

TO
MY REVEREND AND WORTHY FRIENDS,
THE
PREBENDS OF CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE IN OXFORD,
WITH
ALL THE STUDENTS IN DIVINITY IN THAT SOCIETY.

THE reason of my inscribing the ensuing pleas for the authority, purity, and perfection of the Scripture, against the pretences of some to the contrary, in these days, unto you, is, because some of you value and study the Scripture as much as any I know, and it is the earnest desire of my heart, that all of you would so do. Now whereas two things offer themselves unto me, to discourse with you by the way of preface, namely, the commendation of the Scripture, and an exhortation to the study of it, on the one hand; and a discovery of the reproach that is cast upon it, with the various ways and means that are used by some for the lessening and depressing of its authority and excellency on the other; the former being to good purpose, by one or other almost every day performed, I shall insist at present on the latter only; which also is more suited to discover my aim and intention in the ensuing discourses. Now herein as I shall, it may be, seem to exceed that proportion which is due unto a preface to such short discourses as these following; yet I know, I shall be more brief than the nature of so great a matter as that proposed to consideration doth require. And, therefore, ἀνὲν προοιμίων καὶ παθῶν, I shall fall upon the subject that now lies before me.

Many there have been, and are, who, through the craft of Satan, and the prejudice of their own hearts,

lying under the power of corrupt and carnal interest, have engaged themselves to decry and disparage that excellency of the Scripture which is proper and peculiar unto it. The several sorts of them are too many particularly to be considered, I shall only pass through them in general, and fix upon such instances by the way as may give evidence to the things insisted on.

Those who in this business are first to be called to an account, whose filth and abominations given out in gross, others have but parcelled among themselves, are they of the synagogue of Rome. These pretend themselves to be the only keepers and preservers of the word of God in the world; the only ‘ground and pillar of truth.’ Let us then a little consider, in the first place, how it hath discharged this trust; for it is but equal that men should be called to an account upon their own principles; and those, who, supposing themselves to have a trust reposed in them, do manifest a treacherous mind, would not be one whit better if they had so indeed.

What then have these men done in the discharge of their pretended trust? nay, what hath that synagogue left unattempted? yea, what hath it left unfinished, that may be needful to convince it of perfidiousness? that says the Scripture was committed to it alone; and would, if it were able, deprive all others of the possession of it, or their lives. What Scripture then was this, or when was this deed of trust made unto them? The oracles of God, they tell us, committed to the Jews under the Old Testament, and all the writings of the New; and that this was done from the first foundation of the church by Peter, and so on to the finishing of the whole canon. What now have they not done in adding, detracting, corrupting, forging, aspersing those Scriptures to falsify their pretended trust? They add more books to them, never indited

by the Holy Ghost, as remote from being *θεοπνευστι*, *ὡς οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης* : so denying the self-evidencing power of that word, which is truly *ἐξ οὐρανοῦ*, by mixing it with things *ἐξ ἀνθρώπων*, of a human rise and spring ; manifesting themselves to have lost the spirit of discerning, promised with the word, to abide with the true church of God for ever ; Isa. lix. 21. They have taken from its fulness and perfection, its sufficiency and excellency, by their Massora, their oral law, or *verbum*, *ἀγγραφον*, their unknown, endless, bottomless, boundless treasure of traditions ; that *πάνσοφον φάρμακον* for all their abominations. The Scripture itself, as they say, committed to them, they plead, to their eternal shame, to be in the original languages corrupted, vitiated, interpolated, so that it is no stable rule to guide us throughout in the knowledge of the will of God. The Jews, they say, did it whilst they were busy in burning of Christians. Therefore, in the room of the originals, they have enthroned a translation that was never committed to them, that came into the world they know neither how, nor when, nor by whom. So that one^a says of its author, ‘ Si quis percontetur Gallus fuerit an Sarmata, Judæus an Christianus, vir an mulier, nihil habituri sint ejus patroni quod expeditè respondeant.’ All this to place themselves in the throne of God, and to make the words of a translation authentic from their stamp upon them, and not from their relation unto, and agreement with, the words spoken by God himself. And yet farther, as if all this were not enough to manifest what trustees they have been, they have cast off all subjection to the authority of God in his word, unless it be resolved into their own ; denying that any man in the world can know it to be the word of God, unless they tell him so ; it is but ink and paper, skin of parchment, a dead letter, a nose of wax,

^a Erasmus.

a Lesbian rule, of no authority unto us at all. O faithful trustees ! holy mother church ! infallible chair ! can wickedness yet make any farther progress ? was it ever heard of from the foundation of the world, that men should take so much pains, as these men have done, to prove themselves faithless, and treacherous in a trust committed to them ? Is not this the sum and substance of volumes that have even filled the world ; the word of God was committed to us alone, and no others ; under our keeping it is corrupted, depraved, vitiated ; the copies delivered unto us we have rejected, and taken up one of our own choice ; nor let any complain of us, it was in our power to do worse. This sacred depositum had no *κριτήρια*, whereby it might be known to be the word of God ; but it is upon our credit alone, that it passes in the world, or is believed ; we have added to it many books upon our own judgment, and yet think it not sufficient for the guidance of men, in the worship of God, and their obedience they owe unto him : yet do they blush ? are they ashamed as a thief when he is taken ? nay, do they not boast themselves in their iniquity ? and say, they are sold to work all these abominations ? The time is coming, yea, it is at hand, wherein it shall repent them for ever, that they have lifted up themselves against this sacred grant of the wisdom, care, love, and goodness of God.

Sundry other branches there are of the abominations of these men, besides those enumerated ; all which may be reduced to these three corrupt and bloody fountains :

1. That the Scripture at best, as given out from God, and as it is to us continued, was, and is, but a partial revelation of the will of God : the other part of it, which how vast and extensive it is no man knows (for the Jews have given us their *δευτεριώσεις* in their Mishna and Gemara ; these kept them locked up in

the breast, or chair of their holy father), being reserved in their magazine of traditions.

2. That the Scripture is not able to evince or manifest itself to be the word of God, so as to enjoy and exercise any authority in his name, over the souls and consciences of men ; without an accession of testimony, from that combination of politic, worldly-minded men, that call themselves the church of Rome.

3. That the original copies of the Old and New Testament are so corrupted (*'ex ore tuo, serve nequam'*) that they are not a certain standard and measure of all doctrines, or the touch-stone of all translations.

Now concerning these things you will find somewhat offered unto your considerations in the ensuing discourses ; wherein, I hope, without any great alteration or disputes, to lay down such principles of truth, as that their idol imaginations will be found cast to the ground before the sacred ark of the word of God, and to lie naked without wisdom or power.

It is concerning the last of these only, that at present I shall deliver my thoughts unto you ; and that because we begin to have a new concernment therein, wherewith I shall afterward acquaint you. Of all the inventions of Satan to draw off the minds of men from the word of God, this of decrying the authority of the originals seems to me the most pernicious. At the beginning of the reformation, before the council of Trent, the Papists did but faintly, and not without some blushing, defend their vulgar Latin translation. Some openly preferred the original before it, as Cajetan,^b Erasmus, Vives,^c and others. Yea, and after the council also, the same was done by Andradius,^d Ferarius,^e Arias Montanus,^f Masius,^g and others. For those who understood nothing but Latin amongst them, and

^b Præf. in 5. lib. Mos.

^c In August. de Civit. Dei. lib. 15. cap. 13.

^d Defens. Conc. Trid. lib. 4.

^e Proleg. Biblica.

^f Præf. in Bib. in Lat. et passim.

^g Præf. in Comment. in Josh.

scarcely that, whose ignorance was provided for in the council; I suppose it will not be thought meet that in this case we should make any account of them. But the state of things is now altered in the world, and the iniquity, which first wrought in a mystery, being now discovered, casts off its vizard and grows bold; ‘*nihil est audacius istis deprensus.*’ At first the design was managed in private writings, Melchior Canus,^h Guilielmus Lindanus,ⁱ Bellarminus,^k Gregorius de Valentia,^l Leo Castrius,^m Huntlæus,ⁿ Hanstelius,^o with innumerable others, some on one account, some on another, have pleaded that the originals were corrupted; some of them with more impudence than others. Leo Castrius, as Pineda observes, raves almost, wherever he falls on the mention of the Hebrew text. ‘*Sed is est author,*’^p saith he, ‘*dum in hujusmodi Ebraizationes incidit, vix sui compos; et bono licet zelo, tamen vel ignorance rerum quarundam, vel vehementiori aliquâ affectione, extra fines veritatis et modestiæ rapitur: et si ex hujusmodi tantum unguibus Leonem illum estimaremus, non etiam ex aliis præclaris conatibus, aut murem aut vulpem censeremus, aut canem aut quiddam aliud ignobilius.*’ Yea Morinus, who seems to be ashamed of nothing, yet shrinks a little at this man’s impudence and folly. ‘*Apologetici libros,*’^q saith he, ‘*sex bene longos scripsit, quibus nihil quam Judæorum voluntarias et malignas depravationes demonstrare nititur; zelo sanè pio scripsit Castrius, sed libris Hebraicis ad tantum opus quod moliebatur parum erat instructus.*’ In the steps of this Castrius, walks Huntley, a subtle Jesuit, who, in the treatise above cited,^r ascribes the corruption of the Hebrew Bible to the good

^h Loc. Com. lib. 1. cap. 13. ⁱ De opt. Gen. Interpret. lib. 1. ^k Lib. 2. de verb. Dei.

^l Tom. 1. D. 5. Q. 3. ^m De Translat. Sæ. cum Comment. in Isa.

ⁿ Epito. Controv. Contr. 1. c. 8. ^o Disputatio Calum. Casaub.

^p Pined. lib. 5. de Reb. Solom. c. 4. s. 1. ^q Morin. Exercit. de Sincerit. Exerc. 1. c. 3.

^r Cap. 10. lib. 1.

providence of God, for the honour of the vulgar Latin. But these, with their companions, have had their mouths stopped by Reynolds, Whitaker, Junius, Lubbertus, Rivetus, Chamierus, Gerardus, Amesius, Glassius, Alstedius, Amama, and others. So that a man would have thought this fire put to the house of God had been sufficiently quenched. But after all the endeavours hitherto used, in the days wherein we live, it breaks out in a greater flame; they now print the original itself, and defame it; gathering up translations of all sorts, and setting them up in competition with it. When Ximenius put forth the complutensian Bibles, Vatablus his, and Arias Montanus those of the king of Spain, this cockatrice was not hatched, whose fruit is now growing to a flying fiery serpent. It is now but saying the ancient Hebrew letters are changed from the Samaritan to the Chaldean; the points or vowels, and accents, are but lately invented, of no authority, without their guidance and direction nothing is certain in the knowledge of that tongue; all that we know of it comes from the translation of the LXX, the Jews have corrupted the Old Testament; there are innumerable various lections both of the Old and New; there are other copies differing from those we now enjoy, that are utterly lost. So that upon the matter, there is nothing left unto men, but to choose, whether they will be Papists or Atheists.

Here that most stupendous fabric that was ever raised by ink and paper, termed well by a learned man^s ‘magnificentissimum illud (quod post homines natos in lucem prodiit unquam) opus biblicum;’ I mean the Parisian Bibles, is prefaced by a discourse of its erector, Michael de Jay, wherein he denies the Hebrew text, prefers the vulgar Latin before it, and resolves that we are not left to the word for our rule, but to the

^s Edu. Castel. Præf. ad Animad. Samar. in Bib. Poly.

spirit that rules in their church :[†] ‘pro certo igitur atque indubitato apud nos esse debet, vulgatam editionem, quæ communi catholicæ ecclesiæ linguâ circumfertur verum esse et genuinum sacræ Scripturæ fontem ; hanc consulendam ubique, inde fidei dogmata repetenda ; ex quo insuper consentaneum est, verā ac certissima fidei Christianæ autographa in Spiritu ecclesiæ residere, neque ab ejus hostium manibus repetenda.

‘Et certè quamcunque pietatis speciem prætexunt, non religione quapiam, aut sincerā in Scripturam sacram veneratione aguntur ; dum eam unicam, quasi ineluctabilem salutis regulam, usurpant ; neque spiritûs evangelici veritatem investigare decreverunt ; dum ad autographa curiosius recurrentes, ex quibus, præter perplexa quædam vestigia, vix aliquid superest, vel capitales fidei hostes, vel eos qui ecclesiæ minus faverint, de contextuum interpretatione ac germano sacrorum codicum sensu consulunt. Scilicet non alta est opportunior via à regio illius itinere secedendi, neque in privatarum opinionum placitis blandius possunt acquiescere, quas velut unicas doctrinæ suæ regulas sectari plerunque censuerunt.

‘Apage cæcam animorum libidinem, non jam in institutionem nostram subsistit litera, sed ecclesiæ spiritus ; neque è sacris codicibus hauriendum quidquam, nisi quod illa communicatum esse nobiscum voluerit.’ So he, or Morinus in his name ; and if this be indeed the true state of things, I suppose he will very hardly convince men of the least usefulness of this great work and undertaking. To usher those Bibles into the world, Morinus puts forth his exertions, entitled, ‘Of the Sincerity of the Hebrew and Greek Text,’ indeed to prove them corrupt and useless. He is now the man amongst them that undertakes to defend this cause : in whose writings whether there be more of Pyrgopolynices, or

[†] Mich. le Jay Præfat. ad opus Bibl.

