

THE  
**REASON OF FAITH:**

OR AN

ANSWER UNTO THAT INQUIRY,

WHIEREFORE WE BELIEVE THE SCRIPTURE TO BE  
THE WORD OF GOD:

WITH

THE CAUSES AND NATURE OF THAT FAITH WHERewith WE DO SO:

WHEREIN

THE GROUNDS WHEREON THE HOLY SCRIPTURE  
IS BELIEVED TO BE THE WORD OF GOD, WITH FAITH DIVINE  
AND SUPERNATURAL,

ARE DECLARED AND VINDICATED.

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*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one  
rose from the dead.—LUKE xvi. 31.*



## TO THE READER.

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**H**AVING added a brief account of the design, order, and method of the ensuing discourse, in an Appendix at the close of it, I shall not here detain the reader with the proposal of them. Yet some few things remain, which I judge it necessary to mind him of. Be he who he will, I am sure we shall not differ about the weight of the argument in hand ; for, whether it be the truth we contend for, or otherwise, yet it will not be denied, but that the determination of it, and the settling of the minds of men about it, are of the highest concernment unto them. But, whereas so much hath been written of late by others on this subject, any farther debate of it may seem either needless or unseasonable. Something, therefore, may be spoken to evidence that the reader is not imposed on by that, which may absolutely fall under either of those characters. Had the end in and by these discourses been effectually accomplished, it had been altogether useless to renew an endeavour unto the same purpose. But, whereas an opposition unto the Scripture, and the grounds whereon we believe it to be a Divine Revelation, is still openly continued amongst us ; a continuation of the defence of the one and the other cannot reasonably be judged either needless or unseasonable. Besides, most of the discourses published

of late, on this subject, have had their peculiar designs, wherein that here tendered is not expressly engaged. For some of them do principally aim to prove, that we have sufficient grounds to believe the Scripture, without any recourse unto, or reliance upon, the authoritative proposal of the church of Rome; which they have sufficiently evinced beyond any possibility of rational contradiction from their adversaries. Others have pleaded and vindicated those rational considerations, whereby our assent unto the divine original of it, is fortified and confirmed against the exceptions and objections of such whose love of sin, and resolutions to live therein, tempts them to seek for shelter in an atheistical contempt of the authority of God, evidencing itself therein. But as neither of these are utterly neglected in the ensuing discourse, so the peculiar design of it is of another nature. For the inquiries managed therein, namely, what is the obligation upon us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God? what are the causes, and what is the nature of that faith, whereby we do so? what it rests on, and is resolved into, so as to become a divine and acceptable duty? do respect the consciences of men immediately, and the way whereby they may come to rest and assurance in believing. Whereas, therefore, it is evident, that many are often shaken in their minds, with those atheistical objections against the divine original and authority of the Scripture, which they frequently meet withal; that many know not how to extricate themselves from the insnaring questions, that they are often attacked withal about them; not for want of a due assent unto them, but of a right understanding what is the true and

formal reason of that assent ; what is the firm basis and foundation that it rests upon ; what answer they may directly and peremptorily give unto that inquiry, Wherefore do you believe the Scripture to be the word of God ? I have endeavoured to give them those directions herein, that upon a due examination they will find compliant with the Scripture itself, right reason, and their own experience. I am not, therefore, altogether without hopes, that this small discourse may have its use, and be given out in its proper season. Moreover, I think it necessary to acquaint the reader, that as I have allowed all the arguments pleaded by others, to prove the divine authority of the Scripture, their proper place and force ; so, where I differ in the explication of any thing belonging unto this subject from the conceptions of other men, I have candidly examined such opinions, and the arguments wherewith they are confirmed, without straining the words, cavilling at the expressions, or reflections on the persons of any of the authors of them. And, whereas, I have myself been otherwise dealt withal by many, and know not how soon I may be so again, I do hereby free the persons of such humours and inclinations, from all fear of any reply from me, or the least notice of what they shall be pleased to write or say. Such kind of writings are of the same consideration with me, as those multiplied false reports which some have raised concerning me, the most of them so ridiculous and foolish, so alien from my principles, practice, and course of life, as I cannot but wonder how any persons, pretending to gravity and sobriety, are not sensible how their credulity and inclinations are abused in the hearing and repe-

tition of them. The occasion of this discourse is that which, in the last place, I shall acquaint the reader withal. About three years since I published a book about the Dispensation and Operations of the Spirit of God. That book was one part only of what I designed on that subject. The consideration of the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of illumination, of supplication, of consolation, and as the immediate author of all spiritual offices, and gifts extraordinary and ordinary, is designed unto the second part of it. Hereof this ensuing discourse is concerning one part of his work, as a Spirit of illumination, which, upon the earnest requests of some acquainted with the nature and substance of it, I have suffered to come out by itself, that it might be of the more common use, and more easily obtained.

May 11, 1677.

THE  
REASON OF FAITH;

OR

THE GROUNDS WHEREON THE SCRIPTURE IS BELIEVED  
TO BE THE WORD OF GOD,

WITH

FAITH DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL.

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THE principal design of that discourse, whereof the ensuing treatise is a part, is to declare the *work of the Holy Ghost in the illumination of the minds of men*. For this work is particularly and eminently ascribed unto him; or the efficacy of the grace of God by him dispensed; Eph. i. 17, 18. Heb. vi. 4. Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. xxiv. 45. xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 9. The objective cause and outward means of it, are the subjects at present designed unto consideration. And it will issue in these two inquiries:

I. *On what grounds, or for what reason, we do believe the Scripture to be the word of God, with faith divine and supernatural, as it is required of us in a way of duty.*

II. *How, or by what means, we may come to understand aright the mind of God in the Scripture, or the revelations that are made unto us of his mind and will therein.*

For by *illumination* in general, as it denotes an effect wrought in the minds of men, I understand that *supernatural knowledge* that any man hath, or may have, of the mind and will of God, as revealed unto him by *supernatural* means, for the law of his faith, life, and obedience. And this, so far as it is comprised in the first of these inquiries, is that, whose declaration we at present design, reserving the latter unto a distinct discourse by itself also. Unto the former some things may be premised.

First, *Supernatural revelation is the only objective cause and*





the minds of those unto whom it was granted, and theirs also unto whom these revelations were by them communicated. For during this season Satan used his utmost endeavours to possess the minds of men with his delusions, under the pretence of divine supernatural inspirations. For hereunto belongs the original of all his oracles and enthusiasms among the nations of the world. There was, therefore, a divine power and efficacy attending all divine revelations, ascertaining and infallibly assuring the minds of men of their being from God. For if it had not been so, men had never been able to secure themselves, that they were not imposed on by the crafty deceits of Satan, especially in such revelations as seemed to contain things contrary to their reason, as in the command given to Abraham for the sacrificing his son; Gen. xxii. 2. Wherefore, these immediate revelations had not been a sufficient means to secure the faith and obedience of the church, if they had not carried along with them their own evidence that they were from God. Of what nature that evidence was, we shall afterward inquire. For the present I shall only say, that it was an evidence unto faith and not to sense; as is that also which we have now by the Scripture. It is not like that which the sun gives of itself by its light, which there needs no exercise of reason to assure us of; for sense is irresistibly affected with it. But it is like the evidence which the heavens and the earth give of their being made and created of God, and thereby of his being and power. This they do undeniably and infallibly; Psal. xix. 1, 2. Rom. i. 19—21. Yet is it required hereunto, that men do use and exercise the best of their rational abilities in the consideration and contemplation of them. Where this is neglected, notwithstanding their open and visible evidence unto the contrary, men degenerate into atheism. God so gave out these revelations of himself, as to require the exercise of the faith, conscience, obedience, and reason of them unto whom they were made, and therein they gave full assurance of their proceeding from him. So he tells us that his word differeth from all other pretended revelations, as the wheat doth from the chaff; Jer. xxiii. 28. But yet it is our duty to try and sift the wheat from the chaff, or we may not evidently discern the one from the other.

2. The things so revealed were *sufficient* to guide and direct all persons in the knowledge of their duty to God, in all that was required of them in a way of faith or obedience. God from the beginning gave out the knowledge of his will *πολυμερῶς*, ‘by sundry parts and degrees;’ yet so that every age and season had light enough to guide them, in the whole obedience required of them, and unto their edification therein. They had knowledge enough to enable them to offer sacrifices in faith, as did Abel; to walk with God, as did Enoch; and to teach their families the fear of the Lord, as did Abraham. The world perished not for want of sufficient revelation of the mind of God at any time. Indeed, when we go to consider those divine instructions which are upon record, that God granted unto them, we are scarce able to discern how they were sufficiently enlightened, in all that was necessary for them to believe and do. But they were unto them as a ‘light shining in a dark place.’ Set up but a candle in a dark room, and it will sufficiently enlighten it, for men to attend their necessary occasions therein. But when the sun is risen and shineth in at all the windows, the light of the candle grows so dim and useless, that it seems strange that any could have advantage thereby. The Sun of righteousness is now risen upon us, and immortality is brought to light by the gospel. If we look now on the revelations granted unto them of old, we may yet see there was light in them, which yields us little more advantage than the light of a candle in the sun. But unto them who lived before this sun arose, they were a sufficient guide unto all duties of faith and obedience. For,

3. There was, during this season, a *sufficient ministry*, for the declaration of the *revelations*, which God made of himself and his will. There was the natural ministry of parents, who were obliged to instruct their children and families in the knowledge of the truth which they had received. And whereas this began in Adam, who first received the promise, and therewithal whatsoever was necessary unto faith and obedience; the knowledge of it could not be lost without the wilful neglect of parents in teaching, or of children and families in learning. And they had the extraordinary ministry of such as God intrusted new revelations withal, for the confirmation and enlargement of those before received,

who were all of them preachers of righteousness unto the rest of mankind. And it may be manifested, that from the giving of the first promise, when divine external revelations began to be the rule of faith and life unto the church, to the writing of the law, there was always alive one or other, who receiving divine revelations immediately, were a kind of infallible guides unto others. If it was otherwise at any time, it was after the death of the patriarchs, before the call of Moses, during which time, all things went into darkness and confusion. For oral tradition alone would not preserve the truth of former revelations. But by whom these instructions were received, they had a sufficient outward means for their illumination, before any divine revelations were recorded by writing. Yet,

4. This way of instruction, as it was in itself *imperfect*, and liable to many disadvantages, so through the weakness, negligence, and wickedness of men, it proved *insufficient* to retain the knowledge of God in the world. For under this dispensation the generality of mankind fell into their great apostacy from God, and betook themselves unto the conduct and service of the devil; of the ways, means, and degrees whereof, I have discoursed elsewhere<sup>a</sup>. Hereon God also regarded them not, but ‘suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;’ Acts xiv. 16. giving them up to their own hearts’ lusts, to ‘walk in their own counsels;’ as it is expressed, Psal. lxxxi. 12. And although this fell not out without the horrible wickedness and ingratitude of the world; yet there being then no certain standard of divine truth, whereunto they might repair, they brake off the easier from God through the imperfection of this dispensation. If it shall be said, that since the revelation of the will of God hath been committed unto writing, men have apostatized from the knowledge of God, as is evident in many nations of the world, which sometimes professed the gospel, but are now overrun with Heathenism, Mahometism, and idolatry: I say, this hath not come to pass through any defect in the way and means of illumination, or the communication of the truth unto them; but God hath given them up to be destroyed for their wickedness and ingratitude, and unless ‘we repent, we shall all likewise perish;’ Rom. i. 18. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Otherwise,

<sup>a</sup> De Natura Theologiæ, lib. 3.

where the standard of the word is once fixed, there is a constant means of preserving divine revelations. Wherefore,

Thirdly, God hath gathered up into the *Scripture* all divine revelations given out by himself from the beginning of the world, and all that ever shall be so to the end thereof, which are of *general use* unto the church; that it may be thoroughly instructed in the *whole mind and will of God*, and directed in all that worship of him, and obedience unto him, which is necessary to give us acceptance with him here, and to bring us unto the eternal enjoyment of him hereafter. For, 1. when God first committed the law to writing, with all those things which accompanied it, he obliged the church unto the use of it alone, without additions of any kind. Now this he would not have done, had he not expressed therein, that is, the Books of Moses, all that was any way needful unto the faith and obedience of the church. For he did not only command them to attend with all diligence unto his word, as it was then written for their instruction and direction in faith and obedience, annexing all sorts of promises unto their so doing, Deut. vi. 6, 7. but also expressly forbids them, as was said, to add any thing thereunto, or to conjoin any thing therewith; Deut. iv. 2. xii. 32. which he would not have done, had he omitted other divine revelations, before given, that were any way necessary unto the use of the church. As he added many new ones, so he gathered in all the old from the unfaithful repository of tradition, and fixed them in a writing, given by divine inspiration. 2. For all other divine revelations, which were given out to the church, for its use, in general, under the Old Testament, they are all comprised in the following books thereof; nor was this (that I know of) ever questioned by any person pretending to sobriety; though some, who would be glad of any pretence against the integrity and perfection of the Scripture, have fruitlessly wrangled about the loss of some books, which they can never prove concerning any one, that was certainly of a divine original. 3. The full revelation of the whole mind of God, whereunto nothing pretending thereunto is ever to be added, was committed unto, and perfected by, Jesus Christ; Heb. i. 1, 2. That the revelations of God, made by him, whether in his own person, or by his Spirit unto his apostles, were also by divine inspiration committed

to writing, is expressly affirmed concerning what he delivered in his own personal ministry; Luke i. 4. Acts i. 1. John xx. 31. and may be proved by uncontrollable arguments concerning the rest of them. Hence, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament were shut up with a caution and admonition unto the church, to adhere unto the law and testimony, with threatening of a curse unto the contrary; Mal. iv. 4—6. So the writings of the New Testament are closed with a curse on any that shall presume to add any thing more thereunto; Rev. xxii. 18. Wherefore,

Fourthly, The Scripture is now become *the only external means of divine supernatural illumination*, because it is the only repository of all divine supernatural revelation; Psal. xix. 7, 8. Isa. viii. 20. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. The pretences of tradition, as a collateral means of preserving and communicating supernatural revelation, have been so often evicted of falsity, that I shall not farther press their impeachment. Besides, I intend those in this discourse by whom it is acknowledged, that the Bible is, as a sufficient and perfect, so the only, treasury of divine revelations: and what hath been offered by any to weaken or impair its esteem, by taking off from its credibility, perfection, and sufficiency, as unto all its own proper ends, hath brought no advantage unto the church, nor benefit unto the faith of believers. But yet,

Fifthly, In asserting the Scripture to be the *only external means of divine revelation*, I do it not *exclusively* unto those institutions of God which are *subordinate* unto it, and appointed as means to make it effectual unto our souls. As,

1. Our own *personal endeavours* in reading, studying, and meditating on the Scripture, that we may come unto a right apprehension of the things contained in it, are required unto this purpose. It is known to all, how frequently this duty is pressed upon us, and what promises are annexed to the performance of it; see Deut. vi. 6, 7. xi. 18, 19. Josh. i. 8. Psal. i. 2. cxix. Col. iii. 16. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Without this it is in vain to expect illumination by the word. And, therefore, we may see multitudes living and walking in extreme darkness, when yet the word is every where nigh unto them; bread, which is the staff of life, will yet nourish no man who doth not provide it, and feed upon it; no more would manna,

unless it was gathered and prepared. Our own natures, and the nature of divine revelations considered, and what is necessary for the application of the one to the other, makes this evident. For God will instruct us in his mind and will, as we are men, in and by the rational faculties of our souls. Nor is an external revelation capable of making any other impression on us, but what is so received. Wherefore, when I say, that the Scripture is the only external means of our illumination, I include therein all our own personal endeavours to come to the knowledge of the mind of God therein, which shall be afterward spoken unto. And those, who under any pretences do keep, drive, or persuade, men from reading and meditating on the Scripture, do take an effectual course to keep them in and under the power of darkness.

2. The *mutual instruction* of one another in the mind of God out of the Scripture, is also required hereunto. For we are obliged by the law of nature to endeavour the good of others in various degrees, as our children, our families, our neighbours, and all with whom we have conversation. And this is the principal good, absolutely considered, that we can communicate unto others, namely, to instruct them in the knowledge of the mind of God. This whole duty in all the degrees of it is represented in that command, ‘Thou shalt teach my words diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;’ Deut. vi. 7. Thus, when our Saviour found his disciples talking of the things of God by the way-side, he bearing unto them the person of a private man, instructed them in the sense of the Scripture; Luke xxiv. 26, 27. 32. And the neglect of this duty in the world, which is so great that the very mention of it, or the least attempt to perform it, is a matter of scorn and reproach, is one cause of that great ignorance and darkness which yet abounds among us. But the nakedness of this folly, whereby men would be esteemed Christians in the open contempt of all duties of Christianity, will in due time be laid open.

3. The *ministry of the word* in the church is that which is principally included in this assertion. The Scripture is the only means of illumination, but it becometh so principally

by the application of it unto the minds of men in the ministry of the word; see Matt. v. 14, 15. 2 Cor. v. 18—20. Eph. iv. 11—15. 1 Tim. iii. 15. The church, and the ministry of it, are the ordinances of God unto this end, that his mind and will as revealed in the word, may be made known to the children of men, whereby they are enlightened. And that church and ministry, whereof this is not the first principal design and work, is neither appointed of God, nor approved by him. Men will one day find themselves deceived in trusting to empty names, it is duty alone, that will be comfort and reward; Dan. xii. 3.

Sixthly, That the *Scripture*, which thus contains the whole of divine revelation, may be a sufficient external cause of illumination unto us, two things are required:

1. That we *believe it to be a divine revelation*, that is, the word of God, or a declaration of himself, his mind and will, immediately proceeding from him; or that it is of a pure divine *original*, proceeding neither from the folly or deceit, nor from the skill or honesty, of men; so is it stated, 2 Pet. i. 19—21. Heb. i. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 16. Isa. viii. 20. It tenders no light or instruction under any other notion, but as it comes immediately from God; not as the word of man, but as ‘it is indeed the word of the living God;’ 1 Thess. ii. 13. And whatever any one may learn from or by the Scriptures under any other consideration, it belongeth not unto the illumination we inquire after; Nehem. viii. 8. Isa. xxviii. 9. Hos. xiv. 9. Prov. i. 6. Psal. cxix. 34. Matt. xv. 16. 2 Tim. ii. 7. 1 John v. 20.

2. That we *understand the things declared in it*, or the mind of God as revealed and expressed therein. For if it be given unto us a *sealed book*, which we cannot read, either because it is *sealed*, or because we are *ignorant* and cannot read, whatever visions or means of light it hath in it, we shall have no advantage thereby; Isa. xxix. 11, 12. It is not the words themselves of the Scripture only, but our understanding them that gives us light; Psal. cxix. 130. פתח דברך אֵר, the opening the door, ‘the entrance of thy word giveth light.’ It must be opened, or it will not enlighten. So the disciples understood not the testimonies of the Scripture concerning the Lord Christ, they were not enlightened by them, until he expounded them unto them; Luke xxiv. 27, 45. As we have

the same instance in the eunuch and Philip ; Acts viii. 31, 35, 36. To this very day the nation of the Jews have the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the outward letter of them in such esteem and veneration, that they even adore and worship them, yet are they not enlightened by it. And the same is fallen out among many that are called Christians, or they could never embrace such foolish opinions, and practise such idolatries in worship as some of them do, who yet enjoy the letter of the gospel.

And this brings me to my design, which we have been thus far making way unto ; and it is to shew that both these are from the Holy Ghost ; namely, that we *truly believe* the Scripture to be the word of God ; and that we *understand savingly* the mind of God therein, both which belong unto our illumination.

That which I shall first inquire into, is, the *way how*, and the *ground whereon*, we come to believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a *due manner*. For that this is required of us in a *way of duty*, namely, that we should believe the Scripture to be the word of God with *faith divine and supernatural*, I suppose will not be denied, and it shall be afterward proved. And what is the work of the Spirit of God herein, will be our first inquiry.

Secondly, Whereas we see by experience, that all who have or enjoy the Scripture, do not yet *understand it*, or come to a useful saving knowledge of the mind and will of God therein revealed ; our other inquiry shall be, how we may come to understand the word of God aright, and what is the work of the Spirit of God in the assistance which he affordeth us unto that purpose.

With respect unto the first of these inquiries, whereunto the present discourse is singly designed, I affirm that it is *the work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God*, or the supernatural immediate revelation of his mind unto us, and infallibly to evidence it unto our minds, so as that we may spiritually and savingly acquiesce therein. Some, upon a mistake of this proposition, do seem to suppose, that we resolve all faith into private suggestions of the Spirit, or deluding pretences thereof, and some, it may be, will be ready to apprehend that we confound the efficient cause, and formal reason of faith or believing, render-



ing all rational arguments, and external testimonies useless. But, indeed, there neither is nor shall be any occasion administered unto these fears or imaginations. For we shall plead nothing in this matter but what is consonant to the faith and judgment of the ancient and present church of God, as shall be fully evidenced in our progress. I know some have found out other ways whereby the minds of men, as they suppose, may be sufficiently satisfied in the divine authority of the Scripture. But I have tasted of their new wine and desire it not, because I know the old to be better, though what they plead is of use in its proper place.

My design requires that I should confine my discourse unto as narrow bounds as possible, and I shall so do; shewing,

1. What it is, in general, *infallibly to believe the Scripture to be the word of God*, and what is the ground and reason of our so doing; or, what it is *to believe the Scripture to be the word of God*, as we are required to believe it so to be in a way of duty.

2. That there are *external arguments* of the divine original of the Scripture, which are effectual motives to persuade us to give an unfeigned assent thereunto.

3. That yet, moreover, God requires of us, that we believe them to be his word with *faith divine, supernatural, and infallible*.

4. *Evidence* the grounds and reasons whereon we do so believe, and ought so to do.

Unto these heads most of what ensues in the first part of this discourse may be reduced.

It is meet that we should clear the foundation whereon we build, and the principles whereon we do proceed; that what we design to prove may be the better understood by all sorts of persons, whose edification we intend. For these things are the equal concernment of the learned and unlearned. Wherefore, some things must be insisted on, which are generally known and granted. And our first inquiry is, *What it is to believe the Scripture to be the word of God with faith divine and supernatural*, according as it is our duty so to do.

And in our *believing*, or our *faith*, two things are to be considered: (1.) *What* it is that we do believe; and, (2.) *Wherefore* we do so believe it? The first is the material object of

our faith, namely, the things which we do believe; the latter, the formal object of it, or the cause and reason why we do believe them; and these things are distinct. The material object of our faith, are the things revealed in the Scripture, declared unto us in propositions of truth. For things must be so proposed unto us, or we cannot believe them. That God is one in three persons; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and the like propositions of truth are the material object of our faith, or the things that we do believe; and the reason why we do believe them, is, because they are proposed in the Scripture. Thus, the apostle expresseth the whole of what we intend, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. 'I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.' Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, are the things proposed unto us to be believed, and so the object of our faith. But the reason why we believe them, is, because they are declared in the Scriptures; see Acts viii. 28—30. Sometimes, indeed, this expression of believing the Scriptures, by a metonymy, denotes both the formal and material objects of our faith, the Scriptures themselves as such, and the things contained in them; so John ii. 22. 'They believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus said,' or the things delivered in the Scripture, and farther declared by Christ, which before they understood not. And they did so believe what was declared in the Scriptures, because it was so declared in them; both are intended in the same expression, 'they believed the Scripture,' under various considerations; so Acts xxvi. 27. The material object of our faith, therefore, are the articles of our creed, by whose enumeration we answer unto that question, what we believe? giving an account of the hope that is in us, as the apostle doth, Acts xxvi. 22, 23. But if, moreover, we are asked a reason of our faith or hope, or why we believe the things we do profess, as God to be one in three persons, Jesus Christ to be the Son of God? we do not answer, because so it is, for this is that which we believe, which were senseless. But we must give some other answer unto that inquiry, whether it be made by others or ourselves. The proper answer unto this question contains the formal reason and object of our faith, that which it rests

upon and is resolved into. And this is that which we look after.

2. We do not in this inquiry intend any kind of persuasion or faith but that which is *divine* and *infallible*, both which it is from its formal reason or objective cause. Men may be able to give some kind of reasons, why they believe what they profess so to do, that will not suffice or abide the trial in this case, although they themselves may rest in them. Some, it may be, can give no other account hereof, but that they have been so instructed by them whom they have sufficient reason to give credit unto; or that they have so received them by tradition from their fathers. Now, whatever persuasion these reasons may beget in the minds of men, that the things which they profess to believe are true, yet if they are alone, it is not divine faith whereby they do believe, but that which is merely human, as being resolved into human testimony only, or an opinion on probable arguments; for no faith can be of any other kind, than is the evidence it reflects on, or ariseth from. I say, it is so where they are alone: for I doubt not but that some who have never farther considered the reason of their believing than the teaching of their instructors, have yet that evidence in their own souls of the truth and authority of God in what they believe, that with respect thereunto their faith is divine and supernatural. The faith of most hath a beginning and progress not unlike that of the Samaritans; John iv. 40—42. as shall be afterward declared.

3. When we inquire after faith that is *infallible*, or believing *infallibly*, which, as we shall shew hereafter, is necessary in this case, we do not intend an *inherent quality* in the subject, as though he that believes with faith *infallible* must himself also be infallible; much less do we speak of *infallibility* absolutely, which is a property of God, who alone, from the perfection of his nature, can neither deceive nor be deceived. But it is that property or adjunct of the assent of our minds unto divine truths or supernatural revelations, whereby it is differenced from all other kinds of assent whatever. And this it hath from its formal object, or the evidence whereon we give this assent. For the nature of every assent is given unto it by the nature of the evidence which it proceedeth from, or relieth on. This in divine faith is di-

vine revelation, which being infallible, renders the faith that rests on it, and is resolved into it, infallible also. No man can believe that which is false, or which may be false, with divine faith, for that which renders it divine, is the divine truth and infallibility of the ground and evidence which it is built upon. But a man may believe that which is true, infallibly so, and yet his faith not be infallible; that the Scripture is the word of God is infallibly true, yet the faith whereby a man believes it so to be, may be fallible, for it is such as his evidence is, and no other; he may believe it to be so on tradition, or the testimony of the church of Rome only, or on outward arguments, all which being fallible, his faith is so also, although the things he assents unto be infallibly true. Wherefore, unto this faith divine and infallible, it is not required that the person in whom it is, be infallible; nor is it enough that the thing itself believed be infallibly true, but, moreover, that the evidence whereon he doth believe it be infallible also. So it was with them who received divine revelations immediately from God: it was not enough that the things revealed unto them were infallibly true, but they were to have infallible evidence of the revelation itself; then was their faith infallible, though their persons were fallible. With this faith then a man can believe nothing but what is divinely true, and therefore it is infallible; and the reason is, because God's veracity, who is the God of truth, is the only object of it; hence saith the prophet, *האמינו ביהוה*, אלהים, 2 Chron. xx. 20. 'Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established;' or that faith which is in God and his word is fixed on truth, or is infallible. Hence the inquiry in this case is, What is the reason why we believe any thing with this faith divine or supernatural? or what it is, the believing whereof makes our faith divine, infallible, and supernatural? Wherefore,

4. The *authority* and *veracity* of God revealing the *material* objects of our faith, or what it is our duty to believe, is the *formal* object and reason of our faith, from whence it ariseth and whereinto it is ultimately resolved. That is, the only reason why we do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that God is one single essence subsisting in three persons, is, because that God who is truth, the 'God of truth,' Deut. xxxii. 4. who 'cannot lie,' Tit. i. 2. and whose 'word is truth,'

John xvii. 17. and the 'Spirit' which gave it out 'is truth,' 1 John v. 6. hath revealed these things to be so; and our believing these things on that ground renders our faith *divine and supernatural*. Supposing, also, a respect unto the subjective efficiency of the Holy Ghost, inspiring it into our minds, whereof afterward. For, to speak distinctly, our faith is *supernatural*, with respect unto the production of it in our minds by the Holy Ghost; and *infallible*, with respect unto the formal reason of it, which is divine revelation; and is *divine*, in opposition unto what is merely human, on both accounts.

As things are proposed unto us to be believed as true, faith in its assent respects only the truth or veracity of God; but whereas this faith is required of us in a way of obedience, and is considered not only physically in its nature, but morally also as our duty, it respects also the authority of God, which I, therefore, join with the truth of God, as the formal reason of our faith; see 2 Sam. vii. 28. And these things the Scripture pleads and argues, when faith is required of us in the way of obedience. 'Thus saith the Lord,' is that which is proposed unto us as the reason why we should believe what is spoken, whereunto oftentimes other divine names and titles are added, signifying his authority who requires us to believe; 'Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel;' Isa. xxx. 15. 'Thus saith the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy;' Isa. lvii. 15. 'Believe the Lord your God;' 2 Chron. xx. 20. 'The word of the Lord' precedeth most revelations in the prophets, and other reason why we should believe, the Scripture proposeth none; Heb. i. 1, 2. yea, the interposition of any other authority between the things to be believed and our souls and consciences, besides the authority of God, overthrows the nature of divine faith; I do not say, the interposition of any other means whereby we should believe, of which sort God hath appointed many, but the interposition of any other authority, upon which we should believe, as that pretended in and by the church of Rome. No men can be lords of our faith, though they may be helpers of our joy.

5. The *authority* and *truth of God*, considered in themselves absolutely, are not the immediate *formal object* of our faith, though they are the *ultimate* whereinto it is resolved.

For we can believe nothing on their account unless it be evidenced unto us; and this evidence of them is in that revelation which God is pleased to make of himself; for that is the only means whereby our consciences and minds are affected with his truth and authority. We do, therefore, no otherwise rest on the truth and veracity of God in any thing than we rest on the revelation which he makes unto us, for that is the only way whereby we are affected with them; not 'the Lord is true' absolutely, but 'thus saith the Lord,' and 'the Lord hath spoken,' is that which we have immediate regard unto. Hereby alone are our minds affected with the authority and veracity of God, and by what way soever it is made unto us, it is sufficient and able so to affect us. At first, as hath been shewed, it was given immediately to some persons, and preserved for the use of others, in an oral ministry; but now all revelation, as hath also been declared, is contained in the Scriptures only.

