward him as such, doth, by virtue of the new covenant, obtain an interest in that mediation. (iii.) You must know by what signs or evidences true saving faith may be distinguished certainly from temporary and ineffectual faith. (iv.) You must know that these certain evidences are found in your heart and life.

(2.) Full assurance of knowledge implies *a clear and distinct acknowledgment of all these, with reference to a believer's well-built and grounded comforts.*—*Verba sensus et intellectus connotant affectum et effectum:* "Scripture-phrases of sense and knowledge imply a suitable affection, and also such effects as are proper and agreeing." There must not therefore be only a speculative notion, but also an influential and practical application of this knowledge for the founding of assurance thereupon: there must not be only *γνῶσις*, but *ἐπιγνῶσις*, not only "knowledge," but "acknowledgment;" as it follows in the same verse.

#### *Full assurance of faith.*

2. *Labour for "full assurance of faith."*—Now this implies these four things, which I must but name, as in the former direction: (1.) Labour for full assent unto the truth of gospel-revelation. (2.) For full consent unto gospel-method, terms, conditions, and commands. (3.) For full dependence upon gospel-grace. (4.) For full experience of gospel-obedience, or the obedience of faith. All these are included in that "full assurance of faith," wherewith the apostle exhorts believers to "draw near to God;" (Heb. x. 22;) and every one of these acts of faith must be attained and put in practice before assurance can be attained.

#### *Full assurance of hope.*

3. *Labour for "full assurance of hope."* (Heb. vi. 11.)—And this supposes two things:

First. *An actual, explicit considering of the grounds of our hope, or a laying a good foundation.*—All saving hope is rational and well-built. Hope's anchor, in a believer, holds not by the strength of a spider's web, as the hypocrite's hope doth; but it holds by the strength of a three-fold cord, not easily broken; it holds by the evidence of, (1.) Testimony, (2.) Sense, and, (3.) Reason. Bellarmine, fondly adhering to the philosophical definition of hope, and departing from the scriptural use and acceptance of the word "hope," (which is the ground of many errors in the church of Rome,) denies that reason and hope can consist together; and consequently denies also that there is any such thing as "full assurance of hope." But when he is urged with that plain text in Heb. vi. 11, where believers are exhorted to give "diligence" for attaining "full assurance of hope," which supposeth that a full assured hope is in the first place built upon good evidence and proof, the Jesuit, in answer to this, doth most egregiously trifle, and doth nonsensically distinguish between the certainty of the will, in opposition to the certainty of the understanding; although every tyro knows, that the will is no subject

of certainty, nor can there be any certainty of will separate from the certainty of the understanding. And yet more ridiculous is the Jesuit's argument, when he tells us, that "what we have reason to hope for, we do not hope for it, but expect it;"\* the folly of which distinction between hope and expectation, I need not say any thing further to it, than to assure you, that the apostle Peter was wholly ignorant of Bellarmine's logic, when he exhorts believers to be ready to give *λογον περι της εν υμιν ελπιδος*, "a reason of the hope that was in" them. (1 Peter iii. 15.)

But, Secondly, the phrase, "full assurance of hope," supposes an *actual building of our hope upon these good grounds, or an actual conclusion from rational principles, that we are pardoned, and shall be saved.*—It is one thing to consider the grounds of such a conclusion, another thing to conclude actually from those grounds. Assured hope, as it is accompanied with rational evidences, so it is accompanied with right use of right reason to draw the inference. Weak hope sometimes acts as children will do,—it grants the premisses, and yet denies the conclusion; but strong hope is accompanied with a full power to infer the assured conclusion from those assured premisses, which those afore-named assuring graces did lay down. Knowledge saith, "Whoever believes shall be saved;" faith saith, "Peter doth believe;" "Therefore," hope saith, "Peter shall be saved."† And this hope is that which will never "make ashamed, because" hereby "the love of God is shed abroad" more abundantly "in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us." (Rom. v. 5.) "Let every man" therefore thus "prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself, and not in another." (Gal. vi. 4.)

## SERMON XXI. (XX.)

BY THE REV. MATTHEW SYLVESTER,

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BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER ARE THE ONLY SACRAMENTS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THERE ARE BUT TWO SACRAMENTS UNDER THE NEW TESTAMENT.

*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*—Proverbs xxx. 6.

THE independency of Proverbs informs us, that we may spare the labour of reflections upon the context; seeing every proverb is big with its own sense, and fully comprehends its own design and reach.

\* *Duplex est certitudo, alia voluntatis, alia intellectus: et videtur non posse certitudinem intellectus cum spe convenire, quia quod scimus nos habituros, non speramus, sed expectamus.*—BELLARMINUS *De Justif.* lib. xiii. cap. 11. † *Dicit Fides, Parata sunt magna: dicit Spes, Mihi ista servantur.*—BERNARDI *Serm. l.* "Says Faith, 'Great things are prepared: ' For me,' says Hope, 'they are reserved.'"—EDIT.