Rabshakeh, is uncertain. But dogs that bark loud seldom bite deep ; nor do I think many ages have produced a man of more confidence and less judgment ; a prudent reader cannot but nauseate at all his leaves, and the man is well laid open by a learned person of his own party." By the way, I cannot but observe, that in the height of his boasting, he falls upon his mother church, and embraces her to death. Exercit. 1. cap. 1. pag. 11. that he might vaunt himself to be the first and only discoverer of corruptions in the original of the Old Testament, with the causes of them, he falls into a profound contemplation of the guidance of his church, which being ignorant of any such cause of rejecting the originals, as he hath now informed her of, yet continued to reject them, and prefer the vulgar Latin before them, '*hîc admirare lector,*' saith he, '*Dei spiritum ecclesiæ præsentissimum, illam per obscura, perplexa, et invia quæque, inoffenso pede agentem : quanquam incognita esset Rabbīnorum supina negligentia, portentosa ignorantia, fædâque librorum Judæicorum corruptela, et Hæretici contraria his magnâ verborum pompâ audacter jactarent ; adduci tamen non potuit ecclesia, ut versio, quâ solâ per mille ferè et centum annos usa fuerit, ad normam et amussim Hebræi textus iterum recuderetur.*' But is it so indeed, that their church receives its guidance in a stupid brutish manner, so as to be fixed obstinately on conclusions, without the least acquaintance with the premises ? it seems she loved not the originals, but she knew not why ; only she was obstinate in this, that she loved them not. 1. If this be the state with their church, that when it hath neither Scripture, nor tradition, nor reason, nor new revelation, she is guided she knows not how, as Socrates was by his demon, or by secret and inexpressible species of pertinacy and stub-

^u Simeon de Mays Defens. sinc. Text. Heb.

bornness falling upon her imagination; I suppose it will be in vain to contend with her any longer. For my own part I must confess, that I shall as soon believe a poor deluded fanatical Quaker, pretending to be guided by an infallible spirit, as their pope with his whole conclave of cardinals, upon the terms here laid down by Morinus.

But, to let these men pass for a season, had this leprosy kept itself within that house which is thoroughly infected, it had been of less importance; it is but a farther preparation of it for the fire. But it is now broken forth among Protestants also, with what designs, to what end or purpose, I know not, *θεός οἶδε* ‘God knows,’ and the day will manifest. To declare at large how this is come about, ‘longa esset historia,’ too long for me to dwell upon, some heads of things I shall briefly touch at. It is known to all, that the reformation of religion, and restoration of good learning, were begun, and carried on at the same time, and mostly by the same persons. There was indeed a triumvirate among the Papists of men excellently skilled in rabbinical learning before the Reformation. Raymundus Martinus, Porchetus de Sylvaticis, and Petrus Galatinus, are the men; of the which, the last dedicated his book to Maximilian the Emperor, after that Zuinglius and Luther had begun to preach. Upon the matter these three are but one: great are the disputes, whether Galatinus stole his book from Raymundus or Porchetus; from Porchetus, saith Morinus, and calls his work ‘*plagium portentosum, cui vix simile unquam factum est*.’ Exerc. 1. cap. 2. from Raymundus, saith Scaliger, Epist. 2. 41. mistaking Raymundus Martinus for Raymundus Sebon, but giving the first tidings to the world of that book. From Raymundus also, saith Josephus de Voysin in his prolegomena to the ‘*Pugio fidei*,’ and from him Hornebeck

in his Proleg. ad Judæ. I shall not interpose in this matter, the method of Galatinus and his style are peculiar to him, but the coincidence of his quotations too many to be ascribed to common accident. That Porchetus took his 'Victoria adversus impios Judæos' for the most part from Raymundus, himself confesseth in his preface. However, certain it is Galatinus had no small opinion of his own skill, and therefore, according to the usual way of men, who have attained, as they think, to some eminency in any one kind of learning, laying more weight upon it than it is able to bear, he boldly affirms, that the original of the Scripture is corrupted, and not to be restored but by the Talmud; in which one concession he more injures the cause he pleads for against the Jews, than he advantageth it by all his books beside. Of his גלריית of Rabbena Haskadosh there is no more news as yet in the world, than what he is pleased to acquaint us withal. At the same time Erasmus, Reuchlin, Vives, Xantes, Pagninus, and others, moved effectually for the restoration of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. But the work principally prospered in the hands of the first reformers, as they were all of them generally skilled in the Hebrew, so some of them, as Capito, Bibliander, Fagius, Munster, to that height and usefulness, that they may well be reckoned as the fathers and patriarchs of that learning. At that time lived Elias Levita, the most learned of the Jews of that age, whose grammatical writings were of huge importance in the studying of that tongue. This man as he was acquainted with many of the first reformers, so he lived particularly with Paulus Fagius, as I have elsewhere declared. Now in one book, which in those days he published, called Massoreth, Hammasoreth, he broached a new opinion, not much heard of, at least not at all received among the Jews, nor for aught that yet appears, once men-

tioned by Christians before, namely, that the points or vowels, and accents used in the Hebrew Bible, were invented by some critical Jew or Massorite, living at Tiberias about five or six hundred years after Christ: no doubt the man's aim was to reduce the world of Christians to a dependance on the ancient rabbins, for the whole sense of the Scripture, 'Hinc prima mali labes.' Here lies the first breach in this matter. The fraud being not discovered, and this opinion being broached and confirmed by the great and almost only master of the language of that age, some even of the first reformers embraced his fancy. Perhaps Zuinglius had spoken to it before: justly I know not. After a while the poison of this error beginning to operate, the Papists waiting on the mouths of the reformers, like the servants of Benhadad on Ahab, to catch at every word that might fall from them to their advantage, began to make use of it. Hence Cochlæus, lib. de Auth. Scripturæ, cap. 5. applauds Luther, for saying the Jews had corrupted the Bible with points and distinctions, as well he might, for nothing could be spoken more to the advantage of his cause against him. Wherefore, other learned men began to give opposition to this error, so did Munster, Junius, and others, as will be shewn in the ensuing discourse. Thus this matter rested for a season. The study of the Hebrew tongue and learning being carried on, it fell at length on him who undoubtedly hath done more real service for the promotion of it, than any one man whatever, Jew or Christian. I mean Buxtorfius the elder; his *Thesaurus Grammaticus*, his *Tiberias*, or *Commentarius Massorethicus*, his *Lexicons and Concordances*, and many other treatises, whereof some are not yet published, evince this to all the world. Even Morimus saith, that he is the only man among Christians, that ever thoroughly understood the Massora; and Simeon de Muys ac-

knowledgeth his profiting by him, and learning from him; other Jews who undertake to be teachers, know nothing but what they learn of him. To omit the testimony of all sorts of learned men, giving him the pre-eminence in this learning, it may suffice that his works praise him. Now this man in his *Tiberias*, or *Commentarius Massorethicus*, printed with the great Rabbinical Bible of his own correct setting forth at Basil, An. 1620, considereth at large this whole matter of the points, and discovereth the vanity of Elias's pretension about the Tiberian Massorites. But we must not, it seems, rest here: within a few years after, to make way for another design, which then he had conceived, Ludovicus Capellus published a discourse in the defence of the opinion of Elias (at least so far as concerned the rise of the punctuation), under the title of '*Arcanum punctationis revelatum.*' The book was published by Erpenius without the name of the author. But the person was sufficiently known; and Rivetus not long after took notice of him, and saith he was his friend, but concealed his name. *Isag. ad Scr. I. cap. 8.* This new attempt immediately pleaseth some. Among others, our learned professor Dr. Prideaux reads a public lecture on the vespers of our Comitia on that subject; wherein, though he preface his discourse with an observation of the advantage the Papists make of that opinion of the novelty of the points, and the danger of it, yet upon the matter he falls in wholly with Capellus, though he name him not. Among the large encomiums of himself, and his work, printed by Capellus in the close of his *Critica Sacra*, there are two letters from one Mr. Eyre here in England, in one whereof he tells him, that without doubt the doctor read on that subject by the help of his book, as indeed he useth his arguments, and quotes his treatise, under the name of *Sud Hanisebhoth Ha-*

naegalah. But that, I say, which seems to me most admirable in the doctor's discourse is, that whereas he had prefaced it with the weight of the controversy he had in hand, by the advantage the Papists make of the opinion of the novelty of the points, citing their words to that purpose, himself in the body of his exercitations falls in with them, and speaks the very things which he seemed before to have blamed. And by this means this opinion, tending so greatly to the disparagement of the authority of the originals, is crept in amongst Protestants also. Of the stop put unto its progress by the full and learned answer of Buxtorfius the younger (who alone in this learning, in this age, seems to answer his father's worth) unto Capellus, in his discourse, 'de origine et antiquitate Punctorum,' I shall speak more afterward. However it is not amiss fallen out that the masters of this new persuasion are not at all agreed among themselves. Capellus would have it easy to understand the Hebrew text, and every word, though not absolutely by itself, yet as it lies in its contexture, though there were no points at all. Morinus would make the language altogether unintelligible on that account; the one saith, that the points are a late invention of the Rabbins, and the other, that without them, the understanding of the Hebrew is ἐν τῶν ἀδυνάτων, yet though they look divers ways, there is a firebrand between them. But we have this brand brought yet nearer to the church's bread-corn, in the prolegomena to the Biblia Polyglotta, lately printed at London. The solemn espousal of this opinion of the Hebrew punctuation, in that great work, was one chief occasion of the second discourse, as you will find it at large declared in the entrance of it. I dare not mention the desperate consequences that attend this imagination, being affrighted, among other things, by a little treatise lately sent me (upon the occasion of a discourse on this sub-

ject) by my worthy and learned friend Dr. Ward, entitled 'Fides divina,' wherein its author, whoever he be, from some principles of this nature, and unwary expressions of some learned men amongst us, labours to eject, and cast out as useless, the whole Scripture or word of God. I should have immediately returned an answer to that pestilent discourse, but that upon consideration, I found all his objections obviated or answered in the ensuing treatises, which were then wholly finished. And this, as I said, was the first way whereby the poison of undervaluing the originals crept in among Protestants themselves.

Now, together with the knowledge of the tongues, the use of that knowledge in critical observations, did also increase. The excellent use of this study and employment, with the fruits of it in the explanation of sundry difficulties, with many other advantages, cannot be easily expressed. But as the best things are apt to be most abused, so in particular it hath fallen out with this kind of learning and study. Protestants here also have chiefly managed the business. Beza, Camerarius, Scaliger, Casaubon, Drusius, Gomarus, Usher, Grotius, Hensius, Fuller, Dieu, Mede, Camero, Glasius, Capellus, Amama, with innumerable others, have excelled in this kind. But the mind of man being exceedingly vainglorious, curious, uncertain, after a door to reputation and renown, by this kind of learning, was opened in the world, it quickly spread itself over all bounds and limits of sobriety. The manifold inconveniences, if not mischiefs, that have ensued on the boldness and curiosity of some in criticising the Scripture, I shall not now insist upon; and what it might yet grow unto, I have often heard the great Usher expressing his fear. Of the success of Grotius in this way we have a solid account weekly in the lectures of our learned professor, which, I hope,

he will in due time benefit the public withal. But it is only one or two things that my present design calls me upon to remark.

Among other ways that sundry men have fixed on to exercise their critical abilities, one hath been the collecting of various lections both in the Old Testament and New. The first and most honest course fixed on to this purpose, was that of consulting various copies, and comparing them among themselves, wherein yet there were sundry miscarriages, as I shall shew in the second treatise. This was the work of Erasmus, Stephen, Beza, Arias Montanus, and some others, some that came after them finding this province possessed, and no other world of the like nature remaining for them to conquer, fixed upon another way, substituting to the service of their design, as pernicious a principle, as ever I think was fixed on by any learned man since the foundation of the church of Christ, excepting only those of Rome. Now this principle is that, upon many grounds, which some of them are long in recounting : there are sundry corruptions crept into the originals, which by their critical faculty, with the use of sundry engines, those especially of the old translations, are to be discovered and removed. And this also receives countenance from these prolegomena to the *Biblia Polyglotta*, as will afterward be shewn and discussed. Now this principle being once fixed, and a liberty of criticising on the Scripture, yea, a necessity of it, thence evinced, it is inconceivable what springs of corrections and amendments rise up under their hands. Let me not be thought tedious if I recount some of them to you.

1. It is known that there is a double consonancy in the Hebrew consonants among themselves ; of some in figure that are unlike in sound, of some in sound that are unlike in figure, of the first sort are כ and כּ, נ

and ג, י and ו, ו and ז, ז and ד, ד and מ, מ and ט, ט and ח, ח and ת, ע and צ; of the latter are כ and ק, א and ע, ס and ו, ש, ו and ב, ע and ן. Now this is one principle of our new critics, that the scribes of the Bible were sometimes mistaken by the likeness of the letters, in respect of figure, sometimes by their likeness in respect of sound; and so remembering the words they wrote, oftentimes put one for another; so that whether they used their eyes or their memories, they failed on one hand or another, though the Jews deny any copy amongst them to be written but exactly by pattern, or that it is lawful for a man to write one word in a copy, but by pattern, though he could remember the words of the whole Bible: now whereas the signification of every word is regulated by its radix, it often falls out, that in the formation and inflexion of words, by reason of letters that are defective, there remains but one letter of the radix in them, at least that is pronounced: how frequent this is in this tongue, those who have very little skill in it, may guess by only taking a view of Probenius's Bible, wherein the radical letters are printed in a distinct character, from all the prefixes and affixes in their variations. Now if a man hath a mind to criticise and mend the Bible, it is but taking his word, or words, that he will fix upon, and try what they will make by the commutation of the letters that are alike in figure and sound. Let him try what כ will do in the place of ב or on the contrary; which as they are radical, or as they are prefixed, will sufficiently alter the sense; and so of all the rest mentioned. If by this means any new sense that is tolerable, and pleaseth the critic, doth emerge, it is but saying the scribe was mistaken in the likeness of the letters, or in the affinity of the sound, and then it is no matter, though all the copies in the world agree to the contrary, without the least variation. It is evident that

this course hath stood Capellus and Grotius in very good stead. And Simeon de Muys tells us a pretty story of himself to this purpose; de Heb. Edit. Antiq. et Verit. S. S. Yea, this is the most eminent spring of the criticisms on the Old Testament, that these times afford: a thousand instances might be given to this purpose.