6. It follows, that our faith, whereby we believe any divine supernatural truth, is resolved into the Scripture, as the only means of divine revelation, affecting our minds and consciences with the authority and truth of God; or the Scripture, as the only immediate, divine, infallible revelation of the mind and will of God, is the first immediate *formal object* of our faith, the sole reason why, and ground whereon, we do believe the things that are revealed, with faith divine, supernatural, and infallible. We do believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Why do we so do, on what ground or reason? It is because of the authority of God commanding us so to do, and the truth of God testifying thereunto. But how or by what means are our minds and consciences affected with the authority and truth of God, so as to believe with respect unto them, which makes our faith divine and supernatural? It is alone the divine, supernatural, infallible revelation that he hath made of this sacred truth, and of his will, that we should believe it. But what is this revelation, or where is it to be found? It is the Scripture alone which contains the entire revelation that God hath made of himself in all things which he will have us to believe or do. Hence,

7. The last inquiry ariseth, *how*, or *on what ground*, for *what reasons*, do we believe the Scripture to be a divine revelation proceeding immediately from God; or to be that word

of God which is truth divine and infallible? Whereunto we answer, it is *solely* on the evidence that the Spirit of God, *in and by the Scripture itself*, gives unto us, that it was given by immediate inspiration from God. Or the ground and reason whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, are the authority and truth of God, evidencing themselves in and by it unto the minds and consciences of men. Hereon, as whatever we assent unto as proposed in the Scripture, our faith rests on, and is resolved into, the veracity and faithfulness of God, so is it also in this of believing the Scripture itself to be the infallible word of God, seeing we do it on *no other* grounds but its *own evidence* that so it is.

This is that which is principally to be proved, and therefore to prepare for it, and to remove prejudices, something is to be spoken to prepare the way thereunto.

1. There are sundry cogent arguments which are taken from *external considerations* of the Scripture, that evince it on rational grounds to be from God. All these are *motives of credibility*, or effectual persuasives to account and esteem it to be the word of God. And although they neither are, nor is it possible they ever should be, the ground and reason whereon we believe it so to be with *faith divine and supernatural*; yet are they necessary unto the confirmation of our faith herein against temptations, oppositions, and objections. These arguments have been pleaded by many, and that usefully, and therefore it is not needful for me to insist upon them. And they are the same for the substance of them in ancient and modern writers, however managed by some with more learning, dexterity, and force of reasoning than by others. It may not be expected, therefore, that in this short discourse, designed unto another purpose, I should give them much improvement. However, I shall a little touch on those which seem to be most cogent, and that in them wherein, in my apprehension, their strength doth lie. And I shall do this to manifest, that although we plead that no man can believe the Scriptures to be the word of God with *faith divine, supernatural, and infallible*, but upon its *own internal, divine evidence and efficacy*, yet we allow and make use of all those external arguments of its sacred truth and divine original which are pleaded by others, ascribing unto them as much weight and cogency as they can do, acknowledging the persuasion which

they beget and effect to be as firm as they can pretend it to be. Only we do not judge them to contain the *whole* of the evidence which we have for faith to rest in, or to be resolved into ; yea, not that at all, which renders it *divine, supernatural, and infallible*. The rational arguments, we say, which are, or may be, used in this matter, with the human testimonies whereby they are corroborated, may and ought to be made use of and insisted on ; and it is but vainly pretended that their use is superseded by our other assertions ; as though, where faith is required, all the subservient use of reason were absolutely discarded, and our faith thereby rendered *irrational* ; and the assent unto the divine original and authority of the Scriptures, which the mind ought to give upon them, we grant to be of as high a nature as is pretended to be, namely, a *moral certainty*. Moreover, the conclusion which unprejudiced reason will make upon these arguments, is more firm, better grounded, and more pleadable, than that which is built merely on the *sole authority* of any church whatever. But this we assert, that there is an assent of another kind, unto the divine original and authority of the Scriptures required of us ; namely, that of faith divine and supernatural. Of this none will say that it can be effected by, or resolved into, the best and most cogent of rational arguments and external testimonies which are absolutely human and fallible. For it doth imply a contradiction to believe infallibly upon fallible evidence. Wherefore, I shall prove, that beyond all these arguments and their effects upon our minds, there is an assent unto the Scripture as the word of God required of us with faith divine, supernatural, and infallible ; and, therefore, there must be a divine evidence which is the formal object and reason of it, which alone it rests on, and is resolved into, which shall also be declared and proved. But yet, as was said in the first place, because their property is to level the ground, and to remove the rubbish of objections out of the way, that we may build the safer on the sure foundation, I shall mention some of those which I esteem justly pleadable in this cause. And,

1. The *antiquity* of these writings, and of the divine revelation contained in them, is pleaded in evidence of their divine original. And it may be so deservedly. For where it is absolute, it is unquestionable : that which is most an-



cient in any kind is most true; God himself makes use of this plea against idols, Isa. xliii. 10—12. ‘Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord: I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour; I have declared and have saved, and I have shewed when there was no strange god amongst you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.’ That which he asserts is, that he alone is God, and no other. This he calls the people to testify by this argument, that he was among them as God, that is, in the church, before any strange god was known or named. And so it is justly pleaded in the behalf of this revelation of the mind of God in the Scripture; it was in the world long before any other thing or writing pretended to be given unto the same end. Whatever, therefore, ensued with the like design, must either be set up in competition with it, or opposition unto it, above which it hath its advantage merely from its antiquity. Whereas, therefore, this writing in the first books of it, is acknowledged to be ancients than any other that is extant in the world, or indeed that ever was so, and may be proved so to be: it is beyond all reasonable apprehension that it should be of human original. For we know how low, weak, and imperfect, all human inventions were at the first, how rude and unpolished in every kind, until time, observation, following additions and diminutions, had shaped, formed, and improved them. But this writing coming forth in the world, absolutely the first in its kind, directing us in the knowledge of God and ourselves, was at first and at once so absolutely complete and perfect, that no art, industry, or wisdom of man, could ever yet find any just defect in it, or was able to add any thing unto it, whereby it might be bettered or improved. Neither from the beginning would it ever admit of any additions unto it, but what came from the same fountain of divine revelation and inspiration, clearing itself in all ages from all addition and superfetation of men whatever. This, at least, puts a singular character upon this book, and represents it with that reverend awe and majesty, that it is the highest petulancy not to pay it a sacred respect.

This argument is pursued by many, at large, as that which affordeth great variety of historical and chronological observations. And it hath been so scanned and improved, that nothing but the giving of it a new dress remains for present

or future diligence. But the real force of it lies in the consideration of the people, by and amongst whom this revelation first commenced in the world, and the time wherein it did so. When some nations had so improved and cultivated the light of nature as greatly to excel others in wisdom and knowledge, they generally looked upon the people of the Jews as ignorant and barbarous. And the more wise any of them conceived themselves, the more they despised them. And, indeed, they were utter strangers unto all those arts and sciences, whereby the faculties of men's minds are naturally enlightened and enlarged. Nor did they pretend unto any wisdom, whereby to stand in competition with other nations, but only what they received by divine revelations. This alone God himself had taught them to look upon and esteem as their only wisdom before all the world; Deut. iv. 6—8. Now, we shall not need to consider what were the first attempts of other nations, in expressing their conceptions concerning things divine, the duty and happiness of man. The Egyptians and Grecians were those who vied for reputation in the improvement of this wisdom. But it is known and confessed that the utmost production of their endeavours, were things foolish, irrational, and absurd, contrary to the being and providence of God, to the light of nature, leading mankind into a maze of folly and wickedness. But we may consider what they attained unto in the fulness of time by their utmost improvement of science, wisdom, mutual intelligence, experience, communication, laborious study and observation. When they had added and subducted to and from the inventions of all former ages from time immemorial, when they had used and improved the reason, wisdom, invention, and conjectures of all that went before them in the study of this wisdom, and had discarded whatever they had found by experience unsuited to natural light and the common reason of mankind, yet it must be acknowledged that the apostle passeth a just censure on the utmost of their attainments, namely, that they waxed vain in their imaginations, and the world in wisdom knew not God. Whence then was it that in one nation, esteemed barbarous, and really so with respect unto that wisdom, those arts and sciences, which ennobled other nations, from that antiquity wherein it is not pretended that reason and wisdom had received any considerable improve-

ment; without converse, communication, learning, or experience, there should at once proceed such a law, doctrine, and instructions, concerning God and man, so stable, certain, uniform, as should not only incomparably excel all products of human wisdom unto that purpose, however advantaged by time and experience, but also abide invariable throughout all generations, so as that whatever hath been advanced in opposition unto it, or but differing from it, hath quickly sunk under the weight of its own unreasonableness and folly? This one consideration, unless men have a mind to be contentious, gives sufficient satisfaction, that this book could have no other original, but what it pleads for itself, namely, an immediate emanation from God.

2. It is apparent that God in all ages hath had a great regard unto it, and acted his power and care in its preservation. Were not the Bible what it pretends to be, there had been nothing more suitable to the nature of God, and more becoming divine providence, then long since to have blotted it out of the world. For to suffer a book to be in the world, from the beginning of times, falsely pretending his name and authority, seducing so great a portion of mankind into a pernicious and ruinous apostacy from him, as it must do, and doth, if it be not of a divine original, and exposing inconceivable multitudes of the best, wisest, and soberest amongst them, unto all sorts of bloody miseries which they have undergone in the behalf of it, seems not consonant unto that infinite goodness, wisdom, and care, wherewith this world is governed from above. But, on the contrary, whereas the malicious craft of Satan, and the prevalent power and rage of mankind, hath combined and been set at work to the ruin and utter suppression of this book, proceeding sometimes so far as that there was no appearing way for its escape; yet through the watchful care and providence of God, sometimes putting itself forth in miraculous instances, it hath been preserved unto this day, and shall be so to the consummation of all things. The event of that which was spoken by our Saviour, Matt. v. 18. doth invincibly prove the divine approbation of this book, as that doth its divine original; ‘Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.’ God’s perpetual care over the Scriptures for so many ages, that not a letter of it should be

utterly lost, nothing that hath the least tendency towards its end should perish, is evidence sufficient of his regard unto it. Especially would it be so, if we should consider with what remarkable judgments and severe reflections of vengeance on its opposers, this care hath been managed, instances whereof might be easily multiplied. And if any will not ascribe this preservation of the books of the Bible, not only in their being, but in their purity and integrity free from the least just suspicion of corruption, or the intermixture of any thing human or heterogeneous, unto the care of God; it is incumbent on him to assign some other cause proportionate to such an effect, whilst it was the interest of heaven, and the endeavour of the earth and hell to have it corrupted and destroyed. For my part, I cannot but judge that he that seeth not a hand of divine Providence stretched out in the preservation of this book, and all that is in it, its words and syllables, for thousands of years, through all the overthrows and deluges of calamities that have befallen the world, with the weakness of the means whereby it hath been preserved, and the interest, in some ages, of all those in whose power it was to have it corrupted, as it was of the apostate churches of the Jews and Christians, with the open opposition that hath been made unto it, doth not believe there is any such thing as divine Providence at all. It was first written in the very infancy of the Babylonian empire, with which it afterward contempORIZED about nine hundred years. By this monarchy that people which alone had these 'oracles of God committed unto them,' were oppressed, destroyed, and carried into captivity. But this book was then preserved amongst them whilst they were absolutely under the power of their enemies, although it condemned them and all their gods and religious worship, wherewith we know how horribly mankind is enraged. Satan had enthroned himself as the object of their worship, and the author of all ways of divine veneration amongst them. These they adhered unto as their principal interest, as all people do unto that they esteem their religion. In the whole world there was nothing that judged, condemned, opposed him or them, but this book only, which was now absolutely in their power. If that by any means could have been destroyed, then when it was in the hands but of a few, and those, for the most part, flagi-

tious in their lives, hating the things contained in it, and wholly under the power of their adversaries, the interest of Satan, and the whole world in idolatry, had been secured. But through the mere provision of divine care it outlived that monarchy, and saw the ruin of its greatest adversaries. So it did, also, during the continuance of the Persian monarchy which succeeded, whilst the people was still under the power of idolators, against whom this was the only testimony in the world. By some branches of the Grecian monarchy a most fierce and diligent attempt was made to have utterly destroyed it; but still it was snatched by divine power out of the furnace, not one hair of it being singed, or the least detriment brought unto its perfection. The Romans destroyed both the people and place designed until then for its preservation, carrying the ancient copy of the law in triumph to Rome on the conquest of Jerusalem; and whilst all absolute power and dominion in the whole world, where this book was known or heard of, was in their hands, they exercised a rage against it for sundry ages, with the same success that former enemies had. From the very first all the endeavours of mankind that professed an open enmity against it have been utterly frustrate. And whereas also those unto whom it was outwardly committed, as the Jews first, and the antichristian church of apostatized Christians afterward, not only fell into opinions and practices absolutely inconsistent with it, but also built all their present and future interests on those opinions and practices; yet none of them durst ever attempt the corrupting of one line in it, but were forced to attempt their own security, by a pretence of additional traditions, and keeping the book itself, as much as they durst, out of the hands and knowledge of all not engaged in the same interest with themselves. Whence could all this proceed but from the watchful care and power of divine Providence? And it is brutish folly not to believe, that what God doth so protect did originally proceed from himself, seeing it pleads and pretends so to do: for every wise man will take more care of a stranger, than a bastard falsely imposed on him unto his dishonour.

3. The *design of the whole*, and all the parts of it, hath an impress on it of divine *wisdom* and authority. And hereof there are two parts, first, *To reveal God unto men*; and, se-

condly, *To direct men to come unto the enjoyment of God.* That these are the only two great concerns of our nature, of any rational being, were easy to prove, but that it is acknowledged by all those with whom I treat. Now, never did any book or writing in the world, any single or joint endeavours of mankind, or invisible spirits, in the way of authority, give out a law, rule, guide, and light, for all mankind universally in both these, namely, the knowledge of God and ourselves, but this book only; and if any other, it may be, like the Alcoran, did pretend in the least thereunto, it quickly discovered its own folly, and exposed itself to the contempt of all wise and considerate men. The only question is, how it hath discharged itself in this design, for if it hath completely and perfectly accomplished it, it is not only evident that it must be from God, but also that it is the greatest benefit and kindness, that divine benignity and goodness ever granted unto mankind; for without it all men universally must necessarily wander in an endless maze of uncertainties, without ever attaining light, rest, or blessedness, here or hereafter. Wherefore,

(1.) As it takes on itself to speak in the *name and authority of God*, and delivers nothing, commands nothing, but what becomes his infinite holiness, wisdom, and goodness; so it makes that declaration of him in his nature, being, and subsistence, with the necessary properties and acts thereof, his will, with all his voluntary actings or works, wherein we may be or are concerned, so as that we may know him aright, and entertain true notions and apprehensions of him, according to the utmost capacity of our finite limited understanding. Neither do we urge his authority in this case, but here and elsewhere resort unto the evidence of his reasonings compared with the event or matter of fact, What horrible darkness, ignorance, and blindness, was upon the whole world, with respect unto the knowledge of God! What confusion and debasement of our nature ensued thereon; whilst God ‘suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, and winked at the times of their ignorance,’ the apostle declares at large, Rom. i. from the 19th verse to the end of the chapter. The sum is, that the only true God being become unknown to them, as the wisest of them acknowledged; Acts xvii. 21. and as our apostle proved against them; the devil, that ‘mur-

derer from the beginning,' and enemy of mankind, had under various pretences substituted himself in his room, and was become the god of this world, as he is called, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and had appropriated all the religious devotion and worship of the generality of mankind unto himself; 'for the things which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed unto devils, and not unto God,' as our apostle affirms, 1 Cor. x. 20. and as may easily be evinced; and I have abundantly manifested it elsewhere<sup>b</sup>. It is acknowledged that some few speculative men among the Heathen did seek after God in that horrid darkness wherewith they were encompassed, and laboured to reduce their conceptions and notions of his being, unto what reason could apprehend of infinite perfections, and what the works of creation and providence could suggest unto them; but as they never could come unto any certainty or consistency of notions in their own minds, proceeding but a little beyond conjecture, as in the manner of them who seek after them in the dark, much less with one another, to propose any thing unto the world for the use of mankind in these things by common consent; so they could none of them either ever free themselves from the grossest practical idolatry in worshipping the devil, the head of their apostacy from God; nor in the least influence the minds of the generality of mankind with any due apprehensions of the divine nature: this is the subject and substance of the apostle's disputation against them; Rom. i. In this state of things, what misery and confusion the world lived in for many ages, what an endless labyrinth of foolish, slavish superstitions and idolatries it had cast itself into, I have in another discourse particularly declared<sup>c</sup>. With respect hereunto, the Scripture is well called by the apostle Peter, a 'light shining in a dark place;' 2 Pet. i. 19. It gives unto all men, at once a perfect, clear, steady, uniform declaration of God; his being, subsistence, properties, authority, rule, and actings, which evidenceth itself unto the minds and consciences of all whom the god of this world hath not absolutely blinded by the power of prejudices and lusts, confirming them in an enmity unto, and hatred of, God himself. There is, indeed, no more required to free mankind

<sup>b</sup> De Natura Theologiæ, lib. ii. cap. 1. sect. 11.

<sup>c</sup> Ubi supra de origine et progressu idolatriæ.

from this horrible darkness, and enormous conceptions about the nature of God, and the worship of idols, but a sedate unprejudiced consideration of the revelation of these things in the book of the Scripture. We may say, therefore, to all the world, with our prophet, ‘When they say unto you, Seek unto them who have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them;’ Isa. viii. 19, 20. And this, also, plainly manifests the Scripture to be of a divine original. For if this declaration of God, this revelation of himself and his will, is incomparably the greatest and most excellent benefit that our nature is capable of in this world, more needful for, and more useful unto, mankind than the sun in the firmament, as to the proper end of their lives and beings; and if none of the wisest men in the world, neither severally nor jointly, could attain unto themselves, or make known unto others, this knowledge of God, so that we may say with our apostle, that ‘in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God;’ 1 Cor. i. 21. And whereas those who attempted any such things, yet ‘waxed vain in their imaginations’ and conjectures, so that no one person in the world dares own the regulation of his mind and understanding by their notions and conceptions absolutely, although they had all advantages of wisdom, and the exercise of reason above those, at the least the most of them, who wrote and published the books of the Scripture; it cannot, with any pretence of reason, be questioned, whether they were not given by inspiration from God, as they pretend and plead. There is that done in them which all the world could not do, and without the doing whereof all the world must have been eternally miserable, and who could do this but God? If any one shall judge, that that ignorance of God, which was among the Heathens of old, or is among the Indians at this day, is not so miserable a matter as we make it; or that there is any way to free them from it, but by an emanation of light from the Scripture, he dwells out of my present way upon the confines of atheism; so that I shall not divert unto any converse with him: I shall only add, that whatever notions of truth concerning God and his essence, there may be found in those



philosophers who lived after the preaching of the gospel in the world, or are at this day to be found among the Mahometans, or other false worshippers in the world, above those of the more ancient Pagans, they all derive from the fountain of the Scripture, and were thence by various means traduced.

(2.) The second end of this doctrine is to *direct mankind in their proper course of living unto God*, and attaining that rest and blessedness whereof they are capable, and which they cannot but desire. These things are necessary to our nature, so that without them it were better not to be; for it is better to have no being in the world, than, whilst we have it, always to wander, and never to act towards its proper end; seeing all that is really good unto us consists in our tendency thereunto, and our attainment of it. Now as these things were never stated in the minds of the community of mankind, but that they lived in perpetual confusion; so the inquiries of the philosophers about the chief end of man, the nature of felicity or blessedness, the ways of attaining it, are nothing but so many uncertain and fierce digladiations, wherein not any one truth is asserted nor any one duty prescribed, that is not spoiled and vitiated by its circumstances and ends; besides, they never rose up so much as to a surmise of or about the most important matters of religion, without which it is demonstrable by reason, that it is impossible we should ever attain the end for which we are made, or the blessedness whereof we are capable. No account could they ever give of our apostacy from God, of the depravation of our nature, of the cause, or necessary cure of it. In this lost and wandering condition of mankind the Scripture presenteth itself as a light, rule, and guide unto all, to direct them in their whole course unto their end, and to bring them unto the enjoyment of God; and this it doth with that clearness and evidence as to dispel all the darkness, and put an end unto all the confusions, of the minds of men, as the sun with rising doth the shades of the night, unless they wilfully shut their eyes against it, 'loving darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' For all the confusion of the minds of men to extricate themselves from, whence they found out and immixed themselves in endless questions to no purpose, arose from their ignorance of what we were

originally, of what we now are, and how we came so to be, by what way or means we may be delivered or relieved, what are the duties of life, or what is required of us in order to our living to God as our chiefest end, and wherein the blessedness of our nature doth consist: all the world was never able to give an answer tolerably satisfactory unto any one of these inquiries, and yet unless they are all infallibly determined, we are not capable of the least rest or happiness above the beasts that perish. But now all these things are so clearly declared and stated in the Scripture, that it comes with an evidence like a light from heaven on the minds and consciences of unprejudiced persons. What was the condition of our nature in its first creation and constitution, with the blessedness and advantage of that condition; how we fell from it, and what was the cause, what is the nature, and what the consequences and effects, of our present depravation and apostacy from God; how help and relief is provided for us herein by infinite wisdom, grace, and bounty; what that help is, how we may be interested in it, and made partakers of it; what is that system of duties, or course of obedience unto God, which is required of us, and wherein our eternal felicity doth consist; are all of them so plainly and clearly revealed in the Scripture, as, in general, to leave mankind no ground for doubt, inquiry, or conjecture: set aside inveterate prejudices from tradition, education, false notions into the mould whereof the mind is cast, the love of sin, and the conduct of lust, which things have an inconceivable power over the minds, souls, and affections of men; and the light of the Scripture in these things is like that of the sun at noon-day, which shuts up the way unto all farther inquiry, and efficaciously necessitates unto an acquiescency in it. And, in particular, in that direction which it gives unto the lives of men, in order unto that obedience which they owe to God, and that reward which they expect from him, there is no instance conceivable of any thing conducing thereunto, which is not prescribed therein, nor of any thing which is contrary unto it, that falls not under its prohibition. Those, therefore, whose desire or interest it is, that the bounds and differences of good and evil should be unfixed and confounded, who are afraid to know what they were, what they are, or what they shall come unto; who care to know nei-

ther God nor themselves, their duty nor their reward, may despise this book, and deny its divine original: others will retain a sacred veneration of it, as of the offspring of God.

4. The *testimony of the church* may in like manner be pleaded unto the same purpose: and I shall also insist upon it, partly to manifest wherein its true nature and efficacy doth consist, and partly to evince the vanity of the old pretence, that even we also, who are departed from the church of Rome, do receive the Scripture upon the authority thereof; whence it is farther pretended, that on the same ground and reason we ought to receive whatever else it proposeth unto us.

1. The church is said to be the *ground and pillar of truth*; 1 Tim. iii. 15. Which is the only text pleaded, with any sobriety, to give countenance unto the assertion of the authority of the Scripture with respect unto us, to depend on the authority of the church. But the weakness of a plea to that purpose from hence hath been so fully manifested by many already, that it needs no more to be insisted on. In short, it cannot be so the ground and pillar of truth, that the truth should be, as it were, built and rest upon it as its foundation; for this is directly contrary to the same apostle, who teacheth us, that the church itself is built upon the 'foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;' Eph. ii. 20. The church cannot be the ground of truth, and truth the ground of the church, in the same sense or kind. Wherefore, the church is the ground and pillar of truth, in that it holds up and declares the Scriptures, and the things contained therein, so to be.

2. In receiving any thing from a church, we may consider the *authority* of it, or its *ministry*. By the authority of the church in this matter we intend no more but the weight and importance that is in its testimony, as testimonies do vary according to the worth, gravity, honesty, honour, and reputation of them by whom they are given. For to suppose an authority, properly so called, in any church, or all the churches of the world, whereon our reception of the Scripture should depend, as that which gives its authority towards us, and a sufficient warranty to our faith, is a nice imagination: for the authority and truth of God stand not

in need, nor are capable of, any such attestation from men ; all they will admit of from the children of men is, that they do humbly submit unto them, and testify their so doing with the reasons of it. The ministry of the church in this matter is that duty of the church, whereby it proposeth and declareth the Scripture to be the word of God, and that as it hath occasion to all the world. And this ministry also, may be considered either formally, as it is appointed of God unto this end, and blessed by him ; or materially, only as the thing is done, though the grounds whereon it is done, and the manner of doing it, be not divinely approved.

We wholly deny that we receive the Scripture, or ever did, on the authority of the church of Rome in any sense whatever, for the reasons that shall be mentioned immediately. But it may be granted, that, together with the ministry of other churches in the world, and many other providential means of their preservation, and successive communication, we did *de facto* receive the Scriptures by the ministry of the church of Rome also, seeing they also, were in the possession of them : but this ministry we allow only in the latter sense, as an actual means in subserviency unto God's providence, without respect unto any especial institution.

And for the authority of the church in this case, in that sense wherein it is allowed, namely, as denoting the weight and importance of a testimony, which, being strengthened by all sorts of circumstances, may be said to have great authority in it, we must be careful unto whom or what church we grant or allow it. For let men assume what names or titles to themselves they please, yet if the generality of them be corrupt or flagitious in their lives, and have great secular advantages, which they highly prize and studiously improve, from what they suppose and profess the Scripture to supply them withal, be they called church, or what you please, their testimony therein is of very little value ; for all men may see that they have an earthly wordly interest of their own therein. And it will be said, that if such persons did know the whole Bible to be a fable (as one pope expressed himself to that purpose) they would not forego the profession of it, unless they could more advantage themselves in the world another way. Wherefore, whereas it is manifest

unto all, that those who have the conduct of the Roman church have made, and do make to themselves, great earthly temporal advantages, in honour, power, wealth, and reputation in the world, by their profession of the Scripture, their testimony may rationally be supposed to be so far influenced by self-interest, as to be of little validity.

The testimony, therefore, which I intend, is that of multitudes of persons of unspotted reputation on all other accounts in the world, free from all possibility of impeachment as unto any designed evil or conspiracy among themselves with respect unto any corrupt end, and who having not the least secular advantage by what they testified unto, were absolutely secured against all exceptions, which either common reason or common usage among mankind can put in unto any witness whatever. And to evidence the force that is in this consideration, I shall briefly represent, 1. *Who* they were that gave and do give this *testimony*, in some especial instances. 2. *What* they gave this *testimony* unto. 3. *How*, or by what means, they did so.

And in the first place, the testimony of those by whom the several books of the Scripture were written, is to be considered : they all of them severally and jointly witnessed, that *what* they wrote was received by *inspiration from God*. This is pleaded by the apostle Peter in the name of them all ; 2 Pet. i. 16—21. ‘ For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also, a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’ This is the concurrent testimony of the writers both of the Old Testament and the New ; namely, that as they have certain knowledge of

the things they wrote, so their writing was by inspiration from God. So, in particular, John beareth witness unto his revelations; chap. xix. 9. xxii. 6. 'These are the true and faithful sayings of God.' And what weight is to be laid hereon, is declared, John xxi. 24. 'This is that disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.' He testified the truth of what he wrote; but how was it known to the church there intended ('we know that his testimony is true'), that so it was indeed? He was not absolutely *ἀπόπιστος*, or one that was to be believed in merely on his own account; yet here it is spoken in the name of the church with the highest assurance; 'and we know that his testimony is true.' I answer: this assurance of theirs did not arise merely from his moral or natural endowments or holy counsels, but from the evidence they had of his divine inspiration, whereof we shall treat afterward.

The things pleaded to give force unto this testimony in particular, are all that such a testimony is capable of, and so many as would require a large discourse by itself to propose, discuss, and confirm them. But supposing the testimony they gave, I shall in compliance with my own design reduce the evidences of its truth unto these two considerations: (1.) Of their *persons*; and, (2.) Of the *manner* of their writing.

(1.) As to their *persons*, they were absolutely removed from all possible suspicion of deceiving or being deceived. The wit of all the atheistical spirits in the world is not able to fix on any one thing, that would be a tolerable ground of any such suspicion concerning the integrity of witnesses, could such a testimony be given in any other case. And surmises in things of this nature which had no pleadable ground for them, are to be looked on as diabolical suggestions, or atheistical dreams, or at best the false imaginations of weak and distempered minds. The nature and design of their work, their unconcernment with all secular interests, their unacquaintance with one another, the times and places wherein the things reported by them were done and acted, the facility of convincing them of falsehood, if what they wrote in matter of fact, which is the fountain of what else they taught, in case it were not true, the evident certainty that this

would have been done, arising from the known desire, ability, will, and interest, of their adversaries so to do, had it been possible to be effected, seeing this would have secured them the victory in the conflicts wherein they were violently engaged, and have put an immediate issue unto all that difference and uproar that was in the world about their doctrine; their harmony among themselves without conspiracy or antecedent agreement, the miseries which they underwent, most of them without hope of relief or recompense in this world, upon the sole account of the doctrine taught by themselves, with all other circumstances innumerable, that are pleadable to evince the sincerity and integrity of any witnesses whatever, do all concur to prove that they did not follow cunningly devised fables, in what they declared concerning the mind and will of God as immediately from himself. To confront this evidence with bare surmises, incapable of any rational countenance or confirmation, is only to manifest what brutish impudence, infidelity, and atheism, are forced to retreat unto for shelter.

(2.) Their *style* and *manner* of writing deserves a peculiar consideration. For there are impressed on it all those characters of a divine original, that can be communicated unto such an outward adjunct of divine revelation. Notwithstanding the distance of the ages and seasons wherein they lived, the difference of the languages wherein they wrote, with the great variety of their parts, abilities, education, and other circumstances, yet there is upon the whole, and all the parts of their writing, that gravity, majesty, and authority, mixed with plainness of speech, and absolute freedom from all appearance of affectation of esteem or applause, or any things else that derive from human frailty, as must excite an admiration in all that seriously consider them. But I have at large elsewhere insisted on this consideration<sup>d</sup>. And have also in the same place shewed, that there is no other writing extant in the world, that ever pretended unto a divine original, as the apocryphal books under the Old Testament, and some fragments of spurious pieces pretended to be written in the days of the apostles; but they are, not only from their matter, but from the manner of their writing, and the plain footsteps of human artifice and weakness therein, sufficient for

<sup>d</sup> Exercitat. on the Epist. to the Heb. Exer. 1.

their own conviction, and do openly discover their own vain pretensions. So must every thing necessarily do, which being merely human, pretends unto an immediate derivation from God. When men have done all they can, these things will have as evident a difference between them, as there is between wheat and chaff, between real and painted fire; Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.

