

## THE NATURE, CAUSES, AND MEANS,

OF

## REGENERATION.

### CHAP. V.

*Description of the state of nature, necessary unto a right understanding of the work of the Spirit in regeneration. No possibility of salvation unto persons living and dying in a state of sin. Deliverance from it by regeneration only. The Holy Ghost the peculiar author of this work. Differences about the manner and nature of it. Way of the ancients in explaining the doctrine of grace; the present method proposed. Conversion not wrought by moral suasion only. The nature and efficacy of moral suasion, wherein they consist. Illumination preparatory unto conversion. The nature of grace morally effective only, opened; not sufficient for conversion. The first argument disproving the working of grace in conversion to be by moral suasion only. The second. The third. The fourth. Wherein the work of the Spirit in regeneration positively doth consist; the use and end of outward means. Real internal efficiency of the Spirit in this work. Grace victorious and irresistible, the nature of it explained. Proved. The manner of God's working by grace on our wills farther explained. Testimonies concerning the actual collation of faith by the power of God. Victorious efficacy of internal grace proved by sundry testimonies of Scripture. From the nature of the work wrought by it, in vivification and regeneration. Regeneration considered with respect unto the distinct faculties of the soul. The mind. The will. The affections.*

UNTO the description we are to give of the *work of regeneration*, the precedent account of the *subject* of it, or the state and condition of them that are to be regenerated, was necessarily to be premised. For upon the knowledge thereof, doth a due apprehension of the nature of that work depend. And the occasion of all the mistakes and errors that have been about it, either of old or of late, hath been a misunderstanding of the true state of men in their *lapsed condition*, or of nature as depraved. Yea, and those by whom this whole work is derided, do now countenance themselves therein by their ignorance of that state, which they will not

learn either from the Scripture or experience; for, *natura sic apparet vitata ut hoc majoris vitii sit non videre*, as Austin speaks. It is an evidence of the corruption of nature, that it disenables the minds of men to discern their own corruption. We have previously discharged this work so far as it is necessary unto our present purpose. Many other things might be added in the explication of it, were that our direct design. Particularly having confined myself to treat only concerning the depravation of the mind and will, I have not insisted on that of the affections, which yet is effectual to retain unregenerate men under the power of sin; though it be far enough from truth that the whole corruption of nature consists therein, as some weakly and athologically have imagined. Much less have I treated concerning that increase and heightening of the depravation of nature which is attracted by a custom of sinning, as unto all the perverse ends of it. Yet this also the Scripture much insists upon, as that which naturally and necessarily ensues in all in whom it is not prevented by the effectual transforming grace of the Spirit of God. And it is that which seals up the impossibility of their turning themselves to God; Jer. xiii. 23. Rom. iii. 10—19. But that the whole difficulty of conversion should arise from men's contracting a habit or custom of sinning, is false, and openly contradictory to the Scripture. These things are personal evils, and befall individuals through their own default in various degrees. And we see that amongst men, under the same use of means, some are converted unto God, who have been deeply immersed in an habitual course of open sins, whilst others, kept from them by the influence of their education upon their inclinations and affections, remain unconverted. So was it of old between the publicans and harlots on the one hand, and the Pharisees on the other. But my design was only to mention that which is common unto all; or wherein all men universally are equally concerned, who are partakers of the same human nature in its lapsed condition. And what we have herein declared from the Scriptures will guide us in our inquiry after the work of the Holy Spirit of grace in our deliverance from it.

It is evident, and needs no farther confirmation, that persons living and dying in this estate cannot be saved. This

hitherto hath been allowed by all that are called Christians, nor are we to be moved that some who call themselves so, do begin to laugh at the disease, and despise the remedy, of our nature. Among those who lay any serious and real claim unto Christianity, there is nothing more certain, nor more acknowledged, than that there is no deliverance from a state of misery for those who are not delivered from a state of sin. And he who denies the necessary perishing of all that live and die in the state of corrupted nature, denies all the use of the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God. For if we may be saved without the renovation of our natures, there was no need, nor use, of the new creation of all things by Jesus Christ, which principally consists therein. And if men may be saved under all the evils that came upon us by the fall, then did Christ die in vain. Besides, it is frequently expressed that men in that state are enemies to God, alienated from him, children of wrath, under the curse; and if such may be saved, so may devils also. In brief, it is not consistent with the nature of God, his holiness, righteousness, or truth, with the law or gospel, nor possible in the nature of the thing itself, that such persons should enter into, or be made possessors of, glory and rest with God. A deliverance therefore out of, and from, this condition is indispensably necessary to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

This deliverance must be, and is, by regeneration. The determination of our Saviour is positive both in this and the necessity of it before asserted; John iii. 3. 'Except a man be born again,' or from above, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Whatever sense the 'kingdom of God' is taken in, either for that of grace here, or of glory hereafter, it is all the same as unto our present purpose. There is no interest in it to be obtained, no participation of the benefits of it, unless a man be born again, unless he be regenerate. And this determination of our Saviour, as it is absolute and decretory, so it is applicable unto, and equally compriseth, every individual of mankind. And the work intended by their regeneration, or in being born again, which is the spiritual conversion and quickening of the souls of men, is every where ascribed unto them that shall be saved. And although men may have, through their ignorance and prejudices, false ap-

prehensions about regeneration and the nature of it, or wherein it doth consist; yet so far as I know, all Christians are agreed, that it is the way and means of our deliverance from the state of sin or corrupted nature, or rather our deliverance itself. For this both express testimonies of Scripture, and the nature of the thing itself, put beyond contradiction; Tit. iii. 3—5. And those by whom it is exposed unto scorn, who esteem it a ridiculous thing for any one to inquire whether he be regenerate or no, will one day understand the necessity of it; although it may be not before it is too late to obtain any advantage thereby.

The Holy Ghost is the *immediate author* and cause of this work of regeneration. And herein again, as I suppose, we have in general the consent of all. Nothing is more in words acknowledged than that all the ‘elect of God are sanctified by the Holy Ghost.’ And this regeneration is the head, fountain, or beginning, of our sanctification, virtually comprising the whole in itself, as will afterward appear. However that it is a part thereof, is not to be denied. Besides, as I suppose, it is equally confessed to be an effect or work of grace, the actual dispensation whereof is solely in the hand of the Holy Spirit. This, I say, is in words acknowledged by all; although I know not how some can reconcile this profession unto other notions and sentiments which they declare concerning it: for setting aside what men do herein themselves, and others do towards them in the ministry of the word, and I cannot see what remains, as they express their loose imaginations, to be ascribed unto the Spirit of God. But at present we shall make use of this general concession, that regeneration is the work of the Holy Ghost, or an effect of his grace. Not that we have any need so to do, but that we may avoid contesting about those things wherein men may shroud their false opinions under general ambiguous expressions, which was the constant practice of Pelagius and those who followed him of old. But the Scripture is express in testimonies to our purpose. What our Saviour calls ‘being born again,’ John iii. 3. he calls being ‘being born of the Spirit;’ ver. 5, 6. because he is the sole, principal, efficient cause of this new birth. For it is the ‘Spirit that quickeneth;’ John. vi. 63. Rom. viii. 11. And God saveth us, ‘according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and the

renewing of the Holy Ghost;’ Tit. iii. 5. whereas, therefore, we are said to be ‘born of God,’ or to be ‘begotten again of his own will;’ John i. 13. James i. 18. 1 John iii. 9. it is with respect unto the especial and peculiar operation of the Holy Spirit.

These things are thus far confessed, even by the Pelagians themselves, both those of old, and those at present, at least in general; nor hath any as yet been so hardy as to deny regeneration to be the work of the Holy Spirit in us; unless we must except those deluded souls who deny both him and his work. Our sole inquiry, therefore, must be after the manner and nature of this work; for the nature of it depends on the manner of the working of the Spirit of God herein. This I acknowledge was variously contended about of old; and the truth concerning it, hath scarce escaped an open opposition in any age of the church. And at present this is the great ball of contention between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, the latter keeping close to the doctrine of the principal ancient writers of the church, the former under new notions, expressions, and distinctions, endeavouring the reinforcement of Pelagianism, whereunto some of the elder school-men led the way, of whom our Bradwardine so long ago complained. But never was it with so much impotence and ignorance traduced and reviled, as it is by some among ourselves. For a sort of men we have, who by stories of wandering Jews, rhetorical declamations, pert cavillings, and proud revilings of those who dissent from them, think to scorn and banish truth out of the world; though they never yet durst attempt to deal openly and plainly with any one argument that is pleaded in its defence and confirmation.

The ancient writers of the church, who looked into these things with most diligence, and laboured in them with most success, as Austin, Hilary, Prosper, and Fulgentius, do represent the whole work of the Spirit of God towards the souls of men under certain heads or distinctions of grace. And herein were they followed by many of the more sober school-men; and others of late without number. Frequent mention we find in them of grace, as preparing, preventing, working, co-working, and confirming. Under these heads do they handle the whole work of our regeneration or conversion unto God. And although there may be some alteration in

method and ways of expression, which may be varied as they are found to be of advantage unto them that are to be instructed; yet for the substance of the doctrine, they taught the same which hath been preached amongst us since the reformation, which some have ignorantly traduced as novel. And the whole of it is nobly and elegantly exemplified by Austin in his confessions, wherein he gives us the experience of the truth he had taught in his own soul. And I might follow their footsteps herein, and perhaps should for some reasons have chosen so to have done; but that there have been so many differences raised about the explication and application of these terms and distinctions; and the declaration of the nature of the acts and effects of the Spirit of grace intended in them; as that to carry the truth through the intricate perplexities which under these notions have been cast upon it, would be a longer work than I shall here engage into; and too much divert me from my principal intention. I shall, therefore, in general, refer the whole work of the Spirit of God with respect unto the regeneration of sinners unto two heads. First, That which is *preparatory* for it; and, secondly, That which is *effective* of it. That which is preparatory for it, is the *conviction* of sin; this is the work of the Holy Spirit; John xvi. 8, 9. And this also may be distinctly referred unto three heads. 1. A discovery of the *true nature* of sin, by the ministry of the law; Rom. vii. 7. 2. An *application* of that discovery made in the mind or understanding unto the conscience of the sinner. 3. The *excitation* of affections suitable unto that discovery and application; Acts ii. 37. But these things, so far as they belong unto our present design, have been before insisted on. Our principal inquiry at present is after the work itself, or the nature and manner of the working of the Spirit of God in and on the souls of men in their *regeneration*. And this must be both negatively and positively declared.

First, The work of the Spirit of God in the regeneration of sinners, or the quickening of them who are dead in trespasses and sins, or in their first saving conversion to God, doth not consist in a *moral suasion* only. By suasion we intend such a persuasion as may, or may not, be effectual; so absolutely we call that only persuasion whereby a man is actually persuaded. Concerning this we must consider, 1. What it is that is in-

tended by that expression, and wherein its efficacy doth consist; and, 2. prove that the whole work of the Spirit of God in the conversion of sinners doth not consist therein. And I shall handle this matter under this notion, as that which is known unto those who are conversant in these things from the writings of the ancient and modern divines. For it is to no purpose to endeavour the reducing of the extravagant confused discourses of some present writers unto a certain and determinate stating of the things in difference among us. That which they seem to aim at and conclude, may be reduced unto these heads: (1.) That God administers grace unto all in the declaration of the doctrine of the law and gospel. (2.) That the reception of this doctrine, the belief and practice of it, is enforced by promises and threatenings. (3.) That the things revealed, taught, and commanded, are not only good in themselves, but so suited unto the reason and interest of mankind, as that the mind cannot but be disposed and inclined to receive and obey them, unless overpowered by prejudices and a course of sin. (4.) That the consideration of the promises and threatenings of the gospel, is sufficient to remove these prejudices and reform that course. (5.) That upon a compliance with the doctrine of the gospel and obedience thereunto, men are made partakers of the Spirit, with other privileges of the New Testament, and have a right unto all the promises of the present and future life. Now this being a perfect system of Pelagianism, condemned in the ancient church as absolutely exclusive of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be fully removed out of our way in our present discourse, though the loose confused expressions of some be not considered in particular. For if the work of our regeneration doth not consist in a moral suasion, which as we shall see contains all that these men will allow to grace, their whole fabric falls to the ground of its own accord.