2. But in case this course fail, and no relief be afforded this way, than the transposition of letters offers its assistance; those who know any thing in this language, know what alteration in the sense of words may be made by such a way of procedure, frequently words of contrary senses, directly opposite, consist only of the same letters diversly placed. Every lexicon will supply men with instances, that need not to be here repeated.

3. The points are taken into consideration; and here bold men may even satisfy their curiosity. That word, or those three letters דבר are instanced by Jerome to this purpose; Hom. 9. 12. as it may be printed it will afford eight several senses; דְּבַר is *verbum*, and דְּבַר is *pestis*; as far distant from one another as life and death; those letters in that order may be read with ך .. and ך ך and - ך and .. . and ך -, the Jews give instances how by this means, men may destroy the world. But,

4. Suppose that this ground proves barren also, it is but going to an old translation, the LXX, or vulgar Latin, and where any word likes us, to consider what Hebrew word answers unto it, and if it discovers an agreement in any one letter, in figure or sound, with the word in that text, then to say that so they read in that copy; yea, rather than fail, be the word as far different from what is read in the Bible as can be imagined, aver it to yield the more convenient sense, and a various lection is found out.

And these are the chief heads and springs of the criticisms on the Old Testament, which, with so great a reputation of learning, men have boldly obtruded on us of late days. It is not imaginable what prejudice the sacred truth of the Scripture, preserved by the infinite love and care of God, hath already suffered hereby, and what it may farther suffer for my part, I cannot but tremble to think. Lay but these two principles together, namely, that the points are a late invention of some Judaical Rabbins (on which account there is no reason in the world that we should be bound unto them), and that it is lawful to gather various lections by the help of translations, where there are no diversities in our present copies, which are owned in the prolegomena to the Biblia Polyglotta, and for my part I must needs cry out δὲς ποῦ στῶ, as not seeing any means of being delivered from utter uncertainty in and about all sacred truth. Those who have more wisdom and learning, and are able to look through all the digladiations that are likely to ensue on these principles, I hope will rather take pains to instruct me, and such as I am, than be angry or offended with us, that we are not so wise or learned as themselves. In the mean time I desire those who are shaken in mind by any of the specious pretences of Capellus and others, to consider the specimen, given us, of reconciling the difficulties, that they lay as the ground of their conjectures in the miscellany notes, or exercitations of the learned Mr. Pocock; as useful and learned a work as is extant in that kind, in so few sheets of paper. The dangerous and causeless attempts of men, to rectify our present copies of the Bible, the reader may there also find discovered and confuted.

But we have not as yet done, there is a new invention of Capellus, greatly applauded amongst the men of these opinions. He tells us, lib. 6. c. 10. Crit. Sacr.

‘Planum est omnem quæ hodiè est in terrarum orbe linguæ Hebraicæ cognitionem servandam tandèm esse et ascribendam Græcæ τῶν LXX. Sacrorum Bibliorum translationi.’ This is greedily taken up by Morinus (as nothing could be spoken more to his purpose), who also tells us, that the learned prefacer to these Biblia Polyglotta is of the same judgment; Morin. Præfat. ad opusc. Hæbr. Samarit. Hereupon he informs us, that in the translation of the Pentateuch he went for the meaning of sundry words unto Hierome, and the translation of the LXX. But it is not unknown to these learned persons, that Hierome, whom one of them makes his rule, tells us over and over, that notwithstanding the translation of the LXX, he had his knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, from the Hebrew itself, and the help of such Hebrews, as he hired to his assistance. And for Capellus, is not that the Helena for which he contends, and upon the matter the only foundation of his sacred work of criticising on the Scripture, that there was a succession of learned men of the Jews at Tiberias until a hundred years after Hierome, who invented the points of the Hebrew Bible, and that not in an arbitrary manner, but according to the tradition they had received from them who spoke that language in its purity? Shall these men be thought to have had the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue from the translation of the LXX. Certainly they would not then have hated it so, as he informs us they did. But this thing is plainly ridiculous. The language gives us the knowledge of itself. Considering the helps that by Providence have been in all ages, and at all times, afforded thereunto, ever since the time wherein Capellus says, some knew it so well, as to invent and affix the present punctuation, there hath been a succession of living or dead masters to farther the knowledge of it. And this will not seem strange to them who

have given us exact translations of the Persian and Æthiopic pieces of Scripture. In the ἀπαξ λεγόμενα we are little assisted by the LXX. The chiefest seeming help unto this tongue is from the Arabic. And thus have I given you a brief account, how by the subtilty of Satan, there are principles crept in, even amongst Protestants, undermining the authority of the Hebrew verity as it was called of old ; wherein Jerusalem hath justified Samaria, and cleared the Papists in their reproaching of the word of God. Of the New Testament I shall speak particularly in the second discourse ensuing. Morinus, indeed tells us, de Heb. et Græc. Tex. Sincerit. Exercitat. 1. cap. 1. p. 5. it is a jocular thing that the heretics in their disputations do grant, that there are corruptions, and various lections in the Greek and Latin copies of the Scripture, but deny it as to the Hebrew ; but why, I pray, is this so ridiculous ? It is founded on no less stable bottom than this experience, that whereas we evidently find various lections in the Greek copies which we enjoy, and so grant that which ocular inspection evinces to be true ; yet, although men discover such virulent and bitter spirits against the Hebrew text, as this Morinus doth, calling all men fools or knaves that contend for its purity, yet they are none of them able to shew out of any copies yet extant in the world, or that they can make appear ever to have been extant, that ever there were any such various lections in the originals of the Old Testament. And is there any reason that we should be esteemed ridiculous, because believing our own eyes, we will not also believe the testimony of some few men of no credit with us, asserting that for truth, which we have abundant cause to believe to be utterly false ; but of these men so far.

I thought, at the entrance of my discourse, to have also insisted on some other ways, whereby Satan in

these days assaults the sacred truth of the word of God in its authority, purity, integrity, or perfection : especially in the poor, deluded, fanatical souls amongst us, commonly called Quakers ; for the instruction of the younger sort, against whose abominations I have subjoined the theses in the close of the other treatises. But I am sensible how far already I have exceeded the bounds of a preface, unto so small treatises as these ensuing ; and, therefore, giving a brief account of my undertaking in this cause of God and his word, for the vindication of the authority and integrity of it, I shall put a close to this discourse.

It may be, some of you have heard me professing my unwillingness to appear any more in the world this way. I have not in some things met with such pleasing entertainment, as to encourage me unto it : where I have been for peace, others have made themselves ready for war. Some of them, especially oneⁿ of late, neither understanding me, nor the things that he writes about, but his mind for opposition was to be satisfied. This is the manner of not a few in their writings ; they measure other men by their own ignorance, and what they know not themselves, they think is hid to others also ; hence when any thing presents itself new to their minds, as though they were the first that knew, what they then first know, and which they have only an obscure glimpse of, they rest not until they have published it to their praise. Such are the discourses of that person, partly trivial, partly obviated and rendered utterly useless to his purpose by that treatise, which he ventured weakly to oppose. I wish I could prevail with those, whose interest compels them to choose rather to be ignorant than to be taught by me, to let my books alone. Another,^o after two or three years consideration, in answer to a book of near a hundred and

ⁿ M. G. F.^o Mr. L. G.

forty sheets of paper, returns a scoffing reply to so much of it, as was written in a quarter of an hour. I am, therefore, still minded to abstain from such engagements. And I think I may say if there were less writing by some, there would be more reading by others, at least to more purpose. Many books full of profound learning lie neglected, whilst men spend their time on trifles ; and many things of great worth are suppressed by their authors, whilst things of no value are poured out, one on the neck of another. One of yourselves,^p I have often solicited for the publishing of some divinity lectures, read at solemn times in the University, which, if I know aught, are, to say no more, worthy of public view. I yet hope a short time will answer my desire and expectation. Of my present undertaking there are three parts. The first is a subject that having preached on, I was by many urged to publish my thoughts upon it, judging it might be useful: I have answered their requests. What I have performed through the grace of Christ in the work undertaken, is left to the judgment of the godly learned reader. The second concerns the prolegomena and appendix to the late *Biblia Polyglotta* : of this I said often, ‘*Ab alio quovis hoc fieri mallet, quàm à me, sed à me tamen potius quàm à nemine.*’ The reasons of my engaging in that work are declared at large in the entrance of it. The theses in the close were drawn in by their affinity in subject to the other discourses, and to complete the doctrine of the Scripture concerning the Scripture, I endeavoured to comprise in them the whole truth about the word of God, as to name and thing opposed by the poor fanatical Quakers, as also to discover the principles they proceed upon in their confused opposition to that truth.

^p Dr. Henry Wilkinson, public reader of divinity in the University.

I have no more to add, but only begging I may have the continuance of your prayers, and assistance in your several stations, for the carrying on the work of our Lord and Master in this place committed unto us, that I may give my account with joy and not with grief, to him that stands at the door, I commend you to the powerful word of his grace ; and remain,

Your fellow-labourer and brother,

in our dear Lord Jesus,

J. O.

From my Study,
September 22, 1658.

OF THE
DIVINE ORIGINAL,
WITH THE
AUTHORITY, SELF-EVIDENCING POWER, AND LIGHT
OF
THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

CHAP. I.

The divine original of the Scripture, the sole foundation of its authority. The original of the Old Testament ; Heb. i. 11. Several ways of immediate revelation. The peculiar manner of the revelation of the word. Considerations thereon. Various expressions of that way ; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. The written word, as written, preserved by the providence of God. Capellus's opinion about various lections considered. The Scripture not ἰδίαις ἐπιδόσεως. The true meaning of that expression. How the word came of old, and how it was received. Entirely from God to the least tittle. Of the Scriptures of the New Testament and their peculiar prerogative.

THAT the whole authority of the Scripture in itself, depends solely on its divine original, is confessed by all who acknowledge its authority. The evincing and declaration of that authority, being the thing at present aimed at; the discovery of its divine spring and rise, is, in the first place, necessarily to be premised thereunto. That foundation being once laid, we shall be able to educe our following reasons and arguments, wherein we aim more at weight than number, from their own proper principles.

As to the original of the Scripture of the Old Testament, it is said, God spake, παλαὶ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, Heb. i. 1. of old, or formerly, in the prophets. From the days of Moses the lawgiver, and downwards, unto the consignation and bounding of the canon delivered to the Judaical church, in the days of Ezra and his companions אנשי כנסת הגדולה, the 'men of the great congregation,' so God spake. This being done only among the Jews, they as his church, ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, Rom. iii. 2. 9. 4. were 'intrusted with the

oracles of God.' God spake, ἐν τοῖς προφήταις; ἐν for διὰ (Chrysostome, Theophilact), *in* for *by*: διὰ τῶν προφητῶν, 'by the prophets,' as Luke i. 70. διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν, 'by the mouth of the holy prophets;' but there seems to be somewhat farther intended in this expression.

In the exposition, or giving out the eternal counsel of the mind and will of God unto men, there is considerable, his speaking unto the prophets, and his speaking by them, unto us. In this expression, it seems to be that בַּת כִּל or *filia vocis*, that voice from heaven that came to the prophets which is understood. So God spake in the prophets, and in reference thereunto, there is propriety in that expression, ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, 'in the prophets.' Thus the Psalms are many of them said to be, *To this*, or that man. נִכְתָּם לְדָוִד 'A golden psalm to David;' that is, from the Lord; and from thence their tongue was as the 'pen of a writer;' Psal. xlv. 1. So God spake *in* them, before he spake *by* them.

The various ways of special revelation, by dreams, visions, audible voices, inspirations, with that peculiar one of the law-giver under the Old Testament, called פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים 'face to face;' Exod. xxxiii. 11. Deut. xxxiv. 10. and פֶּה אֶל־פֶּה Numb. xi. 8. with that which is compared with it, and exalted above it (Heb. i. 1—3.), in the New, by the Son, ἐκ κόλπου τοῦ πατρὸς, 'from the bosom of the Father;' John i. 17, 18. are not of my present consideration, all of them belonging to the *manner* of the thing inquired after, not the thing itself.

By the assertion then laid down, of God 'speaking in the prophets of old,' from the beginning to the end of that long tract of time, consisting of one thousand years, wherein he gave out the writings of the Old Testament; two things are ascertained unto us, which are the foundation of our present discourse.

1. That the laws they made known, the doctrines they delivered, the instructions they gave, the stories they recorded, the promises of Christ, the prophecies of gospel-times they gave out and revealed, were not their own, not conceived in their minds, not formed by their reasonings, not retained in their memories from what they heard, not by any means beforehand comprehended by them, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. but were all of them immediately from God; there being only a passive concurrence of their rational faculties

in their reception, without any such active obedience, as by any law they might be obliged unto. Hence,

2. God was so with them, and by the Holy Ghost so spake in them, as to their receiving of the word from him, and their delivering of it unto others, by speaking or writing, as that they were not themselves enabled by any habitual light, knowledge, or conviction of truth, to declare his mind and will, but only acted, as they were immediately moved by him. Their tongue in what they said, or their hand in what they wrote, was עט סופר no more at their own disposal, than the pen is, in the hand of an expert writer.