2. Unto the testimony of the divine writers themselves, we must add, that of those who in all ages have *believed in Christ through their word*, which is the description which the Lord Jesus Christ giveth of his church; John xvii. 20. This is the church, that is, those who wrote the Scripture; and those who believe in Christ, through their word, through all ages, which beareth witness to the divine original of the Scripture, and it may be added, that we know this witness is true. With these I had rather venture my faith and eternal condition, than with any society, any real or pretended church whatever. And among these there is an especial consideration to be had of those innumerable multitudes who in the primitive times witnessed this confession all the world over. For they had many advantages above us, to know the certainty of sundry matters of fact which the verity of our religion depends upon. And we are directed unto an especial regard of their testimony, which is signalized by Christ himself. In the great judgment that is to be passed on the world, the first appearance is of the souls of them that were beheaded for 'the witness of Jesus Christ, and for the word of God;' Rev. xx. 4. And there is at present an especial regard unto them in heaven, upon the account of their witness and testimony; Rev. vi. 9—11. These were they who with the loss of their lives by the sword, and other ways of violence, gave testimony unto the truth of the word of God. And to reduce these things unto a natural consideration, who can have the least occasion to suspect all those persons of folly, weakness, credulity, wickedness, or conspiracy among themselves, which such a diffused multitude was absolutely incapable of? Neither can any man undervalue their testimony, but he must comply with their adversaries against them, who were known generally to be of the worst of men. And who is there that believes there is a God, and an eternal future state, that had



not rather have his soul with Paul than Nero, with the holy martyrs than their bestial persecutors? Wherefore, this suffrage and testimony, begun from the first writing of the Scripture, and carried on by the best of men in all ages, and made conspicuously glorious in the primitive times of Christianity, must needs be with all wise men unavoidably cogent, at least unto a due and sedate consideration of what they bare witness unto, and sufficient to scatter all such prejudices as atheism or profaneness may raise or suggest.

Secondly, *What* it was they gave *testimony* unto is duly to be considered. And this was not that the book of the Scripture was good, holy, and true, in all the contents of it only, but that the whole and every part of it was given by *divine inspiration*, as their faith in this matter is expressed; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. On this account, and no other, did they themselves receive the Scripture, as also believe and yield obedience unto the things contained in it. Neither would they admit that their testimony was received, if the whole world would be content to allow of, or obey, the Scripture on any other, or lower terms. Nor will God himself allow of an assent unto the Scripture under any other conception, but as the word which is immediately spoken by himself. Hence, they who refuse to give credit thereunto, are said to 'belie the Lord, and say, It is not he;' Jer. v. 12. Yea, to make 'God a liar;' 1 John v. 10. If all mankind should agree together to receive and make use of this book, as that which taught nothing but what is good, useful, and profitable to human society; as that which is a complete directory unto men in all that they need to believe or do towards God; the best means under heaven to bring them to settlement, satisfaction, and assurance of the knowledge of God and themselves; as the safest guide to eternal blessedness; and, therefore, must needs be written and composed by persons, wise, holy, and honest, above all comparison, and such as had that knowledge of God and his will as is necessary unto such an undertaking, yet all this answers not the testimony given by the church of believers in all ages unto the Scriptures. It was not lawful for them, it is not for us, so to compound this matter with the world. That the whole Scripture was given by inspiration from God, that it was his word, his true

and faithful sayings, was that which, in the first place, they gave testimony unto, and we also are obliged so to do. They never pretended unto any other assurance of the things they professed, nor any other reason of their faith and obedience, but that the Scripture wherein all these things are contained was given immediately from God, or was his word. And, therefore, they were always esteemed no less traitors to Christianity, who gave up their Bibles to persecutors, than those who denied Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, The *manner wherein* this testimony was given, adds to the importance of it. For, 1. many of them, especially in some seasons, gave it in, and with sundry *miraculous operations*. This our apostle pleadeth as a corroboration of the witness given by the first preachers of the gospel unto the truths of it; Heb. ii. 4. as the same was done by all the apostles together; Acts v. 32. It must be granted, that these miracles were not wrought immediately to confirm this single truth, that the Scripture was given by inspiration of God. But the end of miracles is to be an immediate witness from heaven, or God's attestation to their persons and ministry by whom they were wrought. His presence with them, and approbation of their doctrine, were publicly declared by them. But the miracles wrought by the Lord Christ and his apostles, whereby God gave immediate testimony unto the divine mission of their persons, and infallible truth of their doctrine, might either not have been written as most of them were not, or they might have been written, and their doctrine recorded in books not given by inspiration from God. Besides, as to the miracles wrought by Christ himself, and most of those of the apostles, they were wrought among them by whom the books of the Old Testament were acknowledged as the oracles of God, and before the writing of those of the New; so that they could not be wrought in the immediate confirmation of the one or the other. Neither have we any infallible testimony concerning these miracles, but the Scripture itself, wherein they are recorded: whence it is necessary that we should believe the Scripture to be infallibly true, before we can believe on grounds infallible, the miracles therein recorded to be so. Wherefore, I grant that the whole force of this consideration lieth in this alone, that those who gave testimony to the

Scripture to be the word of God, had an attestation given unto their ministry by these miraculous operations; concerning which we have good collateral security also.

2. Many of them confirmed their testimony with their *sufferings*, being not only witnesses but *martyrs* in the peculiar *church notion* of that word, grounded on the Scripture; Acts xxii. 20. Rev. ii. 13. xvii. 7. So far were they from any worldly advantage by the profession they made, and the testimony they gave, as that in the confirmation of them they willingly and cheerfully underwent whatever is evil, dreadful, or destructive to human nature in all its temporary concerns. It is, therefore, unquestionable that they had the highest assurance of the truth in these things which the mind of man is capable of. The management of this argument is the principal design of the apostle in the whole 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. For having declared the nature of faith in general, namely, that it is the 'subsistence of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;' ver. 1. That is, such an assent unto, and confidence of, invisible things, things capable of no demonstration from sense or reason, as respects divine revelation only, whereinto alone it is resolved: for our encouragement thereunto, and establishment therein, he produceth a long catalogue of those who did, suffered, and obtained great things thereby. That which he principally insists upon is the hardships, miseries, cruelties, tortures, and several sorts of deaths which they underwent; especially from ver. 35. to the end. These he calleth a 'cloud of witnesses,' where-with 'we are compassed about;' chap. xii. 1. giving testimony unto what we do believe, that is, divine revelation; and in an especial manner the promises therein contained, unto our encouragement in the same duty, as he there declares. And certainly what was thus testified unto by so many great, wise, and holy persons, and that in such a way and manner, hath as great an outward evidence of its truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of in this world.

3. They gave not their testimony *casually*, or on some *extraordinary occasion* only, or by some *one solemn act*, or in some *one certain way*, as other testimonies are given, nor can be given otherwise; but they gave their testimony in this cause, in their whole course, in all that they *thought, spake,*

or *did*, in the world, and in the whole disposal of their ways, lives, and actions, as every true believer continueth to do at this day. For a man when he is occasionally called out to give a *verbal testimony* unto the divine original of the Scripture, ordering in the mean time the whole course of his conversation, his hopes, designs, aims, and ends, without any eminent respect or regard unto it, his testimony is of no value, nor can have any influence on the minds of sober and considerate men. But when men do manifest and evince, that the declaration of the mind of God in the Scripture, hath a sovereign divine authority, over their souls and consciences, absolutely and in all things, then is their witness cogent and efficacious. There is to me a thousand times more force and weight in the testimony to this purpose of some holy persons, who universally, and in all things with respect unto this world, and their future eternal condition, in all their thoughts, words, actions, and ways, do really experiment in themselves, and express to others, the power and authority of this word of God, in their souls and consciences, living, doing, suffering, and dying in peace, assurance of mind, and consolation thereon, than in the verbal declaration of the most splendid numerous church in the world, who evidence not such an inward sense of its power and efficacy. There is, therefore, that force in the real testimony, which hath been given in all ages, by all this sort of persons, not one excepted, unto the divine authority of the Scripture, that it is highly arrogant for any one to question the truth of it, without evident convictions of its imposture, which no person of any tolerable sobriety did ever yet pretend unto.

I shall add, in the last place, the consideration of that *success*, which the *doctrine* derived solely from the Scripture, and resolved thereinto, hath had in the world upon the minds and lives of men, especially upon the *first preaching* of the gospel. And two things offer themselves hereon immediately unto our consideration: 1. The *persons* by whom this doctrine was successfully carried on in the world; and, 2. The *way* and *manner* of the propagation of it. Both which the Scripture takes notice of in particular, as evidences of that *divine power* which the word was really accompanied withal. For the persons unto whom this work was committed, I mean the apostles and first evangelists,

were, as to their outward condition in the world, poor, low, and every way despised; and as unto the endowments of their minds, destitute of all those abilities and advantages, which might give them either reputation or probability of success in such an undertaking. This the Jews marked in them with contempt; Acts iv. 13. And the Gentiles also generally despised them on the same account. As they afforded our apostle no better title than that of a babbler; Acts xvii. 18. So for a long time they kept up the public vogue in the world, that Christianity was the religion of ideots, and men illiterate. But God had another design in this order of things, which our apostle declares upon an admission of the inconsiderable meanness of them, unto whom the dispensation of the gospel was committed; 2 Cor. iv. 7. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' The reason why God would make use of such instruments only in so great a work was, that through their meanness his own glorious power might be more conspicuous. There is nothing more common among men, nor more natural unto them, than to admire the excellencies of those of their own race and kind, and a willingness to have all evidences of a divine supernatural power, clouded and hidden from them. If, therefore, there had been such persons employed, as instruments in this work, whose powers, abilities, qualifications, and endowments, might have been probably pretended as sufficient, and the immediate causes of such an effect, there would have been no observation of the divine power or glory of God. But he who is not able to discern them in the bringing about of so mighty a work, by means so disproportionate thereunto, is under the power of the unrelievable prejudices intimated by our apostle in this case; 2 Cor. iv. 4, 5. 7.

2. The *means* which were to be used unto this end, namely, the *subduing of the world* unto the faith and obedience of the gospel, so erecting the spiritual kingdom of Christ in the minds of men, who before were under the power and dominion of his adversary, must either be *force* and *arms*; or *eloquence*, in plausible persuasive reasonings. And mighty works have been wrought by the one and the other of them. By the former have empires been set up and established in the world; and the superstition of Mahomet

imposed on many nations. And the latter also hath had great effects on the minds of many. Wherefore, it might have been expected, that those who had engaged themselves in so great a design and work as that mentioned, should betake themselves unto the one or other of these means and ways; for the wit of man cannot contrive any way unto such an end, but what may be reduced unto one of these two; seeing neither upon the principles of nature, nor on the rules of human wisdom or policy, can any other be imagined. But even both these ways were abandoned by them, and they declared against the use of either of them. For as outward force, power, and authority, they had none, the use of all carnal weapons being utterly inconsistent with this work and design, so the other way of persuasive orations, of enticing words, of alluring arts and eloquence, with the like effects of human wisdom and skill, were all of them studiously declined by them in this work, as things extremely prejudicial to the success thereof; 1 Cor. ii 4, 5. But this alone they betook themselves unto; they went up and down preaching to Jews and Gentiles, 'that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again according to the Scriptures;' 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. And this they did by virtue of those spiritual gifts, which were the hidden powers of the world to come, whose nature, virtue, and power, others were utterly unacquainted withal. This preaching of theirs, this preaching of the cross, both for the subject, matter, and manner of it, without art, eloquence, or oratory, was looked on as a marvellous, foolish, thing, a sweaty kind of babbling, by all those who had got any reputation of learning or cunning amongst men. This our apostle at large discourseth, 1 Cor. i. In this state of things, every thing was under as many improbabilities of success, unto all rational conjectures, as can be conceived. Besides, together with the doctrine of the gospel that they preached, which was new and uncouth unto the world, they taught observances of religious worship in meetings, assemblies, or conventicles, to that end, which all the laws in the world did prohibit; Acts xviii. 13. xvi. 21. Hereupon, no sooner did the rulers and governors of the world begin to take notice of them, and what they did, but they judged that it all tended to sedition, and that commotions would ensue thereon. These things enraged the generality of mankind

against them and their converts, who therefore made havoc of them with incredible fury. And yet notwithstanding all these disadvantages, and against all these oppositions, their doctrine prevailed to subdue the world to the obedience thereof. And there may be added unto all these things, one or two considerations, from the state of things at that time in the world, which signalize the quality of this work, and manifest it to have been of God.

As, 1. That in the New Testament the writers of it do constantly distribute all those with whom they had to do in this world, into *Jews* and *Greeks*, which we render *Gentiles*, the other nations of the world coming under that denomination, because of their pre-eminence on various accounts. Now the Jews at that time were *in solidum*, possessed of all the true religion that was in the world ; and this they boasted of as their privilege, bearing up themselves with the thoughts and reputation of it every where and on all occasions ; it being at that time their great business to gain proselytes unto it, whereon also their honour and advantage did depend. The Greeks, on the other side, were in as full a possession of arts, sciences, literature, and all that which the world calls wisdom, as the Jews were of religion ; and they had also a religion, received by a long tradition of their fathers from time immemorial, which they had variously cultivated and dressed with mysteries and ceremonies, unto their own complete satisfaction. Besides, the Romans, who were the ruling part of the Gentiles, did ascribe all their prosperity, and the whole raising of their stupendous empire, to their gods, and the religious worship they gave unto them ; so that it was a fundamental maxim in their policy and rule, that they should prosper or decay, according as they observed or were negligent in the religion they received. As, indeed, not only those who owned the true God and his providence, but before idolatry and superstition had given place unto atheism, all people did solemnly impute all their achievements and successes unto their gods, as the prophet speaks of the Chaldeans ; Mal. i. 11. And he who first undertook to record the exploits of the nations of the world, doth constantly assign all their good and evil unto their gods, as they were pleased or provoked. The Romans, in especial, boasted that their religion was the cause of their prosperity ; ‘*Pietate et religione*

atque hæc una sapientia, quòd deorum immortalium numine omnia regi gubernarique prospeximus, omnes gentes nationesque superamus,' says their great oracle, *Orat. de Har. Resp.* And Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a great and wise historian, giving an account of the religion of the Romans, and the ceremonies of their worship, affirms, that he doth it unto this end, 'that those who have been ignorant of the Roman piety, should cease to wonder at their prosperity and successes, in all their wars, seeing by reason of their religion, they had the gods always propitious and succourable unto them.' *Antiq. Rom. lib. 2.* The consideration hereof, made them so obstinate in their adherence unto their present religion, that when after many ages and hundreds of years, some books of Numa their second king, and principal establisher of their commonwealth, were occasionally found, instead of paying them any respect, they ordered them to be burnt, because one who had perused them, took his oath that they were contrary to their present worship and devotion. And this was that, which upon the declension of their empire, after the prevalency of the Christian religion, those who were obstinate in their Paganism, reflected severely upon the Christians; the relinquishment of their old religion, they fiercely avowed to be the cause of all their calamities. In answer unto which calumny, principally, Austin wrote his excellent discourse, *De Civitate Dei.*

In this state of things the preachers of the gospel come among them, and not only bring a new doctrine, under all the disadvantages before mentioned, and, moreover, that he who was the head of it was newly crucified by the present powers of the earth, for a malefactor, but, also, such a doctrine as was expressly to take away the religion from the Jews, and the wisdom from the Greeks, and the principal maxim of polity from the Romans, whereon they thought they had raised their empire. It were easy to declare how all those sects were engaged in worldly interest, honour, reputation, principles of safety, to oppose, decry, condemn, and reject this new doctrine. And if a company of sorry craftsmen were able to fill a whole city with tumult and uproar against the gospel, as they did when they apprehended it would bring in a decay of their trade; *Acts xix.* what can we think was done in all the world, by all those who were engaged



and enraged by higher provocations? It was as death to the Jews to part with their religion, both on the account of the conviction they had of its truth, and the honour they esteemed to accrue to themselves thereby. And for the Greeks to have all that wisdom, which they and their forefathers had been labouring in for so many generations, now to be all rejected as an impertinent foolery by the sorry preachments of a few illiterate persons; it raised them unto the highest indignation. And the Romans were wise enough to secure the fundamental maxim of their state. Wherefore, the world seemed very sufficiently fortified against the admission of this new and strange doctrine, on the terms whereon it was proposed. There can be no danger sure that ever it should obtain any considerable progress: but we know that things fell out quite otherwise; religion, wisdom, and power, with honour, profit, interest, reputation, were forced all to give way to its power and efficacy.

2. The world was at that time in the highest enjoyment of *peace, prosperity, and plenty*, that ever it attained from the entrance of sin; and it is known how from all these things are usually made *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Whatever the pride, ambition, covetousness, sensuality of any persons could carry them forth to lust after, the world was full of satisfactions for. And most men lived as in the eager pursuit of their lusts, so in a full supply of what they did require. In this condition the gospel is preached unto them, requiring at once, and that indispensably, a renunciation of all those worldly lusts, which before had been the salt of their lives. If men designed any compliance with it, or interest in it, all their pride, ambition, luxury, covetousness, sensuality, malice, revenge, must all be mortified and rooted up. Had it only been a new doctrine and religion, declaring that knowledge and worship of God which they never heard of before, they could not but be very wary in giving it entertainment; but when withal it required at the first instant, that for its sake they should ‘pull out their right eyes, and cut off their right hands,’ to part with all that was dear and useful unto them, and which had such a prevalent interest in their minds and affections, as corrupt lusts are known to have; this could not but invincibly fortify them against its admittance. But yet this also was forced to

give place, and all the fortifications of Satan therein was by the power of the word cast to the ground, as our apostle expresseth it; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Where he gives an account of that warfare, whereby the world was subdued to Christ by the gospel. Now a man, that hath a mind to make himself an instance of conceited folly and pride, may talk as though there was in all this no evidence of divine power giving testimony to the Scripture, and the doctrine contained in it, but the characters of it are so legible unto every modest and sedate prospect, that they leave no room for doubt or hesitation.

But the force of the whole argument is liable unto one exception of no small moment, which must, therefore, necessarily be taken notice of, and removed. For, whereas we plead the power, efficacy, and prevalency of the gospel in former days, as a demonstration of its divine original, it will be inquired, Whence it is, that it is not still accompanied with the same power, nor doth produce the same effects. For we see the profession of it is now confined to narrow limits, in comparison of what it formerly extended itself unto; neither do we find that it gets ground any where in the world, but is rather more and more straitened every day. Wherefore, either the first prevalency that is asserted unto it, and argued as an evidence of its divinity, did indeed proceed from some other accidental causes, in an efficacious, though unseen, concurrence, and was not by an emanation of power from itself; or the gospel is not at present what it was formerly, seeing it hath not the same effect upon, or power over, the minds of men, as that had of old. We may, therefore, suspend the pleading of this argument from what was done by the gospel formerly, lest it reflect disadvantage upon what we profess at present.

*Ans.* 1. Whatever *different events* may fall out in *different seasons*, yet the gospel is the same as ever it was from the beginning. There is not another book, containing another doctrine, crept into the world instead of that once delivered unto the saints. And whatever various apprehensions men may have, through their weakness or prejudices, concerning the things taught therein, yet are they in themselves absolutely the same that ever they were, and that without the loss or change of a material word or syllable in the manner

of their delivery. This I have proved elsewhere, and it is a thing capable of the most evident demonstration. Wherefore, whatever entertainment this gospel meets withal at present in the world, its former prevalency may be pleaded in justification of its divine original.

2. *The cause of this event lieth principally in the sovereign will and pleasure of God.* For although the Scripture be his word, and he hath testified it so to be by his power, put forth and exerted in dispensations of it unto men, yet is not that divine power included or shut up in the letter of it, so that it must have the same effect wherever it comes. We plead not that there is absolutely in itself, its doctrine, the preaching or preachers thereof, such a power, as it were naturally and physically to produce the effects mentioned. But it is an instrument in the hand of God unto that work which is his own, and he puts forth his power in it, and by it, as it seems good unto him. And if he doth at any time so put forth his divine power in the administration of it, or in the use of this instrument, as that the great worth and excellency of it shall manifest itself to be from him, he giveth a sufficient attestation of it. Wherefore, the times and seasons of the prevalency of the gospel in the world, are in the hand and at the sovereign disposal of God. And as he is not obliged ('for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?') to accompany it with the same power at all times and seasons; so the evidence of his own power going along with it, at any time, whilst under an open claim of a divine original, is an uncontrollable approbation of it. Thus, at the first preaching of the word, to fulfil the promises made unto the fathers from the foundation of the world, to glorify his Son Jesus Christ, and the gospel itself which he had revealed, he put forth that effectual divine power in its administration, whereby the world was subdued unto the obedience of it. And the time will come when he will revive the same work of power and grace to retrieve the world into a subjection to Jesus Christ. And although he doth not in these latter ages cause it to run and prosper among the nations of the world, who have not as yet received it, as he did formerly, yet considering the state of things at present among the generality of mankind, the preservation of it in that small remnant by whom it is obeyed

in sincerity, is a no less glorious evidence of his presence with it, and care over it, than was its eminent propagation in days of old.

3. The *righteousness of God* is in like manner to be considered in these things. For, whereas he had granted the inestimable privilege of his word unto many nations, they, through their horrible ingratitude and wickedness, detained the truth in unrighteousness; so that the continuance of the gospel among them was no way to the glory of God, no nor yet unto their own advantage. For neither nations nor persons will ever be advantaged by an outward profession of the gospel, whilst they live in a contradiction and disobedience to its precepts; yea, nothing can be more pernicious to the souls of men. This impiety God is at this day revenging on the nations of the world, having utterly cast off many of them from the knowledge of the truth, and given up others unto 'strong delusions, to believe lies,' though they retain the Scriptures and outward profession of Christianity. How far he may proceed in the same way of righteous vengeance towards other nations also, we know not, but ought to tremble in the consideration of it. When God first granted the gospel unto the world, although the generality of mankind had greatly sinned against the light of nature, and had rejected all those supernatural revelations that at any time had been made unto them; yet had they not sinned against the gospel itself, nor the grace thereof. It pleased God, therefore, to wink at, and pass over, that time of their ignorance, so as that his justice should not be provoked by any of their former sins, to withhold the efficacy of his divine power in the administration of the gospel from them, whereby he 'called them to repentance.' But now, after that the gospel hath been sufficiently tendered unto all nations, and hath, either as unto its profession, or as unto its power, with the obedience that it requires, been rejected by the most of them; things are quite otherwise stated. It is from the 'righteous judgment of God,' revenging the sins of the world against the gospel itself, that so many nations are deprived of it, and so many left obstinate in its refusal. Wherefore, the present state of things doth no way weaken or prejudice the evidence given unto the Scripture by that mighty power of God, which accompanied the administration of it in the

world. For what hath since fallen out, there are secret reasons of sovereign wisdom, and open causes in divine justice, whereunto it is to be assigned.

These things I have briefly called over, and not as though they were all of this kind that may be pleaded, but only to give some *instance* of those *external arguments* whereby the divine authority of the Scripture may be confirmed.

Now these arguments are such as are able of themselves to beget in the minds of men, sober, humble, intelligent, and unprejudiced, a firm opinion, judgment, and persuasion, that the Scripture doth proceed from God. Where persons are prepossessed with invincible prejudices contracted by a course of education, wherein they have imbibed principles opposite and contrary thereunto, and have increased and fortified them by some fixed and hereditary enmity against all those whom they know to own the divinity of the Scripture, as it is with Mahometans, and some of the Indians; these arguments, it may be, will not prevail immediately to work nor effect their assent. It is so with respect unto them, also, who out of love unto, and delight in, those ways of vice, sin, and wickedness, which are absolutely and severely condemned in the Scripture, without the least hope of a dispensation unto them that continue under the power of them, who will not take these arguments into due consideration. Such persons may talk and discourse of them, but they never weigh them seriously according as the importance of the cause doth require. For if men will examine them as they ought, it must be with a sedate judgment, that their eternal condition depends upon a right determination of this inquiry. But for those who can scarce get liberty from the service and power of their lusts, seriously to consider what is their condition, or what it is like to be; it is no wonder if they talk of these things after the manner of these days, without any impression on their minds and affections, or influence on the practical understanding. But our inquiry is after, what is a sufficient evidence for the conviction of rational and unprejudiced persons, and the defeating of objections to the contrary, which these and the like arguments do every way answer.

Some think fit here to stay, that is, in these or the like external arguments, or rational *motives of faith*, such as render

the Scriptures so credible, as that it is an unreasonable thing not to assent unto them. That *certainty* which may be attained on these arguments and motives, is, as they say, the highest which our minds are capable of with respect unto this object, and, therefore, includes all the *assent* which is required of us unto this proposition, that the Scriptures are the word of God; or all the faith whereby we believe them so to be. When I speak of these arguments, I intend not them *alone* which I have insisted on, but all others also of the same kind, some whereof have been urged and improved by others with great diligence, for in the variety of such arguments as offer themselves in this cause, every one chooseth out what seems to him most cogent, and some amass all that they can think on. Now these arguments, with the evidence tendered in them are such, as nothing but *perverse prejudice* can detain men from giving a *firm assent* unto. And no more is required of us, but that according to the *motives* that are proposed unto us, and the *arguments* used to that purpose, we come unto a judgment and persuasion, called a *moral assurance* of the truth of the Scripture, and endeavour to yield obedience unto God accordingly.

And it were to be wished that there were more than it is feared there are, who were really so affected with these arguments and motives. For the truth is, *tradition* and *education* practically bear the whole sway in this matter. But yet when all this is done, it will be said, that all this is but a *mere natural work*, whereunto no more is required, but the *natural exercise* and acting of our *own reason* and understanding; that the arguments and motives used, though strong, are *human* and *fallible*, and, therefore, the conclusion we make from them is so also, and wherein we may be deceived; that an assent grounded and resolved into such *rational arguments* only, is not *faith* in the sense of the Scripture; in brief, that it is required that we *believe the Scriptures to be the word of God with faith divine and supernatural*, which cannot be deceived. Two things are replied hereunto.

1. That *where the things believed are divine and supernatural, so is the faith whereby we believe them, or give our assent unto them.* Let the motives and arguments whereon we give our assent be of what kind they will, so that the assent be true and real, and the things believed be divine and supernatural,

the faith whereby we believe is so also. But this is all one as if, in things natural, a man should say, our sight is green when we see that which is so, and blue when we see that which is blue. And this would be so in things moral, if the specification of acts were from their material objects; but it is certain that they are not of the same nature always with the things they are conversant about, nor are they changed thereby from what their nature is in themselves, be it natural or supernatural, human or divine. Now, things divine are only the material object of our faith, as hath been shewed before; and by an enumeration of them do we answer unto the question, What is it that you do believe? But it is the formal object or reason of all our acts from whence they are denominated, or by which they are specified. And the formal reason of our faith, assent, or believing, is that which prevails with us to believe, and on whose account we do so, wherewith we answer unto that question, Why do you believe? If this be human authority, arguments highly probable, but absolutely fallible, motives cogent, but only to beget a moral persuasion, whatever we do believe thereon, our faith is human, fallible, and a moral assurance only. Wherefore it is said,

2. That this *assent* is sufficient, all that is required of us, and contains in it all the *assurance* which our minds are capable of in this matter. For no farther evidence nor assurance is in any case to be inquired after than the subject matter will bear. And so is it in this case, where the truth is not exposed to sense, nor capable of a scientific demonstration, but must be received upon such reasons and arguments, as carry it above the highest probability, though they leave it beneath science or knowledge, or infallible assurance; if such a persuasion of mind there be.

But yet I must needs say, that although those external arguments, whereby learned and rational men have proved or may yet farther prove the Scripture to be a divine revelation given of God, and the doctrine contained in it to be a heavenly truth, are of singular use for the strengthening of the faith of them that do believe, by relieving the mind against temptations and objections that will arise to the contrary, as also for the conviction of gainsayers; yet to say, that they contain the formal reason of that assent, which

is required of us unto the Scripture as the word of God, that our faith is the effect and product of them, which it rests upon and is resolved into, is both contrary to the Scripture, destructive of the nature of divine faith, and exclusive of the work of the Holy Ghost in this whole matter.

Wherefore, I shall do these two things before I proceed to our principal argument designed: 1. I shall give some few reasons, proving that the faith whereby we believe the Scripture to be the *word* of God is not a mere firm moral persuasion, built upon external arguments and motives of credibility; but is divine and supernatural, because the *formal reason* of it is so also. 2. I shall shew what is the *nature of that faith*, whereby we do or ought to believe the Scripture to be the *word* of God; what is the work of the Holy Spirit about it, and what is the proper object of it. In the first I shall be very brief, for my design is to strengthen the faith of all, and not to weaken the opinions of any.