1. As to the nature of this *moral suasion* two things may be considered. (1.) The *means*, instrument, and matter of it, and this is the word of God; the word of God or the Scripture in the doctrinal instructions, precepts, promises, and threatenings of it. This is that, and this is that alone, whereby we are commanded, pressed, persuaded, to turn ourselves and live to God. And herein we comprise the whole, both

the law and the gospel, with all the divine truths contained in them, as severally respecting the especial ends whereunto they are designed. For although they are distinctly and peculiarly suited to produce distinct effects on the minds of men, yet they all jointly tend unto the general end of guiding men how to live unto God, and to obtain the enjoyment of him. As for those documents and instructions which men have concerning the will of God, and the obedience which he requires of them from the light of nature, with the works of creation and providence, I shall not here take them into consideration. For either they are solitary or without any superaddition of instructive light by revelation, and then I utterly deny them to be a sufficient outward means of the conversion of any one soul; or they may be considered as improved by the written word as dispensed unto men, and so they are comprised under it, and need not to be considered apart. We will therefore suppose that those unto whom the word is declared, have antecedeaneously thereunto, all the help which the light of nature will afford.

(2.) The *principal way* of the application of this means to produce its effect on the souls of men, is the *ministry of the church*. God hath appointed the ministry for the application of the word unto the minds and consciences of men for their instruction and conversion. And concerning this we may observe two things. [1.] That the word of God, thus dispensed by the ministry of the church, is the only ordinary outward means which the Holy Ghost maketh use of in the regeneration of the adult unto whom it is preached. [2.] That it is every way sufficient in its own kind; that is, as an outward means. For the revelation which is made of God and his mind thereby, is sufficient to teach men all that is needful for them to believe and do, that they may be converted unto God, and yield him the obedience that he requires. Hence two things do ensue:

1st. That the use of those means unto men in the state of sin, if they are not complied withal, is sufficient, on the grounds before laid down, to leave them by whom they are rejected inexcusable; so Isa. v. 3—5. Prov. xxix. 1. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, 15.

2nd. That the effect of regeneration or conversion unto God, is assigned unto the preaching of the word, because of

its efficacy thereunto in its own kind and way as the outward means thereof; 1 Cor. iv. 15. James i. 14. 1 Pet. i. 23.

Secondly, We may consider what is the nature, and wherein the efficacy of this *moral work* doth consist. To which purpose we may observe;

1. That in the use of this means for the *conversion of men*, there is, *preparatory* unto that wherein this *moral persuasion* doth consist, an *instruction* of the mind in the knowledge of the will of God and its duty towards him. The first regard unto men in the dispensation of the word unto them, is their darkness and ignorance, whereby they are alienated from the life of God. This therefore is the first end of divine revelation; namely, to make known the counsel and will of God unto us; see Matt. iv. 15, 16. Luke iv. 18, 19. Acts xxvi. 17, 18. xx. 20, 21. 26, 27. By the preaching of the law and the gospel, men are instructed in the whole counsel of God, and what he requires of them. And in their apprehension hereof doth the illumination of their minds consist, whereof we must treat distinctly afterward. Without a supposition of this illumination there is no use of the persuasive power of the word; for it consists in affecting the mind with its concernment in the things that it knows, or wherein it is instructed. Wherefore we suppose in this case, that a man is taught by the word, both the necessity of regeneration, and what is required of himself thereunto.

2. On this supposition, that a man is instructed in the *knowledge* of the will of God, as revealed in the law and the gospel; there is, accompanying the word of God in the dispensation of it, a *powerful persuasive efficacy* unto a compliance with it, and observance of it. For instance; suppose a man to be convinced by the word of God of the nature of sin; of his own sinful condition; of his danger from thence with respect unto the sin of nature, on which account he is a child of wrath, and of his actual sin, which farther renders him obnoxious unto the curse of the law, and the indignation of God; of his duty hereon to turn unto God, and the way whereby he may so do; there are in the precepts, exhortations, expostulations, promises, and threatenings of the word, especially as dispensed in the ministry of the church, powerful motives to affect, and arguments to prevail with, the mind and will of such a man, to endeavour his own regeneration

or conversion unto God, rational and cogent above all that can be objected unto the contrary. On some it is acknowledged that these things have no effect; they are not moved by them, they care not for them, they do despise them, and live and die in rebellion against the light of them, 'having their eyes blinded by the god of this world.' But this is no argument that they are not powerful in themselves; although indeed it is that they are not so towards us of themselves, but only as the Holy Spirit is pleased to act them towards us. But in these motives, reasons, and arguments, whereby men are, in and from the word, and the ministry of it, urged and pressed unto conversion to God, doth this moral persuasion whereof we speak consist. And the efficacy of it, unto the end proposed, ariseth from the things ensuing, which are all resolved into God himself.

(1.) From an evidence of the *truth* of the things from whence these motives and arguments were taken. The foundation of all the efficacy of the dispensation of the gospel lies in an evidence, that the things proposed in it are not 'cunningly devised fables;' 2 Pet. i. 16. Where this is not admitted, where it is not firmly assented unto, there can be no persuasive efficacy in it. But where there is, namely, a prevalent persuasion of the truth of the things proposed, there the mind is under a disposition unto the things whereunto it is persuaded. And hereon the whole efficacy of the word in and upon the souls of men, is resolved into the truth and veracity of God. For the things contained in the Scripture are not proposed unto us merely as true, but as divine truths, as immediate revelations from God, which require not only a rational, but a sacred religious respect unto them. They are things that the 'mouth of the Lord hath spoken.'

(2.) There is a proposal unto the *wills and affections* of men in the things so assented unto, on the one hand as good, amiable, and excellent, wherein the chiefest good, happiness, and utmost end of our natures are comprised, to be pursued and attained; and on the other, of things evil and terrible, the utmost evil that our nature is obnoxious unto, to be avoided. For this is urged on them, that to comply with the will of God in the proposals of the gospel, to conform thereunto, to do what he requires, to turn from sin unto him, is good unto men, best for them, assuredly attended

with present satisfaction and future glory. And therein is also proposed the most noble object for our affections, even God himself as a friend, as reconciled unto us in Christ, and that in a way suited unto his holiness, righteousness, wisdom, and goodness, which we have nothing to oppose unto, nor to lay in the balance against. The way also of the reconciliation of sinners unto God by Jesus Christ is set out, as that which hath such an impress of divine wisdom and goodness upon it, as that it can be refused by none, but out of a direct enmity against God himself. Unto the enforcing of these things on the minds of men, the Scripture abounds with reasons, motives, and arguments, the rendering whereof effectual, is the principal end of the ministry. On the other hand it is declared and evidenced, that sin is the great debasement of our natures, the ruin of our souls, the only evil in the world in its guilt and punishment; that a continuance in a state of it, with a rejection of the invitation of the gospel unto conversion to God, is a thing foolish, unworthy of a rational creature, and that which will be everlastingly pernicious. Whereas, therefore, in the judgment of every rational creature, spiritual things are to be preferred before natural, eternal things before temporal, and that these things are thus disposed of in infinite goodness, love, and wisdom, they must needs be apt to affect the wills, and take the affections of men. And herein the efficacy of the word on the minds and consciences of men is resolved into the authority of God. These precepts, these promises, these threatenings, are his, who hath right to give them and power to execute them. And with his authority, his glorious greatness, and his infinite power, come under consideration. So also doth his goodness and love in an especial manner, with many other things, even all the known properties of his holy nature, all which concur in giving weight, power, and efficacy, unto these motives and arguments.

3. Great power and efficacy is added hereunto from the management of these motives in the *preaching* of the word. Herein by some the rhetorical faculty of them by whom it is dispensed is of great consideration. For hereby are they able to prevail very much on the minds of men. Being acquainted with the inclinations and dispositions of all sorts of persons, the nature of their affections and prejudices, with the topics or kinds and heads of arguments meet to af-

fect them and prevail with them; as also the ways of insinuating persuasive motives to their minds, they express the whole in words elegant, proper, expressive, and suited to allure, draw, and engage them unto the ways and duties proposed unto them<sup>a</sup>. Herein do some place the principal use and efficacy of the ministry in the dispensation of the word; with me it is of no consideration. For our apostle rejects it utterly from any place in his ministry; 1 Cor. ii. 4. 'My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Some of late have put in faint and weak exceptions unto the latter clause, as though not an evidence of the powerful presence of the Spirit of God in the dispensation of the gospel were intended therein, but the power of working miracles, contrary to the whole scope of the place, and consent of the best expositors. But that by the first clause, the persuasive act of human oratory, is excluded from use and efficacy in the preaching of the gospel, none as yet hath had the impudence to deny. But let this also be esteemed to be as useful and efficacious in this work, as to the end of preaching in the conversion of the souls of men, as any can imagine, it shall be granted. Only I shall take leave to resolve the efficacy of preaching into two other causes.

(1.) The *institution of God*. He hath appointed the preaching of the word to be the means, the only outward ordinary means, for the conversion of the souls of men; 1 Cor. i. 17—20. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Rom. i. 16. And the power or efficacy of any thing that is used unto an end in spiritual matters, depends solely on its divine appointment unto that end.

(2.) The *especial gifts* that the Spirit of God doth furnish the preachers of the gospel withal, to enable them unto an effectual discharge of their work; Eph. iv. 11—13. whereof we shall treat afterward. All the power, therefore, that these things are accompanied withal, is resolved into the sovereignty of God. For he hath chosen this way of preaching for this end, and he bestows these gifts on whom he pleaseth.

<sup>a</sup> Τὸ τὸ ὄφελος, ἔαν εὐσύνθετος μὲν ὁ λόγος, κακοσύνθετος δὲ ὁ τρόπος; εἰ μὲν γὰρ σοφιστοῦ διδασκαλεῖον ἢ ἡ ἐκκλησία εὐγλωττίας ἦν ὁ καιρὸς. Ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν τρόπον ἀγὰν καὶ καρποφορία τὸ προκείμενον, καὶ προσδοκία οὐρανῶν τὸ προσδοκώμενον μὴ γλῦπτα ζητεῖσθαι, ἀλλ' ὁ τρόπος. Athanas. de Semente.

From these things it is that the persuasive motives which the word abounds withal unto conversion or turning to God from sin, have that peculiar efficacy on the minds of men which is proper unto them.

4. We do not therefore, in this case, suppose that the *motives of the word* are left unto a mere *natural operation*, with respect unto the ability of them by whom it is dispensed; but moreover that it is blessed of God, and *accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit*, for the producing of its effect and end upon the souls of men. Only the operation of the Holy Ghost, on the minds and wills of men in and by these means, is supposed to extend no farther, but unto motives, arguments, reasons, and considerations, proposed unto the mind, so to influence the will and the affections. Hence his operation is herein moral, and so metaphorical, not real, proper, and physical. Now concerning this whole work, I affirm these two things:

1. That the Holy Spirit *doth* make use of it in the *regeneration* or conversion of all that are *adult*, and that either immediately in and by the preaching of it, or by some other application of light and truth unto the mind derived from the word; for by the reasons, motives, and persuasive arguments which the word affords, are our minds affected, and our souls wrought upon in our conversion unto God, whence it becomes our *reasonable* obedience. And there are none ordinarily converted, but they are able to give some account by what considerations they were prevailed on thereunto. But,

2. We say that the whole work, or the *whole of the work* of the Holy Ghost in our *conversion*, doth not consist herein; but there is a real physical work, whereby he infuseth a gracious principle of *spiritual life* into all that are effectually converted, and really regenerated, and without which, there is no deliverance from the state of sin and death which we have described; which, among others, may be proved by the ensuing arguments.

The principal arguments in this case will ensue in our proofs from the Scriptures, that there is a *real physical work* of the Spirit on the souls of men, in their regeneration. That all he doth, consisteth not in this *moral suasion*, the ensuing reasons do sufficiently evince.