Hence, as far as their own personal concerns, as saints and believers, did lie in them, they are said ἐρευνᾶν, to make a diligent inquiry into, and investigation of, the things which ἐδήλου τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς πνεῦμα χριστοῦ, the ‘Spirit of Christ, that spake in themselves did signify;’ 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Without this, though their visions were express, so that in them their eyes were said to be open; Numb. xxiv. 3, 4. yet they understood them not. Therefore, also, they studied the writings and prophecies of one another; Dan. ix. 2. Thus they attained a saving, useful, habitual knowledge of the truths delivered by themselves and others, by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, through the study of the word, even as we; Psal. cxix. 104. But as to the receiving of the word from God, as God spake in them, they obtained nothing by study or meditation, by inquiry or reading; Amos vii. 15. Whether we consider the *matter* or *manner* of what they received and delivered, or their receiving and delivering of it, they were but as an instrument of music, giving a sound according to the hand, intention, and skill of him that strikes it.

This is variously expressed. Generally it is said דבר היה The ‘word was’ to this or that prophet, which we have rendered, ‘the word came’ unto them. Ezek. i. 3. היה והדבר it ‘came expressly;’ ‘essendo fuit;’ it had a subsistence given unto it, or an effectual in-being, by the Spirit’s entering into him; ver. 14. Now this coming of the word unto them, had oftentimes such a greatness and expression of the majesty of God upon it, as it filled them with dread and reverence of him; Hab. iii. 16. and also greatly affected even their outward man; Dan. viii. 27. But this dread and ter-

ror (which Satan strove to imitate in his filthy tripodes, and ἐγγαστήριμνοι), was peculiar to the Old Testament, and belonged to the pædagogus thereof; Heb. xii. 18—21. The Spirit, in the declaration of the New Testament, gave out his mind and will in a way of more liberty and glory; 2 Cor. iii. The expressness and immediacy of revelation was the same; but the manner of it related more to that glorious liberty in fellowship and communion with the Father, whereunto believers had then an access provided them by Jesus Christ; Heb. ix. 8. x. 19, 20. xii. 23, 24. So our Saviour tells his apostles, Matt. x. 20. οὐκ υμεῖς ἐστὲ οἱ λαλοῦντες; ‘you are not the speakers’ of what you deliver, as other men are, the figment and imagination of whose hearts are the fountain of all that they speak; and he adds this reason, τὸ γὰρ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν; ‘The Spirit of the Father is he that speaketh in you.’ Thus the word that came unto them was a book which they took *in* and gave *out* without any alteration of one tittle or syllable; Ezek. ii. 8—11. iii. 3. Rev. x. 9—11.

Moreover, when the word was thus come to the prophets, and God had spoken in them, it was not in their power to conceal it, the hand of the Lord being strong upon them. They were not now only on a general account to utter the truth they were made acquainted withal, and to speak the things they had heard and seen, which was their common preaching-work, according to the analogy of what they had received; Acts iv. 20. but also the very individual words that they had received, were to be declared. When the word was come to them, it was as a fire within them, that must be delivered, or it would consume them; Psal. xxxix. 3. Jer. xx. 9. Amos iii. 8. vii. 15, 16. So Jonah found his attempt to hide the word that he had received to be altogether vain.

Now, because these things are of great importance, and the foundation of all that doth ensue; namely, the discovery that the word is come forth unto us from God, without the least mixture or interveniency of any medium obnoxious to fallibility (as is the wisdom, truth, integrity, knowledge, and memory, of the best of all men), I shall farther consider it from one full and eminent declaration thereof, given unto us, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. The words of the Holy Ghost are, Τοῦτο πρῶτον γνώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς, ἰδίως ἐπιλύσεως οὐ

γίνεται' οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη ποτὲ προφητεία, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν οἱ ἅγιοι θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι. 'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of 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.'

That which he speaks of is, *προφητεία γραφῆς*; the 'prophecy of Scripture,' or written prophecy.

There were then traditions among the Jews, to whom Peter wrote, exalting themselves into competition with the written word, which not long after got the title of an oral law, pretending to have its original from God. These the apostle tacitly condemns; and also shews under what formality he considered that, which, ver. 19. he termed *λόγος προφητικὸς*, the 'word of prophecy;' namely, as *written*. The written word, as such, is that whereof he speaks. Above fifty times is *ἡ γραφή*, or *αἱ γραφαὶ*, in the New Testament, put absolutely for the word of God. And כְּתָב is so used in the Old, for the word of prophecy; 2 Chron. xxi. 12. It is the *ἡ γραφή*, that is, *θεόπνευστος*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. The writing, or word written, is by inspiration from God. Not only the doctrine in it, but the *γραφὴ* itself, or the doctrine as written, is so from him.

Hence, the providence of God hath manifested itself no less concerned in the preservation of the writings, than the doctrine contained in them. The writing itself being the product of his own eternal counsel for the preservation of the doctrine, after a sufficient discovery of the insufficiency of all other means for that end and purpose. And hence, the malice of Satan hath raged no less against the book, than the truth contained in it. The dealings of Antiochus under the Old Testament, and of sundry persecuting emperors under the New, evince no less. And it was no less crime of old to be *traditor libri*, than to be *abnegator fidei*. The reproach of *chartacea scripta*, and *membranæ* (Coster. Enchirid. cap. 1.), reflects on its author. ^aIt is true, we have not the *Αυτόγραφα* of Moses and the prophets, of the apostles and evangelists; but the *ἀπόγραφα* which we have, or copies, contain every *iota* that was in them.

^a *Ha-brav volumina nec in una dictione corrupta invenies. Sant. Pag. ἴκτα ἐν ἡ μία κεφαλαία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ, Matt. v. 18.*

It is no doubt but that in the copies we now enjoy of the Old Testament there are some diverse readings, or various lections. The *תקון סופרים* ^c *תקון סופרים* The *עטור סופרים* ^d (for the *סופרים* are of another nature) the various lections of Ben Asher, or Rabbi Aaron the son of Rabbi Moses of the tribe of Asher, and Ben Nephthali, or R. Moses the son of David of the tribe of Nephthali; of the east and western Jews, which we have collected at the end of the great Bible with the Masora, evince it. But yet we affirm that the whole word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption. Where there is any variety it is always in things of less, indeed of no, importance.^e God by his providence preserving the whole entire, suffered this lesser variety to fall out, in or among the copies we have, for the quickening and exercising of our diligence in our search into his word.

It was an unhappy attempt (which must afterward be spoken unto), that a learned man^f hath of late put himself upon, namely, to prove variations in all the present *Ἀπόγραφα* of the Old Testament in the Hebrew tongue, from the copies used of old, merely upon uncertain conjectures, and the credit of corrupt translations. Whether that plea of his be more unreasonable in itself, and devoid of any real ground of truth, or injurious to the love and care of God over his word and church, I know not, sure I am, it is both in a high degree. The translation, especially insisted on by him, is that of the LXX. That this translation, either from the mistakes of its first authors (if it be theirs, whose name and number it bears), or the carelessness, or ignorance, or worse, of its transcribers, is corrupted and gone off from the original in a thousand places twice told, is acknowledged by all who know aught of these things. Strange that so corrupt a stream should be judged a fit means to cleanse the fountain. That such a Lesbian rule should be thought a fit measure to

^b Reading, in the margin, and writing, in the line.

^c Correctio scribarum, or the amendment of some small *apiculi* in eighteen places.

^d Ablatio scribarum, or a note of the redundancy of *ו* in five places. Vid. Raymond. pugio fid. Petrus Galat. lib. 1. cap. 8.

^e Hæbraei V. T. Codices per universum terrarum orbem, per Europam, Asiam et Africam, ubique sibi sunt similes, eodémque modo ab omnibus scribuntur et leguntur; si forte exiguas quasdam apiculorum quorundam differentias excipias, quæ ipsæ tamen nullam varietatem efficiunt. Buxtorf. Vindic. Ver. Heb. 2. cap. 14.

^f Lud. Capell. Crit. Sac.

correct the original by ; and yet on the account hereof, with some others not one whit better, or scarce so good, we have one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six various lections exhibited unto us, with frequent insinuations of an infinite number more yet to be collected. It were desirable that men would be content to shew their learning, reading, and diligence, about things where there is less danger in adventures.

Nor is the relief he provides against the charge of bringing things to an uncertainty in the Scripture, which he found himself obnoxious unto, less pernicious than the opinion he seeks to palliate thereby ; although it be since taken up and approved by others.^g ‘The saving doctrine of the Scripture,’^h he tells us, ‘as to the matter and substance of it, in all things of moment it is preserved in the copies of the original, and translations that do remain.’

It is indeed a great relief, against the inconvenience of corrupt translations, to consider that although some of them be bad enough, yet if all the errors and mistakes that are to be found in all the rest, should be added to the worst of all, yet every necessary, saving, fundamental truth, would be found sufficiently testified unto therein. But to depress the sacred truth of the originals, into such a condition, as wherein it should stand in need of this apology, and that without any colour or pretence from discrepancies in the copies themselves that are extant, or any tolerable evidence that there ever were any other, in the least differing from these extant in the world, will at length be found a work unbecoming a Christian, Protestant divine. Besides the injury done hereby to the providence of God towards his church, and care of his word, it will not be found so easy a matter, upon a supposition of such corruption in the originals as is pleaded for, to evince unquestionably that the whole saving doctrine itself, at first given out from God, continues entire and incorrupt. The nature of this doctrine is such, that

^g Proleg. ad Bibl. Polyglot.

^h Satis ergo est quod eadem salutaris doctrina quæ fuit à Moses, prophetis, apostolis et evangelistis in suis *αὐτογέγραφοις* primum literis consignata, eadem omnino pariter in textibus Græco et Hebræo, et in translationibus cum veteribus, tum recentibus, clarè certò et sufficienter inveniatur. Pariter illæ omnes unà cum textibus Græco et Hebræo sunt et dici possunt authenticæ, sacræ, divinæ, *θεόπνευστοι*—respectu materiæ, &c. Sunt in Scripturis multa alia non usque adeo scitu necessaria, &c. Capel. Critic. Sac. lib. 6. cap. 5. § 10, 11.

there is no other principle or means of its discovery, no other rule or measure of judging and determining any thing about or concerning it, but only the writing from whence it is taken : it being wholly of divine revelation, and that revelation being expressed only in that writing. Upon any corruption then supposed therein, there is no means of rectifying it. It were an easy thing to correct a mistake, or corruption, in the transcription of any problem, or demonstration of Euclid, or any other ancient mathematician, from the consideration of the things themselves about which they treat, being always the same, and in their own nature equally exposed to the knowledge and understanding of men, in all ages. In things of pure revelation, whose knowledge depends solely on their revelation, it is not so. Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the doctrines mentioned are preserved entire ; every tittle and ἰωτα in the word of God, must come under our care and consideration, as being as such from God ; but of these things we shall treat afterward at large ; return we now to the apostle.

This προφητεία γραφῶς, this written prophecy, this λόγος προφητικὸς, saith he, ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται ; ‘is not of any private interpretation.’ Some think that ἐπιλύσεως is put for ἐπηλύσεως or ἐπηλυσίας, which, according to Hesychius, denotes afflation, inspiration, conception within ; so Calvin. In this sense the importance of the words is the same with what I have already mentioned ; namely, that the prophets had not their private conceptions, or self-fancied enthusiasms, of the things they spake. To this interpretation assents Grotius. And ἐπηλυσσεως, for ἐπιλύσεως, is reckoned amongst the various lections that are gathered out of him, in the appendix to the Biblia Polyglotta. Thus ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται, is the other side of that usual expression, ἐπῆλθεν ἐπ’ ἐμὲ ὁ λογὸς, or τὸ πνεῦμα. Camero contends for the retaining of ἐπιλύσεως ; and justly. We begin a little too late to see, whither men’s bold conjectures, in correcting the original text of the Scriptures, are like to proceed. Here is no colour for a various lection ; one copy, it seems by Stephen, read διαλύσεως ; without ground, by an evident error ; and such mistakes are not to be allowed the name or place of various readings. But yet, says Camero, ἐπίλυσις is such a ‘resolution’ and interpretation as is made by revelation.

He adds, that in that sense ἐπιλυνειν is used by the LXX, in the business of Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, Gen. xl. which was by revelation. But indeed the word is not used in that chapter. However, he falls in with this sense (as do Calvin and Grotius), that ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως, is not to be referred to our interpretation of the prophets, but to the way and manner of their receiving the counsel and will of God.

And indeed, ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως οὐ γίνεται, taking ἐπίλυσιν for an interpretation of the word of prophecy given out by writing, as our translation bears it, is an expression that can scarcely have any tolerable sense affixed unto it; γίνεται, or οὐ γίνεται, relates here to προφητεία γραφῆς; and denotes the first giving out of its word, not our after consideration of its sense and meaning. And without this sense, it stands in no coherence with, nor opposition to, the following sentence, which by its casual connexion to this, manifests that it renders a reason of what is herein affirmed, in the first place; and in the latter, turning with the adversative ἀλλὰ, an opposition unto it: οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη ποτὲ προφητεία, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἄγιοι Θεοῦ ἀνθρώποι· 'for prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' What reason is in the first part of this verse, why the Scripture is not of our private interpretation? or what opposition in the latter to that assertion? Nay on that supposal, there is no tolerable correspondency of discourse in the whole περιόχῃ. But take the word to express the coming of the prophecy to the prophets themselves, and the sense is full and clear.

This then is the intention of the apostle; the prophecy which we have written, the Scripture, was not an issue of men's fancied enthusiasms; not a product of their own minds and conceptions, not an interpretation of the will of God, by the understanding of man, that is, of the prophets themselves; neither their rational apprehensions, inquiries, conceptions of fancy, or imaginations of their hearts, had any place in this business; no self-afflation, no rational meditation, managed at liberty by the understanding and wills of men, had place herein.