*Divine revelation* is the proper object of *divine faith*. With such faith we can believe nothing but what is so, and what is so can be received no otherwise by us. If we believe it not with divine faith, we believe it not at all. Such is the Scripture as the word of God every where proposed unto us; and we are required to believe, that is, first to believe it so to be, and then to believe the things contained in it. For this proposition, that the Scripture is the word of God, is a divine revelation, and so to be believed. But God no where requires, nor ever did, that we should believe any divine revelation upon such grounds, much less on such grounds and motives only. They are left unto us as consequential unto our believing, to plead with others in behalf of what we profess, and for the justification of it unto the world. But that which he requires our faith and obedience unto, in the receiving of divine revelations, whether immediately given and declared, or as recorded in the Scripture, is his own authority and veracity; ‘I am the Lord, the high and lofty one.’ ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ ‘To the law and to the testimony.’ ‘This is my Son, hear him.’ ‘All Scripture is given by inspiration from God.’ ‘Believe the Lord and his prophets.’ This alone is that which he requires us to resolve our faith into. So, when he gave unto us the law of our lives, the eternal and unchangeable rule of our obedience unto him in the ten command-



ments, he gives no other reason to oblige us thereunto, but this only, 'I am the Lord thy God.' The sole formal reason of all our obedience is taken from his own nature and our relation unto him. Nor doth he propose any other reason why we should believe him, or the revelation which he makes of his mind and will. And our faith is part of our obedience, the root and principal part of it; therefore, the reason of both is the same. Neither did our Lord Jesus Christ nor his apostles ever make use of such arguments or motives for the ingenerating of faith in the minds of men; nor have they given directions for the use of any such arguments to this end and purpose. But when they were accused to have followed 'cunningly devised fables,' they appealed unto Moses and the prophets, to the revelations they had themselves received, and those that were before recorded. It is true they wrought miracles in confirmation of their own divine mission, and of the doctrine which they taught. But the miracles of our Saviour were all of them wrought amongst those who believed the whole Scripture then given to be the word of God; and those of the apostles were before the writings of the books of the New Testament. Their doctrine, therefore, materially considered, and their warranty to teach it, was sufficiently, yea, abundantly confirmed by them. But divine revelation formally considered, and as written, was left upon the old foundation of the authority of God who gave it. No such method is prescribed, no such example is proposed unto us in the Scripture, to make use of these arguments and motives for the conversion of the souls of men unto God, and the ingenerating of faith in them. Yea, in some cases the use of such means is decryed as unprofitable, and the sole authority of God, putting forth his power in and by his word, is appealed unto; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. 13. xiv. 26, 27. 2 Cor. iv. 7. But yet, in a way of preparation subservient unto the receiving the Scripture as the word of God, and for the defence of it against gainsayers and their objections, their use hath been granted and proved. But from first to last in the Old and New Testament, the authority and truth of God are constantly and uniformly proposed as the immediate ground and reason of believing his revelations; nor can it be proved that he doth accept or approve of any kind of faith or assent, but what is built thereon and resolved thereinto. The sum is,

we are obliged in a way of duty, to believe the Scriptures to be a divine revelation, when they are ministerially or providentially proposed unto us, whereof afterward. The ground whereon we are to receive them is the authority and veracity of God speaking in them ; we believe them because they are the word of God. Now this faith, whereby we so believe, is divine and supernatural, because the formal reason of it is so, namely, God's truth and authority. Wherefore, we do not, nor ought to, believe the Scripture as highly probable, or with a moral persuasion and assurance built upon arguments absolutely fallible, and human only. For if this be the formal reason of faith, namely, the veracity and authority of God, if we believe not with faith divine and supernatural, we believe not at all.

2. The *moral certainty* treated of, is a mere effect of reason. There is no more required unto it, but that the reasons proposed for the assent required, be such as the mind judgeth to be convincing and prevalent ; whence an inferior kind of knowledge, or a firm opinion, or some kind of persuasion which hath not yet gotten an intelligible name, doth necessarily ensue. There is, therefore, on this supposition, no need of any work of the Holy Ghost, to enable us to believe, or to work faith in us ; for no more is required herein but what necessarily ariseth from a naked exercise of reason. If it be said, that the inquiry is not about what is the work of the Spirit of God in us ; but concerning the reasons and motives to believing that are proposed unto us. I answer, it is granted ; but that we urge herein is, that the act which is exerted on such motives, or the persuasion which is begotten in our minds by them, is purely natural, and such as requires no especial work of the Holy Ghost in us for the effecting of it. Now this is not faith, nor can we be said in the Scripture sense to believe thereby, and so, in particular, not the Scriptures to be the word of God. For 'faith is the gift of God, and is not of ourselves ;' Eph. ii. 8. 'It is given unto some on the behalf of Christ,' Phil. i. 29. and not unto others ; Matt. xi. 29. xiii. 11. But this assent on external arguments and motives is of ourselves, equally common and exposed unto all. 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost ;' 1 Cor. xii. 3. But he who believeth the Scripture truly, aright, and according to his duty, doth say

so. 'No man cometh to Christ, but he that hath heard and learned of the Father;' John vi. 45. And as this is contrary to the Scripture, so it is expressly condemned by the ancient church; particularly by the second Arausican council; Can. 5. 7. 'Si quis sicut augmentum ita etiam initium fidei, ipsumque credulitatis affectum, non per gratiæ donum, id est, per inspirationem Spiritus Sancti, corrigentem voluntatem nostram ab infidelitate ad fidem, ab impietate ad pietatem, sed naturalitèr nobis inesse dicit, apostolicis dogmatibus adversarius approbatur.' And plainly, Can. 7. 'Si quis per naturæ vigorem bonum aliquod quod ad salutem pertinet vitæ eternæ cogitare ut expedit, aut eligere, sive salutare, id est, evangelicæ prædicationi consentire posse affirmat absque illuminatione et inspiratione Spiritus Sancti, qui dat omnibus suavitatem consentiendo et credendo veritati, hæretico fallitur spiritu.'

It is still granted that the arguments intended (that is, all of them which are true indeed, and will endure a strict examination, for some are frequently made use of in this cause which will not endure a trial) are of good use in their place and unto their proper end; that is, to beget such an assent unto the truth as they are capable of effecting. For although this be not that which is required of us in a way of duty, but inferior to it, yet the mind is prepared and disposed by them unto the receiving of the truth in its proper evidence.

3. Our assent can be of no other nature than the arguments and motives whereon it is built, or by which it is wrought in us, as in *degree* it cannot exceed their *evidence*. Now these arguments are all human and fallible; exalt them unto the greatest esteem possible, yet because they are not demonstrations, nor do necessarily beget a certain knowledge in us (which indeed if they did, there were no room left for faith or our obedience therein), they produce an opinion only, though in the highest kind of probability, and firm against objections. For we will allow the utmost assurance that can be claimed upon them. But this is exclusive of all divine faith as to any article, thing, matter, or object, to be believed. For instance; a man professeth that he believes Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Demand the reason why he doth so, and he will say, Because God who cannot lie, hath revealed and declared him so to be; proceed

yet farther, and ask him, Where or how God hath revealed and declared this so to be ? and he will answer, in the Scripture, which is his word ; inquire now farther of him, which is necessary, Wherefore he believes this Scripture to be the word of God, or an immediate revelation given out from him ? for hereunto we must come and have somewhat that we may ultimately rest in, excluding in its own nature all farther inquiries, or we can have neither certainty, nor stability in our faith. On this supposition his answer must be, that he hath many cogent arguments that render it highly probable so to be, such as have prevailed with him to judge it so to be, and whereon he is fully persuaded, as having the highest assurance whereof that the matter will bear, and so doth firmly believe them to be the word of God. Yea, but it will be replied, all these arguments are in their kind or nature human, and therefore fallible, such as it is possible they may be false ; for every thing may be so that is not immediately from the first essential verity. This assent, therefore, unto the Scriptures as the word of God is human, fallible, and such as wherein we may be deceived. And our assent unto the things revealed, can be of no other kind than that we give unto the revelation itself. For thereinto it is resolved, and thereunto it must be reduced ; these waters will rise no higher than their fountain. And thus at length we come to believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, with a faith human and fallible, and which at last may deceive us ; which is to ‘ receive the word of God as the word of men, and not as it is in truth the word of God,’ contrary to the apostle ; 1 Thess. ii. 13. Wherefore,

4. If I believe the Scripture to be the *word* of God with a human faith only, I do no otherwise believe whatever is contained in it, which overthrows all faith properly so called. And if I believe whatever is contained in the Scripture with faith divine and supernatural, I cannot but by the same faith believe the Scripture itself, which removes the moral certainty treated of out of our way. And the reason of this is, that we must believe the revelation, and the things revealed with the same kind of faith, or we bring confusion on the whole work of believing. No man living can distinguish in his experience between that faith, wherewith he believes the Scripture, and that wherewith he believes the

doctrine of it, or the things contained in it ; nor is there any such distinction or difference intimated in the Scripture itself ; but all our believing is absolutely resolved into the authority of God revealing. Nor can it be rationally apprehended that our assent unto the things revealed, should be of a kind and nature superior unto that which we yield unto the revelation itself. For let the arguments which it is resolved into be never so evident and cogent, let the assent itself be as firm and certain as can be imagined, yet is it human still and natural, and therein is inferior unto that which is divine and supernatural. And yet on this supposition that which is of a superior kind and nature is wholly resolved into that which is of an inferior, and must betake itself on all occasions thereunto for relief and confirmation. For the faith whereby we believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, is on all occasions absolutely melted down into that whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God.

But none of these things are my present especial design, and therefore I have insisted long enough upon them. I am not inquiring what grounds men may have to build an opinion, or any kind of human persuasion upon, that the Scriptures are the word of God, no nor yet how we may prove or maintain them so to be unto gainsayers ; but what is required hereunto that we may believe them to be so with faith divine and supernatural, and what is the work of the Spirit of God therein.

But it may be farther said, that these external arguments and motives are not of themselves, and considered separately from the doctrine which they testify unto, the sole ground and reason of our believing. For if it were possible that a thousand arguments of a like cogency with them were offered to confirm any truth or doctrine, if it had not a divine worth and excellency in itself, they could give the mind no assurance of it. Wherefore, it is the truth itself, or doctrine contained in the Scripture, which they testify unto, that animates them and gives them their efficacy. For there is such a majesty, holiness, and excellency, in the doctrine of the gospel, and, moreover, such a suitableness in them unto unprejudiced reason, and such an answerableness unto all the rational desires and expectations of the soul, as evi-

dence their procedure from the fountain of infinite wisdom and goodness. It cannot but be conceived impossible that such excellent, heavenly mysteries, of such use and benefit unto all mankind, should be the product of any created industry. Let but a man know himself, his state and condition, in any measure, with a desire of that blessedness which his nature is capable of, and which he cannot but design; when the Scripture is proposed unto him in the ministry of the church, attested by the arguments insisted on, there will appear unto him in the truths and doctrines of it, or in the things contained in it, such an evidence of the majesty and authority of God, as will prevail with him to believe it to be a divine revelation. And this persuasion is such, that the mind is established in its assent unto the truth, so as to yield obedience unto all that is required of us. And, whereas our belief of the Scripture is in order only to the right performance of our duty, or all that obedience which God expecteth from us, our minds being guided by the precepts and directions, and duly influenced by the promises and threatenings of it thereunto, there is no other faith required of us but what is sufficient to oblige us unto that obedience.

This being, so far as I can apprehend, the substance of what is by some learned men proposed and adhered unto, it shall be briefly examined. And I say here, as on other occasions, that I should rejoice to see more of such a faith in the world, as would effectually oblige men unto obedience, out of a conviction of the excellency of the doctrine, and the truth of the promises and threatenings of the word, though learned men should never agree about the formal reason of faith. Such notions of truth when most diligently inquired into, are but as sacrifice compared with obedience. But the truth itself is also to be inquired after diligently.

This opinion, therefore, either supposeth what we shall immediately declare, namely, the *necessity* of an internal effectual work of the Holy Spirit, in the *illumination of our minds*, so enabling us to believe with faith *divine and supernatural*, or it doth not. If it doth, it will be found, as I suppose, for the substance of it, to be coincident with what we shall afterward assert, and prove to be the *formal reason* of believing. However, as it is usually proposed, I cannot

absolutely comply with it, for these two reasons among others.

1. It belongs unto the nature of faith, of what sort soever it be, that it be built on and resolved into *testimony*. This is that which distinguisheth it from any other conception, knowledge, or assent of our minds, on other reasons and causes. And if this testimony be divine, so is that faith whereby we give assent unto it, on the part of the object. But the doctrines contained in the Scripture, or the subject matter of the truth to be believed, have not in them the nature of a testimony, but are the material, not formal objects of faith, which must always differ. If it be said that these truths or doctrines do so evidence themselves to be from God, as that in and by them we have the witness and authority of God himself proposed unto us, to resolve our faith into, I will not farther contend about it; but only say, that the authority of God, and so his veracity, do manifest themselves primarily in the revelation itself, before they do so in the things revealed, which is that we plead for.

2. The *excellency of the doctrine*, or things revealed in the Scriptures, respects not so much the truth of them in speculation, as their goodness and suitableness unto the souls of men, as to their present condition and eternal end. Now things under that consideration respect not so much faith, as spiritual sense and experience. Neither can any man have a due apprehension of such a goodness suitable unto our constitution and condition, with absolute usefulness in the truth of the Scripture, but on a supposition of that antecedent assent of the mind unto them, which is believing; which, therefore, cannot be the reason why we do believe.

But if this opinion proceed not upon the aforesaid supposition (immediately to be proved), but requires no more unto our satisfaction in the truth of the Scripture and assent thereon, but the due exercise of reason, or the natural faculties of our minds about them when proposed unto us, then I suppose it to be most remote from the truth, and that amongst many other reasons, for these that ensue.

1. On this supposition, the whole *work of believing* would be a work of *reason*. Be it so, say some, nor is it meet it should be otherwise conceived. But if so, then the object of it must be things so evident in themselves and their own

nature, as that the mind is, as it were, compelled by that evidence unto an assent, and cannot do otherwise. If there be such a light and evidence in the things themselves with respect unto our reason in the right use and exercise of it, then is the mind thereby necessitated unto its assent; which both overthrows the nature of faith, substituting an assent upon natural evidence in the room thereof, and is absolutely exclusive of the necessity or use of any work of the Holy Ghost in our believing, which sober Christians will scarcely comply withal.

2. There are *some doctrines* revealed in the Scripture, and those of the most importance that are so revealed, which concern and contain things so *above our reason*, that without some previous supernatural dispositions of mind, they carry in them no evidence of truth unto mere reason, nor of suitability unto our constitution and end. There is required unto such an apprehension, both the spiritual elevation of the mind by supernatural illumination, and a divine assent unto the authority of the revelation thereon, before reason can be so much as satisfied in the truth and excellency of such doctrines. Such are those concerning the Holy Trinity, or the subsistence of one singular essence in three distinct persons, the incarnation of the Son of God, the resurrection of the dead, and sundry other that are the most proper subjects of divine revelation. There is a heavenly glory in some of these things, which as reason can never thoroughly apprehend, because it is finite and limited, so as it is in us by nature, it can neither receive them, nor delight in them, as doctrinally proposed unto us, with all the aids and assistance before mentioned. Flesh and blood reveals not these things unto our minds, but our Father which is in heaven. Nor doth any man know these mysteries of the kingdom of God, but he 'unto whom it is given;' nor do any learn these things aright, but those that are taught of God.

3. Take our reason singly, without the consideration of divine *grace* and *illumination*, and it is not only weak and limited, but depraved and corrupted. And the carnal mind cannot subject itself unto the authority of God in any supernatural revelation whatever. Wherefore, the truth is, that the doctrines of the gospel, which are purely and absolutely so, are so far from having a convincing evidence in



themselves of their divine truth, excellency, and goodness, unto the reason of men as unrenewed by the Holy Ghost, as that they are foolishness and most undesirable unto it, as I have elsewhere proved at large. We shall, therefore, proceed.

There are two things considerable with respect unto our believing the Scriptures to be the word of God in a due manner, or according to our duty. The first respects the *subject*, or the *mind of man*, how it is enabled thereunto; the other the *object* to be believed, with the true reason why we do believe the Scripture with faith divine and supernatural.

The first of these must of necessity fall under our consideration herein, as that without which, whatever reasons, evidences, or motives, are proposed unto us, we shall never believe in a due manner. For whereas the mind of man, or the minds of all men, are by *nature depraved, corrupt, carnal, and enmity against God*; they cannot of themselves, or by virtue of any innate ability of their own, understand or assent unto spiritual things in a spiritual manner, which we have sufficiently proved and confirmed before. Wherefore, that *assent* which is wrought in us by mere external arguments, consisting in the rational conclusion and judgment which we make upon their truth and evidence, is not that faith wherewith we ought to believe the word of God.

Wherefore, that we may believe the Scriptures to be the word of God according to our duty, as God requireth it of us, in a useful, profitable, and saving manner, above and beyond that *natural human faith* and assent which is the effect of the arguments and motives of credibility, before insisted on, with all others of the like kind, *there is, and must be wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, faith supernatural and divine, whereby we are enabled so to do, or rather whereby we do so*. This work of the Spirit of God, as it is distinct from, so in order of nature it is antecedent unto, all *divine objective evidence* of the Scriptures being the word of God, or the formal reason moving us to believe it; wherefore, without it, whatever arguments or motives are proposed unto us, we cannot believe the Scriptures to be the word of God in a due manner, and as it is in duty required of us.

Some, it may be, will suppose these things ἀπροσδιόνυσα, and impertinent unto our present purpose. For while we are

inquiring on what *grounds* we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, we seem to *fly to the work of the Holy Ghost* in our own minds, which is irrational. But we must not be ashamed of the gospel, nor of the truth of it, because some do not understand, or will not duly consider, what is proposed. It is necessary, that we should return unto the work of the Holy Spirit, not with peculiar respect unto the Scriptures that are to be believed, but unto our own minds and that faith wherewith they are to be believed. For it is not the reason why we believe the Scriptures, but the power whereby we are enabled so to do, which at present we inquire after.

1. That the *faith* whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, is *wrought in us by the Holy Ghost*, can be denied only on two principles or suppositions. (1.) That it is not *faith divine and supernatural* whereby we believe them so to be, but only we have other moral assurance thereof. (2.) That this *faith divine and supernatural* is of ourselves, and is not wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. The first of these hath been already disproved, and shall be farther evicted afterward; and, it may be, they are very few who are of that judgment. For, generally, whatever men suppose the prime object, principal motive, and *formal reason* of that faith to be, yet that it is divine and supernatural they all acknowledge. And as to the second, what is so, it is of the operation of the Spirit of God. For to say it is *divine and supernatural*, is to say that it is *not of ourselves*, but that it is the grace and gift of the Spirit of God, wrought in us by his divine and supernatural power. And those of the church of Rome, who would resolve our faith in this matter *objectively* into the authority of their church, yet *subjectively* acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit ingenerating faith in us, and that work to be necessary to our believing the Scripture in a due manner. ‘*Externæ omnes et humanæ persuasiones non sunt satis ad credendum, quantumcunque ab hominibus competenter ea quæ sunt fidei proponantur. Sed necessaria est insuper causa interior, hoc est divinum quoddam lumen incitans ad credendum, et oculi quidam interni Dei beneficio ad videndum dati,*’ saith Canus, Loc. Theol. lib. 2. cap. 8. Nor is there any of the divines of that church which dissent herein. We do not, therefore, assert any such divine formal reason of believing, as that the

mind should not stand in need of supernatural assistance enabling it to assent thereunto. Nay we affirm, that without this there is in no man any true faith at all, let the arguments and motives whereon he believes be as forcible and pregnant with evidence as can be imagined. It is in this case as in things natural; neither the light of the sun, nor any persuasive arguments unto men to look up unto it, will enable them to discern it, unless they are endued with a due visive faculty.

And this the Scripture is express in beyond all possibility of contradiction. Neither is it that I know of, by any as yet in express terms denied. For, indeed, that all which is *properly called faith*, with respect unto divine revelation, and is accepted with God as such, is the work of the Spirit of God in us, or is bestowed on us by him, cannot be questioned by any who own the gospel. I have also proved it elsewhere so fully and largely as that I shall give it at present no other confirmation, but what will necessarily fall in with the description of the nature of that faith whereby we do believe, and the way or manner of its being wrought in us.

The work of the Holy Ghost unto this purpose consists in the saving *illumination* of the mind, and the effect of it is a *supernatural light*, whereby the mind is renewed; see Rom. xii. 1. Eph. i. 18, 19. iii. 16—19. It is called a ‘heart to understand, eyes to see, ears to hear;’ Deut. xxix. 4. The ‘opening of the eyes of our understanding;’ Eph. i. 18. The ‘giving of an understanding;’ 1 John v. 20. Hereby we are enabled to discern the evidences of the divine original and authority of the Scripture that are in itself, as well as assent unto the truth contained it; and without it we cannot do so. For the ‘natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;’ 1 Cor. ii. 14. And unto this end it is written in the prophets, ‘that we shall be all taught of God;’ John vi. 45. That there is a divine and heavenly excellency in the Scripture, cannot be denied by any, who on any grounds or motives whatever do own its divine original. For all the works of God do set forth his praise, and it is impossible that any thing should proceed immediately from him, but that there will be express characters of divine excellencies upon it; and as to the com-

munication of these characters of himself, he hath ‘ magnified his word above all his name.’ But these we cannot discern, be they in themselves never so illustrious, without the effectual communication of the light mentioned unto our minds ; that is, without divine supernatural illumination.

Herein ‘ he who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shineth into our hearts the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ ;’ 2 Cor. iv. 6. He irradiates the mind with a spiritual light, whereby it is enabled to discern the glory of spiritual things : this they cannot do ‘ in whom the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them ;’ ver. 6. Those who are under the power of their natural darkness and blindness, especially where there are in them also superadded prejudices begotten and increased by the craft of Satan, as there are in the whole world of unbelievers, cannot see nor discern that divine excellency in the Scripture, without an apprehension whereof no man can believe it aright to be the word of God. Such persons may assent unto the truth of the Scripture and its divine original, upon external arguments and rational motives, but believe it with faith divine and supernatural on those arguments and motives only, they cannot.

There are two things which hinder or disenable men from believing with faith divine and supernatural, when any divine revelation is objectively proposed unto them. First, *The natural blindness and darkness of their minds*, which are come upon all by the fall, and the depravation of our nature that ensued thereon. Secondly, *The prejudices* that through the crafts of Satan, the god of this world, their minds are possessed with, by *traditions, educations, and converse* in the world. This last obstruction or hinderance may be so far removed by external arguments and motives of credibility, as that men may upon them attain unto a moral persuasion concerning the divine original of the Scripture. But these arguments cannot remove or take away the native blindness of the mind, which is removed by their renovation and divine illumination alone. Wherefore none, I think, will positively affirm that we can believe the Scripture to be the word of God, in the way and manner which God requireth, without

a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds in the illumination of them; so David prays that ‘God would open his eyes, that he might behold wondrous things out of the law;’ Psal. cxix. 10. That ‘he would make him understand the way of his precepts;’ ver. 27. That ‘he would give him understanding and he should keep the law:’ ver. 34. So the Lord Christ also ‘opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures;’ Luke xxiv. 45. As he had affirmed before that it was ‘given unto some to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,’ and not unto others; Matt. xi. 25. xiii. 11. And neither are these things spoken in vain, nor is the grace intended in them needless.

The communication of this light unto us the Scripture calleth *revealing* and *revelation*; Matt. xi. 25. ‘Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;’ that is, giving them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven when they were preached unto them. ‘And no man knoweth the Father but he to whom the Son revealeth him;’ ver. 27. So the apostle prayeth for the Ephesians, ‘that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of their understandings being enlightened, they might know,’ &c. chap. i. 17—19. It is true, these Ephesians were already believers, or considered by the apostle as such; but if he judged it necessary to pray for them, that they might have ‘the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to enlighten the eyes of their understanding,’ with respect unto farther degrees of faith and knowledge; or, as he speaks in another place, ‘that they might come unto the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God;’ Col. ii. 2. Then it is much more necessary to make them believers, who before were not so, but utter strangers unto the faith.

But as a pretence hereof hath been abused, as we shall see afterward, so the pleading of it is liable to be mistaken. For some are ready to apprehend, that this retreat unto a *Spirit of revelation*, is but a pretence to discard all rational arguments, and to introduce *enthusiasm* into their room. Now although the charge be grievous, yet because it is groundless, we must not forego what the Scripture plainly affirms and instructs us in, thereby to avoid it. Scripture testimo-

nies may be expounded according to the analogy of faith, but denied or despised, seem they never so contrary unto our apprehension of things, they must not be. Some, I confess, seem to disregard both the objective work of the Holy Spirit in this matter, whereof we shall treat afterward, and his subjective work also in our minds, that all things may be reduced unto sense and reason. But we must grant that a 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation' to open the eyes of our understanding, is needful to enable us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a due manner, or forego the gospel. And our duty it is to pray continually for that Spirit, if we intend to be established in the faith thereof.

But yet we plead not for *external immediate revelations*, such as were granted unto the prophets, apostles, and other penmen of the Scripture. The revelation we intend differs from them, both in its *especial subject and formal reason*, or nature, that is, in the whole kind. For, (1.) the subject matter of divine *prophetical revelation*, by a *θεόπνευστία*, or *immediate divine inspiration*, are things not made known before. Things they were, 'hid in God,' or the counsels of his will, 'and revealed unto the apostles and prophets by the Spirit;' Eph. ii. 5. 9, 10. Whether they were doctrines or things, they were at least, as unto their present circumstances, made known from the counsels of God by their revelation. But the matter and subject of the revelation we treat of, is nothing but what is already revealed. It is an internal revelation of that which is outwardly and antecedent unto it, beyond the bounds thereof it is not to be extended. And if any pretend unto *immediate revelations* of things not before revealed, we have no concernment in their pretences. (2.) They differ likewise in their nature or kind. For *immediate, divine, prophetical revelation* consisted in an immediate inspiration, or *afflatus*, or in visions and voices from heaven, with a power of the Holy Ghost *transiently* affecting their minds, guiding their tongues and hands to whom they were granted, whereby they received and represented divine impressions, as an instrument of music doth the skill of the hand whereby it is moved; the nature of which revelation I have more fully discoursed elsewhere. But this *revelation of the Spirit* consists in his effectual operation, freeing our minds from darkness, igno-

rance, and prejudice, enabling them to discern spiritual things, in a due manner. And such a *Spirit of revelation* is necessary unto them who would believe aright the Scripture, or any thing else that is divine and supernatural contained therein. And if men, who through the power of temptations and prejudices are in the dark, or at a loss as to the great and fundamental principle of all religion, namely, the divine original and authority of the Scripture, will absolutely lean unto their own understandings, and have the whole difference determined by the natural power and faculties of their own souls, without seeking after *divine aid and assistance*, or earnest prayer for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to open the eyes of their understandings, they must be content to abide in their uncertainties, or to come off from them without any advantage to their souls. Not that I would deny unto men, or take them off from the use of their reason in this matter; for what is their reason given unto them for, unless it be to use it in those things which are of the greatest importance unto them? Only I must crave leave to say, that it is not sufficient of itself to enable us to the performance of this duty, without the immediate aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God.

If any one, upon these principles, shall now ask us, *Wherefore we believe the Scripture to be the word of God?* We do not answer, It is *because the Holy Ghost hath enlightened our minds, wrought faith in us, and enabled us to believe it.* Without this we say indeed, did not the Spirit of God so work in us, and upon us, we neither should nor could believe with faith divine and supernatural. If God had not opened the heart of Lydia, she would not have attended unto the things preached by Paul so as to have received them; and without it the light oftentimes shines into darkness, but the darkness comprehends it not. But this neither is, nor can be, the *formal object of our faith*, or the reason why we believe the Scripture to be of God, or any thing else; neither do we, nor can we, rationally answer by it unto this question, *Why we do believe.* This reason must be something external and evidently proposed unto us. For whatever ability of spiritual assent there be in the understanding which is thus wrought in it by the Holy Ghost, yet the understanding cannot assent unto any thing with any kind of assent natural

or supernatural, but what is outwardly proposed unto it as true, and that with sufficient evidence that it is so. That therefore, which proposeth any thing unto us as true, with evidence of that truth, is the formal object of our faith, or the reason why we do believe. And what is so proposed must be evidenced to be true, or we cannot believe it; and according to the nature of that evidence such is our faith; human if that be human, and divine if that be so. Now nothing of this is done by that saving light which is infused into our minds, and is, therefore, not the reason why we believe what we do so.

Whereas, therefore, some, who seem to conceive that the only *general ground of believing the Scripture* to be the word of God doth consist in *rational arguments* and *motives of credibility*, do grant that private persons may have their assurance hereof from the illumination of the Holy Ghost, though it be not pleadable to others; they grant what is not, that I know of, desired by any, and which in itself is not true. For this work consisting solely in enabling the mind unto that kind of assent which is faith divine and supernatural, on supposition of an external formal reason of it duly proposed, is not the reason why any do believe, nor the ground whereunto their faith is resolved.

It remains only that we inquire whether our faith in this matter be not resolved into an *immediate internal testimony of the Holy Ghost*, assuring us of the divine original and authority of the Scripture, distinct from the work of *spiritual illumination*, before described. For it is the common opinion of Protestant divines, that the *testimony of the Holy Ghost* is the ground whereon we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and in what sense it is so shall be immediately declared. But hereon are they generally charged by those of the church of Rome and others, that they resolve all the ground and assurance of faith into their own particular spirits, or the spirit of every one that will pretend thereunto. And this is looked upon as a sufficient warranty to reproach them with giving countenance unto *enthusiasms*, and exposing the minds of men to endless delusions. Wherefore, this matter must be a little farther inquired into. And,

By an *internal testimony of the Spirit*, an extraordinary *afflatus*, or new immediate revelation may be intended. Men



may suppose they have, or ought to have, an internal particular testimony that the Scripture is the word of God, whereby, and whereby alone, they may be infallibly assured that so it is. And this is supposed to be of the same nature with the revelation made unto the prophets and penmen of the Scripture; for it is neither an *external proposition* of truth, nor an *internal ability to assent* unto such a proposition. And besides these there is no divine operation in this kind, but an immediate *prophetical inspiration* or revelation. Wherefore, as such a revelation or immediate testimony of the Spirit is the only reason why we do believe, so it is that alone which our faith rests on and is resolved into.

This is that which is commonly imputed unto those who deny either the *authority of the church*, or any other *external arguments or motives of credibility*, to be the *formal reason* of our faith. Howbeit there is no one of them, that I know of, who ever asserted any such thing. And I do, therefore, deny that our faith is resolved into any such *private testimony*, immediate revelation or inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And that for the ensuing reasons.

1. Since the finishing of the canon of the Scripture, the church is not under that *conduct*, as to stand in need of such new extraordinary revelations. It doth indeed live upon the internal gracious operations of the Spirit, enabling us to understand, believe, and obey, the perfect complete revelation of the will of God already made, but new revelations it hath neither need nor use of. And to suppose them, or a necessity of them, not only overthrows the perfection of the Scripture, but also leaveth us uncertain whether we know all that is to be believed in order unto salvation, or our whole duty, or when we may do so. For it would be our duty to live all our days in expectation of new revelations, wherewith neither peace, assurance, nor consolation, are consistent.

2. Those who are to *believe*, will not be able on this supposition to secure themselves from *delusion*, and from being imposed on by the deceits of Satan. For this new revelation is to be tried by the Scripture, or it is not. If it be to be tried and examined by the Scripture, then doth it acknowledge a superior rule, judgment, and testimony, and so cannot be that which our faith is ultimately resolved into.