First, If the Holy Spirit worketh no otherwise on men in their regeneration or conversion, but by proposing unto them, and urging upon them, *reasons, arguments, and motives*, to that purpose<sup>b</sup>; then after his whole work, and notwithstanding it, the will of man remains absolutely indifferent whether it will admit of them or no; or whether it will *convert itself* unto God upon them or no; for the *whole* of this work consists in proposing *objects* unto the will; with respect whereunto it is left *undetermined*, whether it will choose and close with them or no. And, indeed, this is that which some plead for. For they say, that in all men, at least all unto whom the gospel is preached, there is that grace present, or with them, that they are able to comply with the word if they please; and so believe, repent, or do any act of obedience unto God according to his will. And if they will, they can refuse to make use of this assistance, aid, power, or grace, and so continue in their sins. What this grace is, or whence men have this power and ability, by some is not declared. Neither is it much to be doubted but that many do imagine that it is purely natural; only they will allow it to be called grace, because it is from God who made us. Others acknowledge it to be the work or effect of grace internal, wherein part of the difference lay between the Pelagians and semi-pelagians of old. But they all agree that it is absolutely in the power of the will of man, to make use of it or not; that is, of the whole effect on them, or product in them, of this grace communicated in the way described. For, notwithstanding any thing wrought in us or upon us thereby, the will is still left various, flexible, and undetermined. It is true, that notwithstanding the grace thus administered, the will hath power to refuse it and to abide in sin. But that there is no more grace wrought in us, but what may be so

<sup>b</sup> Non est igitur gratia Dei in liberi arbitrii natura, &c. in lege atque doctrina sicut Pelagius desipit, sed ad singulos actus datur illius voluntate de quo scriptum est; pluvium voluntarium segregabis Deus hereditati tuæ. Quia et liberum arbitrium ad diligendum Deum primi peccati granditate perdidimus; et lex Dei atque doctrina quamvis sancta et justa, tamen occidit, si non vivificet spiritus, per quem fit non ut audiendo sed ut obediendo, neque ut lectione sed ut dilectione teneatur. Quapropter ut in Deum credamus et pie vivamus, non volentis neque currentis sed miserentis est Dei; non quia velle non debemus et currere, sed quia ipse in nobis et velle operatur et currere; non ergo gratiam dicamus esse doctrinam, sed agnoscamus gratiam quæ facit prodesse doctrinam; quæ gratia si desit, videmus etiam obesse doctrinam. August. Epist. 107. ad Vitalem.

refused, or that the will can make use of that grace for conversion, which it can refuse, is false.

For, 1. this ascribes the whole glory of our regeneration and conversion unto ourselves, and not to the grace of God. For that act of our wills, on this supposition, whereby we convert unto God, is merely an act of our own, and not of the grace of God. This is evident, for if the act itself were of grace, then would it not be in the power of the will to hinder it. 2. This would leave it absolutely uncertain, notwithstanding the purpose of God, and the purchase of Christ, whether ever any one in the world should be converted unto God or no. For when the whole work of grace is over, it is absolutely in the power of the will of man whether it shall be effectual or no; and so absolutely uncertain; which is contrary to the covenant, promise, and oath of God, unto and with Jesus Christ. 3. It is contrary to express testimonies of Scripture innumerable, wherein actual conversion unto God is ascribed unto his grace, as the immediate effect thereof. This will farther appear afterward. ‘God worketh in us to will and to do;’ Phil. ii. 13. The act therefore itself of willing in our conversion, is of God’s operation; and although we will ourselves, yet it is he who causeth us to will, by working in us to will and to do. And if the act of our will, in believing and obedience, in our conversion to God, be not the effect of his grace in us, he doth not ‘work in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.’

Secondly, This *moral persuasion*, however advanced or improved, and supposed to be effectual, yet it confers no new *real supernatural strength* unto the soul. For whereas it worketh, yea, the Spirit or grace of God therein and thereby, by reasons, motives, arguments, and objective considerations, and no otherwise, it is able only to excite and draw out the strength which we have, delivering the mind and affections from prejudices and other moral impediments: real aid, and internal spiritual strength, neither is nor can be conferred thereby<sup>c</sup>. And he who will acknowledge that there is any such internal spiritual strength communicated unto us, must also acknowledge that there is another work

<sup>c</sup> Sed quid illud est quo corporeorum sensuum pulsantur, in agro cordis cui impenditur ista cultura, nec radicem potest figere nec germen emittere, nisi ille summus et verus Agricola potentia sui operis adhibuerit, et ad vitalem profectum ea quæ sunt plantata perduxerit. Epist. ad Demetriadem.

of the Spirit of God in us and upon us, that can be effected by these persuasions. But thus it is in this case as some suppose. The mind of man is affected with much ignorance, and usually under the power of many prejudices, which by the corrupt course of things in the world, possess it from its first actings in the state of infancy. The will and the affections likewise are vitiated with depraved habits, which by the same means are contracted. But when the gospel is proposed and preached unto them, the things contained in it, the duties it requires, the promises it gives, are so rational or so suited unto the principles of our reason; and the subject matter of them is so good, desirable, and beautiful, unto an intellectual appetite, that being well conveyed unto the mind, they are able to discard all the prejudices and disadvantages of a corrupt course under which it hath suffered, and prevail with the soul to desist from sin, that is, a course of sinning, and to become a new man in all virtuous conversation. And that this is in the liberty and power of the will, is irrefragably proved by that sophism of Biel<sup>d</sup> out of Scotus and Occam, which contains the substance of what they plead in this cause. Yea, thus to do, is so suitable unto the rational principles of a well disposed mind, that to do otherwise, is the greatest folly and madness in the world. Especially will this work of conversion be unquestionably wrought, if the application of these means of it, be so disposed in the providence of God, as that they may be seasonable, with respect unto the frame and condition of the mind whereinto they are applied. And as sundry things are necessary to render the means of grace thus seasonable and congruous unto the present frame, temper, and disposition of the mind, so in such a congruity much of its efficacy doth consist. And this, as it is said, is the work of the Holy Ghost, and an effect of the grace of God. For if the Spirit of God did not by the word, prevent, excite, stir up, and provoke the minds of men; did he not help and assist them when endeavouring to turn to God, in the removal of prejudices and all sorts of moral impediments, men would con-

<sup>d</sup> *Omni dictamini rectæ rationis potest voluntas se conformare; sed diligere Deum super omnia est dictamen rectæ rationis; ratio enim dictat inter omnia diligenda esse aliquid summe diligendum. Item homo errans potest diligere creaturam super omnia, ergo etiam Deum; mirum enim valde esset, quod voluntas se conformare possit dictamini erroneo et non recto. Biel 2, sent. distinc. 27. q. Art. 4.*

tinue and abide, as it were, dead in trespasses and sins, at least their endeavours after deliverance would be weak and fruitless.

This is all the grace, all the work of the Spirit of God in our regeneration and conversion, which some will acknowledge, so far as I can learn from their writings and discourses<sup>e</sup>. But that there is more required thereunto, I have before declared. As also it hath been manifested what is the true and proper use and efficacy of these means in this work. But to place the whole of it herein, is that which Pelagius contended for of old ; yea, he granted a greater use and efficacy of grace, than I can find to be allowed in the present confused discourses of some on this subject<sup>f</sup>. Wherefore it is somewhat preposterous to endeavour an imposition of such rotten errors upon the minds of men, and that by crude assertions, without any pretence of proof, as is the way of many. And that the sole foundation of all their harangues, namely, the suitableness of gospel-principles and promises unto our wisdom and reason, antecedently unto any saving work of the Spirit on our minds, is directly contradictory to the doctrine of our apostle, shall afterward be declared. But it may be, it will be said, that it is not so much what is Pelagian, and what is not, as what is truth and what is not, that is to be inquired

<sup>e</sup> Hoc piarum mentium est, ut nihil sibi tribuant, sed totum gratiæ Dei ; unde quantumcunque aliquis det gratiæ Dei, etiamsi subtrahat potestati naturæ aut liberi arbitrii a pietate non recedit ; cum vero aliquid gratiæ Dei subtrahitur et naturæ tribuitur quod gratiæ est, ibi potest periculum intervenire. Cassander. lib. Consult. Art. 68.

<sup>f</sup> Pelagiana hæresis quo dogmate Catholicam fidem destruere adorta sit, et quibus impietatum venenis viscera ecclesiæ atque ipsa vitalia corporis Christi voluerit occupare, notiora sunt quam ut opere narrationis indigeant. Ex his tamen una est blasphemia, nequissimum et subtilissimum germen aliarum, quæ dicunt gratiam Dei secundum merita hominum dari. Cum enim primo tantam naturæ humanæ vellent astruere sanitatem ut per solum liberum arbitrium posset assequi Dei regnum ; eo quod tam plene ipso conditionis suæ præsidio juvaretur ; ut habens naturaliter rationalem intellectum facile bonum eligeret malumque vitaret. Et ubi in utraque parte libera essent opera voluntatis, non facultatem his qui mali sunt deesse, sed studium. Cum ergo ut dixi totam justitiam hominis ex naturali vellent rectitudine ac possibilitate subsistere, atque hanc definitionem doctrina sana respueret, damnatum a Catholicis sensum et multis postea hæreticæ fraudis varietatibus coloratum, hoc apud se ingenio servaverunt, ut ad incipiendum, et ad proficiendum, et ad perseverandum in bono necessariam homini Dei gratiam profiterentur. Sed in hac professione quomodo vasa iræ molirentur irrepere, ipsa Dei gratia vasis misericordiæ revelavit. Intellectum est enim, saluberrimeque perspectum hoc tantum eos de gratia confiteri, quod quædam libero Arbitrio sit magistra, seque per cohortationes, per legem, per doctrinam, per creaturam, per contemplationem, per miracula, perque terrores extrinsecus iudicio ejus ostendat ; quo unusquisque secundum voluntatis suæ motum, si quæserit inveniat, si petierit, recipiat ; si pulsaverit introeat. Prosp. ad Ruffin. de lib. Arbit.

after. And it is granted, that this is, and ought to be, our first and principal inquiry. But it is not unuseful to know in whose steps they tread, who at this day oppose the doctrine of the effectual grace of Christ; and what judgment the ancient church made of their principles and opinions.

It is pretended yet farther, that grace in the dispensation of the word doth work *really and efficiently*, especially by *illumination*, internal excitations of the mind and affections; and if thereon the will do put forth its act, and thereby determine itself in the choice of that which is good, in believing and repenting; then the grace thus administered concurs with it, helps and aids it in the perfecting of its act, so that the whole work is of grace. So pleaded the semi-pelagians, and so do others continue to do. But all this while, the way whereby grace or the Spirit of God worketh this illumination, excites the affections and aids the will, is by moral persuasion only, no real strength being communicated or infused, but what the will is at perfect liberty to make use of or to refuse at pleasure. Now this in effect is no less than to overthrow the whole grace of Jesus Christ, and to render it useless. For it ascribes unto man the honour of his conversion, his will being the principal cause of it. It makes a man to beget himself anew, or to be born again of himself; to make himself differ from others, by that which he hath not in an especial manner received. It takes away the analogy that there is between the forming of the natural body of Christ in the womb, and the forming of his mystical body in regeneration. It makes the act of living unto God by faith and obedience, to be a mere natural act, no fruit of the mediation or purchase of Christ, and allows the Spirit of God no more power nor efficacy in or towards our regeneration, than is in a minister who preacheth the word, or in an orator, who eloquently and pathetically persuades to virtue and dehorts from vice. And all these consequences, it may be, will be granted by some amongst us, and allowed to be true; to that pass are things come in the world, through the confident pride and ignorance of men. But not only it may be, but plainly and directly the whole gospel and grace of Christ are, renounced where they are admitted.