Of this, saith the apostle, τοῦτο πρῶτον, γινώσκοντες·

knowing, judging, and determining this in the first place. This is a principle to be owned and acknowledged by every one that will believe any thing else. *Γινώσκω* is not only to know, to perceive, to understand; but also to judge, own, and acknowledge. This then, in our religion, is to be owned, acknowledged, submitted unto, as a principle, without farther dispute. To discover the grounds of this submission and acknowledgment, is the business of the ensuing discourse.

That this is so indeed, as before asserted, and to give a reason why this is to be received as a principle, he adds, ver. 21. οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη ποτὲ προφητεία. That word of prophecy which we have written, is not *ιδίαις ἐπιλύσεως*, ‘of private conception,’ ‘for it came not at any time by the will of man.’ ἠνέχθη, which is the passive conjugation of *φέρω* from *ἐνέγκω*, denotes at least to be ‘brought in;’ more than merely it ‘came;’ it was brought into them by the will of God. The affirmative, as to the will of God, is included in the negative, as to the will of man. Or it came as the voice from heaven to our Saviour on the mount; ver. 18. where the same word is used. So Ezek. i. 3. חוה היה דבר ‘*es-sedo fuit verbum;*’ it was brought into him, as was shewed before. Thus God brought the word to them, and spake in them, in order of nature, before he spake by them. As ἠνέχθη, it was brought to them, it was *קול יהוה* ‘the voice of the Lord,’ Gen. iii. 8. or *בת קול* as the Jews call it; as spoken by them, or written, it was properly *דבר יהוה* ‘*verbum Dei,*’ ‘the word of God;’ which by his immediate voice he signified to the prophets. Thus some of them in visions, first eat a written book, and then prophesied, as was instanced before. And this is the first spring of the Scripture; the beginning of its emanation from the counsel and will of God. By the power of the Holy Ghost, it was brought into the organs or instruments, that he was pleased to use, for the revelation, and declaration of it unto others.

That which remains for the completing of this dispensation of the word of God unto us, is added by the apostle; *ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἀγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ὕμνοι θεοῦ ἀνθρώποις*. When the word was thus brought to them, it was not left to their understandings, wisdoms, minds, memories, to order, dispose, and give it out; but they were borne, acted, carried

out by the Holy Ghost, to speak, deliver, and write, all that, and nothing but that, to every tittle, that was so brought to them. They invented not words themselves, suited to the things they had learned ; but only expressed the words, that they received. Though their mind and understanding were used in the choice of words, whence arises all the difference, that is, in the manner of expression (for they did use דברי חפץ ' words of will,' or choice), yet they were so guided, that their words were not their own, but immediately supplied unto them ; and so they gave out כתוב ישר the ' writing of uprightness,' and דברי אמת ' words of truth' itself. Eccles. xii. 10. Not only the doctrine they taught, was the word of truth, truth itself, John xvii. 17. but the words whereby they taught it, were words of truth from God himself. Thus allowing the contribution of passive instruments for the reception and representation of words, which answers the mind and tongue of the prophets, in the coming of the voice of God to them, every apex of the written word is equally divine, and as immediately from God, as the voice wherewith, or whereby, he spake to, or in, the prophets ; and is therefore accompanied with the same authority, in itself and unto us.

What hath been thus spoken of the Scripture of the Old Testament, must be also affirmed of the New ; with this addition of advantage and pre-eminence, that ἀρχὴν ἔλαβεν λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου, Heb. ii. 3. ' it received its beginning of being spoken by the Lord himself ;' God spake in these last days, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, ' in the Son ;' Heb. i. 1.

Thus God, who himself began the writing of the word with his own finger, Exod. xxxi. 11. after he had spoken it, Exod. xx. appointing or approving the writing of the rest that followed ; Deut. xxxi. 12. Josh. xxiii. 6. 1 Kings ii. 3. 2 Kings xiv. 6. xvii. 13. 1 Chron. xxi. 15. 2 Chron. xxv. 4. Ezek. ii. 9, 10. Hab. ii. 2. Luke xvi. 29. John v. 39. xx. 31. Acts xvii. 11. doth lastly command the close of the immediate revelation of his will, to be written in a book ; Rev. i. 11. and so gives out the whole of his mind and counsel unto us in writing ; as a merciful and stedfast relief, against all that confusion, darkness, and uncertainty, which the vanity, folly, and looseness, of the minds of men, drawn out and heightened by the unspeak-

able alterations, that fall out amongst them, would otherwise have certainly run into.

Thus we have laid down the original of the Scriptures, from the Scripture itself; and this original is the basis and foundation of all its authority. Thus is it from God; entirely from him; as to the doctrine contained in it, and the words wherein that doctrine is delivered, it is wholly his; what that speaks, he speaks himself. He speaks in it, and by it; and so it is vested with all the moral authority of God over his creatures.

CHAP. II.

The main question proposed to consideration. How we may know assuredly the Scripture to be the word of God. The Scripture to be received by divine faith. The ground and foundation of that faith inquired after. The answer in the general thesis of this discourse. The authority of God that foundation. The way whereby that authority is evidenced or made known. What is meant by the authority of the Scriptures. Authority is in respect of others. First general evidence given to the thesis laid down. The various ways of God's revealing himself and his mind. 1. By his works; 2. By the light of nature; 3. By his word. Each of these evince themselves to be from him. His word especially.

HAVING laid in the foregoing chapter, the foundation that we are to build and proceed upon, I come now to lay down the inquiry, whose resolution must thence be educed. That then which we are seeking after is, how we, and the rest of men in the world, who through the merciful dispensation of God, have the book or books, wherein the Scripture given out from him, as above declared, is contained, or said to be contained, who live so many ages from the last person who received any part of it immediately from God, or who have not received it immediately ourselves, may come to be ascertained, as to all ends and purposes wherein we may be concerned therein, that the whole and entire written word in that book, or those books, hath the original, and consequently the authority, that it pleads and avows; namely, that it is ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, and not ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, from God, in the way and manner laid down, and not the invention of men, attending σεσοφισμένοις μυθοῖς, 2 Pet. i. 16. or to 'cunningly devised fables.'

Now seeing it is expected from us, and required of us, by God himself, and that on the penalty of his eternal displeasure, if we fail in our duty (2 Thess. i. 8—10.), that we receive the Scripture not as we do other books, in relation to their author, with a firm opinion, built on prevailing probable arguments, prevalent against any actual conclusions to the contrary; but with divine and supernatural faith, omitting all such inductions as serve only to ingenerate a persuasion, not to be cast out of the mind by contrary reasonings or objections; it is especially inquired, what is the foundation and formal reason of our doing so, if we so do. Whatever that be, it returns an answer to this important question,—‘Why, or on what account do you believe the Scriptures, or books of the Old and New Testament, to be the word of God.’ Now the formal reason of things being but one, whatever consideration may be had of other inducements, or arguments, to beget in us a persuasion that the Scripture is the word of God, yet they have no influence into that divine faith wherewith we are bound to believe them. They may indeed be of some use to repel the objections that are, or may, by any, be raised against the truth we believe; and so indirectly cherish and farther faith itself, but as to a concurrence unto the foundation, or formal reason of our believing, it is not capable of it.

Having then laid down the divine original of the Scriptures, and opened the manner of the word’s coming forth from God, an answer shall now on that sole foundation be returned to the inquiry laid down. And this I shall do in the ensuing position.

The authority of God, the supreme Lord of all, the first and only absolute truth, whose word is truth, speaking in and by the penmen of the Scriptures, evinced singly in and by the Scripture itself, is the sole bottom and foundation, or formal reason, of our assenting to those Scriptures as his word, and of our submitting our hearts and consciences unto them, with that faith and obedience, which morally respects him, and is due to him alone.

God, speaking in the penmen of the Scripture, Heb. i. 1. his voice to them was accompanied with its own evidence, which gave assurance unto them; and God speaking by them, or their writings unto us, his word is accompanied

with its own evidence, and gives assurance unto us. His authority and veracity did and do in the one and the other, sufficiently manifest themselves, that men may quietly repose their souls upon them, in believing and obedience. Thus are we built ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, Eph. ii. 20. ‘on the foundation of the prophets and apostles,’ in our believing.

That then which, to the establishment of the souls of believers, I shall labour to prove and evince, is plainly this; namely, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, do abundantly and uncontrollably manifest themselves to be the word of the living God; so that merely on the account of their own proposal of themselves unto us, in the name and majesty of God, as such, without the contribution of help or assistance from tradition, church, or any thing else without themselves, we are obliged upon the penalty of eternal damnation (as are all to whom by any means they come, or are brought) to receive them, with that subjection of soul which is due to the word of God. The authority of God shining in them, they afford unto us all the divine evidence of themselves, which God is willing to grant unto us, or can be granted us, or is any way needful for us. So then the authority of the written word, in itself and unto us, is from itself, as the word of God, and the eviction of that authority unto us, is by itself.

When the authority of the Scripture is inquired after, strictly its power to command, and require obedience in the name of God, is intended. To ask then, whence it hath its authority, is to ask, whence it hath its power to command in the name of God. Surely men will not say, that the Scripture hath its power to command in the name of God from any thing but itself. And it is indeed a contradiction for men to say, They give authority to the Scriptures. Why do they do so? Why do they give this authority to that book rather than another? They must say, Because it is the word of God. So the reason why they give authority unto it, is the formal reason of all its authority, which it hath antecedently to their charter and concession of power; ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς, ἀλήθειά ἐστι, John xvii. 17. ‘Thy word is truth.’

Some say indeed, that the Scripture hath its authority in itself, and from itself, or its own divine original, but not

quoad nos; not in respect of us; that it may reach us, that we may know, and understand, and submit to its authority, it must be testified unto *aliunde*, from some other person, or thing appointed thereunto.

Ans. 1. But may not this be said of God himself, as well as of his word? If God reveal himself to us, it must be by means, and if those means may not be understood to reveal him, unless they are testified unto from somewhat else, God cannot reveal himself to us. ‘*Si Deus hominibus non placuerit, utique Deus non erit.*’ If God and his word, will keep themselves, within themselves, to themselves, they may be God and his word still, and keep their authority; but if they will deal with us, and put forth their commands to us, let them look that they get the church’s testimonials, or on this principle, they may be safely rejected. But,

2. Authority is a thing that no person or thing can have in him, or itself, that hath it not in respect of others. In its very nature it relates to others, that are subject unto it. All authority arises from relation; and answers it throughout. The authority of God over his creatures, is from their relation to him as their Creator. A king’s authority is in respect of his subjects. And he who hath no subjects hath no kingly authority in himself, but is only a stoical king. The authority of a minister relates to his flock; and he who hath no flock hath no authority of a minister; if he have not a ministerial authority, in reference to a flock, a people, a church, he hath none, he can have none in himself. So is it in this case; if the Scripture hath no authority from itself, in respect of us, it hath none in itself, nor can have. If it hath it in itself, it hath it in respect of us. Such a respect, that is, a right to command and oblige to obedience, is as inseparable from authority, or a moral power, as heat is from fire. It is true, a man may have, *de jure*, a lawful authority over them, whom, *de facto*, he cannot force or compel to obedience. But want of force doth not lessen authority. God looseth not his authority over men, though he put not forth towards them, ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως, or ἐνεργείαν τοῦ κράτους τῆς ἰσχύος, ‘the greatness of his power, or the efficacy of the might of his strength,’ to cause them to obey. It is fond then to imagine, that a man, or any thing, should have an authority in himself, or itself,

and yet not have that authority in respect of them who are to be subject thereunto. That is not a law properly at all, which is not a law to some. Besides, all the evil of disobedience relates to the authority of him that requires the obedience; James ii. 10, 11. No action is disobedience, but from the subjection of him who performs it, unto him who requires obedience. And therefore if the Scripture hath not an authority in itself, towards us, there is no evil in our disobedience unto its commands; or our not doing what it commandeth, and our doing what it forbiddeth, is not disobedience, because it hath not an authority over us; I speak of it as considered in itself, before the accession of the testimony pretended necessary to give it an authority over us. Hitherto then have we carried this objection, To disobey the commands of the Scripture before the communication of a testimony unto it by men, is no sin; *credat Apella*.

The sense then of our position is evident and clear; and so our answer to the inquiry made. The Scripture hath all its authority from its author both in itself, and in respect of us; that it hath the author and original pleaded for, it declares itself, without any other assistance by the ways and means, that shall afterward be insisted on: the truth whereof I shall now confirm by one general induction. 2. By testimonies. 3. By arguments, expressing the ways and means of its revelation of itself.

There are three ways, whereby God in several degrees revealeth himself, his properties, his mind, and will, to the sons of men.

1. He doth it by his works, both of creation and providence. ‘All thy works praise thee;’ Psal. cxlv. 10, &c. ‘The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament telleth the works of his hands. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night declareth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out throughout the earth, and their word to the end of the world;’ Psal. xix. 1—4, &c. So Job. xxxvii. xxxviii. xxxix. throughout. ‘God who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein, suffered in times past all nations to walk in their own ways; yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our

hearts with food and gladness;' Acts xiv. 15—17. And, 'God that made the world and all things therein, seeing he is the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth unto all life and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood all mankind to dwell on the face of the earth, and assigned the seasons which were ordained before, and the bounds of their habitations,' *Ζητεῖν τὸν κύριον ἐν ἄραγε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὗροιν*, 'that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him;' Acts xvii. 24—27. 'For, that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for, God hath shewed it unto them; for the invisible things of him, 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. 18—20. All which places, God assisting, shall be opened before long in another treatise.^a The sum of them amounts to what was before laid down, namely, that God reveals and declares himself unto us, by the works of his hands.