If it be exempted from that rule of trying the spirits, then, (1.) It must produce the *grant of this exemption*, seeing the rule is extended generally unto all things and doctrines that relate unto *faith* or obedience. (2.) It must declare what are the grounds and evidences of its own *αὐτοπιστία*, or self-credibility, and how it may be infallibly or assuredly distinguished from all delusions, which can never be done. And if any tolerable countenance could be given unto these things, yet we shall shew immediately that no such *private testimony*, though real, can be the formal object of faith, or reason of believing.

3. It hath so fallen out in the *providence of God*, that generally all who have given up themselves, in any things concerning faith or obedience, unto the *pretended conduct of immediate revelations*, although they have pleaded a respect unto the Scripture also, have been seduced into opinions and practices directly repugnant unto it. And this, with all persons of sobriety, is sufficient to discard this pretence.

But this *internal testimony of the Spirit*, is by others explained quite in another way. For they say, that besides the work of the Holy Ghost before insisted on, whereby he takes away our *natural blindness*, and enlightening our minds, enables us to discern the divine excellencies that are in the Scripture; there is another internal efficiency of his, whereby we are moved, persuaded, and enabled to believe: hereby we are taught of God, so as that finding the glory and majesty of God in the word, our hearts do by an ineffable power assent unto the truth without any hesitation. And this work of the Spirit carrieth its own evidence in itself, producing an assurance above all human judgment, and such as stands in need of no farther arguments or testimonies; this faith rests on and is resolved into. And this some learned men seem to embrace, because they suppose that the *objective evidence* which is given in the Scripture itself, is only moral, or such as can give only a moral assurance. Whereas, therefore, faith ought to be divine and supernatural, so must that be whereinto it is resolved, yea, it is so alone from the *formal reason* of it. And they can apprehend nothing in this work, that is immediately divine, but only this *internal testimony of the Spirit*, wherein God himself speaks unto our hearts.

But yet neither, as it is so explained, can we allow it to be the formal object of faith, nor that wherein it doth acquiesce. For,

1. It hath not the proper *nature of a divine testimony*. A divine work it may be, but a divine testimony it is not; but it is of the nature of faith, to be built on an external testimony. However, therefore, our minds may be established, and enabled to believe firmly and stedfastly, by an ineffable internal work of the Holy Ghost, whereof also we may have a certain experience; yet neither that work nor the effect of it, can be the reason why we do believe, nor whereby we are moved to believe, but only that whereby we do believe.

2. That which is the *formal object of faith*, or reason whereon we believe, is the same, *and common unto all that do believe*. For our inquiry is not how, or by what means, this or that man came *to believe*, but why any one or every one *ought so to do*, unto whom the Scripture is proposed. The object proposed unto all to be believed is the same; and the faith required of all in a way of duty is the same, or of the same kind and nature, and therefore the reason why we believe, must be the same also. But on this supposition, there must be as many distinct reasons of believing, as there are believers.

3. On this supposition, it cannot be the duty of any one to believe the Scripture to be the word of God, who hath not received this *internal testimony of the Spirit*. For where the true formal reason of believing is not proposed unto us, there it is not our duty to believe. Wherefore, although the Scripture be proposed as the word of God, yet is it not our duty to believe it so to be, until we have this work of the Spirit in our hearts, in case that be the formal reason of believing. But not to press any farther, how it is possible men may be deceived and deluded in their apprehensions of such an internal testimony of the Spirit, especially if it be not to be tried by the Scripture; which, if it be, it loseth its *αὐτοπιστία* or self-credibility, or if it be, it casteth us into a circle, which the Papists charge us withal; it cannot be admitted as the formal object of our faith, because it would divert us from that which is public, proper, every way certain and infallible.

However, that work of the Spirit, which may be called an

*internal real testimony* is to be granted, as that which belongs unto the stability and assurance of faith. For if he did no otherwise work in us, or upon us, but by the communication of spiritual light unto our minds, enabling us to discern the evidences that are in the Scripture of its own divine original, we should often be shaken in our assent, and moved from our stability. For whereas our spiritual darkness is removed but in part, and at best whilst we are here we see things but darkly, as in a glass, all things believed having some sort of inevidence or obscurity attending them; and whereas temptations will frequently shake and disturb the due respect of the faculty unto the object, or interpose mists and clouds between them, we can have no assurance in believing, unless our minds are farther established by the Holy Ghost. He doth, therefore, three ways assist us in believing, and ascertain our minds of the things believed, so as that we may hold fast the beginning of our confidence, firm and steadfast unto the end. For,

1. He gives unto believers a *spiritual sense* of the *power and reality of the things believed*, whereby their faith is greatly established. And although the divine witness, whereunto our faith is ultimately resolved, doth not consist herein, yet, it is the greatest corroborating testimony, whereof we are capable. This is that which brings us unto the ‘riches of the full assurance of understanding;’ Col. ii. 2. as also, 1 Thess. i. 5. And on the account of this spiritual experience, is our perception of spiritual things so often expressed by acts of sense, as tasting, seeing, feeling, and the like means of assurance in things natural. And when believers have attained hereunto, they do find the divine wisdom, goodness, and authority of God so present unto them, as that they need neither argument, nor motive, nor any thing else, to persuade them unto, or confirm them in, believing. And whereas this spiritual experience, which believers obtain through the Holy Ghost, is such as cannot rationally be contended about, seeing those who have received it, cannot fully express it, and those who have not, cannot understand it, nor the efficacy which it hath to secure and establish the mind; it is left to be determined on by them alone, who have their ‘senses exercised to discern good and evil.’ And this belongs unto the internal subjective testimony of the Holy Ghost.

2. He assists, helps, and relieves us, against *temptations to the contrary*, so as that they shall not be prevalent. Our first *prime assent*, unto the divine authority of the Scripture, upon its proper grounds and reasons, will not secure us against future objections and temptations unto the contrary, from all manner of causes and occasions. David's faith was so assaulted by them, as that he said in his haste, that all men were liars. And Abraham himself, after he had received the promise, that in his seed all nations should be blessed, was reduced unto that anxious inquiry, 'Lord God what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?' Gen. xv. 2. And Peter was so winnowed by Satan, that although his faith failed not, yet he greatly failed and fainted in its exercise. And we all know what fears from within, what fightings from without, we are exposed unto in this matter. And of this sort are all those atheistical objections against the Scripture, which these days abound withal; which the devil useth as fiery darts, to inflame the souls of men, and to destroy their faith; and indeed this is that work, which the powers of hell are principally engaged in at this day. Having lopped off many branches, they now lay their axe to the root of faith, and thence in the midst of the profession of Christian religion, there is no greater controversy, than whether the Scriptures are the word of God or not. Against all these temptations, doth the Holy Ghost, give in such a continual supply of spiritual strength and assistance unto believers, as that they shall at no time prevail, nor their faith totally fail. In such cases the Lord Christ intercedes for us, that our faith fail not, and God's grace is sufficient against the buffetings of these temptations. And herein the truth of Christ's intercession, with the grace of God, and its efficiency, are communicated unto us by the Holy Ghost. What are those internal aids, whereby he establisheth and assureth our minds, against the force and prevalency of objections and temptations against the divine authority of the Scripture, how they are communicated unto us, and received by us, this is no place to declare in particular. It is in vain for any to pretend unto the name of Christians, by whom they are denied. And these also have the nature of an internal real testimony, whereby faith is established.

And because it is somewhat strange, that after a long

quiet possession of the professed faith, and assent of the generality of the minds of men thereunto, there should now arise among us, such an open opposition unto the divine authority of the Scriptures, as we find there is by experience; it may not be amiss in our passage, to name the principal causes or occasions thereof: for if we should bring them all into one reckoning, as justly we may, who either openly oppose it and reject it, or who use it or neglect it at their pleasure, or who set up other guides in competition with it or above it, or otherwise declare that they have no sense of the immediate authority of God therein; we shall find them to be like the Moors or slaves, in some countries or plantations, they are so great in number and force above their rulers and other inhabitants, that it is only want of communication, with confidence, and some distinct interests, that keep them from casting off their yoke and restraint. I shall name three causes only of this surprising and perilous event.

1. A long continued *outward profession* of the truth of the Scripture, without an *inward experience of its power*, betrays men at length to question the truth itself, at least not to regard it as divine. The owning of the Scriptures to be the word of God bespeaks a divine majesty, authority, and power to be present in it and with it. Wherefore, after men, who have for a long time so professed, do find that they never had any real experience of such a divine presence in it by any effects upon their own minds, they grow insensibly regardless of it, or to allow it a very common place in their thoughts. When they have worn off the impressions that were on their minds from tradition, education, and custom, they do for the future rather not oppose it than in any way believe it. And when once a reverence unto the word of God on the account of its authority is lost, an assent unto it on the account of truth will not long abide. And all such persons, under a concurrence of temptations and outward occasions, will either reject it, or prefer other guides before it.

2. The *power of lust* rising up unto a resolution of living in those sins, whereunto the Scripture doth unavoidably annex eternal ruin, hath prevailed with many to cast off its authority. For whilst they are resolved to live in an outrage of sin, to allow a divine truth and power in the Scripture, is to cast themselves under a present torment, as well as to

ascertain their future misery : for no other can be his condition who is perpetually sensible that God always condemns him in all that he doth, and will assuredly take vengeance of him, which is the constant language of the Scripture concerning such persons. Wherefore, although they will not immediately fall into an open atheistical opposition unto it, as that which, it may be, is not consistent with their interest and reputation in the world, yet looking upon it as the devils did on Jesus Christ, as that which ‘comes to torment them before their time,’ they keep it at the greatest distance from their thoughts and minds, until they have habituated themselves unto a contempt of it. There being, therefore, an utter impossibility of giving any pretence of reconciliation between the owning of the Scriptures to be the word of God, and a resolution to live in an excess of known sin ; multitudes suffer their minds to be bribed by their corrupt affections to a relinquishment of any regard unto it.

3. The *scandalous quarrels*, and disputations of those of the *church of Rome* against the Scripture and its authority, have contributed much unto the ruin of the faith of many. Their great design is by all means to secure the power, authority, and infallibility of their church. Of these they say continually, as the apostle in another case of the mariners, ‘unless these stay in the ship we cannot be saved ;’ without an acknowledgment of these things they would have it, that men can neither at present believe, nor be saved hereafter. To secure this interest, the authority of the Scripture must be by all means questioned and impaired. A divine authority in itself they will allow it, but with respect unto us it hath none but what it obtains by the suffrage and testimony of their church. But whereas *authority* is ἐκ τῶν πρὸς τὸ, and consists essentially in the relation and respect which it hath unto others, or those that are to be subject unto it ; to say that it hath an *authority in itself*, but *none towards us*, is not only to deny that it hath any authority at all, but also to reproach it with an empty name. They deal with it as the soldiers did with Christ, ‘they put a crown on his head, and clothed him with a purple robe ; and bowing the knee before him, mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews.’ They ascribe unto it the crown and robe of divine authority in itself, but not towards any one person in the world. So, *if they*

*please*, God shall be God, and his word be of some credit among men. Herein they seek continually to entangle those of the weaker sort, by urging them vehemently with this question, *How do you know the Scripture to be the word of God?* and have in continual readiness a number of *sophistical artifices* to weaken all evidences that shall be pleaded in its behalf. Nor is that all; but on all occasions they insinuate such *objections against it* from its *obscurity, imperfections, want of order, difficulties, seeming contradictions* in it, as are suited to take off the minds of men from a firm assent unto it, or reliance on it. As if a company of men should conspire by crafty multiplied insinuations, divulged on all advantages, to weaken the reputation of a chaste and sober matron; although they cannot deprive her of her virtue; yet unless the world were wiser than, for the most part, it appears to be, they will insensibly take off from her due esteem. And this is as bold an attempt as can well be made in any case. For the first tendency of these courses is to make men atheists, after which success it is left at uncertain hazard whether they will be Papists or no. Wherefore, as there can be no greater nor more dishonourable reflection made on Christian religion, than that it hath no other evidence or testimony of its truth, but the authority and witness of those by whom it is at present professed, and who have notable worldly advantages thereby; so the minds of multitudes are secretly influenced by the poison of these disputes, to think it no way necessary to believe the Scripture to be the word of God; or at least are shaken off from the grounds whereon they have professed it so to be. And the like disservice is done unto faith and the souls of men, by such as advance a light within, or immediate inspiration into competition with it, or the room of it. For as such imaginations take place, and prevail in the minds of men, so their respect unto the Scripture, and all sense of its divine authority doth decay, as experience doth openly manifest.

It is, I say, from an unusual concurrence of these and the like causes and occasions, that there is at present among us such a decay in, relinquishment of, and opposition unto, the belief of the Scripture, as, it may be, former ages could not parallel.

But against all these objections and temptations, the



minds of true believers are secured by supplies of spiritual light, wisdom, and grace from the Holy Ghost.

3. There are several other especial gracious actings of the Holy Spirit on the minds of believers, which belong also unto this *internal real testimony*, whereby their faith is established. Such are his *anointing* and *sealing* of them, his *witnessing* with them, and his being an *earnest* in them, all which must be elsewhere spoken unto. Hereby is our faith every day more and more increased and established. Wherefore, although no *internal work* of the Spirit can be the *formal reason* of our faith, or that which it is resolved into; yet is it such, as without it we can never sincerely believe as we ought, nor be established in believing against temptations and objections.

And with respect unto this work of the Holy Ghost it is, that divines at the first *reformation* did generally resolve our faith of the divine authority of the Scripture into the testimony of the Holy Spirit. But this they did not do exclusively unto the proper use of external arguments and motives of credibility, whose store indeed is great, and whose fountain is inexhaustible. For they arise from all the indubitable notions that we have of God or ourselves, in reference unto our present duty or future happiness. Much less did they exclude that evidence thereof which the Holy Ghost gives unto it in and by itself. Their judgment is well expressed in the excellent words of one of them. ‘*Maneat ergo,*’ saith he, ‘*hoc fixum, quos Spiritus intus docuit solide acquiescere in Scripturâ, et hanc quidem esse αὐτοπιστόν neque demonstrationi et rationibus subjici eam fas esse; quam tamen meretur apud nos certitudinem Spiritus testimonio consequi; etsi enim reverentiam sua sibi ultro majestate conciliat, tunc tamen demum serio nos afficit, quum per Spiritum obsignata est cordibus nostris. Istius ergo veritate illuminati, jam non aut nostro, aut aliorum judicio credimus a Deo esse Scripturam; sed supra humanum judicium certo certius constituimus, non secus ac si ipsius Dei numen illic intueretur hominum ministerio, ab ipsissimo Dei ore ad nos fluxisse. Non argumenta, non veri similitudines quærimus, quibus judicium nostrum incumbat; sed ut rei extra estimandi aleam positæ judicium ingeniumque nostrum subjicimus. Non qualiter superstitionibus solent miseri homines captivam*

mentem addicere; sed quia non dubiam vim Numinis illic sentimus vigere et spirare, quam ad parendum scientes ac volentes, vividius tamen et efficacius quam pro humana aut voluntate aut scientia trahimur et accendimur. Talis ergo est persuasio quæ rationes non requirat, talis notitia cui optima ratio constet, nempe, in qua securius constantiusque mens quiescat, quam in ullis rationibus; talis denique sensus, qui nisi ex cælesti revelatione nequeat. Non aliud loquor quam quod apud se experitur fidelium unusquisque nisi quod longe infra justam rei explicationem verba subsidunt.' Calv. Instit. lib. 2. cap. 7—9.

And we may here briefly call over what we have attained or passed through. For, (1.) we have shewed, in general, both what is the nature of *divine revelation*, and *divine illumination*, with their mutual respect unto one another. (2.) What are the principal external arguments or motives of *credibility*, whereby the Scripture may be proved to be of a divine original. (3.) What kind of persuasion is the effect of them, or what is the assent which we give unto the truth of the Scriptures on their account. (4.) What *objective evidence* there is unto reason in the doctrine of the Scriptures to induce the mind to assent unto them. (5.) What is the *nature of that faith* whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and how it is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. (6.) What is that *internal testimony* which is given unto the divine authority of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, what is the force and use thereof. The principal part of our work doth yet remain.

That which we have thus far made way for, and which is now our only remaining inquiry, is, *What is the work of the Holy Ghost with respect unto the objective evidence which we have concerning the Scripture, that it is the word of God*, which is the formal reason of our faith, and whereinto it is resolved; that is, we come to inquire and to give a direct answer unto that question, *Why we believe the Scripture to be the word of God?* what it is that our faith rests upon herein? and what it is that makes it the duty of every man to believe it so to be, unto whom it is proposed? And the reason why I shall be the briefer herein is, because I have long since in another discourse cleared this argument, and I shall not here again call over any thing that was delivered therein, because what

hath been unto this day gainsaid unto it, or excepted against it, hath been of little weight or consideration. Unto this great inquiry, therefore, I say,

*We believe the Scripture to be the word of God with divine faith for its own sake only*; or our faith is resolved into the authority and truth of God only, as revealing himself unto us therein and thereby. And this authority and veracity of God do infallibly manifest or evince themselves unto our faith, or our minds in the exercise of it, by the revelation itself in the Scripture, and no otherwise. Or, *Thus saith the Lord*, is the reason *why we ought to believe*, and why we do so; why we believe at all in general, and why we believe any thing in particular. And this we call the *formal object* or *reason* of our faith.

And it is evident that this is not God himself absolutely considered; for so he is only the *material object* of our faith; 'He that cometh unto God must believe that he is;' Heb. xi. 6. Nor is it the truth of God absolutely, for that we believe as we do other *essential properties* of his nature: but it is the truth of God *revealing himself, his mind and will, unto us in the Scripture*. This is the sole reason why we believe any thing with divine faith.

It is, or may be, inquired, wherefore we do believe *Jesus Christ to be the Son of God*, or that God is one in nature, subsisting in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? I answer, it is, because God himself, the first truth, who *cannot lie*, hath revealed and declared these things so to be, and he who is *our all*, requireth us so to believe. If it be asked how, wherein, or whereby, God hath revealed and declared these things so to be, or what is that revelation which God hath made hereof? I answer, *It is the Scripture, and that only*. And if it be asked, how I know this Scripture to be a divine revelation, to be the word of God? I answer, 1. I do not know it *demonstratively*, upon rational scientific principles, because such a divine revelation is not capable of such a demonstration; 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2. I do not assent unto it, or think it to be so, upon arguments and *motives highly probable*, or morally uncontrollable only, as I am assuredly persuaded of many other things whereof I can have no certain demonstration; 1 Thess. ii. 15. But I believe it so to be *with faith divine and supernatural*, resting on, and resolved

into, the authority and veracity of God himself, evidencing themselves unto my mind, my soul, and my conscience, by this *revelation itself*, and not otherwise.

Here we rest, and deny that we believe the Scripture to be the word of God *formally* for any other reason but itself, which assureth us of its divine authority. And if we rest not here, we must run on the rock of a *moral certainty* only, which shakes the foundation of all divine faith; or fall into the gulf and labyrinth of an *endless circle*, in proving two things *mutually* by one another, as the church by the Scripture, and the Scripture by the church, in an everlasting rotation. Unless we intend so to wander, we must come to something wherein we may rest for its own sake, and that not with a strong and firm opinion, but with divine faith. And nothing can rationally pretend unto this privilege, but the truth of God manifesting itself in the Scripture. And therefore, those, who will not allow it hereunto, do, some of them, wisely deny that the Scriptures being the word of God, is the object of divine faith directly, but only of a moral persuasion from external arguments and considerations. And I do believe that they will grant, that if the Scripture be so to be believed, it must be for its own sake. For those who would have us to believe the Scripture to be the word of God upon the authority of the church, proposing it unto us, and witnessing so to be, though they make a fair appearance of a ready and easy way for the exercise of faith, yet, when things come to be sifted and tried, they do so confound all sorts of things, that they know not where to stand or abide. But it is not now my business to examine their pretences, I have done it elsewhere. I shall, therefore, prove and establish the assertion laid down, after I have made way to it by one or two previous observations.

1. We suppose herein all the *motives of credibility* before mentioned, that is, all the arguments *ab extra*, which vehemently persuade the Scripture to be the word of God, and wherewith it may be protected against objections and temptations to the contrary. They have all of them their use, and may in their proper place be insisted on. Especially ought they to be pleaded when the Scripture is attacked by an atheism, arising from the love and practice of those lusts and sins which are severely condemned therein, and threatened

with the utmost vengeance. With others, they may be considered as previous inducements unto believing, or concomitant means of strengthening faith in them that do believe. In the first way, I confess, to the best of my observation of things past and present, their use is not great, nor ever hath been in the church of God. For assuredly, the most that do sincerely believe the divine original, and the authority of the Scripture, do it without any great consideration of them, or being much influenced by them. And there are many who, as Austin speaks, are saved *simplicitate credendi*, and not *subtilitate disputandi*, that are not able to inquire much into them, nor yet to apprehend much of their force and efficacy, when they are proposed unto them. Most persons, therefore, are effectually converted to God, and have saving faith whereby they believe the Scripture, and virtually all that is contained in it, before they have ever once considered them. And God forbid we should think that none believe the Scripture aright, but those who are able to apprehend and manage the subtile arguments of learned men produced in their confirmation. Yea, we affirm, on the contrary, that those who believe them on no other grounds have indeed no true divine faith at all. Hence they were not of old insisted on for the ingenerating of faith in them to whom the word was preached, nor ordinarily are so to this day by any who understand what is their work and duty. But in the second way, wherever there is occasion from objections, oppositions, or temptations, they may be pleaded to good use and purpose. And they may do well to be furnished with them, who are unavoidably exposed unto trials of that nature. For, as for that course which some take in all places and at all times, to be disputing about the Scriptures, and their authority; it is a practice giving countenance unto atheism, and is to be abhorred of all that fear God, and the consequences of it are sufficiently manifest.

2. The *ministry of the church*, as it is the *ground and pillar of truth*, holding it up and declaring it, is in an ordinary way previously necessary unto believing. For ‘faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’ We believe the Scripture to be the word of God for itself alone, but not by itself alone. The ministry of the word is the means which God hath appointed for the declaration and making known

the testimony which the Holy Spirit gives in the Scripture unto its divine original. And this is the ordinary way whereby men are brought to believe the Scripture to be the word of God. The church in its ministry, owning, witnessing, and avowing it so to be, instructing all sorts of persons out of it, there is, together with a sense and apprehension of the truth and power of the things taught and revealed in it, faith in itself as the word of God ingenerated in them.

3. We do also here suppose the *internal effectual work of the Spirit* begetting faith in us as was before declared; without which, we can believe neither the Scripture nor any thing else with faith divine, not for want of evidence in them, but of faith in ourselves.

These things being supposed, we do affirm, that *it is the authority and truth of God, as manifesting themselves in the supernatural revelation made in the Scripture, that our faith ariseth from and is resolved into.* And herein consists that testimony which the Spirit gives unto the word of God that it is so; ‘for it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.’ The Holy Ghost being the immediate author of the whole Scripture, doth therein and thereby give testimony unto the divine truth and original of it, by the characters of divine authority and veracity impressed on it, and evidencing themselves in its power and efficacy. And let it be observed, that what we assert, respects the revelation itself, the Scripture, the writing, *τὴν γραφὴν*, and not merely the things written or contained in it. The arguments produced by some to prove the truth of the doctrines of the Scripture, reach not the cause in hand. For our inquiry is not about believing the truths revealed, but about believing the revelation itself, the Scripture itself, to be divine. And this we do only because of the authority and veracity of the revealer, that is, of God himself, manifesting themselves therein.

To manifest this fully, I shall do these things.

1. Prove that our *faith is so resolved into the Scripture* as a divine revelation, and not into any thing else, that is, we believe the Scripture to be the word of God for its own sake, and not for the sake of any thing else, either external arguments, or authoritative testimony of men whatever.

2. Shew how, or by what means, the Scripture doth *evi-*

dence its own divine original, or the authority of God is so evidenced in it and by it, as that we need no other *formal cause* or *reason of our faith*, whatever motives or means of believing we may make use of. And as to the first of these.

1. That is the *formal reason* whereon we do believe, which the Scripture proposeth as the only *reason why we should so do*, why it is our duty to do so, and whereunto it requireth our *assent*. Now this is to itself as it is the word of God, and because it is so. Or it proposeth the authority of God in itself, and that alone, which we are to acquiesce in, and the truth of God, and that alone, which our faith is to rest on, and is resolved into. It doth not require us to believe it upon the testimony of any church, or on any other arguments that it gives us to prove that it is from God; but speaks unto us immediately in his name, and thereon requires faith and obedience.

Some, it may be, will ask, *Whether this prove the Scripture to be the word of God, because it says so of itself, when any other writing may say the same?* But we are not now giving arguments to prove unto others the Scripture to be the word of God, but only proving and shewing what our own faith resteth on, and is resolved into, or at least ought so to be. How it evidenceth itself unto our faith to be the word of God we shall afterward declare. It is sufficient unto our present purpose, that God requires us to believe the Scripture for no other reason but because it is his word, or a divine revelation from him; and if so, his authority and truth are the formal reason why we believe the Scripture or any thing contained in it. To this purpose do testimonies abound in particular, besides that general attestation which is given unto it in that sole preface of divine revelations, ‘Thus saith the Lord;’ and therefore, they are to be believed. Some of them we must mention.

Deut. xxxi. 11—13. ‘When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children which have not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear

the Lord your God.' It is plain that God here requireth faith and obedience of the whole people, men, women, and children. The inquiry is, what he requireth it unto? It is to this law, to this law written in the books of Moses, which was to be read unto them out of the book, at the hearing of which they were obliged to believe and obey. To evidence that law to be his, he proposeth nothing but itself. But it will be said, that generation was sufficiently convinced that the law was from God, by the miracles which they beheld in the giving of it. But moreover it is ordered to be proposed unto children of future generations, who knew nothing, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord.

That which by the appointment of God is to be *proposed unto them that know nothing* that they may believe, that is unto them the *formal reason* of their believing. But this is the written word, 'Thou shalt read this law unto them who have known nothing, that they may hear and learn,' &c. Whatever use, therefore, there may be of other motives or testimonies to commend the law unto us, of the ministry of the church especially, which is here required unto the proposal of the word unto men, it is the law itself, or the written word, which is the object of our faith, and which we believe for its own sake; see also chap. xxix. 29. where revealed things are said to belong unto us and our children that we might do them, that is, receive them on the account of their divine revelation.

Isa. viii. 19, 20. 'And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep and mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' The inquiry is, by what means men may come to satisfaction in their minds and consciences, or what their faith and trust is in. Two things are proposed unto this end. (1.) Immediate *diabolical revelations*, real or pretended. (2.) The *written word of God*, the law and the testimony. Hereunto are we sent, and that upon the account of its own authority alone, in opposition unto all other pretences of assurance or security. And the sole reason why any one doth not acquiesce by faith in the written word, is, because he hath no *mornings or light of truth* shining on him.



But how shall we know the law and testimony, this written word, to be the word of God, and believe it so to be, and distinguish it from every other pretended divine revelation, that is not so? This is declared,

Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. ‘The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my word like as fire, saith the Lord? and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?’ It is supposed, that there are two persons in reputation for divine revelations esteemed prophets; one of them only pretends so to be, and declares the dreams of his own fancy, or the divinations of his own mind, as the word of God. The other hath the word of God and declares it faithfully from him. Yea, but how shall we know the one from the other? Even as men know wheat from chaff, by their different natures and effects. For as false pretended revelations are but as chaff which every wind will scatter; so the true word of God is like a fire, and like a hammer, is accompanied with that light, efficacy, and power, that it manifests itself unto the consciences of men so to be. Hereon doth God call us to rest our faith on it in opposition unto all other pretences whatever.