Thirdly, This is not *all that we pray for*<sup>s</sup>, either for our-

<sup>s</sup> Inaniter et perfunctorie potius quam veraciter pro eis ut doctrinæ cui adversan-

selves or others, when we beg effectual grace for them or ourselves. There was no argument that the ancients more pressed the Pelagians withal, than that the grace which they acknowledged, did not answer the prayers of the church, or what we are taught in the Scripture to pray for. We are to pray only for what God hath promised, and for the communication of it unto us in that way whereby he will work it and effect it. Now he is at a great indifferency in this matter, who only prays that God would persuade him or others, to believe and to obey, to be converted or to convert himself. The church of God hath always prayed that God would work these things in us; and those who have a real concernment in them, do pray continually that God would effectually work them in their hearts. They pray that he would convert them, that he would create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit in them; that he would give them faith for Christ's sake, and increase it in them; and that in all these things he would work in them by the exceeding greatness of his power both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. And there is not a Pelagian in the world who ever once prayed for grace, or gracious assistance against sin and temptation, with a sense of his want of it, but that his prayers contradicted his profession. To think that by all these petitions, with others innumerable dictated unto us in the Scripture, and which a spiritual sense of our wants will engage into, we desire nothing but only that God would persuade, excite, and stir us up to put forth a power and ability of our own, in the performance of what we desire, is contrary unto all Christian experience. Yea, for a man to lie praying with importunity, earnestness, and fervency, for that which is in his own power, and can never be effected but by his own power, is fond and ridiculous. And they do but mock God who pray unto him to do that for them which they can do for themselves, and which God cannot do for them but only when and as they do it themselves. Suppose a man to have a power in himself to believe and repent; suppose these to be such acts of his will as God doth not, indeed cannot, by his grace work in him, but only persuade him thereunto, and shew him sufficient rea-

*tur credendo consentiant, Deo fundimus preces, si ad ejus non pertinet gratiam convertere ad fidem suam, ipsi fidei contrarias voluntates.* August. Epist. 107.

son why he should so do; to what purpose should this man, or with what congruity could he, pray that God would give him faith and repentance. This some of late, as it seems, wisely observing, do begin to scoff at and reproach the prayers of Christians. For whereas in all their supplications for grace, they lay the foundation of them in an humble acknowledgment of their own vileness and impotency unto any thing that is spiritually good, yea, and a natural aversion from it, and a sense of the power and working of the remainder of in-dwelling sin in them; hereby exciting themselves unto that earnestness and importunity in their requests for grace, which their<sup>h</sup> condition makes necessary (which hath been the constant practice of Christians since there was one in the world); this is by them derided and exposed to contempt. In the room therefore of such despised prayers, I shall supply them with an ancient form that is better suited unto their principles<sup>i</sup>. The preface unto it is, ‘*Ille ad Deum digne elevat manus, ille orationem bonâ conscientîâ effundit qui potest dicere:*’ The prayer followeth: ‘*Tu nosti Domine quam sanctæ et puræ et mundæ sint ab omni malitia, et iniquitate, et rapina quas ad te extendo manus. Quemadmodum justa et munda labia et ab omni mendacio libera quibus offero tibi deprecationes, ut mihi miserearis.*’ This prayer Pelagius taught a widow to make, as it was objected unto him in the Diospolitan synod, that is at Lydia in Palestine, cap. 6. only he taught her not to say that she had no deceit in her heart, as one among us doth wisely and humbly vaunt that he knoweth of none in his, so every way perfect is the man. Only to balance this of Pelagius, I shall give these men another prayer, but in the margin<sup>k</sup>, not declaring whose it is, lest they should cen-

<sup>h</sup> Prima Divini muneris gratia est, ut erudiat nos ad nostræ humilitatis confessionem, et agnoscere faciat, quod si quid boni agimus per illum possumus, sine quo nihil possumus. Prosp. Sentent. 105. ex Augustino.

<sup>i</sup> Quicumque tribuit sibi bonum quod facit etiamsi videtur nihil mali manibus operari, jam cordis innocentiam perdidit in quo se largitori bonorum prætulit. Hieron. in cap. 16. Proverb.

<sup>k</sup> O bone Domine Jesu, etsi ego admisi unde me damnare petes, tu non amisisti unde salvare soles. — Verum est conscientia mea meretur damnationem, et pœnitentia mea non sufficit ad satisfactionem. Sed certum est quod misericordia tua superat omnem offensionem. Parce ergo mihi Domine, qui es salus vera et non vis mortem peccatoris: miserere Domine peccatrici animæ meæ, solve vincula ejus, sana vulnera ejus. Ecce misericors Deus coram te exhibeo animam meam virtutum muneribus desolatam, catenis vitiorum ligatam, pondere peccatorum gravatam, delictorum sordibus fœdatam, discissam vulneribus dæmonum, pudidam et fœtidam ulceribus

sure him to the gallows. Whereas therefore it seems to be the doctrine of some, that we have no grace from Christ but only that of the gospel teaching us our duty, and proposing a reward; I know not what they have to pray for, unless it be riches, wealth, and preferments, with those things that depend thereon.

Fourthly, This kind of the *operation of grace* where it is *solitary*, that is, where it is asserted exclusively to an internal *physical work* of the Holy Spirit, is not suited to effect and produce the work of *regeneration* or conversion unto God, in persons who are really in that state of nature which we have before described. The most effectual persuasions cannot prevail with such men to convert themselves, any more than arguments can prevail with a blind man to see, or with a lame man to walk steadily. Wherefore the whole description before given from the Scripture of the state of lapsed nature, must be disproved and removed out of the way, before this grace can be thought sufficient to be for the regeneration and conversion of men in that estate. But some proceed on other principles; men, they say, have by nature certain notions and principles concerning God, and the obedience due unto him; which are demonstrable by the light of reason, and certain abilities of mind to make use of them unto their proper end. But they grant, at least some of them do<sup>1</sup>, that however these principles may be improved and acted by those abilities, yet they are not sufficient, or will not eventually be effectual, to bring men unto the life of God, or to enable them so to believe in him, love him, and obey him, as that they may come at length unto the enjoyment of

criminum: his et aliis gravioribus malis quæ tu melius vides quam ego obstrictam, oppressam, circumdatam, obvolutam, bonorum omnium relevamine destitutam, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Gratia qua Christi populus sumus hoc cohibetur  
Limine nobiscum, et formam hanc ascribitis illi;  
Ut cunctos vocet illa quidem invitetque, neque ullum  
Præteriens studeat communem adferre salutem  
Omnibus, et totum peccato absolvere mundum.  
Sed proprio quæque Arbitrio parere vocanti,  
Judicioque suo, mota se extendere mente  
Ad lucem oblatam, quæ se non subtrahat ulli;  
Sed cupidos recti juvet illustretque volentes.  
Hinc adjutoris Domini bonitate magistra  
Crescere virtutum studia, ut quid quisque petendum  
Mandatis didicit jugi sectetur amore.—Posp. de Ingratis, cap. 10.

him; at least they will not do this safely and easily, but through much danger and confusion; wherefore God out of his goodness and love to mankind, hath made a farther revelation of himself by Jesus Christ in the gospel, with the especial way whereby his anger against sin is averted, and peace made for sinners, which men had before only a confused apprehension and hope about. Now the things received, proposed, and prescribed, in the gospel, are so good, so rational, so every way suited unto the principles of our beings, the nature of our intellectual constitutions, or the reason of men, and those fortified with such rational and powerful motives, in the promises and threatenings of it, representing unto us on the one hand the chiefest good which our nature is capable of, and on the other the highest evil to be avoided that we are obnoxious unto, that they can be refused or rejected by none, but out of a brutish love of sin, or the efficacy of depraved habits contracted by a vicious course of living. And herein consists the grace of God towards men, especially as the Holy Ghost is pleased to make use of these things in the dispensation of the gospel by the ministry of the church. For when the reason of men is by these means excited so far as to cast off prejudices, and enabled thereby to make a right judgment of what is proposed unto it, it prevails with them to convert to God, to change their lives, and yield obedience according to the rule of the gospel that they may be saved.

And no doubt this were a notable system of Christian doctrine, especially as it is by some rhetorically blended, or theatrically represented, in feigned stories and apologues, were it not defective in one or two things; for, first, it is exclusive of a supposition of the fall of man, at least as unto the depravation of our nature which ensued thereon; and, secondly, of all real effective grace dispensed by Jesus Christ<sup>m</sup>; which render it a fantastic dream, alien from the design and

<sup>m</sup> *Ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos et homines et salvos. Nam si ille nos fecit homines, nos autem ipsi nos fecimus salvos, aliquid illo melius fecimus; melior est enim salvus homo quam quilibet homo. Si ergo te Deus fecit hominem, et tu te fecisti bonum hominem, quod tu fecisti melius est. Aug. de Verb. Apost. Serm. 10.*

*Natura humana etiamsi in illa integritate in qua est condita, permanerit, nullo modo seipsam creatore suo non adjuvante servaret. Unde cum sine Dei gratia salutem non posset custodire quam accepit, quomodo sine Dei gratia potest recuperare quam perdidit. Prosp. Sentent. 308.*

doctrine of the gospel. But it is a fond thing to discourse with men about either regeneration or conversion unto God, by whom these things are denied.

Such a work of the Holy Spirit we must therefore inquire after, as whereby the mind is effectually renewed, the heart changed, the affections sanctified, all actually and effectually, or no deliverance will be wrought, obtained, or ensue, out of the estate described. For notwithstanding the utmost improvement of our minds and reasons that can be imagined, and the most eminent proposal of the truths of the gospel, accompanied with the most powerful enforcements of duty and obedience that the nature of the things themselves will afford; yet the mind of man in the state of nature, without a supernatural elevation by grace, is not able so to apprehend them, as that its apprehension should be spiritual, saving, or proper unto the things apprehended. And notwithstanding the perception which the mind may attain unto in the truths of gospel proposals; and the conviction it may have of the necessity of obedience, yet is not the will able to apply itself unto any spiritual act thereof, without an ability wrought immediately in it by the power of the Spirit of God; or rather unless the Spirit of God by his grace do effect the act of willing in it. Wherefore, not to multiply arguments, we conclude, that the most effectual use of outward means alone, is not all the grace that is necessary unto, nor all that is actually put forth in, the regeneration of the souls of men.

Having thus evidenced wherein the work of the Holy Spirit, in the regeneration of the souls of men, doth not consist, namely, in a supposed congruous persuasion of their minds where it is alone :

I shall proceed to shew wherein it doth consist, and what is the true nature of it. And to this purpose I say,

1. Whatever efficacy that *moral operation*, which accompanies, or is the effect of, the preaching of the word, as blessed and used by the Holy Spirit, is of, or may be supposed to be of, or is possible that it should be of, in and towards them that are *unregenerate*, we do willingly ascribe unto it. We grant that in the work of regeneration, the Holy Spirit towards those that are adult, doth make use of the word, both the law and the gospel, and the ministry of the church in the dispensation of it, as the ordinary means thereof; yea,

this is ordinarily the whole external means that is made use of in this work, and an efficacy proper unto it, it is accompanied withal. Whereas therefore, some contend that there is no more needful to the conversion of sinners, but the preaching of the word unto them who are congruously disposed to receive it, and that the whole of the grace of God consists in the effectual application of it unto the minds and affections of men, whereby they are enabled to comply with it, and turn unto God by faith and repentance; they do not ascribe a greater power unto the word, than we do by whom this administration of it is denied to be the total cause of conversion. For we assign the same power to the word as they do, and more also, only we affirm that there is an effect to be wrought in this work, which all this power, if alone, is insufficient for. But in its own kind is it sufficient and effectual, so far as that the effect of regeneration or conversion unto God is ascribed thereunto. This we have declared before.

2. There is not only a *moral*, but a *physical* immediate operation of the Spirit by his power and grace, or his powerful grace upon the minds or souls of men in their regeneration<sup>m</sup>. This is that which we must cleave to, or all the glory of God's grace is lost, and the grace administered by Christ neglected. So is it asserted, Eph. i. 19, 20. 'That we may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; which he wrought in Christ when he raised

<sup>m</sup> At vero omnipotens hominem cum gratia salvat,  
Ipsa suum consummat opus cui tempus agendi  
Semper adest, quæ gesta velit non moribus illi  
Fit mora, non causis anceps suspenditur ullis.  
Nec quod sola potest cura officioque ministri  
Exequitur, famulisve vicem committit agendi.  
Qui quamvis multa admoneant mandata vocantis,  
Pulsant non intrant animas, Deus ergo sepultos  
Suscitatur et solvit peccati compede vinctos.  
Ille obscuratis cordibus dat intellectum.  
Ille ex injustis justos facit, indit amorem  
Quo redametur amans, et amor quem conferet ipse est.  
Hunc itaque affectum quo sumunt mortua vitam,  
Quo tenebræ fiunt lumen, quo immunda vilescent;  
Quo stulti sapere incipiunt ægrique valescent  
Nemo alii dat, nemo sibi.—Prosp. de Ingrat. cap. 15.