2. God declares himself, his sovereign power and authority, his righteousness and holiness, by the innate (or ingrafted) light of nature, and principles of the consciences of men. That indispensable moral obedience, which he requireth of us, as his creatures, subject to his law, is in general thus made known unto us. For 'the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; they having not the law, are a law unto themselves, shewing the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the mean time excusing or accusing one another;' Rom. ii. 14, 15. By the light that God hath indelibly implanted in the minds of men, accompanied with a moral instinct of good and evil, seconded by that self-judgment which he hath placed in us, in reference to his own over us, doth he reveal himself unto the sons of men.

3. God reveals himself by his word, as is confessed. It remains then that we inquire, how we may know, and be ascertained that these things are not deceivable pretences, but that God doth indeed so reveal himself by them.

^a De Natura et Studio Theologiæ.

First, The works of God, as to what is his will to teach and reveal of himself by them, have that expression of God upon them, that stamp and character of his eternal power and Godhead, that evidence with them that they are his, that wherever they are seen and considered, they undeniably evince that they are so, and that what they teach concerning him, they do it in his name and authority. There is no need of traditions, no need of miracles, no need of the authority of any churches to convince a rational creature, that the works of God are his, and his only ; and that he is eternal and infinite in power that made them. They carry about with them their own authority. By being what they are, they declare whose they are. To reveal God by his works, there is need of nothing, but that they be by themselves represented, or objected to the consideration of rational creatures.

The voice of God in nature is in like manner effectual. It declares itself to be from God by its own light and authority. There is no need to convince a man by substantial witnesses, that what his conscience speaks, it speaks from God. Whether it bear testimony to the being, righteousness, power, omniscience, or holiness of God himself ; or whether it call for that moral obedience which is eternally and indispensably due to him, and so shews forth the ‘work of the law in the heart,’ it so speaks and declares itself, that without farther evidence or reasoning, without the advantage of any considerations, but what are by itself supplied, it discovers its author, from whom it is, and in whose name it speaks. Those κοινὰ ἔννοιαι, καὶ προλήψεις, those common notions and general presumptions of him and his authority, that are inlaid in the natures of rational creatures by the hand of God, to this end, that they might make a revelation of him as to the purposes mentioned, are able to plead their own divine original, without the least contribution of strength or assistance from without.

And thus is it with those things ; now the psalmist says unto God, ‘Thou hast magnified’ על־כָּל שֵׁמךְ אִמְרְתָךְ ‘over all thy name the word’ thou hast spoken. The name of God is all that whereby he makes himself known. Over all this God magnifies his word. It lies all in a subserviency thereunto. The name of God is not here God himself ; but

every thing whereby God makes himself known. Now it were very strange that those low, dark, and obscure principles and means of the revelation of God and his will, which we have mentioned, should be able to evince themselves to be from him, without any external help, assistance, testimony, or authority, and that which is by God himself magnified above them, which is far more noble and excellent in itself, and in respect of its end and order, hath far more divinely conspicuous and glorious impressions and characters of his goodness, holiness, power, grace, truth, than all the creation, should lie dead, obscure, and have nothing in itself to reveal its author, until this or that superadded testimony be called in to its assistance. We esteem them to have done no service unto the truth, who amongst innumerable other bold denials, have insisted on this also; that there is no natural knowledge of God arising from the innate principles of reason, and the works of God proposing themselves to the consideration thereof; let now the way to the progress of supernatural revelation be obstructed, by denying that it is able to evince itself to be from God, and we shall quickly see what banks are cut to let in a flood of atheism upon the face of the earth.

Let us consider the issue of this general induction. As God in the creation of the world, and all things therein contained, hath so made and framed them, hath left such characters of his eternal power and wisdom in them and upon them, filled with such evidences of their author, suited to the apprehensions of rational creatures that without any other testimony from himself, or any else, under the naked consideration and contemplation of what they are, they so far declare their Creator, that they are left wholly inexcusable, who will not learn, and know him from thence; so in the giving out of his word to be the foundation of that world, which he hath set up in this world, as האופן בתוך האופן 'a wheel within a wheel,' his church; he hath by his Spirit implanted in it, and impressed on it, such characters of his goodness, power, wisdom, holiness, love to mankind, truth, faithfulness, with all the rest of his glorious excellencies and perfections, that at all times, and in all places, when הרקיע the expansion of it, is stretched over men by his providence, without any other witness or testimony given unto

it, it declares itself to be his, and makes good its authority from him, so that the refusal of it upon its own evidence brings unavoidable condemnation on the souls of men. This comparison is insisted on by the psalmist; Psal. xix. where as he ascribeth קול and קו a 'voice,' and 'line' to the creatures, so אור &c. Light, power, stability, and permanency, like that of the heavens and sun, in commutation of properties to the word, and in an inexpressible exaltation of it above them; the light of one day of this sun being unspeakably more than that of seven others, as to the manifestation of the glory of God.

This then is fixed as a principle of truth, Whatever God hath appointed to reveal himself by, as to any special or general end, that those whom he intends to discover himself unto, may either be effectually instructed in his mind and will, according to the measure, degree, and means, of the revelation afforded, or be left inexcusable for not receiving the testimony that he gives of himself, by any plea or pretence of want of clear, evident, manifest revelation; *that* whatever it be hath such an impression of his authority upon it, as undeniably to evince that it is from him. And this now concerning his word, comes farther to be confirmed by testimonies and arguments.

CHAP. III.

Arguments of two sorts. Inartificial arguments, by way of testimony, to the truth. To whom these arguments are valid ; Isa. viii. 20. 2 Tim. iii. 16. of Θεοπνευστία. The τὸ θεῖον that accompanies the voice of God ; Jer. iii. 26—29. The rejection of a plea of Θεοπνευστίας, wherein it consists ; Luke xvi. 31. Of miracles, their efficacy to beget faith, compared with the word ; 2 Pet. i. 16. 19, 20.

HAVING declared the divine original and authority of the Scripture, and explained the position laid down as the foundation of our ensuing discourse, way is now made for us, to the consideration of those self-evidences of its divine rise, and consequently authority, that it is attended withal, upon the account whereof we receive it, as (believing it to be) the word of God.

The arguments whereby any thing is confirmed are of two sorts ; inartificial, by the way of testimony ; and artificial, by the way of deductions and inferences. Whatever is capable of contributing evidence unto truth, falls under one of these two heads. Both these kinds of proofs we make use of, in the business in hand. Some profess they own the authority of the Scriptures, and also urge others so to do ; but they well dispute on what grounds and accounts they do so. With those we may deal in the first way, by testimony from the Scriptures themselves, which upon their own principles they cannot refuse. When they shall be pleased to inform us, that they have relinquished those principles, and do no longer own the Scripture to be the word of God, we will withdraw the witnesses upon their exceptions whom for the present we make use of. Testimonies that are innate and ingrafted in the word itself, used only as mediums of artificial arguments to be deduced from them, which are of the second sort, may be used towards them who at present own not the authority of the Scripture on any account whatever, or who are desirous to put on themselves the persons of such men, to try their skill and ability for the management of a controversy against the word of God.

In both these cases the testimony of the Scripture is pleaded, and is to be received ; or cannot with any pretence

of reason be refused; in the former, upon the account of the acknowledged authority and veracity of the witness, though speaking in its own case; in the latter, upon the account of that self-evidence which the testimony insisted on is accompanied withal, made out by such reasonings and arguments as, for the kind of them, persons who own not its authority cannot but admit. In human things, if a man of known integrity and unspotted reputation bear witness in any cause, and give uncontrollable evidence to his testimony, from the very nature and order of the things whereof he speaks, as it is expected that those who know and admit of his integrity and reputation do acquiesce in his assertion, so those to whom he is a stranger, who are not moved by his authority, will yet be overcome to assent to what is witnessed by him, from the nature of the things he asserts, especially if there be a coincidence of all such circumstances, as are any way needful to give evidence to the matter in hand.

Thus it is, in the case under consideration. For those who profess themselves to believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and so own the credit and fidelity of the witness, it may reasonably be expected from them, yea in strict justice demanded of them, that they stand to the testimony, that they give to themselves, and their own divine original. By saying that the Scripture is the word of God, and then commanding us to prove it so to be, they render themselves obnoxious unto every testimony that we produce from it, that so it is; and that it is to be received on its own testimony. This witness they cannot wave without disavowing their own professed principles; without which principles they have not the least colour of imposing this task on us.

As for them, with whom we have not the present advantage of their own acknowledgment, it is not reasonable to impose upon them with the bare testimony of that witness concerning whom the question is, whether he be worthy the acceptation pleaded for; but yet arguments taken from the Scripture, from what it is and doth, its nature and operation, by which the causes and springs of all things are discovered, are not to be refused.

But it is neither of these, that principally I intend to deal withal; my present discourse is rather about the satis-

faction of our own consciences, than the answering of others' objections. Only we must satisfy our consciences upon such principles as will stand against all men's objections. This then is chiefly inquired after; namely, what it is that gives such an assurance of the Scriptures being the word of God, as that relying thereon we have a sure bottom and foundation for our receiving them as such; and from whence it is, that those who receive them not in that manner, are left inexcusable in their damnable unbelief. This we say, is in and from the Scripture itself; so that there is no other need of any farther witness or testimony, nor is any, in the same kind, to be admitted.

It is not at all in my purpose to insist largely at present on this subject, and therefore, I shall content myself with instancing in some few testimonies and arguments, beginning with one or two of the first sort; Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them.' Whatever any one says, be it what or who it will, church or person, if it be in or about the things of God, concerning his will or worship, with our obedience to him, it is to be tried by the law and testimony. Hither we are sent; this is asserted to be the rule and standard, the touchstone of all speakings whatever. Now that must speak alone for itself, which must try the speaking of all but itself, yea its own also.

But what doth this law and testimony, that is, this written word plead, on the account whereof it should be thus attended unto? What doth it urge for its acceptation? Tradition, authority of the church, miracles, consent of men? or doth it speak *αὐτοκρατορικῶς*, and stand only upon its own sovereignty? The apostle gives us his answer to this inquiry, 2 Tim. iii. 16. *πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος*. Its *plea* for reception in comparison with, and opposition unto, all other ways of coming to the knowledge of God, his mind and will, founded whereon, it calls for attendance and submission with supreme uncontrollable authority, is its *θεοπνευστία*, or 'divine inspiration.' It remains then only to be inquired, whether, when *θεοπνευστία* is 'pleaded,' there be any middle way, but either that it be received with divine faith, or rejected as false.

Suppose a man were *θεόπνευστος*, 'divinely inspired,'

and should so profess himself in the name of the Lord, as did the prophets of old ; Amos vii. supposing, I say, he were so indeed ; it will not be denied, but that his message were to be received and submitted unto on that account. The denial of it would justify them who ‘ rejected and slew those, that spake unto them in the name of the Lord.’ And it is to say in plain terms, we may reject them whom God sends. Though miracles were given only with respect to *persons* not *things*, yet most of the prophets who wrought no miracles insisted on this, that being θεόπνευστοι, ‘divinely inspired,’ their doctrine was to be received, as from God. In their so doing, it was sin, even unbelief, and rebellion against God, not to submit to what they spake in his name. And it always so fell out, to fix our faith on the right bottom, that scarce any prophet that spake in the name of God, had any approbation from the church, in whose days he spake ; Matt. v. 12. xxiii. 29. Luke xvii. 47, 48. Acts vii. 52. Matt. xxi. 33—38. It is true, ἐγένοντο ψευδοπροφῆται ἐν τῷ λαῷ, 2 Pet. ii. 1. there were false prophets, that spake in the name of the Lord, when he sent them not ; Jer. xxiii. 22. Yet were those whom he did send, to be received on pain of damnation : on the same penalty were the others to be refused ; Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. The foundation of this duty lies in the τὸ θεῖον, that accompanied the word that was ἐκ θεοπνευστίας : of which afterward. And without a supposal hereof, it could not consist with the goodness and righteousness of God, to require of men, under the penalty of his eternal displeasure, to make such a discrimination, where he had not given them τεκμήρια, infallible tokens to enable them so to do.

But that he had, and hath done so, he declares, Jer. xxiii. ‘How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies ? that are prophets of the deceit of their own heart ; which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. 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 a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the mountains in pieces.’ In the latter days of that church,

when the people were most eminently perplexed with false prophets, both as to their number and subtilty, yet God lays their eternal and temporal safety, or ruin, on their discerning aright between his word and that which was only pretended so to be. And that they might not complain of this imposition, he tenders them security of its easiness of performance. Speaking of his own word comparatively, as to every thing that is not so, he says, it is as wheat to chaff, which may infallibly, by being what it is, be discerned from it; and then absolutely, that it hath such properties, as that it will discover itself, even light, and heat, and power. A person then who was truly *θεόπνευστος*, was to be attended unto, because he was so.

As then was said before, the Scriptures being *θεόπνευστοι*, is not the case the same, as with a man that was so? is there any thing in the writing of it by God's command, that should impair its authority? nay, is it not freed from innumerable prejudices that attended it, in its first giving out by men; arising from the personal infirmities, and supposed interests of them that delivered it? Jer. xliii. 3. John ix. 29. Acts xxiv. 5.