But is it of this authority and efficacy in itself? See Luke xvi. 27—31. ‘Then said he (the rich man in hell), I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus who was dead), unto my father’s house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they would repent; and he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’ The question here between Abraham and the rich man in this parable, indeed between the wisdom of God and the superstitious contrivances of men, is about the way and means of bringing those who are unbelievers and impenitent unto faith and repentance. He who was in hell apprehended that nothing would make them believe but a miracle, one rising from the dead and speaking unto them; which, or the like marvellous ope-

rations, many at this day think would have mighty power and influence upon them to settle their minds and change their lives; should they see one rise from the dead, and come and converse with them, this would convince them of the immortality of the soul, of future rewards and punishments, as giving them sufficient evidence thereof, so that they would assuredly repent and change their lives; but as things are stated they have no sufficient evidence of these things, so that they doubt so far about them as that they are not really influenced by them; give them but one real miracle and you shall have them for ever. This, I say, was the opinion and judgment of him who was represented in hell, as it is of many who are posting thither apace. He who was in heaven thought otherwise, wherein we have the immediate judgment of Jesus Christ given in this matter, determining this controversy. The question is about sufficient evidence and efficacy to cause us to believe things divine and supernatural; and this he determines to be in the written word, 'Moses and the prophets.' If he that will not believe on the single evidence of the written word to be from God, or a divine revelation of his will, will never believe upon the evidence of miracles, nor any other motives, then that written word contains in itself the entire formal reason of faith, or all that evidence of the authority and truth of God in it, which faith divine and supernatural rests upon; that is, it is to be believed for its own sake. But, saith our Lord Jesus Christ himself, if men will not hear, that is, believe Moses and the prophets, 'neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead,' and come and preach unto them, a greater miracle than which they could not desire. Now this could not be spoken, if the Scripture did not contain in itself the whole entire formal reason of believing; for if it have not this, something necessary unto believing would be wanting, though that were enjoyed. And this is directly affirmed,

John xx. 30, 31. 'And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through his name.' The signs which Christ wrought did evidence him to be the Son of God. But how come we to know and believe these signs? what is the way

and means thereof? Saith the blessed apostle, 'these things are written that you may believe;' this writing of them by divine inspiration is so far sufficient to beget and assure faith in you, as that thereby you may have eternal life through Jesus Christ. For if the writing of divine things and revelations be the means appointed of God to cause men to believe unto eternal life, then it must as such carry along with it sufficient reason why we should believe, and grounds whereon we should do so. And in like manner is this matter determined by the apostle Peter,

2 Pet. i. 16—21. 'For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The question is about the gospel, or the declaration of the powerful coming of Jesus Christ, whether it were to be believed or no, and, if it were, upon what grounds? Some said it was a 'cunningly devised fable;' others, that it was a fanatical story of madmen, as Festus thought of it, when preached by Paul; Acts xxvi. 24. and very many are of the same mind still. The apostles, on the contrary, averred that what was spoken concerning him, were 'words of truth and soberness,' yea, 'faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptation;' 1 Tim. i. 15. that is, to be believed for its worth and truth. The grounds and reasons hereof, are two. (1.) The testimony of the apostles, who not only conversed with Jesus Christ, and were eye-witnesses of his majesty, beholding his glory, 'the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' John i. 14. which they gave in evidence of the truth of the gospel; 1 John i. 1. But also heard a miraculous testi-

mony given unto him immediately from God in heaven ; ver. 17, 18. This gave them indeed sufficient assurance ; but whereinto shall they resolve their faith who heard not this testimony ? Why, they have a ‘ more sure,’ that is, a most sure ‘ word of prophecy,’ that is, the written word of God, that is sufficient of itself to secure their faith in this matter, especially as confirmed by the testimony of the apostles, whereby the church comes to be built in its faith on the ‘ foundation of the prophets and apostles ;’ Eph. ii. 20. But why should we believe this word of prophecy ? may not that also be a ‘ cunningly devised fable,’ and the whole Scripture be but the suggestions of men’s private spirits, as is objected ? Ver. 20. All is finally resolved into this, that the writers of it were immediately moved and acted by the Holy Ghost, from which divine original it carrieth along its own evidence with it. Plainly, that which the apostle teacheth us is, that we believe all other divine truths for the Scripture’s sake, or because they are declared therein ; but the Scripture we believe for its own sake, or because ‘ holy men of God wrote it as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’

So is the whole object of faith proposed by the same apostle, 2 Pet. iii. 2. ‘ The words that were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.’ And because our faith is resolved into them, we are said to be ‘ built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles,’ as was said, Eph. ii. 20. that is, our faith rests solely, as on its proper foundation which bears the weight of it, on the authority and truth of God in their writings. Hereunto we may add that of Paul,

Rom. xvi. 25, 26. ‘ According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith.’ The matter to be believed is the mystery of the gospel, which was kept secret since the world began, or from the giving of the first promise, not absolutely, but with respect unto that full manifestation which it hath now received. This God commands to be believed, the everlasting God, he who hath so-vereign authority over all, requires faith in a way of obedi-

ence hereunto. But what ground or reason have we to believe it? This alone is proposed, namely, the divine revelation made in the preaching of the apostles, and writings of the prophets; for 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;' Rom. x. 17. This course and no other did our Saviour, even after his resurrection, take to beget and confirm faith in the disciples; Luke xxiv. 25—27. That great testimony to this purpose, 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. I do not plead in particular, because I have so fully insisted on it in another discourse.

From these and many other testimonies to the same purpose, which might be produced, it is evident,

1. That it is the Scripture itself, the *word* or will of God as *revealed* or *written*, which is proposed unto us as the object of our faith and obedience, which we are to receive and believe with faith divine and supernatural.

2. That *no other reason* is proposed unto us, either as a *motive* to encourage us, or as an *argument* to assure us, that we shall not be mistaken, but only its own *divine original and authority*, making our duty necessary, and securing our faith infallibly. And those testimonies are with me of more weight a thousand times, than the plausible reasonings of any to the contrary. With some indeed it is grown a matter of contempt to quote or cite the Scripture in our writings, such reverence have they for the ancient fathers, some of whose writings are nothing else but a perpetual contexture of Scripture. But for such who pretend to despise those testimonies in this case, it is because either they do not understand what they are produced to confirm, or cannot answer the proof that is in them. For it is not unlikely but that some persons well conceited of their own understanding in things wherein they are most ignorant, will pride and please themselves in the ridiculousness of proving the Scripture to be the word of God by testimonies taken out of it. But, as was said, we must not forego the truth because either they will not or cannot understand what we discourse about.

2. Our assertion is confirmed by the *uniform practice* of the *prophets* and *apostles*, and all the penmen of the Scripture, in proposing these divine revelations which they received by immediate inspiration from God. For that which was the reason of their faith unto whom they first declared those

divine revelations, is the reason of our faith now they are recorded in the Scripture. For the writing of it being by God's appointment, it comes into the room, and supplies the place, of their oral ministry. On what ground soever men were obliged to receive and believe divine revelations, when made unto them by the prophets and apostles, on the same are we obliged to receive and believe them now they are made unto us in the Scripture, the writing being by divine inspiration, and appointed as the means and cause of our faith. It is true, God was pleased sometimes to bear witness unto their personal ministry by miracles, or signs and wonders, as Heb. ii. 4. 'God bearing them witness.' But this was only at some seasons, and with some of them. That which they universally insisted on, whether they wrought any miracles or no, was, that the word which they preached, declared, wrote, was not the word of man, came not by any private suggestion, or from any invention of their own, but was indeed the word of God; 1 Thess. ii. 13. and declared by them as they were acted by the Holy Ghost; 2 Pet. i. 21.

Under the Old Testament, although the prophets sometimes referred persons unto the word already written, as that which their faith was to acquiesce in, Isa. viii. 20. Mal. iv. 4. setting out its power and excellency for all the ends of faith and obedience; Psal. xix. 7—9. cxix. and not to any thing else, nor to any other motives or arguments to beget and require faith, but its own authority only; yet, as to their own especial messages and revelations, they laid the foundation of all the faith and obedience which they required, in this alone, 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of truth.' And under the New Testament, the infallible preachers and writers thereof do, in the first place, propose the writings of the Old Testament to be received for their own sake, or on the account of their divine original; see John v. 45—47. Luke xvi. 29. 31. Matt. xxi. 42. Acts xviii. 24, 25. 28. xxiv. 14. xxvi. 22. 2 Pet. i. 21. Hence are they called, 'the oracles of God;' Rom. iii. 2. And oracles always required an assent for their own sakes, and other evidence they pleaded none. And for the revelations which they superadded, they pleaded that they had them 'immediately from God, by Jesus Christ;' Gal. i. 1. And this was accompanied with such an infallible assurance in them that

received it, as to be preferred above a supposition of the highest miracle to confirm any thing to the contrary ; Gal. i. 8. For if an angel from heaven should have preached any other doctrine than what they revealed and proposed in the name and authority of God, they were to esteem him accursed. For this cause they still insisted on their apostolical authority and mission, which included infallible inspiration and directions, as the reason of the faith of them unto whom they preached and wrote. And as for those who were not themselves divinely inspired, or wherein those that were so did not act by immediate inspiration, they proved the truth of what they delivered by its consonancy unto the Scriptures already written, referring the minds and consciences of men unto them for their ultimate satisfaction ; Acts xviii. 28. xxviii. 33.

3. It was before granted, that there is required as subservient unto believing, as a *means* of it, or the resolution of our faith into the authority of God in the Scriptures, the *ministerial proposal* of the Scriptures, and the truths contained in them, with the command of God for obedience unto them ; Rom. xvi. 25, 26. This ministry of the church, either extraordinary or ordinary, God hath appointed unto this end, and ordinarily it is indispensable thereunto ; Rom. x. 14, 15. ‘How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? and how shall they preach unless they are sent ?’ Without this ordinarily we cannot believe the Scripture to be the word of God, nor the things contained in it to be from him, though we do not believe either the one or the other for it. I do grant that in extraordinary cases outward providences may supply the room of this ministerial proposal ; for it is all one, as unto our duty, by what means the Scripture is brought unto us. But upon a supposition of this ministerial proposal of the word, which ordinarily includes the whole duty of the church in its testimony and declaration of the truth, I desire to know whether those unto whom it is proposed are obliged, without farther external evidence, to receive it as the word of God, to rest their faith in it, and submit their consciences unto it ? The rule seems plain, that they are obliged so to do ; Mark xvi. 16. We may

consider this under the distinct ways of its proposal, extraordinary and ordinary.

Upon the preaching of any of the prophets by immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or on their declaration of any *new revelation* they had from God, by preaching or writing, suppose Isaiah or Jeremiah, I desire to know whether or no all persons were bound to receive their doctrine as from God, to *believe* and submit unto the *authority* of God in the revelation made by him, without any *external* motives or arguments, or the testimony or authority of the church witnessing thereunto? If they were not, then were they all excused as guiltless, who refused to believe the message they declared in the name of God, and in despising the *warnings* and *instructions* which they gave them. For external motives they used not, and the *present church* mostly condemned them and their *ministry*; as is plain in the case of Jeremiah. Now it is impious to imagine that those to whom they spake in the name of God, were not obliged to believe them, and it tends to the overthrow of all religion. If we shall say that they were obliged to believe them, and that under the penalty of divine displeasure, and so to receive the revelation made by them, or their declaration of it, as the *word of God*; then it must contain in it the formal *reason* of believing, or the full and entire cause, reason, and ground, why they ought to believe with faith divine and supernatural. Or let another ground of faith in this case be assigned.

Suppose the proposal be made in the *ordinary* ministry of the church. Hereby the Scripture is declared unto men to be the *word of God*; they are acquainted with it, and what God requires of them therein, and they are charged in the name of God to receive and believe it. Doth any obligation unto believing hence arise? It may be some will say that immediately there is not; only they will grant that men are bound hereon to *inquire* into such *reasons* and *motives*, as are proposed unto them for its reception and admission. I say, there is no doubt but that men are obliged to consider all things of that nature which are proposed unto them, and not to receive it with *brutish implicit belief*. For the receiving of it is to be an act of men's own minds or understandings, on the best grounds and evidences which the



nature of the thing proposed is capable of. But supposing men to do their duty in their diligent inquiries into the whole matter, I desire to know, whether by the proposal mentioned, there come upon men an obligation to believe? If there do not, then are all men perfectly innocent, who refuse to receive the gospel, in the preaching of it, as to any respect unto *that preaching*; which to say, is to overthrow the whole dispensation of the ministry. If they are obliged to *believe* upon the preaching of it, then hath the word in itself those *evidences* of its divine original and authority, which are a sufficient ground of faith, or reason of believing; for what God requires us to believe upon, hath so always.

As the issue of this whole discourse, it is affirmed, that our faith is built on, and resolved into, the *Scripture itself*, which carries with it its own evidence of being a divine revelation. And, therefore, doth that faith ultimately rest in the *truth and authority of God alone*, and not in any human testimony, such as is that of the church, nor in any rational arguments or motives that are absolutely fallible.

It may be said, that if the Scripture thus *evidence* itself to be the word of God, as the sun manifesteth itself by light, and fire by heat, or as the first principles of reason are evident in themselves without farther proof or testimony; then every one, and all men, upon the proposal of the Scripture unto them, and its own bare assertion, that it is the word of God, would, necessarily, on that evidence alone, assent thereunto, and believe it so to be. But this is not so, all experience lieth against it; nor is there any pleadable ground of reason that so it is, or that so it ought to be.

In answer unto this objection, I shall do these two things.

1. I shall shew what it is, what power, what faculty in the minds of men, whereunto this revelation is proposed, and whereby we assent unto the truth of it, wherein the mistakes whereon this objection proceedeth will be discovered.

2. I shall mention some of those things, whereby the Holy Ghost testifieth and giveth evidence unto the Scripture in and by itself, so as that our faith may be immediately resolved into the veracity of God alone.

1. And, in the first place, we may consider, that there are *three ways* whereby we *assent* unto any thing that is proposed unto us as true, and receive it as such.

(1.) By inbred principles of *natural light*, and the first rational actings of our minds. This in *reason* answers *instinct* in irrational creatures. Hence God complains that his people did neglect and sin against their own natural light, and first dictates of reason, whereas brute creatures would not forsake the conduct of the instinct of their natures; Isa. i. 3. In general, the mind is necessarily determined to an assent unto the proper objects of these principles; it cannot do otherwise. It cannot but assent unto the prime dictates of the light of nature, yea, those dictates are nothing but its assent. Its first *apprehension* of the things which the light of nature embraceth, without either express reasonings or farther consideration, are this assent. Thus doth the mind embrace in itself the general notions of moral good and evil, with the difference between them, however it practically complies not with what they guide unto; Jude 10. And so doth it assent unto many principles of reason, as that the whole is greater than the part, without admitting any debate about them.

(2.) By *rational considerations* of things externally proposed unto us. Herein the mind exerciseth its discursive faculty, gathering one thing out of another, and concluding one thing from another. And hereon is it able to assent unto what is proposed unto it in *various degrees of certainty*, according unto the nature and degree of the evidence it proceeds upon. Hence it hath a *certain knowledge* of some things; of others an *opinion* or persuasion prevalent against the objections to the contrary, which it knows, and whose force it understands, which may be true or false.

(3.) By *faith*. This respects that power of our minds, whereby we are able to assent unto any thing as true, which we have no first principles concerning, no inbred notions of, nor can from more known principles make unto ourselves any certain rational conclusions concerning them. This is our assent *upon testimony*, whereon we believe many things, which no sense, inbred principles, nor reasonings of our own, could either give us an acquaintance with, or an assurance of. And this *assent* also hath not only *various degrees*, but is also of *divers kinds*, according as the *testimony* is which it ariseth from, and resteth on; as being *human*, if that be *human*, and *divine*, if that be so also.

According to these distinct faculties and powers of our souls, God is pleased to reveal or make known himself, his mind or will, *three ways* unto us. For he hath implanted no power on our minds, but the principal use and exercise of it are to be with respect unto himself, and our living unto him, which is the end of them all. And a neglect of the improvement of them unto this end, is the highest aggravation of sin. It is an aggravation of sin, when men abuse the creatures of God otherwise than he hath appointed, or in not using them to his glory; when they take his corn, and wine, and oil, and spend them on their lusts; Hos. ii. 8. It is a higher aggravation when men in sinning abuse and dishonour their own bodies; for these are the principal external workmanship of God, being made for eternity, and whose preservation unto his glory is committed unto us in an especial manner. This the apostle declareth to be the peculiar aggravation of the sin of fornication and uncleanness in any kind; 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19. But the height of impiety consists in the abuse of the faculties and powers of the soul, wherewith we are endowed purposely and immediately for the glorifying of God. Hence proceed unbelief, profaneness, blasphemy, atheism, and the like pollutions of the spirit or mind. And these are sins of the highest provocation. For the powers and faculties of our minds being given us only to enable us to live unto God, the diverting of their principal exercise unto other ends, is an act of enmity against him, and affront unto him.

(1.) He makes himself known unto us by the *immediate principles of our nature*, unto which he hath communicated as a power of apprehending, so an indelible sense of his being, his authority, and his will, so far as our natural dependance on him, and moral subjection unto him, do require. For whereas there are two things in this natural light and first dictates of reason; first, a *power of conceiving*, discerning, and assenting; and, secondly, a *power of judging* and determining upon the things so discerned and assented unto: by the one God makes known his being, and essential properties; by the other his sovereign authority over all.

As to the first, the apostle affirms, that τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς; Rom. i. 19. ‘That which may be known of God (his essence, being, subsistence, his natu-

ral, necessary, essential properties) is manifest in them ;' that is, it hath a self-evidencing power, acting itself in the minds of all men endued with natural light and reason.

And as unto his *sovereign authority*, he doth evidence it in and by the *consciences of men*, which are the judgment that they make, and cannot but make, of themselves and their actions, with respect unto the authority and judgment of God ; Rom. ii. 14, 15. And thus the mind doth assent unto the principles of God's being and authority, antecedently unto any actual exercise of the discursive faculty of reason, or other testimony whatever.

(2.) He doth it unto our *reason in its exercise*, by proposing such things unto its consideration, as from whence it may, and cannot but conclude, in an assent unto the truth of what God intends to reveal unto us that way. This he doth by the works of creation and providence, which present themselves unavoidably unto reason in its exercise, to instruct us in the nature, being, and properties of God.

Thus the 'heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard ;' Psal. xix. 1—3. But yet they do not thus declare, evidence, and reveal the glory of God unto the first principles and notions of natural light, without the actual exercise of reason. Only they do so 'when we consider his heavens the work of his fingers, the moon and the stars which he hath ordained,' as the same psalmist speaks, Psal. viii. 3. A rational consideration of them, their greatness, order, beauty, and use, is required unto that testimony and evidence which God gives in them and by them unto himself, his glorious being and power. To this purpose the apostle discourseth at large concerning the works of creation ; Rom. i. 20—22. as also, of those of providence ; Acts xiv. 15—17. xvii. 24—28. and the rational use we are to make of them ; ver. 29. So God calls unto men for the exercise of their reason about these things ; reproaching them with stupidity and brutishness where they are wanting therein ; Isa. xlvi. 7—9. xlv. 18—20.

(3.) God reveals himself unto *our faith*, or that power of our souls whereby we are able to assent unto the truth of what is proposed unto us upon testimony. And this he doth by

his word, or the Scriptures, proposed unto us in the manner and way before expressed.

He doth not reveal himself by his word unto the principles of natural light, nor unto reason in its exercise. But yet these principles, and reason itself, with all the faculties of our minds, are consequentially affected with that revelation, and are drawn forth into their proper exercise by it. But in the gospel the righteousness of God 'is revealed from faith to faith;' Rom. i. 17. not to natural light, sense, or reason, in the first place. And it is faith that is the evidence of things not seen, as revealed in the word; Heb. xi. 1. Unto this kind of revelation, *Thus saith the Lord*, is the only ground and reason of our assent; and that assent is the assent of faith, because it is resolved into testimony alone.

And concerning these several ways of the communication or revelation of the knowledge of God, it must be always observed, that there is a *perfect consonancy in the things revealed by them all*. If any thing pretends from the one, what is absolutely contradictory unto the other, or our senses as the means of them, it is not to be received.

The foundation of the whole, as of all the actings of our souls, is in the inbred principles of natural light, or first necessary dictates of our intellectual rational nature. This, so far as it extends, is a *rule unto our apprehension* in all that follows. Wherefore, if any pretend in the exercise of reason, to conclude unto any thing concerning the nature, being, or will of God, that is directly *contradictory* unto those principles and dictates, it is no divine revelation unto our reason, but a *paralogism* from the defect of reason in its exercise. This is that which the apostle chargeth on, and vehemently urgeth against, the *Heathen philosophers*. Inbred notions they had in themselves of the being and eternal power of God; and these were so manifest in them thereby, that they could not but own them. Hereon they set their rational *discursive faculty* at work in the consideration of God and his being. But herein were they so vain and foolish, as to draw conclusions *directly contrary* unto the first principles of natural light, and the unavoidable notions which they had of the eternal being of God; Rom. i. 21—24. And many upon their pretended rational consideration of the *promiscuous event of things* in the world, have foolishly concluded that all

things had a *fortuitous beginning*, and have *fortuitous events*, or such as from a concatenation of antecedent causes are *fatally necessarily*, and are not disposed by an infinitely wise, unerring, holy providence. And this also, is directly *contradictory* unto the first principles and notions of natural light, whereby it openly proclaims itself not to be an effect of reason in its due exercise, but a mere delusion.

So if any pretend unto *revelations by faith*, which are contradictory unto the first principles of natural light, or reason in its proper exercise about its proper objects, it is a delusion. On this ground the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation is justly rejected; for it proposeth that as a revelation by faith, which is expressly contradictory unto our sense and reason in their proper exercise about their proper objects. And a supposition of the possibility of any such thing, would make the ways whereby God reveals and makes known himself, to cross and interfere one with another; which would leave us no certainty in any thing divine or human.

But yet as these means of divine revelation do *harmonize* and perfectly agree one with the other; so they are not *objectively equal*, or equally extensive, nor are they co-ordinate, but subordinate unto one another. Wherefore, there are many things discernible by reason in its exercise, which do not appear unto the first principles of natural light. So the sober philosophers of old attained unto many true and great conceptions of God, and the excellencies of his nature, above what they arrived unto, who either did not, or could not, cultivate and improve the principles of natural light in the same manner as they did. It is, therefore, folly to pretend that things so made known of God are not infallibly true and certain, because they are not obvious unto the first conceptions of natural light, without the due exercise of reason, provided they are not contradictory thereunto. And there are many things revealed unto faith that are above and beyond the comprehension of reason, in the best and utmost of its most proper exercise. Such are all the principal mysteries of Christian religion. And it is the height of folly to reject them, as some do, because they are not discernible and comprehensible by reason, seeing they are not contradictory thereunto. Wherefore, these ways of God's revelation of himself, are not equally extensive, or commensurate,

but are so subordinate one unto another, that what is wanting unto the one is supposed by the other, unto the accomplishment of the whole and entire end of divine revelation ; and the truth of God is the same in them all.

(1.) The revelation which God makes of himself in the first way, by the *inbred principles of natural light*, doth sufficiently and infallibly evidence itself to be from him ; it doth it in, unto, and by, those principles themselves. This revelation of God is infallible, the assent unto it is infallible, which the infallible evidence it gives of itself makes to be so. We dispute not now, what a few atheistical sceptics pretend unto, whose folly hath been sufficiently detected by others. All the sobriety that is in the world consents in this, that the *light of the knowledge of God*, in and by the inbred principles of our minds and consciences, doth sufficiently, uncontrollably, and infallibly, manifest itself to be from him, and that the mind neither is, nor can be possibly imposed on, in its apprehensions of that nature. And if the first dictates of reason concerning God, do not *evidence themselves* to be from God, they are neither of any use nor force ; for they are not capable of being confirmed by external arguments ; and what is written about them, is to shew their force and evidence, not to give them any. Wherefore, this first way of God's revelation of himself unto us is infallible, and infallibly evidenceth itself in our minds, according to the capacity of our natures.

(2.) The revelation that God maketh of himself, by the *works of creation and providence, unto our reason in exercise*, or the faculties of our souls as *discursive*, concluding rationally one thing from another, doth sufficiently, yea, infallibly evidence and demonstrate itself to be from him, so that it is impossible we should be deceived therein. It doth not do so unto the *inbred principles* of natural light, unless they are engaged in a *rational exercise*, about the means of the revelation made ; that is, we must rationally consider the works of God, both of creation and providence, or we cannot learn by them what God intends to reveal of himself ; and in our doing so we cannot be deceived. ' For the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ;' Rom. i. 20. They are clearly seen,

and therefore may be perfectly understood, as to what they teach of God, without any possibility of mistake. And wherever men do not receive the revelation intended in the way intended, that is, do not certainly conclude, that what God teaches by his works of creation and providence, namely, his eternal power and Godhead, with the essential properties thereof, infinite wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and the like, is certainly and infallibly so, believing it accordingly; it is not from any defect in the revelation, or its *self-evidencing* efficacy, but only from the depraved, vicious habits of their minds, their enmity against God, and dislike of him. And so the apostle saith, that they who rejected or improved not the revelation of God, did it, ‘because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge;’ Rom. i. 28. For which cause God did so severely revenge their natural unbelief, as is there expressed. See Isa. xlvi. 8. xlv. 15. 19, 20. That which I principally insist on from hence is, that the revelation which God makes of himself, by the works of creation and providence, doth not evidence itself unto the first principles of natural light, so as that an assent should be given thereunto, without the actual exercise of reason, or the discursive faculty of our minds about them; but thereunto it doth infallibly evidence itself. So may the Scripture have, and hath a *self-evidencing efficacy*, though this appear not unto the light of first natural principles, no nor to bare reason in its exercise. For,

(3.) Unto our *faith* God reveals himself by the *Scripture*, or his word which he hath *magnified above all his name*; Psal. cxxxviii. 2. that is, implanted on it more characters of himself and his properties, than on any other way, whereby he revealeth or maketh himself known unto us. And this revelation of God by his word, we confess, is not sufficient nor suited to *evidence itself* unto the *light of nature*, or the first principles of our understanding, so that by bare proposal of it to be from God, we should by virtue of them immediately assent unto it, as men assent unto self-evident natural principles, as that the *part is less than the whole*, or the like. Nor doth it evidence itself unto our *reason*, in its mere natural exercise, as that by virtue thereof, we can demonstratively conclude that it is from God, and that what is declared therein is certainly and infallibly true. It hath indeed such exter-



nal evidences accompanying it, as makes a great impression on reason itself. But the power of our souls whereunto it is proposed, is that whereby we can give an assent unto the truth, upon the testimony of the proposer, whereof we have no other evidence. And this is the principal and most noble faculty and power of our natures. There is an instinct in brute creatures, that hath some resemblance unto our inbred natural principles ; and they will act that instinct, improved by experience, into a great likeness of reason in its exercise, although it be not so. But as unto the *power* or *faculty* of giving an assent unto things on witness or testimony, there is nothing in the nature of irrational creatures, that hath the least shadow of it or likeness unto it. And if our souls did want but this one faculty of *assenting unto truth upon testimony*, all that remains would not be sufficient to conduct us through the affairs of this natural life. This, therefore, being the *most noble faculty* of our minds, is that whereunto the highest way of divine revelation is proposed.

(4.) That our minds, in this especial case, to make our assent to be according unto the mind of God, and such as is required of us in a way of duty, are to be *prepared and assisted* by the Holy Ghost, we have declared and proved before. On this supposition, the revelation which God makes of himself by his word, doth no less evidence itself unto our minds, *in the exercise of faith*, to be from him, or gives no less infallible evidence, as a ground and reason why we should believe it to be from him, than his revelation of himself, by the works of creation and providence, doth manifest itself unto our minds in the exercise of reason to be from him, nor with less assurance than what we assent unto, in and by the *dictates of natural light*. And when God revealeth himself, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, by the things that are made, the works of creation, the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament shewing his handy-work ; the reason of men stirred up and brought into exercise thereby, doth infallibly conclude upon the evidence that is in that revelation, that there is a God, and he eternally powerful and wise, without any farther arguments to prove the revelation to be true. So when God by his word reveals himself unto the minds of men, thereby exciting and bringing forth faith into exercise, or the power of the soul to assent unto truth

upon testimony, that *revelation* doth no less *infallibly evidence* itself, to be divine or from God, without any external arguments to prove it so to be. If I shall say unto a man that the sun is risen, and shineth on the earth; if he question or deny it, and ask how I shall prove it; it is a sufficient answer to say, that it *manifesteth itself* in and by its own light: and if he add, that this is no proof to him, for he doth not discern it; suppose that to be so, it is a satisfactory answer, to tell him that he is blind; and if he be not so, that it is to no purpose to argue with him who *contradicts his own sense*, for he leaves no *rule* whereby what is spoken may be tried or judged on. And if I tell a man that the ‘heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work,’ or that the ‘invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made;’ and he shall demand how I prove it; it is a sufficient answer to say, that these things, in and by themselves, do manifest unto the *reason of every man in its due and proper exercise*, that there is an eternal, infinitely wise and powerful being, by whom they were caused, produced, and made; so as that whosoever knoweth how to use and exercise his reasonable faculty, in the consideration of them, their original, order, nature, and use, must necessarily conclude that so it is. If he shall say, that it doth not so appear unto him, that the being of God is so revealed by them; it is a sufficient reply, in case he be so indeed, to say he is *phrenetic*, and hath not the use of his *reason*; and if he be not so, that he argues in express contradiction unto his own reason, as may be demonstrated. This the Heathen philosophers granted. ‘Quid potest,’ saith Cicero, ‘esse tam apertum tamque perspicuum, cum cælum suspeximus, cœlestiaque contemplati sumus, quæ esse aliquod numen præstantissima mentis, quo hæc reguntur; quod qui dubitat haud sane intelligo cur non idem sol sit, an nullus sit dubitare possit.’ De Natura Deor. lib. 2. And if I declare unto any one, that the *Scripture is the word of God*, a divine revelation, and that it doth evidence and manifest itself so to be. If he shall say, that he hath the use and exercise of his sense and reason as well as others, and yet it doth not appear unto him so to be; it is as unto the present inquiry, a sufficient reply for the security of the authority of the Scriptures (though

other means may be used for his conviction) to say, that '*all men have not faith*;' by which alone the evidence of the divine authority of the Scriptures is discoverable; in the light whereof alone we can read those characters of its divine *extract*, which are impressed on it, and communicated unto it.

If it be not so, seeing it is a *divine revelation*, and it is our duty to believe it so to be, it must be either because our faith is not fitted, suited, nor able to receive such an evidence, suppose God would give it unto the revelation of himself by his word, as he hath done unto those by the light of nature and works of providence; or because God would not, or could not, give such an evidence unto his word as might manifest itself so to be. And neither of these can be affirmed without a high reflection on the wisdom and goodness of God.

That our faith is capable of giving such an assent is evident from hence, because God works it in us, and bestows it upon us for this very end. And God requireth of us that we should infallibly believe what he proposeth unto us, at least when we have infallible evidence that it is from him. And as he appointeth faith unto this end, and approveth of its exercise, so he doth both judge and condemn them who fail therein; 2 Chron. xx. 20. Isa. vii. 9. Mark xvi. 16. Yea, our faith is capable of giving an assent, though of another kind, more firm and accompanied with more assurance, than any is given by reason in the best of its conclusions. And the reason is, because the power of the mind to give assent upon testimony, which is its most noble faculty, is elevated and strengthened by the divine supernatural work of the Holy Ghost, before described.

To say that God either could not, or would not, give such a power unto the revelation of himself by his word, as to evidence itself to be so, is exceedingly prejudicial unto his honour and glory, seeing the everlasting welfare of the souls of men is incomparably more concerned therein than in the other ways mentioned. And what reason could be assigned why he should implant a less evidence of his divine authority on this than on them, seeing he designed far greater and more glorious ends in this than in them. If any one shall say the reason is, because this kind of divine revelation is not capable of receiving such evidences; it must be either

because there cannot be evident characters of divine authority, goodness, wisdom, power, implanted on it or mixed with it; or because an efficacy to manifest them cannot be communicated unto it. That both these are otherwise, shall be demonstrated in the last part of this discourse, which I shall now enter upon.

It hath been already declared, that it is the *authority and veracity of God, revealing themselves in the Scripture and by it, that is the formal reason of our faith, or supernatural assent unto it as it is the word of God.*

2. It remains only that we inquire, in the second place, into the way and means whereby they evidence themselves unto us, and the Scripture thereby to be the word of God, so as that we may undoubtedly and infallibly believe it so to be. Now because faith, as we have shewed, is an *assent upon testimony*, and consequently divine faith is an assent upon divine testimony. There must be some testimony or witness in this case whereon faith doth rest. And this we say is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, the author of the Scriptures, given unto them, in them, and by them. And this work or testimony of the Spirit may be reduced unto two heads, which may be distinctly insisted on.