Legant ergo et intelligant, intueantur et fateantur, non lege atque doctrina insonante forinsecus, sed intima atque occulta, mirabili atque ineffabili potestate operari Deum in cordibus hominum non solum veras revelationes, sed etiam bonas voluntates. August. lib. de Grat. Christ. adv. Pelagium et Cælest. cap. 24.

him from the dead.' The power here mentioned, hath an exceeding greatness ascribed unto it, with respect unto the effect produced by it. The power of God, in itself, is as unto all acts equally infinite, he is omnipotent. But some effects are greater than others, and carry in them more than ordinary impressions of it. Such is that here intended, whereby God makes men to be believers, and preserves them when they are so. And unto this power of God, there is an actual operation or efficiency ascribed, the working of his mighty power. And the nature of this operation or efficiency is declared to be of the same kind with that which was exerted in the raising of Christ from the dead. And this was by a real physical efficiency of divine power. This therefore is here testified, that the work of God towards believers, either to make them so, or preserve them such, for all is one as unto our present purpose, consists in the acting of his divine power by a real internal efficiency. So God is said to fulfil 'in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;' 2 Thess. i. 11. 2 Pet. i. 3. And hence the work of grace in conversion is constantly expressed by words denoting a real internal efficiency, such are creating, quickening, forming, giving a new heart, whereof afterward. Wherever this work is spoken of with respect unto an active efficiency, it is ascribed unto God. He creates us anew, he quickens us, he begets us of his own will; but where it is spoken of with respect unto us, there it is passively expressed; we are created in Christ Jesus, we are new creatures, we are born again, and the like; which one observation is sufficient to avert the whole hypothesis of Arminian grace. Unless a work wrought by power, and that real and immediate be intended herein, such a work may neither be supposed possible, nor can be expressed. Wherefore it is plain in the Scripture, that the Spirit of God works internally, immediately, efficiently, in and upon the minds of men in their regeneration. The new birth is the effect of an act of his power and grace; or, no man is born again but it is by the inward efficiency of the Spirit.

3. This *internal efficiency* of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, as to the event, is *infallible*<sup>n</sup>, victorious, irresistible,

<sup>n</sup> Quid est omnis qui audivit a Patre, et didicit, venit ad me; nisi nullus est qui audiat et discat a Patre et non veniat ad me? Si enim omnis qui audivit a Patre

or always efficacious. But in this assertion, we suppose that the measure of the efficacy of grace, and the end to be attained, are fixed by the will of God. As to that end, whereunto of God it is designed, it is always prevalent or effectual, and cannot be resisted; or, it will effectually work what God designs it to work; for wherein he will work none shall let him; and who hath resisted his will? There are many motions of grace even in the hearts of believers, which are thus far resisted, as that they attain not that effect which in their own nature they have a tendency unto. Were it otherwise, all believers would be perfect. But it is manifest in experience, that we do not always answer the inclinations of grace, at least as unto the degree which it moves towards. But yet even such motions also, if they are of and from saving grace, are effectual so far, and for all those ends which they are designed unto, in the purpose of God; for his will shall not be frustrate in any instance. And where any work of grace is not effectual, God never intended it should be so, nor did put forth that power of grace which was necessary to make it so. Wherefore in or towards whomsoever the Holy Spirit puts forth his power, or acts his grace for their regeneration, it removes all obstacles, overcomes all oppositions, and infallibly produceth the effect intended°. This proposition being of great importance to the glory of God's grace, and most signally opposed by the patrons of corrupted nature and man's freewill in the state thereof, must be both explained and confirmed. We say, therefore,

(1.) The power which the Holy Ghost puts forth in our regeneration, is such in its acting or exercise, as our minds, wills, and affections, are suited to be wrought upon, and to be affected by it, according to their natures, and natural operations. 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; draw me, and I shall run after thee.' He doth neither act in them any otherwise than they themselves are meet to be moved and

et didicit, venit, profecto omnis qui non venit non audivit a Patre nec didicit: nam si audisset et didicisset veniret;—hæc itaque gratia quæ occulte humanis cordibus divina largitate tribuitur, a nullo duro corde respuitur; ideo quippe tribuitur ut cordis duritia primitus auferatur. Augustin. de Prædestinatione Sanctorum, lib. 1. cap. 8.

° O qualis est artifex ille Spiritus! nulla ad discendum mora agitur in omne quod voluerit. Mox enim ut eligeret mentem docet; solumque tetigisse docuisse est. Nam humanum subito ut illustrat immutat affectum; abnegat hoc repente quod erat, exhibet repente quod non erat. Gregor. Hom. 30. in Evangel.

move, to be acted and act, according to their own nature, power, and ability. He draws us with 'the cords of a man.' And the work itself is expressed by persuading, 'God persuade Japhet;' and alluring, 'I will allure her into the wilderness and speak comfortably:' for as it is certainly effectual, so it carries no more repugnancy unto our faculties, than a prevalent persuasion doth. So that,

(2.) He doth not, in our regeneration, possess the mind with any enthusiastical impressions; nor acteth absolutely upon us as he did in extraordinary prophetic inspirations of old, where the minds and organs of the bodies of men were merely passive instruments, moved by him above their own natural capacity and activity, not only as to the principle of working, but as to the manner of operation. But he works on the minds of men, in and by their own natural actings, through an immediate influence and impression of his power. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' He worketh to will and to do.

(3.) He therefore offers no violence or compulsion unto the will<sup>p</sup>. This that faculty is not naturally capable to give admission unto. If it be compelled it is destroyed. And the mention that is made in the Scripture, of compelling ('compel them to come in'), respects the certainty of the event, not the manner of the operation on them. But whereas the will in the depraved condition of fallen nature, is not only habitually filled and possessed with an aversion from that which is good spiritually (alienated from the life of God), but also continually acts an opposition unto it, as being under the power of the carnal mind which is 'enmity against God;' and whereas this grace of the Spirit in conversion doth prevail against all this opposition, and is effectual and victorious over it; it will be inquired how this can any otherwise be done, but by a kind of violence and compulsion; seeing we have evinced already that moral persuasion and objective allurements is not sufficient thereunto? *Ans.* It is acknowledged, that in the work of conversion unto God, though

<sup>p</sup> Christus non dicit, duxerit, ut illic aliquo modo intelligamus præcedere voluntatem; sed dicit traxerit, quis autem trahitur si jam volebat; et tamen nemo venit nisi velit, trahitur ergo miris modis ut velit, ab illo qui novit intus in ipsis hominum cordibus operari; non ut homines quod fieri non potest, nolentes credant, sed ut volentes ex nolentibus fiant. August. cont. duas Epist. Pelag. cap. 19.

Certum est nos velle cum volumus, sed ille facit ut velimus, de quo dictum est, Deus est qui operatur in nobis velle. Idem de grat. et lib. Arbit. cap. 16.

not in the very act of it, there is a reaction between grace and the will, their acts being contrary, and that grace is therein victorious ; and yet no violence or compulsion is offered unto the will ; for,

[1.] The opposition is not *ad idem*. The *enmity and opposition* that is acted by the will against grace, is against it as *objectively proposed* unto it. So do men resist the Holy Ghost ; that is, in the external dispensation of grace by the word. And if that be alone, they may always resist it ; the enmity that is in them will prevail against it ; ‘Ye always resist the Holy Ghost.’ The will, therefore, is not forced by any power put forth in grace, in that way wherein it is capable of making opposition unto it, but the prevalency of grace is of it as it is internal, working really and physically, which is not the object of the will’s opposition ; for it is not proposed unto it, as that which it may accept or refuse, but worketh effectually in it.

[2.] The will, in the first *act* of conversion (as even sundry of the schoolmen acknowledge), *acts* not but as it is *acted*, moves not but as it is moved, and therefore is *passive* therein in the sense immediately to be explained : and if this be not so, it cannot be avoided, but that the *act* of our turning unto God is a mere *natural act*, and not spiritual or gracious. For it is an act of the will not enabled thereunto antecedently by grace. Wherefore it must be granted, and it shall be proved, that in order of nature, the acting of grace in the will in our conversion is antecedent unto its own acting ; though in the same instant of time wherein the will is moved, it moves ; and when it is acted, it acts itself, and preserves its own liberty in its exercise. There is therefore herein an inward almighty *secret act* of the power of the Holy Ghost, producing or effecting in us the will of conversion unto God, so acting our wills, as that they also act themselves, and that freely. So Austin, cont. Duas Epistol. Pelag. lib. 1. cap. 19. ‘Trahitur (homo) miris modis ut velit, ab illo qui novit intus in ipsis cordibus hominum operari, non ut homines, quod fieri non possit, nolentes credant, sed ut volentes ex nolentibus fiant.’ The Holy Spirit, who in his power and operation is more intimate, as it were, unto the principles of our souls than they are to themselves, doth with the preservation, and in the exercise of the liberty of our wills, effectually work

our regeneration and conversion unto God. This is the substance of what we plead for in this cause, and which declares the nature of this work of regeneration, as it is an inward spiritual work. I shall therefore confirm the truth proposed with evident testimonies of Scripture, and reasons contained in them or educed from them.

First, The *work of conversion* itself, and in especial the *act of believing*<sup>a</sup>, or *faith itself*, is expressly said to be of God, to be wrought in us by him, to be given unto us from him. The Scripture says not that God gives us ability or power to believe only, namely, such a power as we may make use of if we will, or do otherwise; but faith, repentance, and conversion, themselves are said to be the work and effect of God. Indeed there is nothing mentioned in the Scripture concerning the communicating of power, remote or next unto the mind of man, to enable him to believe antecedently unto actual believing. A remote power, if it may be so called, in the capacities of the faculties of the soul, the reason of the mind, and liberty of the will, we have given an account concerning. But for that which some call a next power<sup>r</sup>, or an ability to believe in order of nature antecedent unto believing itself, wrought in us by the grace of God, the Scripture is silent. The apostle Paul saith of himself, *πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντι με Χριστῷ*, Phil. iv. 13. ‘I can do all things, or prevail in all things, through Christ who enableth me;’ where a power or ability seems to be spoken of antecedent unto acting. But this is not a power for the first act of faith, but a power in them that believe. Such a power I acknowledge, which is acted in the co-operation of the Spirit and grace of Christ, with the grace which believers have received, unto the performance of all acts of holy obedience, whereof

<sup>a</sup> Restat ut ipsam fidem unde omnis justitia sumit initium, non humano, quo isti extolluntur, tribuamus arbitrio, nec ullis precedentibus meritis, quoniam inde incipiunt bona quæcunque sunt merita sed gratuitum Dei donum esse fateamur, si gratiam veram, id est, sine meritis cogitemus. August. Epist. 105.

Nollem ergo his tam claris testimoniis repugnare, et tamen volens a seipso sibi esse quod credit quasi componit cum Deo ut partem fidei sibi vendicat, atque illi partem relinquat; et quod est elatius, primam tollit ipse, sequentem dat illi; et in eo quod dicit esse amorum, priorem se, posteriorem facit Deum. August. de Prædest. Sanct. cap. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Quando Deus docet per Spiritus gratiam, ita docet ut quod quisque didicerit non tantum cognoscendo videat, sed etiam volendo appetat agendoque perficiat. Et ipso divino docendi modo etiam ipsa voluntas, et ipsa operatio non sola volendi et operandi naturalis possibilitas adjuvatur. Si enim solum posse nostrum hac gratia juvaretur, ita diceret dominus, omnis qui audiverit a Patre et didicit potest venire ad me. August. de Grat. Christ. Contra Pelagium, cap. 14.

I must treat elsewhere. Believers have a stock of habitual grace, which may be called indwelling-grace, in the same sense wherein original corruption is called indwelling-sin. And this grace, as it is necessary unto every act of spiritual obedience, so of itself, without the renewed co-working of the Spirit of Christ, it is not able nor sufficient to produce any spiritual act. This working of Christ upon, and with, the grace we have received, is called enabling of us. But with persons unregenerate, and as to the first act of faith, it is not so.