This being pleaded by it, and insisted on, its testimony is received, or it is not. If it be received on this account, there is in it we say the proper basis and foundation of faith, whereon it hath its *ὑπόστασις*, or 'subsistence.' If it be rejected, it must be not only with a refusal of its witness, but also with a high detestation of its pretence to be from God. What ground or plea for such a refusal and detestation any one hath, or can have, shall be afterward considered. If it be a sin to refuse it, it had been a duty to receive it: if a duty to receive it as the word of God, then was it sufficiently manifested so to be. Of the objection arising from them who pretend to this inspiration falsely, we have spoken before; and we are as yet dealing with them that own the book whereof we spake to be the word of God, and only call in question the grounds on which they do so, or on which others ought so to do. As to these it may suffice, that in the strength of all the authority and truth they profess to own and acknowledge in it, it declares the foundation of its acceptance to be no other, but its own divine inspiration: hence it is *λόγος πάσης ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος*.

Again, in that dispute that was between Abraham and the rich man, Luke xvi. 31. about the best and most effectual means of bringing men to repentance. The rich man in hell, speaking his own conception, fixes upon miracles; if one rise from the dead, and preach, the work will be done: Abraham is otherwise minded; that is, Christ was so, the author of that parable: he bids them attend to Moses and the prophets, the written word, as that which all faith and repentance was immediately to be grounded on. The inquiry being, how men might be best assured, that any message is from God, did not the word manifest itself to be from him, this direction had not been equal.

The ground of the request for the rising of one from the dead, is laid in the common apprehension of men not knowing the power of God in the Scriptures; who think, that if an evident miracle were wrought, all pretences and pleas of unbelief would be excluded; who doth not think so? Our Saviour discovers that mistake, and lets men know, that those who will not own, or submit to, the authority of God in the word, would not be moved by the most signal miracles imaginable. If a holy man, whom we had known assuredly to have been dead for some years, should rise out of his grave, and come unto us with a message from God; could any man doubt whether he were sent unto us of God or no? I suppose not. The rising of men from the dead was the greatest miracle that attended the resurrection of our Saviour; Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. yea greater than his own, if the Socinians may be believed: namely, in that he raised not himself by his own power; yet the evidence of the mission of such a one, and the authority of God speaking in him, our Saviour being judge, is not of an efficacy to enforce belief beyond that which is in the written word, nor a surer foundation for faith to repose itself upon.

Could we hear a voice from heaven, accompanied with such a divine power, as to evidence itself to be from God, should we not rest in it as such? I suppose men think they would; can we think that any man should withdraw his assent, and say, yea but I must have some testimony that this is from God; all such evasions are precluded in the supposition, wherein a self-evidencing power is granted. What greater miracles did the apostles of Christ ever behold, or

hear, than that voice that came ὑπὸ τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης, ‘from the most excellent glory; This is my beloved Son:’ yet Peter, who heard that voice, tells us, that comparatively we have greater security from, and by, the written word, than they had *in* and *by* that miraculous voice; we have βεβαίωτερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον; we heard, saith he, that voice indeed, but we have a more sure word of prophecy to attend unto. More sure, not in itself, but in its giving out its evidence unto us. And how doth it appear so to be? The reason he alleges for it, was before insisted on; 2 Pet. i. 18—20.

Yea, suppose that God should speak to us from heaven, as he spake to Moses, or as he spake to Christ; or from some certain place, as Numb. vii. 8, 9. How should we be able to know it to be the voice of God? Cannot Satan cause a voice to be heard in the air, and so deceive us? or, may not there be some way in this kind found out, whereby men might impose upon us with their delusions. Pope Celestine thought he heard a voice from heaven, when it was but the cheat of his successor. Must we not rest at last in that τὸ θεῖον, which accompanies the true voice of God, evidencing itself, and ascertaining the soul beyond all possibility of mistake. Now did not this τεκμήριον accompany the written word at its first giving forth? if it did not, as was said, how could any man be obliged to discern it from all delusions? if it did, how came it to loose it? did God appoint his word to be written, that so he might destroy its authority? If the question be, whether the doctrines proposed to be believed are truths of God, or ‘cunningly devised fables,’ we are sent to the Scripture itself, and that alone, to give the determination.

CHAP. IV.

Innate arguments in the Scripture, of its divine original and authority. These the formal reason of our believing. Its self-evidencing efficacy. All light manifests itself. The Scripture, light. What kind of light it is. Spiritual light evidential. The ground of men's not discerning this light. Consecratories from the premises laid down. What the self-evidencing light of the Scripture peculiarly is. The proposition of the Scripture as an object of faith is from and by this light. Power, self-evidencing. The Scripture the power of God. And powerful. How this power exerts itself. The whole question resolved.

HAVING given some few instances of those many testimonies, which the Scripture in express terms bears to itself, and the spring, rise, and fountain of all that authority, which it claims among and over the sons of men, which all those who pretend on any account whatever to own and acknowledge its divinity, are bound to stand to, and are obliged by; the second thing proposed, or the innate arguments that the word of God is furnished withal for its own manifestation, and whereby the authority of God is revealed for faith to repose itself upon, comes in the next place into consideration. Now these arguments contain the full and formal grounds of our answer to that inquiry before laid down; namely, why and wherefore we do receive and believe the Scripture to be the word of God. It being the formal reason of our faith, that whereon it is built, and whereunto it is resolved, that is inquired after, we answer as we said before; we do so receive, embrace, believe, and submit unto it, because of the authority of God who speaks it, or gave it forth as his mind and will, evidencing itself by the Spirit in and with that word unto our minds and consciences; or because that the Scripture being brought unto us by the good providence of God, in ways of his appointment and preservation, it doth evidence itself infallibly unto our consciences to be the word of the living God.

The self-evidencing efficacy of the Scripture, and the grounds of it, which consist in common mediums, that have an extent and latitude answerable to the reasons of men, whether as yet they acknowledge it to be the word of God or no,

is that then which in the remainder of this discourse I shall endeavour to clear and vindicate. This only I shall desire to premise, that whereas some grounds of this efficacy seem to be placed in the things themselves contained in the Scripture, I shall not consider them abstractedly as such, but under the formality of their being the Scripture or written word of God; without which consideration and resolution, the things mentioned would be left naked and utterly divested of their authority and efficacy pleaded for; and be of no other nature and importance, than the same things found in other books. It is the writing itself that now supplies the place and room of the persons, in and by whom God originally spake to men. As were the persons speaking of old, so are the writings now: it was the word spoken that was to be believed, yet as spoken by them from God; and it is now the word written that is to be believed, yet as written by the command and appointment of God.

There are then two things, that are accompanied with a self-evidencing excellency; and every other thing doth so, so far as it is partaker of their nature, and no otherwise; now these are, 1. Light. 2. Power for, or in, operation.

1. Light manifests itself. Whatever is light doth so; that is, it doth whatever is necessary on its own part for its manifestation and discovery. Of the defects that are, or may be, in them, to whom this discovery is made, we do not as yet speak: and whatever manifests itself is light; *πάν γὰρ τὸ φανερούμενον, ὥς ἐστιν* Eph. v. 13. Light requires neither proof nor testimony for its evidence. Let the sun arise in the firmament, and there is no need of witnesses to prove and confirm unto a seeing man that it is day. A small candle will so do. Let the least child bring a candle into a room that before was dark, and it would be a madness to go about to prove by substantial witnesses, men of gravity and authority, that light is brought in. Doth it not evince itself, with an assurance above all that can be obtained by any testimony whatever? Whatever is light, either naturally or morally so, is revealed by its being so. That which evidenceth not itself, is not light.

That the Scripture is a light, we shall see immediately. That it is so, or can be called so, unless it hath this nature and property of light, to evidence itself, as well as to give

light unto others, cannot in any tolerable correspondence of speech be allowed. Whether light spiritual and intellectual regarding the mind, or natural with respect to bodily sight, be firstly and properly light, from whence the other is by allusion denominated, I need not now inquire. Both have the same properties in their several kinds. *φῶς ἀλήθινον φαίνει* ‘true light shineth.’ *ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶ* 1 John i. 5. God himself is light; and he inhabiteth *φῶς ἀπρόσβιον*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. not a shining glistening brightness, as some ^agrossly imagine, but the glorious unsearchable majesty of his own being, which is inaccessible to our understandings. So Isa. lvii. 15. ‘inhabiteth eternity.’ So *עוֹלָם אֵר* saith the Psalmist, ‘thou clothest thyself with light:’ and Dan. ii. 22. *וְנִהְיָ עִמָּה שָׂרָא* the ‘light remaineth with him;’ God, he is light essentially, and is therefore known by the beaming of his eternal properties, in all that outwardly is of him. And light abides with him, as the fountain of it; he communicating light to all others. This being the fountain of all light, the more it participates of the nature of the fountain, the more it is light; and the more properly, as the properties and qualities of it are considered. It is then spiritual, moral, intellectual light, with all its mediums, that hath the pre-eminence, as to a participation of the nature and properties of light.

Now the Scripture, the word of God, is light; those that reject it are called *מְרִי אֵר* ‘lights rebels,’ men resisting the authority which they cannot but be convinced of. Psal. xix. 9. xliii. 3. cxix. 105. 130. Prov. vi. 23. Isa. ix. 2. Hos. vi. 5. Matt. iv. 16. v. 14. John iii. 20, 21. It is a light so shining with the majesty of its author, as that it manifests itself to be his; 2 Pet. i. 19. ‘A light shining in a dark place,’ with an eminent advantage for its own discovery, as well as unto the benefit of others.

Let a light be never so mean and contemptible; yet if it shines, casts out beams and rays in a dark place, it will evidence itself. If other things be wanting in the faculty, the light, as to its innate glory and beauty, is not to suffer prejudice. But the word is a glorious shining light, as hath been shewed; an illuminating light; compared to, and preferred above, the light of the sun; Psal. xix. 5—7. Rom. x.

^a Biddle Catech.

18. Let not then a reproach be cast upon the most glorious light in the world, the most eminent reflection of uncreated light and excellencies, that will not be fastened on any thing, that on any account is so called; Matt. v. 19.

Now as the Scripture is thus a light, we grant it to be the duty of the church, of any church, of every church, to hold it up, whereby it may become the more conspicuous. It is a ground, and pillar to set this light upon. 1 Tim. iii. 15. *στύλος καὶ ἐδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας*, may refer to the mystery of godliness, in the next words following, in good coherence of speech, as well as to the church; but granting the usual reading, no more is affirmed, but that the light and truth of the Scripture is held up, and held out, by the church. It is the duty of every church so to do: almost the whole of its duty. And this duty it performs ministerially, not authoritatively. A church may bear up the light, it is not the light. It bears witness to it, but kindles not one divine beam to farther its discovery. All the preaching that is in any church, its administration of ordinances, all its walking in the truth, hold up this light.

Nor doth it in the least impair this self-evidencing efficacy of the Scripture, that it is a moral and spiritual, not a natural light. The proposition is universal to all kinds of light; yea, more fully applicable to the former, than the latter. Light, I confess, of itself, will not remove the defect of the visive faculty. It is not given for that end; light is not eyes. It suffices that there is nothing wanting on its own part, for its discovery and revelation. To argue that the sun, cannot be known to be the sun, or the great means of communicating external light unto the world, because blind men cannot see it, nor do know any more of it, than they are told, will scarce be admitted; nor doth it in the least impeach the efficacy of the light pleaded for, that men stupidly blind, cannot comprehend it; John i. 5.

I do not assert from hence, that wherever the Scripture is brought, by what means soever (which indeed is all one), all that read it, or to whom it is read, must instantly, of necessity, assent unto its divine original. Many men (who are not stark blind), may have yet so abused their eyes, that when a light is brought into a dark place, they may not be able to discern it. Men may be so prepossessed with innu-

merable prejudices, principles received by strong traditions, corrupt affections, making them hate the light, that they may not behold the glory of the word, when it is brought to them. But it is nothing to our present discourse, whether any man living be able by, and of himself, to discern this light, whilst the defect may be justly cast on their own blindness. 2 Cor. iv. 2—4. ‘By the manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every one’s conscience in the sight of God; but if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.’ There is in the dispensation of the word an evidence of truth, commending itself to the consciences of men; some receive not this evidence; is it for want of light in the truth itself? No! that is a glorious light that shines into the hearts of men. Is it for want of testimony to assert this light? No! but merely because the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of men, that they should not behold it.

From what then hath been laid down, these two things may be inferred:

1. That as the authority of God, the first and only absolute truth, in the Scripture, is that alone which divine faith rests upon, and is the formal object of it, so wherever the word comes, by what means soever, it hath in itself a sufficiency of light to evidence to all (and will do it eventually to all that are not blinded by the god of this world), that authority of God its author; and the only reason why it is not received by many in the world to whom it is come, is the advantage that Satan hath to keep them in ignorance and blindness, by the lusts, corruptions, prejudices, and hardness, of their own hearts.

The word then makes a sufficient proposition of itself, wherever it is. And he to whom it shall come, who refuses it because it comes not so or so testified, will give an account of his atheism and infidelity. He that hath the witness of God, need not stay for the witness of men, for the witness of God is greater.

Wherever the word is received indeed, as it requireth itself to be received, and is really assented unto as the word of God; it is so received upon the evidence of that light

which it hath in itself, manifestly declaring itself so to be. It is all one, by what means, by what hand, whether of a child or a church, by accident or traditions, by common consent of men or peculiar providence, the Scripture comes unto us; come how it will, it hath its authority in itself, and towards us, by being the word of God; and hath its power of manifesting itself so to be, from its own innate light.