(1.) The *impressions or characters* which are *subjectively* left in the Scripture and upon it, by the Holy Spirit its author, of all the divine excellencies or properties of the divine nature, are the first means evidencing that testimony of the Spirit which our faith rests upon; or they do give the *first evidence* of its divine original and authority, whereon we do believe it. The way whereby we learn the eternal power and deity of God, from the works of creation, is no otherwise but by those marks, tokens, and impressions of his divine power, wisdom, and goodness, that are upon them. For from the consideration of their subsistence, greatness, order, and use, reason doth necessarily conclude an infinite subsisting being, of whose power and wisdom these things are the manifest effects. These are clearly seen and understood by the things that are made; we need no other arguments to prove that God made the world, but itself. It carrieth in it and upon it the infallible tokens of its original. See to this purpose the blessed meditation of the psalmist; Psal. civ. throughout. Now there are greater and more

evident impressions of divine excellencies left on the written word from the infinite wisdom of the author of it, than any that are communicated unto the works of God, of what sort soever. Hence David comparing the works and the word of God, as to their instructive efficacy in declaring God and his glory, although he ascribe much unto the works of creation, yet doth he prefer the word incomparably before them; Psal. xix. 1—3. 7—9. cxlvi. 8, 9, &c. xix. 20. And these do manifest the word unto our faith to be his more clearly, than the other do the works to be his, unto our reason. As yet I do not know that it is denied by any, or the contrary asserted, namely, that God, as the immediate author of the Scripture, hath left in the very word itself evident tokens and impressions of his wisdom, prescience, omniscience, power, goodness, holiness, truth, and other divine infinite excellencies, sufficiently evidenced unto the enlightened minds of believers. Some, I confess, speak suspiciously herein; but until they will directly deny it, I shall not need farther to confirm it, than I have done long since in another treatise. And I leave it to be considered, whether (morally speaking) it be possible that God should immediately by himself, from the eternal counsels of his will reveal himself, his mind, the thoughts and purposes of his heart, which had been hidden in himself from eternity, on purpose that we should believe them, and yield obedience unto him according to the declaration of himself so made, and yet not give with it, or leave upon it any *τεκμήριον*, any infallible token, evidencing him to be the author of that revelation. Men who are not ashamed of their Christianity, will not be so to profess and seal that profession with their blood, and to rest their eternal concerns on that security herein which they have attained, namely, that there is that manifestation made of the glorious properties of God in and by the Scripture, as it is a divine revelation which incomparably excels in evidence all that their reason receives concerning his power from the works of creation.

This is that whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God with *faith divine and supernatural*, if we believe it so at all. There is in itself that evidence of its *divine original*, from the characters of divine excellencies left upon it by its author the Holy Ghost, as faith quietly rests in,

and is resolved into. And this evidence is manifest unto the meanest and most unlearned, no less than unto the wisest philosophers. And the truth is, if rational arguments and external motives were the sole ground of receiving the Scripture to be the word of God, it could not be, but that learned men and philosophers would have always been the forwardest and most ready to admit it, and most firmly to adhere unto it, and its profession. For whereas all such arguments do prevail on the minds of men, according as they are able aright to discern their force and judge of them, learned philosophers would have had the advantage incomparably above others. And so some have of late affirmed, that it was the wise, rational, and learned men, who at first most readily received the gospel; an assertion which nothing but gross ignorance of the Scripture itself, and all the writings concerning the original of Christianity, whether of Christians or Heathens, could give the least countenance unto; see 1 Cor. i. 23. 26. From hence is the Scripture so often compared unto light; called 'light,' 'a light shining in a dark place,' which will evidence itself unto all who are not blind, or do wilfully shut their eyes, or have their eyes 'blinded by the god of this world, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them;' which consideration I have handled at large elsewhere.

(2.) The Spirit of God evidenceth the *divine original and authority* of the Scripture, by the power and authority which he puts forth in it and by it over the minds and consciences of men, with its operation of divine effects thereon. This the apostle expressly affirms to be the reason and cause of faith; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 'If all prophesy, and there comes in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' The acknowledgment and confession of God to be in them or among them, is a profession of faith in the word administered by them. Such persons assent unto its divine authority, or believe it to be the word of God. And on what evidence or ground of credibility they did so, is expressly declared. It was not upon the force of any external argu-

ments produced and pleaded unto that purpose. It was not upon the testimony of this or that, or any church whatever; nor was it upon a conviction of any miracles which they saw wrought in its confirmation. Yea, the ground of the faith and confession declared, is opposed unto the efficacy and use of the miraculous gifts of tongues; ver. 23, 24. Wherefore, the only evidence whereon they received the word and acknowledged it to be of God, was that divine power and efficacy, whereof they found and felt the experience in themselves. ‘He is convinced of all, judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest,’ whereon he falls down before it with an acknowledgment of its divine authority, finding the word to come upon his conscience with an irresistible power of conviction and judgment thereon. ‘He is convinced of all, judged of all;’ he cannot but grant that there is *θεῖον τὶ*, a divine efficacy in it, or accompanying of it. Especially his mind is influenced by this, that the ‘secrets of his heart are made manifest by it.’ For all men must acknowledge this to be an effect of divine power; seeing God alone is *καρδιογνώστης*, he who searcheth, knoweth, and judgeth the heart. And if the woman of Samaria believed that Jesus was the Christ, because he ‘told her all things that ever she did;’ John iv. 29. there is reason to believe that word to be from God, which makes manifest even the secrets of our hearts. And although I do conceive that by ‘the word of God,’ Heb. iv. 12. the living and eternal word is principally intended, yet the power and efficacy there ascribed to him is that which he puts forth by the word of the gospel. And so that word also, in its place and use, ‘pierceth to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor,’ or passeth a critical judgment ‘on the thoughts and intents of the heart,’ or makes manifest the secrets of men’s hearts, as it is here expressed. Hereby then doth the Holy Ghost so evidence the divine authority of the word, namely, by that divine power which it hath upon our souls and consciences, that we do assuredly acquiesce in it to be from God. So the Thessalonians are commended, that they ‘received the word not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually works in them that believe;’ 1 Thess. ii. 15. It distinguisheth itself from the word of men, and evidences itself to be in-

deed the word of God by its effectual operation in them that believe. And he who hath this testimony in himself hath a higher and more firm assurance of the truth than what can be attained by the force of external arguments, or the credit of human testimony. Wherefore, I say, in general, that the Holy Spirit giveth testimony unto, and evinceth the divine authority of the word, by its powerful operations and divine effects on the souls of them that do believe. So that although it be weakness and foolishness unto others, yet, as is Christ himself unto them that are called, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

And I must say, that although a man be furnished with external arguments of all sorts, concerning the divine original and authority of the Scriptures; although he esteem his motives of credibility to be effectually persuasive, and have the authority of any or all the churches in the world to confirm his persuasion, yet if he have no experience in himself of its divine power, authority, and efficacy, he neither doth, nor can believe it, to be the word of God in a due manner, with faith divine and supernatural. But he that hath this experience hath that testimony in himself which will never fail.

This will be the more manifest, if we consider some few of those many instances, wherein it exerts its power, or the effects which are produced thereby.

The principal divine effect of the word of God is in the conversion of the souls of sinners unto God. The greatness and glory of this work we have elsewhere declared at large. And all those who are acquainted with it as it is declared in the Scripture, and have any experience of it in their own hearts, do constantly give it as an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God. It may be they speak not improperly, who prefer the work of the new creation before the work of the old, for the express evidences of almighty power contained in it, as some of the ancients do. Now, of this great and glorious effect, the word is the only instrumental cause, whereby the divine power operates and is expressive of itself. For we are ‘born again, born of God, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which abideth for ever;’ 1 Pet. i. 21. For of his own will doth God ‘beget us with the word of truth;’ James i.



18. The word is the seed of the new creature in us, that whereby our whole natures, our souls, and all their faculties, are changed and renewed into the image and likeness of God. And by the same word is this new nature kept and preserved; 1 Pet. ii. 2. and the whole soul carried on unto the enjoyment of God. It is unto believers 'an ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls;' James i. 21. 'The word of God's grace, which is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified;' Acts xx. 32. And that because it is the 'power of God unto salvation unto them that do believe;' Rom. i. 16. All the power which God puts forth and exerts in the communication of that grace and mercy unto believers, whereby they are gradually carried on and prepared unto salvation, he doth it by the word. Therein, in an especial manner, is the divine authority of the word evidenced by the divine power and efficacy given unto it by the Holy Ghost. The work which is effected by it in the regeneration, conversion, and sanctification of the souls of believers, doth evidence it infallibly unto their consciences, that it is not the word of man, but of God. It will be said, this testimony is private in the minds only of them on whom this work is wrought. And, therefore, do I press it no farther; but, he that 'believeth hath the witness in himself;' 1 John v. 10. Let it be granted, that all, who are really converted unto God by the power of the word, have that infallible evidence and testimony of its divine original, authority, and power in their own souls and consciences, that they thereon believe it with faith divine and supernatural, in conjunction with the other evidences before-mentioned, as parts of the same divine testimony, and it is all I aim at herein.

But yet, although this testimony be privately received (for in itself it is not so, but common unto all believers), yet is it ministerially pleadable in the church, as a principal motive unto believing. A declaration of the divine power which some have found by experience in the word, is an ordinance of God to convince others, and to bring them unto the faith. Yea, of all the external arguments that are, or may be pleaded to justify the divine authority of the Scripture, there is none more prevalent nor cogent, than this of its mighty efficacy in all ages on the souls of men, to change, convert, and re-

new them into the image and likeness of God, which hath been visible and manifest.

Moreover, there are yet other particular effects of the divine power of the word, on the minds and consciences of men, belonging unto this general work, either preceding or following of it, which are clearly sensible and enlarge the evidence. As,

(1.) The work of *conviction of sin* on those who expected it not, who desired it not, and who would avoid it, if by any means possible they could. The world is filled with instances of this nature; whilst men have been full of love to their sins, at peace in them, enjoying benefit and advantage by them, the word coming upon them in its power, hath awed, disquieted, and terrified them, taken away their peace, destroyed their hopes, and made them, as it were, whether they would or no, that is, contrary to their desires, inclinations, and carnal affections, to conclude, that if they comply not with what is proposed unto them in that word, which before they took no notice of, nor had any regard unto, they must be presently or eternally miserable.

*Conscience* is the territory or dominion of God in man, which he hath so reserved unto himself, that no human power can possibly enter into it, or dispose of it any wise. But in this work of *conviction of sin*, the word of God, the Scripture, entereth into the conscience of the sinner, takes possession of it, disposeth it unto peace or trouble by its laws or rules, and no otherwise. Where it gives disquietments, all the world cannot give it peace; and where it speaks peace, there is none can give it trouble. Were not this the *word of God*, how should it come thus to speak in his name, and to act his authority in the consciences of men as it doth? when once it begins this work, conscience immediately owns a *new rule*, a *new law*, a *new government*, in order to the judgment of God upon it and all its actions. And it is contrary to the nature of conscience to take this upon itself, nor would it do so, but that it sensibly finds God speaking and acting in it, and by it; see 1 Cor. xiv. 25, 26. An invasion may be made on the *outward duties* that conscience disposeth unto; but none can be so upon its *internal actings*. No power under heaven can cause conscience to think, act, or judge otherwise, than it doth by its immediate respect

unto God. For it is the mind's *self-judging* with respect unto God ; and what is not so, is no act of conscience. Wherefore, to force an act of conscience, implies a contradiction. However it may be defiled, bribed, seared, and at length, utterly debauched ; admit of a superior power, a power above or over itself, under God it cannot.

I know conscience may be prepossessed with prejudices ; and by education, with the insinuation of traditions, take on itself the power of false, corrupt, superstitious principles and errors, as means of conveying unto it a sense of divine authority ; so is it with the Mahometans, and other false worshippers in the world. But the power of those divine convictions, whereof we treat, is manifestly different from such prejudicate opinions. For where these are not imposed on men by artifices and delusions easily discoverable, they prepossess their minds and inclinations by traditions, antecedently unto any right judgment they can make of themselves or other things ; and they are generally wrapt up and condited in their secular interests. The convictions we treat of, come from without, upon the minds of men, and that with a sensible power, prevailing over all their previous thoughts and inclinations. Those first affect, deceive, and delude the notional part of the soul, whereby conscience is insensibly influenced and diverted into improper respects, and is deceived as to its judging of the voice of God ; these immediately principle the practical understanding and self-judging power of the soul. Wherefore, such opinions and persuasions are gradually insinuated into the mind, and are admitted insensibly without opposition or reluctancy, being never accompanied at their first admission with any secular disadvantage. But these divine convictions by the word befall men, some, when they think of nothing less, and desire nothing less ; some, when they design other things, as the pleasing of their ears, or the entertainment of their company ; and some that go on purpose to deride and scoff at what should be spoken unto them from it. It might also be added unto the same purpose, how confirmed some have been in their carnal peace and security, by love of sin, with innumerable inveterate prejudices ; what losses and ruin to their outward concerns many have fallen into by admitting of their convictions ; what force, diligence, and artifices, have

been used to defeat them, what contribution of aid and assistance hath there been from Satan unto this purpose; and yet against all, hath the divine power of the word absolutely prevailed, and accomplished its whole designed effect. See 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Jer. xxiii. 29. Zach. i. 6.

(2.) It doth it by the light that is in it, and that spiritual illuminating efficacy wherewith it is accompanied. Hence it is called a 'light shining in a dark place;' 2 Pet. i. 19. That light whereby God 'shines into the hearts' and minds of men; 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6. Without the Scripture all the world is in darkness. 'Darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness the people;' Isa. lx. 2. It is the kingdom of Satan filled with darkness and confusion. Superstition, idolatry, lying vanities, wherein men know not at all what they do, nor whither they go, fill the whole world; even as it is at this day. And the minds of men are naturally in darkness; there is a blindness upon them that they cannot see nor discern spiritual things, no not when they are externally proposed unto them, as I have at large evinced elsewhere. And no man can give a greater evidence that it is so, than he who denies it so to be. With respect unto both these kinds of darkness the Scripture is a light, and accompanied with a spiritual illuminating efficacy, thereby evidencing itself to be a divine revelation. For what but divine truth could recall the minds of men from all their wanderings in error, superstition, and other effects of darkness; which of themselves they love more than truth? All things being filled with vanity, error, confusion, misapprehensions about God and ourselves, our duty and end, our misery and blessedness; the Scripture, where it is communicated by the providence of God, comes in as a light into a dark place, discovering all things clearly and steadily, that concern either God or ourselves, our present or future condition; causing all the ghosts, and false images of things which men had framed and fancied unto themselves in the dark, to vanish and disappear. *Digitus Dei!* this is none other but the power of God. But principally it evinceth this its divine efficacy, by that spiritual saving light, which it conveys into and implants on the minds of believers. Hence there is none of them who have gained any experience by the observation of God's dealings with them, but shall, although they know not

the ways and methods of the Spirit's operations by the word, yea, can say, with the man unto whom the Lord Jesus restored his sight, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was born blind, now I see.' This power of the word, as the instrument of the Spirit of God for the communication of saving light and knowledge unto the minds of men, the apostle declares, 2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 4. 6. By the efficacy of this power doth he evidence the Scripture to be the word of God. Those who believe, find by it a glorious supernatural light introduced into their minds, whereby they who before saw nothing in a distinct affecting manner in spirituals, do now clearly discern the truth, the glory, the beauty, and excellency of heavenly mysteries, and have their minds transformed into their image and likeness. And there is no person who hath the witness in himself of the kindling of this heavenly light in his mind by the word, but hath also the evidence in himself of its divine original.

(3.) It doth, in like manner, evidence its divine authority by the *awe*, which it puts on the minds of the *generality of mankind* unto whom it is made known, that they dare not absolutely reject it. Multitudes there are unto whom the word is declared, who *hate* all its precepts, *despise* all its promises, *abhor* all its threatenings, like nothing, approve of nothing, of what it declares or proposes, and yet dare not absolutely refuse or reject it. They deal with it as they do with God himself, whom they hate also, according to the revelation which he hath made of himself in his word. They wish he were not, sometimes they hope he is not, would be glad to be free of his rule, but yet dare not, cannot absolutely deny and disown him, because of that testimony for himself, which he keeps alive in them whether they will or no. The same is the frame of their hearts and minds towards the Scripture, and that for no other reason but because it is the word of God, and manifesteth itself so to be. They hate it, wish it were not, hope it is not true, but are not by any means able to shake off a disquiet in the sense of its divine authority. This testimony it hath fixed in the hearts of multitudes of its enemies; Psal. xlv. 5.

(4.) It evidences its divine power in *administering strong consolations* in the deepest and most unrelievable distresses. Some such there are, and such many men fall into, wherein

all means and hopes of relief may be utterly removed and taken away. So is it when the miseries of men are not known unto any that will so much as pity them, or wish them relief; or, if they have been known, and there hath been an eye to pity them, yet there hath been no hand to help them. Such hath been the condition of innumerable souls, as on other accounts, so in particular under the power of persecutors; when they have been shut up in filthy and nasty dungeons, not to be brought out but unto death by the most exquisite tortures that the malice of hell could invent, or the bloody cruelty of man inflict. Yet in these and the like distresses doth the word of God by its divine power and efficacy break through all interposing difficulties, all dark and discouraging circumstances, supporting, refreshing, and comforting such poor distressed sufferers, yea, commonly filling them under overwhelming calamities ‘with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.’ Though they are in bonds, yet is the word of God not bound; neither can all the power of hell, nor all the diligence or fury of men, keep out the word from entering into prisons, dungeons, flames, and to administer strong consolations against all fears, pains, wants, dangers, deaths, or whatever we may in this mortal life be exposed unto. And sundry other instances of the like nature might be pleaded, wherein the word gives evident demonstrations unto the minds and consciences of men of its own divine power and authority; which is the second way whereby the Holy Ghost its author gives testimony unto its original.

But it is not merely the grounds and reasons whereon we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, which we designed to declare. The whole work of the Holy Spirit enabling us to believe them so to be was proposed unto consideration. And beyond what we have insisted on, there is yet a farther peculiar work of his, whereby he effectually ascertains our minds of the Scriptures being the word of God, whereby we are ultimately established in the faith thereof. And I cannot but both admire and bewail that this should be denied by any that would be esteemed Christians. Wherefore, if there be any necessity thereof, I shall take occasion, in the second part of this discourse, farther to confirm this part of the truth thus far debated; namely, *that God, by his Holy Spirit, doth secretly and effectually persuade and satisfy*

*the minds and souls of believers in the divine truth and authority of the Scriptures*, whereby he infallibly secures their faith against all objections and temptations whatsoever; so that they can safely and comfortably dispose of their souls in all their concerns, with respect unto this life and eternity, according unto the undeceivable truth and guidance of it. But I shall no farther insist on these things at present.

Three things do offer themselves unto consideration from what hath been discoursed.

1. What is the ground and reason why the meanest and most unlearned sort of believers do assent unto this truth, *that the Scriptures are the word of God*, with no less firmness, certainty, and assurance of mind, than do the wisest and most learned of them. Yea, oft-times the faith of the former sort herein is of the best growth, and firmest consistency against oppositions and temptations. Now, no *assent of the mind* can be accompanied with any more assurance, than *the evidence* whose effect it is, and which it is resolved into, will afford. Nor doth any evidence of truth beget an assent unto it in the mind, but as it is apprehended and understood. Wherefore, the evidence of this truth, wherein soever it consists, must be that which is perceived, apprehended, and understood, by the meanest and most learned sort of true believers. For, as was said, they do no less firmly assent and adhere unto it, than the wisest and most learned of them. It cannot, therefore, consist in such subtle and learned arguments whose sense they cannot understand or comprehend. But the things we have pleaded are of another nature. For those *characters* of divine wisdom, goodness, holiness, grace, and sovereign authority, which are implanted on the Scripture by the Holy Ghost, are as legible unto the faith of the meanest, as of the most learned believer. And they also are no less capable of an experimental *understanding* of the divine power and efficacy of the Scriptures in all its spiritual operations, than those who are more wise and skilful in discerning the force of *external arguments* and motives of credibility. It must, therefore, of necessity be granted, that the formal reason of faith consists in those things, whereof the evidence is equally obvious unto all sorts of believers.

2. Whence it is that the assent of faith, whereby we believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, is usually affirmed

to be accompanied with more *assurance* than any assent which is the effect of science upon the most demonstrative principles. They who affirm this, do not consider faith as it is in this or that individual person, or in all that do sincerely believe; but in its own nature and essence, and what it is meet and able to produce. And the schoolmen do distinguish between a *certainly or assurance of evidence*, and an *assurance of adherence*. In the latter they say the certainty of *faith* doth exceed that of science; but it is less in respect of the former. But it is not easily to be conceived how the certainty of adherence should exceed the certainty of evidence, with respect unto any object whatsoever. That which seems to render a difference in this case is, that the evidence which we have in things scientific is speculative, and affects the mind only; but the evidence which we have by faith effectually worketh on the will also, because of the goodness and excellency of the things that are believed. And hence it is that the whole soul doth more firmly adhere unto the objects of faith upon that evidence which it hath of them, than unto other things whereof it hath clearer evidence, wherein the will and the affections are little or not at all concerned. And Bonaventure giveth a reason of no small weight, why faith is more certain than science, not with the certainty of speculation, but of adherence: ‘*Quoniam fideles Christiani, nec argumentis, nec tormentis, nec blandimentis adduci possunt, vel inclinari, ut veritatem quam credunt vel ore tenus negent; quod nemo peritus alicujus scientiæ faceret, si acerrimis tormentis cogeretur scientiam suam de conclusione aliqua geometrica vel arithmetica retractare. Stultus enim et ridiculus esset geometra, qui pro sua scientia in controversiis geometricis mortem auderet subire, nisi in quantum dictat fides, non esse mentiendum.*’ And whatever may be said of this distinction, I think it cannot modestly be denied, that there is a greater assurance in faith, than is in any scientific conclusions; until as many good and wise men will part with all their worldly concerns, and their lives, by the most exquisite tortures, in the confirmation of any truth which they have received merely on the ground of reason acting in human sciences, as have so done on the certainty which they had by faith, that the Scripture is a divine revelation. For in bearing testimony hereunto, have innumerable multitudes



of the best, the holiest, and the wisest men that ever were in the world, cheerfully and joyfully sacrificed all their temporal, and adventured all their eternal, concernments. For they did it under a full satisfaction that in parting with all temporary things, they should be eternally blessed, or eternally miserable, according as their persuasion in faith proved true or false. Wherefore, unto the firmitude and constancy which we have in the assurance of faith, three things do concur.

(1.) That this *ability of assent upon testimony*, is the highest and most noble power or faculty of our rational souls; and, therefore, where it hath the highest evidence whereof it is capable, which it hath in the testimony of God, it giveth us the highest certainty or assurance, whereof in this world we are capable.

(2.) Unto the assent of divine faith there is required an *especial internal operation of the Holy Ghost*. This rendereth it of another nature than any mere natural act and operation of our minds. And, therefore, if the assurance of it may not properly be said to exceed the assurance of science in degree, it is only because it is of a more excellent kind, and so is not capable of comparison unto it as to degrees.

(3.) That the revelation which God makes of himself, his mind and will, by his word, is more *excellent*, and accompanied with greater evidence of his *infinitely glorious properties*, wherein alone the mind can find absolute rest and satisfaction (which is its assurance), than any other discovery of truth, of what sort soever, is capable of. Neither is the assurance of the mind *absolutely perfect* in any thing beneath the enjoyment of God. Wherefore, the soul by faith making the nearest approaches, whereof in this life it is capable, unto the eternal spring of being, truth, and goodness, it hath the highest rest, satisfaction, and assurance therein, that in this life it can attain unto.

3. It followeth from hence, that those that would deny either of those two things, or would so separate between them, as to exclude the *necessity* of either unto the duty of believing, namely, the *internal work* of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, enabling them to believe, and the *external work* of the same Holy Spirit giving evidence in and by the Scripture unto its own divine original; do endeavour to ex-

pel all true divine faith out of the world, and to substitute a probable persuasion in the room thereof.

For a close unto this discourse, which hath now been drawn forth unto a greater length than was at first intended, I shall consider some objections that are usually pleaded in opposition unto the truth asserted and vindicated.

1. It is, therefore, objected, in the first place, that the plea hitherto insisted on cannot be managed without great disadvantage to Christian religion. For if we take away the *rational grounds*, on which we believe the doctrine of Christ to be true and divine, and the whole evidence of the truth of it be laid on things not only derided by men of *atheistical spirits*, but in themselves such as cannot be discerned by any but such as do believe, on what *grounds* can we proceed to convince an unbeliever?

*Ans.* 1. By the way, it is one thing to prove and believe the doctrine of Christ to be true and divine; another to prove and believe the Scripture to be given by inspiration of God, or the divine authority of the Scripture, which alone was proposed unto consideration. A doctrine true and divine may be written in and proposed unto us by writings that were not *divinely and infallibly inspired*; and so might the doctrine of Christ have been, but not without the unspeakable disadvantage of the church. And there are sundry arguments which forcibly and effectually prove the doctrine of Christ to have been *true and divine*, which are not of any efficacy to prove the divine authority of the Scriptures; though on the other hand, whatever doth prove the divine authority of the Scriptures, doth equally prove the divine truth of the doctrine of Christ.

2. There are two ways of *convincing unbelievers*; the one insisted on by the *apostles* and their *followers*, the other by some *learned men* since their days. The way principally insisted on by the apostles was by *preaching* the word itself unto them in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, by the power whereof manifesting the authority of God in it, they were convinced; and falling down acknowledged God to be in it of a truth; 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. xiv. 25, 26. It is likely that in this their proposal of the gospel, the doctrine and truths contained in it, unto unbelievers, that those of *atheistical spirits* would both deride them and it; and so indeed it came to pass,

many esteeming *themselves* to be *babblers* and their doctrine to be *errant folly*. But yet they desisted not from pursuing their work in the same way, whereunto God gave success. The other way is to prove unto *unbelievers* that the *Scripture is true and divine* by rational arguments, wherein some learned persons have laboured, especially in these last ages, to very good purpose. And certainly their labours are greatly to be commended, whilst they attend unto these rules. (1.) That they produce no arguments but such as are *cogent*, and not liable unto just exceptions. For if to manifest their own skill or learning they plead such reasons as are capable of an answer and solution, they exceedingly prejudice the truth by subjecting it unto dubious *disputations*, whereas in itself it is clear, firm, and sacred. (2.) That they do not pretend their rational grounds and arguments to be the sole foundation that faith hath to rest upon, or which it is resolved into. For this were the ready way to set up an opinion instead of faith supernatural and divine. Accept but of these two limitations, and it is acknowledged that the rational grounds and arguments intended may be rationally pleaded, and ought so to be, unto the conviction of gainsayers. For no man doth so plead the *self-evidencing power* of the Scripture, as to deny that the use of other external motives and arguments is necessary to stop the mouths of *atheists*, is also unto the farther establishment of them who do believe. These things are subordinate, and no way inconsistent.

The truth is, if we will attend unto our own, and the experience of the whole church of God, the way whereby we come to believe the Scripture to be the *word of God* ordinarily is this and no other. God having first given his *word* as the foundation of our faith and obedience, hath appointed the *ministry of men*, at first extraordinary, afterward ordinary, to propose unto us the doctrines, truths, precepts, promises, and threatenings contained therein; together with this proposition of them, they are appointed to declare that these things are not from *themselves*, nor of their own *invention*; 2 Tim. iii. 14—17. And this is done variously. Unto some the word of God in this *ministry* thus comes, or is thus proposed, preached, or declared, whilst they are in a condition not only utterly unacquainted with the mysteries of it, but filled with contrary apprehensions,

and consequently prejudices against it. Thus it came of old unto the *Pagan world*, and must do so unto such persons and nations as are yet in the same state with them. Unto these the first preachers of the gospel did not produce the *book of the Scriptures*, and tell them that it was the word of God, and that it would evidence itself unto them so to be. For this had been to despise the wisdom and authority of God in their own ministry. But they preached the doctrines of it unto them, grounding themselves on the divine revelation contained therein. And this proposition of the truth or preaching of the gospel was not *left of God* to work itself into the reasons of men by the suitableness of it thereunto; but being his *own institution* for their illumination and conversion, he accompanied it with divine power and made it effectual unto the ends designed; Rom. i. 16. And the event hereof among mankind was, that by *some* this *new doctrine* was derided and scorned, by *others* whose *hearts God opened to attend unto it*, it was embraced and submitted unto. Among those who after the propagation of the gospel are born, as they say, *within the pale of the church*, the same doctrine is variously instilled into persons according unto the several duties and concerns of others to instruct them. Principally the *ministry of the word* is ordained of God unto that end, whereon the church is the ground and pillar of truth. Those of both sorts unto whom the doctrine mentioned is preached or proposed, are directed unto the Scriptures as the sacred repository thereof. For they are told that these things come by *revelation* from God, and that revelation is contained in the *Bible*, which is his word. Upon this proposal, with inquiry into it and consideration of it, God co-operating by his Spirit, there is that evidence of its divine original communicated unto their minds through its power and efficacy, with the characters of divine wisdom and holiness implanted on it, which they are now enabled to discern, that they believe it and rest in it as the immediate word of God. Thus was it in the case of the woman of Samaria, and the inhabitants of Sychar, with respect unto their faith in Christ Jesus; John iv. 42. This is the way whereby men ordinarily are brought to believe the word of God; Rom. x. 14, 15. and that neither by external arguments or motives, which no one soul was ever converted unto God by, nor by

any mere naked proposal and offer of the book unto them, nor by miracles, nor by immediate revelation or private subjective testimony of the Spirit; nor is their faith a persuasion of mind, that they can give no reason of, but only that they are so persuaded.

2. But it will be yet farther objected, that if there be such clear evidences in the thing itself, that is, in the divine original and authority of the Scriptures, that none who freely use their reason can deny it; then it lies either in the naked proposal of the things unto the understanding; and if so, then every one that assents unto this proposition, *that the whole is greater than the part*, must likewise assent unto this that the Scripture is the word of God; or the evidence must not lie in the naked proposal, but in the efficacy of the Spirit of God in the minds of them unto whom it is proposed.