But it will be objected, that every thing which is actually accomplished, was *in potentia* before. There must, therefore, be in us a power to believe, before we do so actually. *Ans.* The act of God working faith in us, is a creating act. For we are his ‘workmanship created in Christ Jesus;’ Eph. ii. 10. And he that is in Christ Jesus ‘is a new creature;’ 2 Cor. v. 17. Now the effects of creating acts are not *in potentia* any where, but in the active power of God; so was the world itself before its actual existence. This is termed *potentia logica*; which is no more but a negation of any contradiction to existence; not *potentia physica*, which includes a disposition unto actual existence. Notwithstanding, therefore, all these preparatory works of the Spirit of God, which we allow in this matter, there is not by them wrought in the minds and wills of men, such a next power, as they call it, as should enable them to believe without farther actual grace working faith itself. Wherefore, with respect to believing, the first act of God is to work in us ‘to will;’ Phil. ii. 13. ‘He worketh in us to will.’ Now to will to believe, is to believe. This God works in us by that grace which Austin and the school-men call *gratia operans*, because it worketh in us, without us, the will being merely moved and passive therein. That there is a power or faculty of believing, given unto all men unto whom the gospel is preached, or who are called by the outward dispensation of it, some do pretend. And that because those unto whom the word is so preached, if they do not actually believe, shall perish eternally, as is positively declared in the gospel; Mark xvi. 16. But this they could not justly do, if they had not received a power or faculty of believing.

*Ans.* 1. Those who believe not upon the proposal of

Christ in the gospel; are left without remedy in the guilt of those other sins, for which they must perish eternally; 'If you believe not,' saith Christ, 'that I am he, you shall die in your sins;' John viii. 12.

2. The impotency that is in men as to the act of believing, is contracted by their own fault, both as it ariseth from the original depravation of nature, and as it is increased by corrupt prejudices, and contracted habits of sin: wherefore they justly perished, of whom yet it is said, 'That they could not believe;' John xii. 39.

3. There is none by whom the gospel is refused, but they put forth an act of the will in its rejection, which all men are free unto and able for. 'I would have gathered you but you would not;' Matt. xxiii. 37. 'You will not come to me that you may have life.'

But the Scripture positively affirms of some to whom the gospel was preached that they 'could not believe;' John xii. 39. And of all natural men, that 'they cannot perceive the things of God;' 1 Cor. ii. 14. neither is it 'given unto all to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,' but some only; Matt. xi. 25. And those to whom it is not so given, have not the power intended. Besides, faith is not of all, or all 'have not faith;' 2 Thess. iii. 2. But it is peculiar to the elect of God; Tit. i. 1. Acts xiii. 48. And these elect, are but some of those that are called; Matt. xx. 16.

Yet farther to clear this it may be observed, that this first act of willing may be considered two ways. (1.) As it wrought in the will *subjectively*, and so it is formally only in that faculty. And in this sense the will is merely passive, and only the subject moved or acted. And in this respect, the act of God's grace in the will, is an act of the will. But, (2.) it may be considered as it is *efficiently* also in the will, as being *acted*, it *acts* itself. So it is from the will as its principle, and is a vital act thereof, which gives it the nature of obedience. Thus the will in its own nature is *mobilis*; fit and meet to be wrought upon by the grace of the Spirit, to faith and obedience; with respect unto the creating act of grace working faith in us, it is *mota*, moved and acted thereby. And in respect of its own elicit act, as it so acted and moved, it is *movens*, the next efficient cause thereof.

These things being premised for the clearing of the nature

of the operation of the Spirit in the first communication of grace unto us, and the will's compliance therewithal, we return unto our arguments or testimonies given unto the actual collation of faith<sup>s</sup> upon us by the Spirit and grace of God, which must needs be effectual and irresistible; for the contrary implies a contradiction, namely, that God should 'work what is not wrought;' Phil. i. 29. 'To you it is given on the behalf of Christ; not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' To believe on Christ, expresseth saving faith itself. This is given unto us. And how is it given us? Even by the power of God working in us 'to will and to do of his own good pleasure;' chap. ii. 13. Our faith is our coming to Christ. 'And no man,' saith he, 'can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father;' John vi. 65. All power in ourselves for this end, is utterly taken away; 'no man can come unto me'. However we may suppose men to be prepared or disposed, whatever arguments may be proposed unto them, and in what season soever, to render things congruous and agreeable unto their inclinations, yet no man of himself can believe, can come to Christ, unless faith itself be given unto him; that is, be wrought in him by the grace of the Father; Col. ii. 11. So it is again asserted, and that both negatively and positively; Eph. ii. 8. 'By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift, of God.' Our own ability, be it what it will, however assisted and excited, and God's gift are contradistinguished. If it be of ourselves, it is not the gift of God; if it be the gift of God, it is not of ourselves. And the manner how God bestows this gift upon us, is declared; ver. 10. 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' Good works, or gospel obedience, are the things designed. These must proceed from faith, or they are not acceptable

\* Si quis sine gratia Dei credentibus, volentibus, desiderantibus, conantibus misericordiam dicit conferri; non autem divinitus ut credamus, velimus, per infusionem et inspirationem Spiritus sancti in nobis fieri confitetur, anathema sit. Conc. Arausic. 2. Cant. 6.

Datur potestas ut filii Dei fiant qui credunt in eum, cum hoc ipsum datur ut credant in eum. Quæ potestas nisi detur a Deo nulla esse potest ex libero arbitrio, quia nec liberum bono erit quod liberator non liberaverit. August. lib. 1. cont. Duas Epist. Pelag. cap. 3.

† Restat ut ipsam fidem unde omnis justitia sumit initium, non humano, quo isti extolluntur, tribuamus arbitrio, nec ullis precedentibus meritis, quoniam inde incipiunt bona quæcunque sunt merita, sed gratuitum Dei donum esse fateamur, si gratiam veram, id est, sine meritis cogitemus. August. Epist. 105.

with God; Heb. xi. 6. And the way whereby this is wrought in us, or a principle of obedience, is by a creating act of God; we 'are his workmanship created in Jesus Christ.' In like manner God is said to 'give us repentance;' 2 Tim. ii. 25. Acts. xi. 18. This is the whole of what we plead. God in our conversion, by the exceeding greatness of his power, as he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, actually worketh faith and repentance in us; gives them unto us, bestows them on us, so that they are mere effects of his grace in us. And his working in us, infallibly produceth the effect intended, because it is actual faith that he works; and not only a power to believe, which we may either put forth and make use of, or suffer to be fruitless, according to the pleasure of our own wills.

Secondly, As God giveth and worketh in us faith and repentance, so the *way* whereby he doth it, or the *manner* how he is said to effect them in us, make it evident that he doth it by a power *infallibly efficacious*, and which the will of man doth never resist. For this way is such, as that he thereby takes away all repugnancy, all resistance, all opposition, every thing that lieth in the way of the effect intended; Deut. xxx. 6. 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' A denial of the work here intended, is expressed chap. xxix. 4. 'The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day.' What it is to have the heart circumcised, the apostle declares, Col. ii. 11. 'It is the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;' that is, our conversion to God. It is the giving a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear; that is, spiritual light and obedience by the removal of all obstacles and hindrances. This is the immediate work of the Spirit of God himself. No man ever circumcised his own heart. No man can say he began to do it by the power of his own will, and then God only helped him by his grace. As the act of outward circumcision on the body of a child, was the act of another, and not of the child who was only passive therein, but the effect was in the body of the child only; so is it in this spiritual circumcision. It is the act of God whereof our hearts are the subject. And whereas it is

the blindness, obstinacy, and stubbornness in sin, that is in us by nature, with the prejudices which possess our minds and affections, which hinder us from conversion unto God, by this circumcision they are taken away. For by it, the 'body of the sins of the flesh is put off.' And how should the heart resist the work of grace, when that whereby it should resist is effectually taken away?

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' To which may be added, Jer. xxiv. 7. 'And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; so they shall return unto me with their whole heart.' As also, Isa. xlv. 3—5. 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing on thy offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's.' So Jer. xxxi. 33. 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' I shall first inquire two things about these concurrent testimonies: 1. Is it lawful for us, is it our duty, to *pray* that God would do and effect what he had promised to do, and that both for ourselves and others? For ourselves, that the work of our conversion may be renewed, carried on, and consummated in the way and by the means whereby it was begun; that so he who hath begun the good work in us, may perfect it to the day of Jesus Christ; Phil. i. 6. For those who are converted and regenerated, and are persuaded on good and infallible grounds that so they are, may yet pray for those things which God promiseth to work in their first conversion. And this is, because the same work is to be preserved and carried on in them by the same means, the same power, the same grace, wherewith it was begun. And the reason is, because this work, as it is merely the work of conversion, is immediately perfected and completed as to the being of it; yet as it is the beginning of a work of sanctification, it is continually to be renewed and gone over again, because of the remainder of sin in us, and the imperfection of our grace.

For others, that it may be both begun and finished in them. And do we not in such prayers desire, that God would really, powerfully, effectually, by the internal efficiency of his Spirit take away all hindrances, oppositions, and repugnancy in our minds and wills, and actually collate upon us, give unto us, and work in us, a new principle of obedience, that we may assuredly love, fear, and trust in God always? Or, do we only desire that God would so help us, as to leave us absolutely undetermined, whether we will make use of his help or no? Did ever any pious soul couch such an intention in his supplications? He knows not how to pray, who prays not that God would by his own immediate power, work those things in him which he thus prayeth for. And unto this prayer also grace effectual is antecedently required<sup>u</sup>. Wherefore I inquire, 2. Whether God doth *really effect* and work in any the things which he here promiseth that he will work and effect? If he doth not, where is his truth and faithfulness? It is said that he doth so, and will so do, provided that men do not refuse his tender of grace, nor resist his operations, but comply with them. But this yields no relief.

For, (1.) what is it, *not to refuse* the grace of conversion, but to comply with it? Is it not to believe, to obey, to convert ourselves? so then God promiseth to convert us, on condition that we convert ourselves; to work faith in us, on condition that we do believe: and a new heart, on condition that we make our hearts new ourselves. To this are all the adversaries of the grace of God brought by those conditions which they feign of its efficacy to preserve the sovereignty of freewill in our conversion, that is, unto plain and open contradictions, which have been charged sufficiently upon them by others, and from which they could never extricate themselves. (2.) Where God promiseth<sup>x</sup> thus to *work*, as these testimonies do witness, and doth not effectually do so; it must be either because he *cannot* or because he *will not*;

<sup>u</sup> Semper quidem adjutorium gratiæ nobis est a Deo poscendum, sed nec ipsum quod possumus viribus nostris assignem. Neque enim haberi potest ipse saltem orationis affectus nisi divinitus fuerit attributus. Ut ergo desideremus adjutorium gratiæ, hoc ipsum quoque est gratiæ, ipsa namque incipit effundi ut incipiat posci. Fulgent. Epist. 6. ad Theod.

<sup>x</sup> Hoc promittit Deus quod ipse facit; non enim ipse promittit et alius facit; quod jam non est promittere sed prædicere. Ideo non ex operibus sed ex vocante, ne ipsorum sit, non Dei.—August. de Spirit. et Lit. cap. 24.

if it be said, that he doth it not, because he *will not*, then this is that which is ascribed unto God; that he promiseth indeed to take *away our stony heart*, and to give us a *new heart* with his law written in it, but he will not do so, which is to overthrow his faithfulness, and to make him a liar. If they say it is, because he *cannot*, seeing that men oppose and resist the grace whereby he would work this effect; then where is the wisdom of promising to work that in us, which he knew he *could not* effect without our compliance, and which he knew that we would not comply withal? But it will be said, that God promiseth to work and effect these things, but in such a way as he hath appointed; that is, by giving such supplies of grace as may enable us thereunto, which if we refuse to make use of, the fault is merely our own. *Ans.* It is the things themselves that are promised, and not such a communication of means to effect them, as may produce them, or may not, as the consideration of the places will manifest: whereof observe,

[1.] The *subject* spoken of in these promises, is the *heart*. And the heart in the Scripture is taken for the whole rational soul, not absolutely, but as all the faculties of the soul are one common principle of all our moral operations. Hence it hath such properties assigned unto it as are peculiar to the mind or understanding, as to see, perceive, to be wise, and to understand; and on the contrary, to be blind and foolish; sometimes such as belong properly to the will and affections, as to obey, to love, to fear, to trust in God. Wherefore the principle of all our spiritual and moral operations is intended hereby.

[2.] There is a description of this heart, as it is in us, *antecedent* unto the effectual working of the grace of God in us: it is said to be *stony*. The 'heart of stone.' It is not absolutely, that it is said so to be, but with respect unto some certain end. This end is declared to be our walking in the ways of God, or our fearing of him. Wherefore our hearts by nature, as unto living to God, or his fear, are a stone, or stony; and who hath not experience hereof from the remainders of it still abiding in them? And two things are included in this expression: 1st. An ineptitude unto any actings towards that end. Whatever else the heart can do of itself, in things natural or civil, in outward things; as to

the end of living unto God, it can of itself, without his grace, do no more than a stone can do of itself, unto any end whereunto it may be applied. 2nd. An obstinate, stubborn, opposition unto all things conducing unto that end. Its hardness or obstinacy in opposition to the pliability of a heart of flesh, is principally intended in this expression. And in this stubbornness of the heart, consists all that repugnancy to the grace of God, which is in us by nature, and whence all that resistance doth arise, which some say is always sufficient to render any operation of the Spirit of God by his grace fruitless.

[3.] This heart, that is, this *impotency* and *enmity*, which is in our natures unto conversion and spiritual obedience, God says, *He will take away*; that is, he will do so in them who are to be converted according to the purpose of his will, and whom he will turn unto himself<sup>y</sup>. He doth not say that he will endeavour to take it away, nor that he will use such or such means for the taking of it away, but absolutely that he will take it away. He doth not say, that he will persuade with men to remove it or do it away, that he will aid and help them in their so doing, and that so far as that it shall wholly be their own fault if it be not done, which no doubt it is, where it is not removed; but positively that he himself will take it away. Wherefore the act of taking it away, is the act of God by his grace, and not the act of our wills, but as they are acted thereby; and that such an act as whose effect is necessary. It is impossible that God should take away the stony heart, and yet the stony heart not be taken away. What, therefore, God promiseth herein, in the removal of our natural corruption, is, as unto the event, infallible, and as to the manner of operation irresistible.

[4.] As what God *taketh* from us in the cure of our original disease, so what he *bestoweth* on us, or works in us, is here also expressed; and this is a *new heart* and a *new spirit*. ‘I will give you a new heart.’ And withal it is declared what benefit we do receive thereby. For those who have this new heart bestowed on them, or wrought in them, they do actually by virtue thereof, fear the Lord and walk in his

<sup>y</sup> Hæc gratia quæ occulte humanis cordibus divina largitate tribuitur, a nullo duro corde respuitur; ideo quippe tribuitur, ut cordis durities primitus auferatur. Augus. de Prædest. Sanctor. cap. 8.

ways. For so it is affirmed in the testimonies produced, and no more is required thereunto, as nothing less will effect it. There must, therefore, be in this new heart thus given us a principle of all holy obedience unto God, the creating of which principle in us, is our conversion to him; for God doth convert us, and we are converted. And how is this new heart communicated unto us? 'I will,' saith God, 'give them a new heart.' That is, it may be, he will do what is to be done on his part that they may have it. But we may refuse his assistance and go without it. No, saith he, 'I will put a new spirit within them;' which expression is capable of no such limitation or condition. And to make it more plain yet, he affirms, that he 'will write his law in our hearts.' It is confessed, that this is spoken with respect unto his writing of the law of old in the tables of stone. As then he wrote the letter of the law in the tables of stone, so that thereon, and thereby, they were actually engraven therein; so by writing the law, that is, the matter and substance of it, in our hearts, it is as really fixed therein, as the letter of it was of old in the tables of stone. And this can be no otherwise, but in a principle of obedience and love unto it, which is actually wrought of God in us. And the aids or assistances which some men grant, that are left unto the power of our own wills to use or not to use, have no analogy with the writing of the law in tables of stone. And the end of the work of God described, is not a power to obey, which may be exerted or not. But it is actual obedience in conversion, and all the fruits of it. And if God doth not in these promises, declare a real efficiency of internal grace, taking away all repugnancy of nature unto conversion, curing its depravation actually and effectually, and communicating infallibly a principle of scriptural obedience, I know not in what words such a work may be expressed. And whatever is excepted, as to the suspending of the efficacy of this work upon conditions in ourselves, it falls immediately into gross and sensible contradictions. And an especial instance of this work we have, Acts xvi. 14.

A third argument is taken from the state and condition of men by nature before described. For it is such, as that no man can be delivered from it, but by that powerful, internal, effectual grace which we plead, such as wherein

the mind and will of man can act nothing in or towards conversion to God, but as they are acted by grace. The reason why some despise, some oppose, some deride, the work of the Spirit of God in our regeneration or conversion, or fancy it to be only an outward ceremony, or a moral change of life and conversation, is, their ignorance of the corrupted and depraved estate of the souls of men, in their minds, wills, and affections by nature. For if it be such as we have described, that is, such as in the Scripture it is represented to be, they cannot be so brutish as once to imagine, that it may be cured, or that men may be delivered from it, without any other aid but that of those rational considerations, which some would have to be the only means of our conversion to God. We shall, therefore, inquire what that grace is, and what it must be, whereby we are delivered from it.

1. It is called a *vivification* or quickening. We are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, as hath been proved, and the nature of that death at large explained. In our deliverance from thence, we are said to be 'quickened;' Eph. v. 5. Though dead, we 'hear the voice of the Son of God, and live;' John v. 25. 'Being made alive unto God through Jesus Christ;' Rom. vi. 11. Now, no such work can be wrought in us, but by an effectual communication of a principle of spiritual life, and nothing else will deliver us. Some think to evade the power of this argument, by saying, that all these expressions are metaphorical, and arguings from them, are but fulsome metaphors. And it is well, if the whole gospel be not a metaphor unto them. But if there be not an impotency in us by nature unto all acts of spiritual life; like that which is in a dead man unto the acts of life natural; if there be not an alike power of God required unto our deliverance from that condition, and the working in us a principle of spiritual obedience, as is required unto the raising of him that is dead, they may as well say, that the Scripture speaks not truly, as that it speaks metaphorically. And, that it is almighty power, the exceeding greatness of God's power, that is put forth and exercised herein, we have proved from Eph. i. 18, 19. Col. ii. 12, 13. 2 Thess. i. 11. 2 Pet. i. 3. And what do these men intend by this quickening, this raising us from the dead, by the power of God?

A persuasion of our minds by rational motives taken from the word, and the things contained in it? But was there ever heard of such a monstrous expression, if there be nothing else in it? What could the holy writers intend by calling such a work as this, by a quickening of them who were dead in trespasses and sins, through the mighty power of God, unless it were by a noise of insignificant words, to draw us off from a right understanding of what is intended? And it is well, if some are not of that mind.

2. The work itself wrought, is our regeneration. I have proved before, that this consists in a new, spiritual, supernatural, vital principle, or habit of grace infused into the soul, the mind, will, and affections, by the power of the Holy Spirit, disposing and enabling them in whom it is, unto spiritual, supernatural, vital acts of faith and obedience. Some men seem to be inclined to deny all habits of grace. And on such a supposition, a man is no longer a believer than he is in the actual exercise of faith. For there is nothing in him from whence he should be so denominated. But this would plainly overthrow the covenant of God, and all the grace of it. Others expressly deny all gracious supernatural infused habits, though they may grant such as are, or may be, acquired by the frequent acts of those graces or virtues, whereof they are the habits. But the Scripture giveth us another description of this work of regeneration, for it consists in the renovation of the image of God in us; Eph. iv. 23, 24. 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' That Adam in innocency had a supernatural ability of living unto God, habitually residing in him, is generally acknowledged. And although it were easy for us to prove, that whereas he was made for a supernatural end, namely, to live to God, and to come to the enjoyment of him, it was utterly impossible that he should answer it or comply with it, by the mere strength of his natural faculties, had they not been endued with a supernatural ability, which, with respect unto that end, was created with them, and in them. Yet, we will not contend about terms. Let it be granted, that he was created in the image of God, and that he had an ability to fulfil all God's commands, and that in himself, and no more shall be desired.

This was lost by the fall. When this is by any denied, it shall be proved. In our regeneration, there is a renovation of this image of God in us. ‘Renewed in the spirit of our minds.’ And it is renewed in us by a creating act of almighty power, ‘which after God,’ or according to his likeness, ‘is created in righteousness and true holiness.’ There is, therefore, in it an implantation of a new principle of spiritual life, of a life unto God in repentance, faith, and obedience, or universal holiness, according to gospel truth, or the truth which came by Jesus Christ; John i. 18. And the effect of this work is called spirit; John viii. 5. ‘That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.’ It is the Spirit of God, of whom we are born; that is, our new life is wrought in us by his efficiency. And that, which in us is so born of him, is spirit; not the natural faculties of our souls, they are once created, once born, and no more; but a new principle of spiritual obedience, whereby we live unto God. And this is the product of the internal immediate efficiency of grace.

This will the better appear if we consider the faculties of the soul distinctly, and what is the especial work of the Holy Spirit upon them in our regeneration or conversion to God.

1. The leading conducting faculty of the soul is the *mind* or understanding. Now this is corrupted and vitiated by the fall, and how it continues depraved in the state of nature, hath been declared before. The sum is, that it is not able to discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner, for it is possessed with spiritual blindness or darkness, and is filled with enmity against God and his law, esteeming the things of the gospel to be foolishness, because it is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in it: we must therefore inquire what is the work of the Holy Spirit on our minds in turning of us to God, whereby this depravation is removed, and this vicious state cured; whereby we come to see and discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner; that we may savingly know God and his mind as revealed in and by Jesus Christ. And this is several ways declared in the Scripture.

(1.) He is said to give us an understanding; 1 John v. 20. ‘The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true;’ which he doth by his Spirit. Man by sin is become like the, ‘beasts that perish which have no understanding;’ Psal. xlix. 12. 20.

Men have not lost their natural intellective faculty or reason absolutely; it is continued unto them with the free though impaired use of it, in things natural and civil. And it hath an advance in sin. Men are wise to do evil<sup>2</sup>. But it is lost as to the especial use of it in the saving knowledge of God and his will; to 'do good they have no knowledge;' Jer. iv. 22. For naturally, 'there is none that understandeth, that seeketh after God;' Rom. iii. 17. It is corrupted not so much in the root and principle of its actings, as with respect unto their proper object, term, and end. Wherefore, although this giving of an understanding, be not the creating in us anew of that natural faculty; yet it is that gracious work in it, without which that faculty in us as depraved, will no more enable us to know God savingly, than if we had none at all. The grace, therefore, here asserted in the giving of an understanding, is the causing of our natural understandings to understand savingly. This David prays for, Psal. cxix. 34. 'Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law.' The whole work is expressed by the apostle, Ephes. i. 16—18. 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being opened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, &c.' That the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, is the Spirit of God working those effects in us, we have before evinced. And it is plain, that the revelation here intended is subjective, in the enabling us to apprehend what is revealed, and not objective in new revelations which the apostle prayed not that they might receive. And this is farther evidenced by the ensuing description of it, 'the eyes of your understanding being opened.' There is an eye in the understanding of man, that is, the natural power and ability that is in it, to discern spiritual things. But this eye is sometimes said to be blind, sometimes to be darkness, sometimes to be shut or closed. And nothing but the impotency of our minds to know God savingly, or discern things spiritually when proposed unto us, can be intended thereby. It is the work of the Spirit of grace to open this eye<sup>3</sup>; Luke iv. 18. Acts xxvi. 18. And this

<sup>2</sup> Prorsus si Dei adiutorium defuerit, nihil boni agere poteris; agis quidem illo non adjuvante libera voluntate, sed male; ad hoc idonea est voluntas tua quæ vocatur libera, et male agendo fit damnabilis ancilla. August. Serm. 13. de Verb. Apostol.