*Ans.* 1. I know no divine, ancient or modern, Popish or Protestant, who doth not assert that there is a work of the Holy Ghost on the minds of men necessary unto a due belief of the Scriptures to be the word of God. And the consideration hereof ought not by any Christian to be excluded. But they say not that this is the objective testimony or evidence on which we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, concerning which alone is our inquiry.

2. We do not dispute how far, or by what means, this proposition, *the Scripture is the word of God*, may be evidenced merely unto our reason; but unto our understanding as capable of giving an assent upon testimony. It is not said that this is a first principle of reason, though it be of faith, nor that it is capable of a *mathematical demonstration*. That the whole is greater than the part, is self-evident unto our reason upon its first proposal; but such none pretends to be in the Scripture, because it is a subject not capable of it. Nor do those who denying the self-evidence of the Scripture, pretend by their arguments for its divine authority to give such an evidence of it unto reason, as is in first principles, or *mathematical demonstrations*, but content themselves with that which they call a moral certainty. But it is by faith we are obliged to receive the truth of this proposition, which respects the power of our minds to assent unto truth upon testimony, infallibly on that which is infallible.

And hereunto it evidenceth its own truth, not with the same, but with an evidence and certainty of a higher nature and nobler kind than that of the *strictest demonstration* in things natural, or the most forcible arguments in things moral.

3. It will be objected, that if this be so, then none can be *obliged to receive the Scripture* as the word of God, who hath not faith, and none have faith but those in whom it is wrought by the Spirit of God, and thereinto all will be resolved at last.

*Aus.* 1. Indeed there is no room for this objection; for the whole work of the Spirit is pleaded only as he is the *efficient cause of believing*, and not the *objective*, or reason why we do believe. But,

2. We must not be ashamed to resolve all we do well, spiritually and in obedience to the command of God, unto the efficacious operation of the Holy Ghost in us, unless we intend to be ashamed of the gospel. But this still makes his *internal operation* to be the *efficient*, and not his *internal testimony* to be the formal, reason of our faith.

3. It is another question, whether all obligation unto duty is and must be proportionate unto our own strength without divine assistance, which we deny: and affirm that we are obliged unto many things by virtue of God's *command*, which we have no power to answer but by virtue of his *grace*.

4. Where the proposal of the Scripture is made in the way before described, those unto whom it is proposed are obliged to receive it as the word of God, upon the evidence which it gives of itself so to be. Yea, every real, true, divine revelation made unto men, or every proposal of the Scripture by divine providence, hath that evidence of its being from God accompanying of it, as is sufficient to *oblige them* unto whom it was made to believe it, on pain of his displeasure. If this were otherwise, then either were God obliged to confirm every particular divine revelation with a miracle (which as to its obligation unto believing wants not its difficulty), which he did not, as in many of the prophets; nor doth at this day at the first proposal of the gospel to the Heathen; or else when he requires faith and obedience in such ways as in his wisdom he judgeth meet, that is, in the ordinary ministry of the word, they are not obliged thereby, nor is it their sin to refuse a compliance with his will.

5. If this difficulty can be no otherwise avoided, but by affirming that the faith which God requires of us with respect unto his word, is nothing but a *natural assent* unto it upon rational arguments and considerations, which we have an ability for, without any spiritual aid of the Holy Ghost, or respect unto his testimony, as before described; which overthrows all faith, especially that which is divine. I shall rather ten thousand times allow of all the just consequences that can follow on the supposition mentioned, than admit of this relief. But of those consequences this is none, that any unto whom the Scripture is proposed are excepted from an obligation unto believing.

In like manner there is no difficulty in the usual objection which respects particular books of the Scripture, why we receive them as *canonical*, and reject others; as, namely, the *Book of Proverbs*, and *not of Wisdom*; of *Ecclesiastes*, and *not Ecclesiasticus*. For,

1. As to the books of the Old Testament, we have the canon of them given us in the New, where it is affirmed, that unto the *church of the Jews were committed the oracles of God*: which both confirms all that we receive, and excludes all that we exclude. And unto the New, there are no pretend-ers, nor ever were, to the least exercise of the faith of any.

2. All books whatever, that have either themselves pretended unto a divine original, or have been pleaded by others to be of that extract, have been, and may be from themselves, without farther help, evicted of falsehood in that pretence. They have all of them hitherto in matter or manner, in plain confessions, or other sufficient evidence, manifested themselves to be of a human original. And much danger is not to be feared from any that for the future shall set forth with the same pretence.

3. We are not bound to refuse the *ministry of the church*, or the advantages of providence whereby the Scripture is brought unto us, with the testimonies which either directly or collaterally any one part of it gives unto another. Although the Scripture be to be believed *for itself*, yet it is not ordinarily to be believed *by itself*, without the help of other means.

4. On these suppositions I fear not to affirm that there are on every *individual book of the Scripture*, particularly those

named, those divine characters and *criteria*, which are sufficient to difference them from all other writings whatever, and to testify their divine authority unto the minds and consciences of believers. I say of *believers*, for we inquire not on what ground unbelievers, or those who do not believe, do believe the word of God, nor yet directly on what outward motives such persons may be induced so to do. But our sole inquiry at present is, what the faith of them *who do believe* is resolved into. It is not, therefore, said that when our Lord Jesus Christ (for we acknowledge that there is the same reason of the first giving out of divine revelations, as is of the Scripture) came and preached unto the Jews, that those mere words, 'I am the light of the world,' or the like, had all this evidence in them or with them; for nothing he said of that kind may be separated from its circumstances; but supposing the testimonies given in the Scripture beforehand to his person, work, time, and manner of coming, with the evidence of the presence of God with him in the declaration that he made of his doctrine, and himself to be the Messiah, the Jews were bound to believe what he taught, and himself to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and so did many of them upon his preaching only; John iv. 42. And in like manner they were bound to believe the doctrine of John Baptist, and to submit unto his institutions although he wrought no miracle, and those who did not, rejected the counsel of God for their good, and perished in their unbelief. But although our Lord Jesus Christ wrought no miracles to prove the Scripture then extant to be the word of God, seeing he wrought them among such only as by whom that was firmly believed; yet the wisdom of God saw it necessary to confirm his personal ministry by them. And without a sense of the power and efficacy of the divine truth of the doctrine proposed, miracles themselves will be despised; so they were by some who were afterward converted by the preaching of the word; Acts ii. 13. iii. 7, 8. or they will produce only a false faith, or a ravished assent upon an amazement, that will not abide; Acts viii. 13. 21.



## APPENDIX.

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A SUMMARY representation of the *nature* and *reason* of that faith wherewith we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, with some *attestations* given unto the substance of what hath been delivered concerning it, shall give a close to this discourse. As to the first part of this design, the things that follow are proposed.

I. Unto the inquiry, on what grounds, or for what reason, we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, many things are *supposed*, as on all hands agreed upon, whose demonstration or proof belongs not unto our present work. Such are,

1. The being of God, and his self-subsistence, with all the essential properties of his nature.

2. Our relation unto him and dependance on him, as our Creator, Benefactor, Preserver, Judge, and Rewarder, both as unto things temporal and eternal. Wherefore,

3. The τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, whatever may be known of God by the light of nature, whatever is manifest in or from the works of creation or providence, and necessary actings of conscience, as to the being, rule, and authority of God, is supposed as acknowledged in this inquiry.

4. That beyond the conduct and guidance of the light of nature, that men may live unto God, believe and put their trust in him, according to their duty, in that obedience which he requireth of them, so as to come unto the enjoyment of him, a supernatural revelation of his mind and will unto them, especially in that condition wherein all mankind are since the entrance of sin, is necessary.

5. That all those unto whom God hath granted divine revelations immediately from himself, for their own use, and that of all other men unto whom they were to be communicated, were infallibly assured that they came from God, and that their minds were no way imposed on in them.

6. That all these divine revelations, so far as they are any

way necessary to guide and instruct men in the true knowledge of God, and that obedience which is acceptable unto him, are now contained in the Scriptures, or those books of the Old and New Testament which are commonly received and owned among all sorts of Christians.

These things, I say, are supposed unto our present inquiry, and taken for granted; so as that the reader is not to look for any direct proof of them in the preceding discourse. But on these suppositions it is alleged and proved,

1. That all men unto whom it is duly proposed as such, are bound to believe this Scripture, these books of the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God; that is, to contain and exhibit an immediate, divine, supernatural revelation of his mind and will, so far as is any way needful that they may live unto him; and that nothing is contained in them, but what is of the same divine original.

2. The obligation of this duty of thus believing the Scripture to be the word of God, ariseth partly from the nature of the thing itself, and partly from the especial command of God. For it being that revelation of the will of God, without the knowledge whereof, and assent whereunto, we cannot live unto God as we ought, nor come unto the enjoyment of him, it is necessary that we should believe it unto those ends; and God requireth it of us, that so we should do.

3. We cannot thus believe it in a way of duty, but upon a sufficient evidence and prevalent testimony that so it is.

4. There are many cogent arguments, testimonies, and motives to persuade, convince, and satisfy unprejudiced persons, that the Scripture is the word of God, or a divine revelation, and every way sufficient to stop the mouths of gainsayers, proceeding on such principles of reason, as are owned and approved by the generality of mankind. And arguments of this nature may be taken from almost all considerations of the properties of God, and his government of the world, of our relation unto him, of what belongs unto our present peace, and future happiness.

5. From the arguments and testimonies of this nature, a firm persuasion of mind defensible against all objections, that the Scripture is the word of God, may be attained; and that such, as that those who live not in contradiction unto their own light and reason through the power of their lusts,

cannot but judge it their wisdom, duty, and interest to yield obedience unto his will as revealed therein.

6. But yet that persuasion of mind which may be thus attained, and which resteth wholly upon these arguments and testimonies, is not entirely that faith wherewith we are obliged to believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a way of duty. For it is not to be merely human, how firm soever the persuasions in it may be, but divine and supernatural, of the same kind with that whereby we believe the things themselves contained in the Scripture.

7. We cannot thus believe the Scripture to be the word of God, nor any divine truth therein contained, without the effectual illumination of our minds by the Holy Ghost. And to exclude the consideration of his work herein is to cast the whole inquiry out of the limits of Christian religion.

8. Yet is not this work of the Holy Spirit in the illumination of our minds, whereby we are enabled to believe in a way of duty with faith supernatural and divine, the ground and reason *why* we do believe, or the evidence *whereon* we do so, nor is our faith resolved thereinto.

9. Whereas, also, there are sundry other acts of the Holy Spirit in and upon our minds, establishing this faith against temptations unto the contrary, and farther ascertaining us of the divine original of the Scripture, or testifying it unto us; yet are they none of them severally, nor all of them jointly, the formal reason of our faith, nor the ground which we believe upon. Yet are they such as that as without the first work of divine illumination we cannot believe at all in a due manner; so without his other consequent operations we cannot believe steadfastly against temptations and oppositions. Wherefore,

10. Those only can believe the Scripture aright to be the word of God in a way of duty, whose minds are enlightened, and who are enabled to believe by the Holy Ghost.

11. Those who believe not are of two sorts, for they are either such as oppose and gainsay the word as a cunningly devised fable; or such as are willing without prejudice to attend unto the consideration of it. The former sort may be resisted, opposed, and rebuked by external arguments, and such moral considerations as vehemently persuade the divine original of the Scripture, and from the same principles

may their mouths be stopped as to their cavils and exceptions against it. The other sort are to be led on unto believing by the ministry of the church in the dispensation of the word itself, which is the ordinance of God unto that purpose. But,

12. Neither sort do ever come truly to believe, either merely induced thereunto by force of moral arguments only, or upon the authority of that church by whose *ministry* the Scripture is proposed unto them to be believed. Wherefore,

13. The formal reason of faith *divine and supernatural*, whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God in the way of duty, and as it is required of us, is the authority and veracity of God alone, evidencing themselves unto our minds and consciences in and by the Scripture itself. And herein consisteth that divine testimony of the Holy Ghost, which as it is a testimony gives our assent unto the Scriptures the general nature of faith, and as it is a divine testimony gives it the especial nature of faith divine and supernatural.

14. This divine testimony given unto the divine original of the Scripture in and by itself, whereinto our faith is ultimately resolved, is evidenced and made known, as by the characters of the infinite perfections of the divine nature that are in it and upon it; so by the authority, power, and efficacy, over and upon the souls and consciences of men, and the satisfactory excellency of the truths contained therein, wherewith it is accompanied.

15. Wherefore, although there be many cogent external arguments whereby a moral steadfast persuasion of the divine authority of the Scriptures may be attained, and it be the principal duty of the true church in all ages to give testimony thereunto, which it hath done successively at all times since first it was intrusted with it; and so, although there be many other means whereby we are induced, persuaded, and enabled to believe it, yet is it for its own sake only, efficaciously manifesting itself to be the word of God, or upon the divine testimony that is given in it and by it thereunto, that we believe it to be so with faith divine and supernatural.

*Corol.* Those who either deny the necessity of an internal subjective work of the Holy Ghost enabling us to believe, or

the objective testimony of the Holy Spirit given unto the Scripture in and by itself, or do deny their joint concurrence in and unto our believing, do deny all faith properly divine and supernatural.

This being the substance of what is declared and pleaded for in the preceding treatise; to prevent the obloquy of some, and confirm the judgment of others, I shall add the suffrage of ancient and modern writers given unto the principal parts of it, and whereon all other things asserted in it do depend.

Clemens Alexandrinus discourseth at large unto this purpose; Stromat. 7. Ἐχομεν γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς διδασκαλίας τὸν Κύριον, διὰ τε τῶν προφητῶν, διὰ τε τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, καὶ διὰ τῶν μακαρίων ἀποστόλων, πολυτρόπως καὶ πολυμερῶς ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἰς τέλος ἡγούμενον τῆς γνώσεως. ‘We have the Lord himself for the principle or beginning of doctrine, who by the prophets, the gospel, and blessed apostles, in various manners and by divers degrees goeth before us, or leads us unto knowledge.’ [This is that which we lay down as the reason and ground of faith, namely, the authority of the Lord himself instructing us by the Scriptures.] So he adds; Τὴν ἀρχὴν δὲ εἴ τις ἐτέρον δεῖσθαι ὑπολάβοι, οὐκέτ’ ἂν ὄντως ἀρχὴ φυλαχθείη. Ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ πιστὸς, τῇ κυριακῇ γραφῇ τε καὶ φωνῇ ἀξιόπιστος εἰκότως ἂν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εὐεργεσίαν ἐνεργουμένη· ἀμέλει πρὸς τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων εὐρεσιν αὐτῇ χρώμεθα κριτηρίῳ· τὸ κρινόμενον δὲ πᾶν, ἐτι ἄπιστον πρὶν κριθῆναι· ὥς οὐδ’ ὥστ’ ἀρχὴ τὸ κρισίως δεόμενον. ‘And if any one suppose that he needeth any other principle, the principle will not be kept’ [that is, if we need any other principle whereinto to resolve our faith, the word of God is no more a principle unto us]. ‘But he who is faithful from himself is worthy to be believed in his sovereign writing and voice, which as it appeareth is administered by the Lord for the benefit of men. And certainly we use it as a rule of judging for the invention of things. But whatever is judged, is not credible or to be believed until it is judged, and that is no principle which stands in need to be judged.’ The intention of his words is, that God who alone is to be believed for himself, hath given us his word as the rule whereby we are to judge of all things. And this word is so to be believed, as not to be subject unto any other judgment; because if it be so it

cannot be either a principle or a rule. And so he proceeds; *Εἰκότως τοίνυν πίστει περιβαλόντες ἀναπόδεικτον τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ περιουσίας, καὶ τὰς ἀποδείξεις παρ' αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρχῆς περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς λαβόντες, φωνῇ Κυρίου παιδευόμεθα πρὸς τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας.* 'Wherefore, it is meet that embracing by faith the most sufficient indemonstrable principle, and taking the demonstrations of the principle from the principle itself, we are instructed by the voice of the Lord himself unto the acknowledgment of the truth.' In few words he declares the substance of what we have pleaded for. No more do we maintain in this cause, but what Clemens doth here assert; namely, that we believe the Scripture for itself, as that which needeth no antecedent or external demonstration; but all the evidence and demonstration of its divine original is to be taken from itself alone; which yet he farther confirms, *Οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς ἀποφαινόμενοι ἀνθρώποις προσέχοιμεν, οἷς καὶ ἀνταποφάνεσθαι ἐπ' ἴσης ἔξεστιν. Εἰ δ' οὐκ ἀρχεῖ μόνον ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν τὸ δόξαν, ἀλλὰ πιστώσασθαι δεῖ το λεχθὲν, οὐ τὴν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀναμένομεν μαρτυρίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ Κυρίου φωνῇ πιστούμεθα τὸ ζητούμενον.* 'Η πάσων ἀποδείξεων ἐχέγγυωτέρα μᾶλλον δὲ, ἢ μόνῃ ἀποδείξει οὔσα τυγχάνει.—οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀπ' αὐτῶν περὶ αὐτῶν τῶν γραφῶν τελείως ἀποδεικνύντες ἐκ πίστεως πεθόμεθα ἀποδεικτικῶς.<sup>a</sup> 'For we would not attend or give credit simply to the definitions of men, seeing we have right also to define in contradiction unto them. And seeing it is not sufficient merely to say or assert what appears to be truth, but to beget a belief also of what is spoken, we expect not the testimony of men, but confirm that which is inquired about with the voice of the Lord, which is more full and firm than any demonstration, yea, which rather is the only demonstration.—Thus we, taking our demonstrations of the Scripture out of the Scripture, are assured by faith, as by demonstration.' And in other places, as Strom. 4. he plainly affirms that the way of Christians was to prove the Scripture by itself, and all other things by the Scripture.

<sup>a</sup> These passages from Clemens Alexandrinus, very incorrectly transcribed, (*πίστεως* for *διδασκαλίας*, *ἀναπάλεικτον* for *ἀναπόδεικτον*, *περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς* omitted, &c.) have been corrected. Vid. Clem. Alex. Op. Strom. lib. vii. cap. 16. ed. Oxon. 1715. pp. 890, 891. The Editor, however, takes this opportunity of stating, that he does not undertake, nor would it be possible, without a prodigious, and, at the same time, almost useless, expenditure of time and labour, and a boundless accumulation of books, to verify the numerous quotations of Dr. Owen from the fathers and schoolmen, and controversialists of a more recent period.

Basilus speaks to the same purpose on Psal. cxv. Πίστις, ἡ ὑπὲρ τὰς λογικὰς μεθόδους τὴν ψυχὴν εἰς συνκατάθεσιν ἔλκουσα. Πίστις, οὐχ ἡ γεωμετρικαῖς ἀνάγκαις, ἀλλ' ἡ ταῖς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐνεργείαις ἐκγινομένη.<sup>b</sup> 'Faith which draws the soul to assent above all methods of reasonings; faith which is not the effect of geometrical demonstrations, but of the efficacy of the Spirit.' The nature, cause, and efficacy of that faith whereby we believe the Scripture to be the word of God, are asserted by him.

Nemesius de Homin. cap. 2. Ἡ τῶν θεῶν λογικῶν διδασκαλία, τὸ πιστὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἔχουσα διὰ τὸ θεόπνευστον εἶναι.<sup>c</sup> 'The doctrine of the divine oracles hath its credibility from itself, because of its divine inspiration.'

The words of Austin, though taken notice of by all, yet may here be again reported. Confess. lib. 2. cap. 3. 'Audiam et intelligam quo modo fecisti cælum et terram. Scripsit hoc Moses, scripsit et abiit, transivit hinc ad te; neque enim nunc ante me est. Nam si esset, tenerem eum, et rogarem eum, et per te obsecrarem, ut mihi ista panderet, et præberem aures corporis mei, sonis erumpentibus ex ore ejus. At si Hebræa voce loqueretur, frustra pulsaret sensum meum, nec inde mentem meam quicquam tangeret. Si autem Latinè, scirem quid diceret, sed unde scirem an verum diceret? quod etsi hoc scirem num et ab illo scirem? Intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis, nec Hebræa, nec Græca, nec Latina, nec barbara veritas, sine oris et linguæ organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret, verum dicit; at ego statim erectus confidenter illi homini tuo dicerem, verum dicis; cum ergo illum interrogare non possim, te quo plenus vera dixit, veritas, te Deus meus rogo, parce peccatis meis, et qui illi servo tuo dedisti hæc dicere, da et mihi hæc intelligere.'—'I would hear, I would understand how thou madest the heaven and the earth. Moses wrote this, he wrote it, and is gone hence to thee; for he is not now before me; for if he were, I would hold him, and ask him, and beseech him for thy sake, that he would open these things unto me, and I would apply the ears of my body to the sounds breaking forth from his mouth. But if he should use the Hebrew language, in vain should he affect my sense, for he would not at all touch my mind; if he should speak Latin, I should

<sup>b</sup> Op. ed. Bened. tom. i. p. 371.

<sup>c</sup> Oxon. ed. 1671. p. 92.

know what he said; but whence should I know that he spake the truth? and if I should know this also, should I know it of him? Within me, in the habitation of my own thoughts, truth neither in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, nor any barbarous language, without the organs of mouth or tongue, without the noise of syllables, would say, He speaks the truth: and I being immediately assured or certain of it, would say unto that servant of thine, Thou speakest truth. Whereas, therefore, I cannot ask him, I ask thee, O truth, with which he being filled, spake the things that are true: O my God, I ask of thee; pardon my sins, and thou who gavest unto this thy servant to speak these things, give unto me to understand them.'

That which is most remarkable in these words, is, that he plainly affirms that faith would not ensue on the declaration of the prophets themselves if they were present with us, unless there be an internal work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds to enable us, and persuade them thereunto. And indeed he seems to place all assurance of the truth of divine revelations in the inward assurance which God gives us of them by his Spirit; which we have before considered.

The second Arausican council gives full testimony unto the necessity of the internal grace of the Spirit, that we may believe. Can. 7. '*Siquis evangelicæ prædicationi consentire posse confirmat, absque illuminatione et inspiratione Spiritus Sancti, hæretico fallitur Spiritu.*'

To descend unto later times wherein these things have been much disputed, yet the truth hath beamed such light into the eyes of many, as to enforce an acknowledgment from them, when they have examined themselves about it. The words of Baptista Mantuanus are remarkable; *De Patient. lib. 3. cap. 2.* '*Sæpe mecum cogitavi, unde tam suadibilis sit ipsa Scriptura, unde tam potenter influat in animos auditorum, unde tantum habeat energię, ut non ad opinandum tantum, sed ad solide credendum omnes inflectat? Non est hoc imputandum rationum evidentię quas non adducit; non artis industrię aut verbis suavis ad persuadendum accomodatis quibus non utitur; sed vide an id in causa sit quod persuasi sumus eam a prima veritate fluxisse? sed unde sumus ita persuasi nisi ab ipsa? quasi ad ei credendum nos sui ipsius contrahat autoritas. Sed unde oro hanc auctoritatem sibi vendicavit? neque enim vidimus nos Deum*



concionantem, scribentem, docentem, tamen ac si vidissemus, credimus et tenemus a Spiritu Sancto fluxisse quæ legimus; forsán fuerit hæc ratio firmiter adhærendi, quod in ea veritas sit solidior quamvis non clarior; habet enim omnis veritas vim inclinativam, et major majorem, et maxima maximam; sed cur ergo non omnes credunt evangelio? *Respond.* Quod non omnes trahuntur a Deo. Sed longa opus est disputatione? firmiter sacris Scripturis ideo credimus quod divinam inspirationem intus accipimus.—‘I have often thought with myself whence the Scripture itself is so persuasive, from whence it doth so powerfully influence the minds of its hearers, that it inclines or leads them not only to receive an opinion, but surely to believe. This is not to be imputed to the evidence of reasons, which it doth not produce, nor unto the industry of art, with words smooth and fit to persuade, which it useth not; see then if this be not the cause of it, that we are persuaded that it comes from the first truth or verity. But whence are we so persuaded but from itself alone? as if its own authority should effectually draw us to believe it. But whence, I pray, hath it this authority? we saw not God preaching, writing, or teaching of it; but yet as if we had seen him, we believe and firmly hold, that the things which we read proceeded from the Holy Ghost. It may be this is the reason why we so firmly adhere unto it, that truth is more solid in it, though not more clear than in other writings; for all truth hath a persuasive power, the greater truth, the greater power, and that which is greatest the greatest efficacy of all. But why then do not all believe the gospel? *Ans.* Because all are not drawn of God. But what need is there of any long disputation? we therefore, firmly believe the Scriptures, because we have received a divine inspiration assuring of us.’ And in what sense this is allowed hath been declared in the preceding discourse.

I shall close the whole with the testimony of them, by whom the truth which we assert is most vehemently opposed, when it riseth in opposition unto an especial interest of their own.

Two things there are which are principally excepted against in the doctrine of Protestants, concerning our belief of the Scripture. The first is with respect unto the Holy Spirit as the efficient cause of faith, for whereas they teach

that no man can believe the Scripture to be the word of God in a due manner and according unto his duty, without the real internal aid and operation of the Holy Ghost, however it be proposed unto him, and with what arguments soever the truth of its divine original be confirmed; this is charged on them as an error and a crime. And, secondly, whereas they also affirm that there is an inward testimony or witness of the Holy Spirit, whereby he assures and confirms the minds of men in the faith of the Scriptures with an efficacy exceeding all the persuasive evidence of outward arguments and motives; this also by some they are traduced for. And yet those of the Roman church who are looked on as most averse from that resolution of faith which most Protestants acquiesce in, do expressly maintain both these assertions.

The design of Stapleton, *De Principiis Fidei*, controver. 4. lib. 8. cap. 1. is to prove, ‘*impossibile esse sine speciali gratia, ac dono fidei divinitus infuso, actum veræ fidei producere, aut ex veri nominis fide credere.*’ Which he there proves with sundry arguments, namely, ‘that it is impossible to produce any act of faith, or to believe with faith rightly so called, without special grace, and the divine infusion of the gift of faith.’ And Bellarmin speaks to the same purpose; ‘*Argumenta quæ articulos fidei nostræ credibiles faciunt, non talia sunt ut fidem omnino indubitata reddant, nisi mens divinitus adjuvetur.*’ *De Grat. et lib. Arbit.* lib. 6. cap. 3. ‘The arguments which render the articles of our faith credible, are not such as produce an undoubted faith, unless the mind be divinely assisted.’

Melchior Canus, *loc. Theol.* lib. 2. cap. 8. disputes expressly to this purpose; ‘*Id statuendum est, auctoritatem humanam et incitamenta omnia illa prædicta, sive alia quæcunque adhibita ab eo qui proponit fidem, non esse sufficientes causas ad credendum ut credere tenemur, sed præterea opus esse interiori causa efficiente, id est, Dei speciali auxilio moventis ad credendum.*’—‘This is firmly to be held, that human authority, and all the motives before mentioned, nor any other which may be used by him who proposeth the object of faith to be believed, are not sufficient causes of believing as we are obliged to believe; but there is moreover necessary an internal efficient cause moving us to believe, which is the especial help or aid of God.’ And a little after

he speaks yet more plainly. ‘*Externæ igitur omnes et humanæ persuasiones non sunt satis ad credendum, quantumcunque ab hominibus competenter ea quæ sunt fidei proponantur; sed necessaria est insuper causa interior, hoc est, divinum quoddam lumen incitans ad credendum, et oculi quidam interiores Dei beneficio ad videndum dati.*’—‘Wherefore, all external human persuasions or arguments are not sufficient causes of faith, however the things of faith may be sufficiently proposed by men; there is, moreover, necessary an internal cause, that is, a certain divine light, inciting to believe, or certain internal eyes to see, given us by the grace of God.’ Yea, all other learned men of the same profession do speak to the same purpose.

The other assertion also they do no less comply withal; ‘*Arcanum divini Spiritus testimonium prorsus necessarium est, ut quis ecclesiæ testimonio ac judicio circa Scripturarum approbationem credat,*’ saith Stapleton. ‘The secret testimony of the Spirit is altogether necessary, that a man may believe the testimony and judgment of the church about the Scriptures.’ And the words of Gregory de Valentia are remarkable. ‘*Cum hactenus ejusmodi argumenta pro autoritate Christianiæ doctrinæ fecerimus, quæ per seipsa satis prudentibus esse debeant, ut animum inducant velle credere; tamen nescio an non sit argumentum iis omnibus majus, quod qui vere Christiani sunt, ita se animo affectos esse, quod ad fidem attinet, sentiunt, ut præcipue quidem propter nullum argumentum, quod vel hactenus fecimus vel ratione similiter excogitari possit, sed propter aliud nescio quid, quod alio quodam modo et longe fortius quam ulla argumenta persuadet, ut ad firmiter credendum se intelligant.*’ Tom. 3. in Thom. Disp. 7. Qu. 1. punc. 4. sect. 2. Let any man compare these words with those of Calvin; Institut. lib. 1. cap. 7. sect. 5. which, as I remember, I have cited before, and he will know whence the sense of them was taken. ‘Whereas,’ saith he, ‘we have hitherto pleaded arguments for the authority of Christian doctrine, which even by themselves ought to suffice prudent persons to induce their minds to belief, yet I know not whether there be not an argument greater than they all, namely, that those who are truly Christians do find or feel by experience their minds so affected in this matter of faith, that they are moved

(and obliged) firmly to believe, neither for any argument that we have used, nor for any of the like sort that can be found out by reason, but for somewhat else which persuades our minds in another manner, and far more effectually than any arguments whatever.' And to shew what he means by this internal argument and persuasion, he affirms elsewhere, that, '*Deus ipse imprimis est, qui Christianam doctrinam atque adeo Scripturam sacram veram esse, voce revelationis suæ et interno quodam instinctu et impulsu, humanis mentibus contestatur.*'—'It is God himself, who by the voice of his revelation, and by a certain internal instinct and impulse, witnesseth unto the minds of men the truth of Christian doctrine, or of the Holy Scripture.'

These few testimonies have I produced amongst the many that might be urged to the same purpose, not to confirm the truth which we have pleaded for, which stands on far surer foundations; but only to obviate prejudices in the minds of some, who being not much conversant in things of this nature, are ready to charge what hath been delivered unto this purpose with singularity.