<sup>3</sup> Erat lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum; quod

is the powerful effectual removal of that depravation of our minds with all its effects, which we before described. And how are we made partakers thereof? It is of the gift of God, freely and effectually working of it. For, (1.) he 'gives us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation' to that end. And, (2.) works the thing itself in us. He gives 'us a heart to know him,' Jer. xxiv. 7. without which we cannot so do, or he would not himself undertake to work it in us for that end. There is, therefore, an effectual, powerful, creating act of the Holy Spirit put forth in the minds of men in their conversion unto God, enabling them spiritually to discern spiritual things; wherein the seed and substance of divine faith is contained.

(2.) This is called the 'renovation of our minds; renewed in the spirit of our minds;' Eph. iv. 23. which is the same with being renewed in knowledge; Col. iii. 10. And this renovation of our minds, hath in it a transforming power, to change the whole soul into an obediential frame towards God; Rom. xii. 2. And the work of renewing our minds is peculiarly ascribed unto the Holy Spirit. Tit. iii. 5. 'The renewing of the Holy Ghost.' Some men seem to fancy, yea, do declare, that there is no such depravation in or of the mind of man, but that he is able by the use of his reason, to apprehend, receive, and discern those truths of the gospel which are objectively proposed unto it. But of the use of reason in these matters, and its ability to discern and judge of the sense of propositions, and force of inferences in things of religion, we shall treat afterward. At present I only inquire whether men unregenerate be of themselves able spiritually to discern spiritual things, when they are proposed unto them in the dispensation of the gospel, so as their knowledge may be saving in and unto themselves, and acceptable unto God in Christ, and that without any especial, internal, effectual work of the Holy Spirit or grace in them and upon them? if they say they are, as they plainly plead them

ideo dictum est, quia nullus hominum illuminatur, nisi illo lumine veritatis quod Deus est, ne quisquam putaret ab eo se illuminari a quo aliquid audit ut discat; non dico si quenkum magnum hominem sed nec si angelum ei contingat habere doctorem. Adhibetur enim sermo veritatis extrinsecus vocis ministerio corporali; verumtamen neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat; sed qui incrementum dat Deus. Audit quippe homo dicentem vel hominem vel angelum, sed ut sentiat et cognoscat verum esse quod dicitur, illo lumine intus meus aspergitur quod æternum manet, quod etiam in tenebris lucet. August. de Peccator. Merit. et Remiss. lib. 1. cap. 25.

to be, and will not content themselves with an ascription unto them of that notional doctrinal knowledge, which none deny them to be capable of, I desire to know, to what purpose are they said to be 'renewed by the Holy Ghost;' to what purpose are all those gracious actings of God in them before recounted? He that shall consider what, on the one hand, the Scripture teacheth us concerning the blindness, darkness, impotency of our minds, with respect unto spiritual things when proposed unto us, as in the state of nature; and on the other, what it affirms concerning the work of the Holy Ghost in their renovation and change, in giving them new power, new ability, a new active understanding, will not be much moved with the groundless confident unproved dictates of some concerning the power of reason in itself to apprehend and discern religious things, so far as we are required in a way of duty. This is all one as if they should say, that if the sun shine clear and bright, every blind man is able to see.

God herein is said to communicate a light unto our minds, and that so, as that we see by it, or perceive by it, the things proposed unto us in the gospel usefully and savingly; 2 Cor. iv. 6. 'God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' Did God no otherwise work on the minds of men, but by an external objective proposal of truth unto them, to what purpose doth the apostle mention the almighty act of creating power, which he put forth and exercised in the first production of natural light out of darkness? What allusion is there between that work, and the doctrinal proposal of truth to the minds of men? It is, therefore, a confidence not to be contended with, if any will deny that the act of God in the spiritual illumination of our minds, be not of the same nature as to efficacy and efficiency, with that whereby he created light at the beginning of all things. And because the effect produced in us is called light, the act itself is described by 'shining.' God 'hath shined into our hearts,' that is, our minds; so he conveys light unto them by an act of omnipotent efficiency. And as that which is so wrought in our minds is called 'light,' so the apostle leaving his metaphor, plainly declares what he intends hereby;

namely, 'the actual knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' that is, as God is revealed in Christ by the gospel, as he declares, ver. 4. Having, therefore, (1.) compared the mind of man by nature, with a respect unto a power of discerning spiritual things, to the state of all things under darkness before the creation of light; and, (2.) the powerful working of God in illumination, unto the act of his omnipotency in the production or creation of light natural, he ascribes our ability to know, and our actual knowledge of God in Christ, unto his real efficiency and operation. And these things in part direct us towards an apprehension of that work of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of men in their conversion unto God, whereby their depravation is cured, and without which it will not so be. By this means, and no otherwise, do we who were darkness become light in the Lord, or come to know God in Christ savingly, looking into, and discerning, spiritual things with a proper intuitive sight, whereby all the other faculties of our souls are guided and influenced unto the obedience of faith.

2. It is principally with respect unto the *will* and its *depravation* by nature, that we are said to be *dead in sin*. And herein is seated that peculiar obstinacy, whence it is that no unregenerate person doth, or can, answer his own conviction, or walk up unto his light in obedience. For the will may be considered two ways. (1.) As a rational vital faculty of our souls. (2.) As a free principle<sup>b</sup>; freedom being of its essence or nature. This, therefore, in our conversion to God is renewed by the Holy Ghost, and that by an effectual implantation in it of a principle of spiritual life and holiness in the room of that original righteousness which it lost by the fall. That he doth so, is proved by all the testimonies before insisted on. [1.] This is its renovation as it is a rational vital faculty; and of this vivification see before. [2.] As it is a free principle, it is determined unto its acts in this case by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, without the least impeachment of its liberty or freedom as hath been declared. And that this is so, might be fully evinced, as by others, so by the ensuing arguments. For, if the Holy Ghost doth not work immediately and effectually upon the will, producing and creating in it a principle of faith and obedience, infal-

<sup>b</sup> Libertas sine gratia nihil est nisi contumacia; non libertas. August. Epist. 89.

libly determining it in its free acts, then is all the glory of our conversion to be ascribed unto ourselves, and we make ourselves therein, by the obediential actings of our own free will, to differ from others who do not so comply with the grace of God; which is denied by the apostle; 1 Cor. iv. 7. Neither can any purpose of God concerning the conversion of any one soul be certain and determinate, seeing after he hath done all that is to be done, or can be done towards it, the will remaining undetermined may not be converted, contrary to those testimonies of our Saviour; Rom. viii. 28. Matt. xi. 25, 26. John vi. 37. Neither can there be an original infallibility in the promises of God made to Jesus Christ, concerning the multitudes that should believe in him; seeing it is possible no one may so do, if it depends on the undetermined liberty of their wills whether they will or no. And then also must salvation of necessity be of 'him that willeth, and of him that runneth, and not of God that shews mercy on whom he will have mercy,' contrary to the apostle; Rom. ix. 15, 16. And the whole efficacy of the grace of God, is made thereby to depend on the wills of men, which is not consistent with our being the 'workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works;' Eph. ii. 10. Nor on this supposition do men know what they pray for, when they pray for their own or other men's conversion to God, as hath been before declared. There is, therefore, necessary such a work of the Holy Spirit upon our wills, as may cure and take away the depravation of them before described, freeing us from the state of spiritual death, causing us to live unto God, determining them in and unto the acts of faith and obedience. And this he doth, whilst, and as he makes us new creatures, quickens us who are dead in trespasses and sins, gives us a new heart, and puts a new spirit within us, writes his law in our hearts, that we may do the mind of God, and walk in his ways; worketh in us to will and to do, making them who were unwilling and obstinate, to become willing and obedient, and that freely and of choice.

3. In like manner a prevailing *love* is implanted upon the affections by the Spirit of grace, causing the soul with delight and complacency to cleave to God and his ways. This removes and takes away the enmity before described,

with the effects of it; Deut. xxx. 6. 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.' This circumcision of the heart consists in the putting off the 'body of the sins of the flesh,' as the apostle speaks; Col. ii. 11. He 'crucifies the flesh with the lusts and affections thereof.' Some men are inclined to think that all the depravation of our nature consists in that of the sensitive part of the soul, or our affections. The vanity and folly of which opinion hath been before discovered. Yet it is not denied but that the affections are signally depraved, so that by them principally the mind and will do act those lusts that are peculiarly seated in them, or by them do act according to their perverse and corrupt inclinations; Gal. v. 24. James i. 14, 15. Wherefore in the circumcision of our hearts, wherein the flesh, with the lusts, affections, and deeds thereof, are crucified by the Spirit, he takes from them their enmity, carnal prejudices, and depraved inclinations, really though not absolutely and perfectly; and instead of them, he fills us with holy spiritual love, joy, fear, and delight, not changing the being of our affections, but sanctifying and guiding them by the principle of saving light, and knowledge before described, and uniting them unto their proper object in a due manner. From what hath been spoken in this third argument, it is evident that the Holy Spirit designing the regeneration or conversion of the souls of men worketh therein effectually, powerfully, and irresistibly, which was proposed unto confirmation.

From the whole it appears that our *regeneration* is a work of the Spirit of God, and *that* not any *act of our own*, which is only so, is intended thereby<sup>c</sup>. I say it is not so our own,

<sup>c</sup> Quis istis corda mutavit, nisi qui finxit singillatim corda eorum? Quis hujus rigoris duritiem ad obediendi mollivit affectum, nisi qui potens est de lapidibus Abrahæ filios excitare? Prosp. ad Ruffin. de lib. Arbit.

Ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos et homines et salvos. Nam si ille nos fecit homines, nos autem ipsi nos fecimus salvos, aliquid illo melius fecimus. Melior enim est salvus homo quam quilibet homo. Si ergo te Deus fecit hominem et tu te fecisti bonum hominem, quod tu fecisti melius est. Noli te extollere super Deum, confitere illi qui fecit te, quia nemo recreat nisi qui creat, nemo reficit nisi qui fecit. August. de Verbis Apost.

Nemo quisquam hominum sive ad cogitandum, sive ad operandum quodcumque bonum potest esse idoneus; nisi qui fuerit munere gratuito divinæ opitulationis adjutus; ab ipso namque est initium bonæ voluntatis, ab ipso facultas boni operis, ab ipso perseverantia bonæ conversationis. Fulgent. lib. 1. ad Monim.

as by outward helps and assistance to be educed out of the principles of our natures. And herein is the Scripture express; for mentioning this work directly with respect unto its cause, and the manner of its operation in the effecting of it, it assigns it positively unto God or his Spirit; 1 Pet. i. 3. ‘God according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again.’ James i. 18. ‘Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.’ John iii. 5, 6. 8. ‘Born of the Spirit.’ 1 John iii. 9. ‘Born of God.’ And on the other hand, it excludes the will of man from any active interest herein; I mean, as to the first beginning of it; 1 Pet. i. 23. ‘Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.’ John i. 13. ‘Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ See Matt. xvi. 17. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 9, 10. It is therefore incumbent on them who plead for the active interest of the will of man in regeneration, to produce some testimonies of Scriptures where it is assigned upon it, as the effect unto its proper cause. Where is it said, that a man is born again, or begotten anew by himself? And if it be granted, as it must be so, unless violence be offered not only to the Scripture, but to reason and common sense, that whatever be our duty and power herein, yet these expressions must denote an act of God and not ours, the substance of what we contend for is granted, as we shall be ready at any time to demonstrate. It is true, God doth command us to circumcise our hearts and to make them new. But he doth therein declare our duty not our power; for himself promiseth to work in us what he requireth of us. And that power which we have and do exercise in the progress of this work in sanctification and holiness, proceeds from the infused principle which we receive in our regeneration; for all which ends we ought to pray for him according to the example of holy men of old<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Jam divini amor Numinis, Patris omnipotentis prolisque beatissimæ sancta communicatio; omnipotens paraclete Spiritus; mærentium consolator clementissime, jum cordis mei penetrabilibus potenti illabere virtute, et tenebrosa quæque laris neglecti latibula, corusci luminis fulgore pius habitator lætifica, tuique roris abundantia, longo ariditatis marcentia squalore, visitando sæcunda.