Now this light in the Scripture, for which we contend, is nothing but the beaming of the majesty, truth, holiness, and authority of God, given unto it, and left upon it, by its author the Holy Ghost; an impress it hath, of God's excellency upon it, distinguishing it by infallible *τεκμήρια*, from the product of any creature; by this it dives into the consciences of men, into all the secret recesses of their hearts; guides, teaches, directs, determines, and judges in them, upon them, in the name, majesty, and authority of God. If men who are blinded by the god of this world, will yet deny this light, because they perceive it not, it shall not prejudice them who do. By this self-evidencing light, I say, doth the Scripture make such a proposition of itself, as the word of God, that whoever rejects it, doth it at the peril of his eternal ruin; and thereby a bottom and foundation is tendered for that faith which it requireth, to repose itself upon.

For the proof then of the divine authority of the Scriptures, unto him, or them, who as yet on no account whatever do acknowledge it, I shall only suppose, that by the providence of God, the book itself be so brought unto him or them, as that he, or they, be engaged to the consideration of it; or do attend to the reading of it. This is the work of God's providence in the government of the world; upon a supposal hereof, I leave the word with them; and if it evidence not itself unto their consciences, it is because they are blinded by the god of this world; which will be no plea for the refusal of it, at the last day; and they who receive it not on this ground, will never receive it on any, as they ought.

The second sort of things that evidence themselves, are things of an effectual powerful operation in any kind. So doth fire by heat, the wind by its noise and force, salt by its taste and savour, the sun by its light and heat; so do also moral principles that are effectually operative; Rom. ii. 14, 15. Men in whom they are, *ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον*, do

manifest the work of them; or them by their work and efficacy. Whatever it be that hath an innate power in itself, that will effectually operate on a fit and proper subject, it is able to evidence itself, and its own nature and condition.

To manifest the interest of the Scripture to be enrolled among things of this nature, yea, under God himself, who is known by his great power and the effects of it, to have the pre-eminence, I shall observe only one or two things concerning it, the various improvement whereof, would take up more time, and greater space, than I have allotted to this discourse.

It is absolutely called the ‘power of God;’ and that unto its proper end, which way lies the tendency of its efficacy in operation, Rom. i. 16. It is *δύναμις Θεοῦ*, ‘*vis virtus Dei*,’ ‘the power of God.’ *ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ*, the ‘word concerning the cross,’ that is, the gospel, is *δύναμις Θεοῦ*. 1 Cor. i. 18. the ‘power of God;’ and faith which is built on that word, without other helps or advantages, is said to stand in the ‘power of God’ 1 Cor. ii. 5. That is, effectually working, in and by the word; it worketh, *ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως*, ‘in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power;’ *ἐν διὰ δυοῖν* its spiritual power gives a demonstration of it. Thus it comes not as a naked word, 1 Thess. i. 5. but in ‘power, and in the Holy Ghost,’ and *ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ* giving all manner of assurance and full persuasion of itself, even by its power and efficacy. Hence it is termed *ῥαβδος* ‘the rod of power,’ or strength; Psal. cx. 2. denoting both authority and efficacy; surely that which is thus the power and authority of God, is able to make itself known so to be.

It is not only said to be *δύναμις*, ‘power,’ the power of God in itself; but also *δυναμενος*, ‘able and powerful’ in respect of us. ‘Thou hast learned,’ saith Paul to Timothy, *τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*, ‘the sacred letters,’ (the written word) *τὰ δυνάμενά σε σωφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν*, ‘which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.’ They are powerful and effectual to that purpose. It is *λόγος δυνάμενος σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς*. James i. 21. ‘The word that hath power in it to save.’ So Acts xx. 31. ‘I commend you *λόγῳ τῷ δυναμένῳ*, to the able powerful word.’ And that we may know what kind of power it hath, the apostle tells us that it is *ζῶν καὶ ἐνεργῆς*, it is

‘living and effectual,’ Heb. iv. 12. and ‘sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.’ It is designed of God to declare *τὴν ἐνέργειαν τῆς δυνάμεως*, the effectual working of his power. See John. vi. 68, 69. 2 Cor. vi. 41. xv. 58. Gal. ii. 8. By virtue of this power, it brought forth fruit in all the world; Col. i. 6. Without sword, without (for the most part) miracles, without human wisdom, or oratory, without any inducements or motives, but what were merely and solely taken from itself, consisting in things, that ‘eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor could enter into the heart of man to conceive;’ hath it exerted this its power and efficacy, to the conquest of the world; causing men of all sorts, in all times and places, so to fall down before its divine authority, as immediately to renounce all that was dear to them in the world, and to undergo whatever was dreadful, terrible, and destructive to nature in all its dearest concerns.

It hath been the work of many to insist on the particulars, wherein this power exerts itself; so that I shall not enlarge upon them. In general, they have this advantage, that as they are all spiritual, so they are such, as have their seat, dwelling, and abode in the hearts and consciences of men, whereby they are not liable to any exception as though they were pretended. Men cannot harden themselves in the rejection of the testimony they give, by sending for magicians to do the like; or by any pretence that it is a common thing, that is befallen them on whom the word puts forth its power. The seat and residence of these effects, is safeguarded against all power and authority but that of God. Its diving into the hearts, consciences, and secret recesses of the minds of men; its judging and sentencing of them in themselves; its convictions, terrors, conquests, and killing of men; its converting, building up, making wise, holy, obedient; its administering consolations in every condition, and the like effects of its power, are usually spoken unto.

These are briefly the foundations of the answer returned to the inquiry formerly laid down, which might abundantly be enlarged. How know we that the Scripture is the word of God; how may others come to be assured thereof? The Scripture, say we, bears testimony to itself, that it is the word

of God; that testimony is the witness of God himself, which whoso doth not accept and believe, he doth what in him lies to make God a liar. To give us an infallible assurance that in receiving this testimony, we are not imposed upon by cunningly devised fables, the αἱ γραφαὶ, the ἑρὰ γράμματα, 'the Scriptures' have that glory of light and power accompanying of them as wholly distinguisheth them by infallible signs and evidences from all words and writings not divine; conveying their truth and power into the souls and consciences of men with an infallible certainty. On this account are they received, by all that receive them as from God; who have any real distinguishing foundation of their faith, which would not be, separated from these grounds, as effectual an expedient for the reception of the Alcoran.

CHAP. V.

Of the testimony of the Spirit. Traditions. Miracles.

BEFORE I proceed to the consideration of those other testimonies, which are as arguments drawn from those innate excellencies and properties of the word which I have insisted on; some other things, whose right understanding is of great importance in the cause under debate, must be laid down and stated. Some of these refer to that testimony of the Spirit, that is usually and truly pleaded, as the great ascertaining principle, or that, on the account whereof we receive the Scriptures to be the word of God. That it may be seen in what sense that is usually delivered by our divines, and how far there is a coincidence between that assertion and what we have delivered, I shall lay down what that testimony is, wherein it consists, and what is the weight or stress that we lay upon it.

That the Scripture be received as the word of God, there is required a twofold efficacy of the Spirit. The first respects the subject or the mind of man that assents unto the authority of the Scripture; now concerning this act, or work of the Spirit, whereby we are enabled to believe the Scripture, on the account whereof we may say that we receive the Scripture to be the word of God, or upon the tes-

timony of the Spirit, I shall a little inquire, what it is, and wherein it doth consist.

First, Then, It is not an outward or inward vocal testimony concerning the word, as the Papist would impose upon us to believe and assent. We do not affirm that the Spirit immediately, by himself, saith unto every individual believer this book is, or contains, the word of God; we say not that the Spirit ever speaks to us of the word, but by the word. Such an enthusiasm as they fancy is rarely pretended; and where it is so, it is for the most part quickly discovered to be a delusion. We plead not for the usefulness, much less the necessity, of any such testimony. Yea, the principles we have laid down, resolving all faith into the public testimony of the Scriptures themselves, do render all such private testimonies altogether needless.

Secondly, This testimony of the Spirit consists not in a persuasion that a man takes up, he knows not well how, or why; only this he knows, he will not depose it though it cost him his life. This would be like that, which by Morinus^a is ascribed to the church of Rome, which though it knew no reason why it should prefer the vulgar Latin translation before the original, yet by the guidance of the Spirit would do so, that is, unreasonably. But if a man should say, that he is persuaded that the Scripture is the word of God, and that he will die a thousand times to give testimony thereunto; and not knowing any real ground of this persuasion, that should bear him out in such a testimony, shall ascribe it to the Spirit of God, our concernment lies not in that persuasion. This may befall men by the advantage of traditions, whereof men are usually zealous, and obstinate in their defence. Education in some constitutions will give pertinacy in most vain and false persuasions. It is not then a resolution and persuasion induced into our minds we know not how, built we know not upon what foundations, that we intend in the assignation of our receiving the Scripture to be the word of God, to the effectual work and witness of the Holy Ghost.

Two things then we intend by this work of the Spirit upon the mind of man: 1. His communication of spiritual light; by an act of his power, enabling the mind to discern

^a Morin. Exercit. de Heb. Tex. sincer. Exercit. 1. cap. 1.

the saving truth, majesty, and authority of the word, *πνευματικὰ πνευματικῶς*. There is a blindness, a darkness, upon the minds of men, *πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχόντων*, that not only disenables them from discerning the things of God, in their certainty, evidence, necessity, and beauty (for *ψυχιχὸς ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ*) but also causes them to judge amiss of them as things weak and foolish, dark, unintelligible, not answering to any principle of wisdom whereby they are guided; 1 Cor. ii. Whilst this *γλαύχωμα* abides on the minds of men, it is impossible that they should on any right abiding foundation assent to the word of God. They may have a prejudicate opinion, they have no faith concerning it. This darkness then must be removed by the communication of light by the Holy Ghost, which work of his illumination is commonly by others spoken unto; and by me also in another place.

2. The Holy Ghost, together with and by his work of illumination, taking off the perverse disposition of mind that is in us by nature, with our enmity to, and aversion from, the things of God, effectually also persuades the mind, to a receiving and admitting of the truth, wisdom, and authority of the word. Now, because this perverse disposition of mind, possessing the *τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν* of the soul, influences the will also into an aversion and dislike of that goodness which is in the truth proposed to it; it is removed by a double act of the Holy Ghost.

(1.) He gives us wisdom, understanding, a spiritual judgment, whereby we may be able to compare spiritual things with spiritual, in a spiritual manner, and to come thereby to a clear and full light of the heavenly excellency and majesty of the word; and so enables us to know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. Under the benefit of this assistance all the parts of the Scripture, in their harmony and correspondency, all the truths of it in their power and necessity, come in together to give evidence one to another, and all of them to the whole; I mean as the mind is enabled to make a spiritual judgment of them.

(2.) He gives *αἰσθησιν πνευματικῶν*, a spiritual sense, a taste of the things themselves upon the mind, heart, and conscience; when we have *αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα* ‘senses exercised’ to discern such things. These things deserve a more full handling, and to be particularly exemplified from

Scripture if the nature of our present design would admit thereof.

As in our natural estate in respect of these things of God, the mind is full of vanity, darkness, blindness, yea, is darkness itself, so that there is no correspondency between the faculty and the object; and the will lies in an utter unacquaintedness, yea, impossibility of any acquaintance with the life, power, savour, sweetness, relish, and goodness, that is in the things proposed to be known and discerned, under the dark shades of a blind mind; so for a removal of both these, the Holy Ghost communicates light to the understanding, whence it is able to see and judge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, and the will being thereby delivered from the dungeon wherein it was, and quickened anew, performs its office, in embracing what is proper and suited unto it in the object proposed. The Spirit, indeed, discovereth to every one *καθὼς βούλεται*, according to the counsel of his will; but yet in that way, in the general, whereby the sun gives out his light and heat, the former making way for the latter: but these things must not now be insisted on.

Now by these works of the Spirit, he doth, I say, persuade the mind concerning the truth and authority of the Scripture, and therein leave an impression of an effectual testimony within us: and this testimony of his, as it is authoritative, and infallible in itself, so of inconceivably more efficacy, power, and certainty, unto them that do receive it, than any voice or internal word, boasted of by some, can be. But yet this is not the work of the Spirit at present inquired after.

2. There is a testimony of the Spirit, that respects the object, or the word itself; and this is a public testimony, which, as it satisfies our souls in particular, so it is, and may be, pleaded, in reference unto the satisfaction of all others, to whom the word of God shall come. The Holy Ghost speaking in and by the word, imparting to it virtue, power, efficacy, majesty, and authority, affords us the witness, that our faith is resolved unto. And thus, whereas there are but two heads, whereunto all grounds of assent do belong, namely, authority of testimony, and the self-evidence of truth, they do here both concur in one. In the same word we have both the authority of the testimony of the Spirit,

and the self-evidence of the truth spoken by him ; yea, so that both these are materially one and the same, though distinguished in their formal conceptions. I have been much affected with those verses of Dante's, the Italian poet, which somebody hath thus, word for word, turned into Latin :

—————larga pluvia
Spiritus sancti quæ est diffusa
Super veteres, et super novas membranas,
Est syllogismus qui eam mihi conclusit
Acutè adeo ut præ illa
Omnis demonstratio mihi videatur obtusa.

The Spirit's communication of his own light and authority to the Scripture, as evidences of its original, is the testimony pleaded for.

When then we resolve our faith into the testimony of the Holy Ghost, it is not any private whisper, word, or voice, given to individual persons ; it is not the secret and effectual persuasion of the truth of the Scriptures, that falls upon the minds of some men, from various involved considerations of education, tradition, and the like, whereof they can give no particular account : it is not the effectual work of the Holy Ghost upon the minds and wills of men, enabling them savingly to believe, that is intended ; the Papists, for the most part, pleading about these things, do but shew their ignorance and malice. But it is the public testimony of the Holy Ghost given unto all, of the word, by and in the word, and its own divine light, efficacy, and power.

Thus far then have we proceeded. The Scripture, the written word, hath its infallible truth in itself ; *ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς, ἀλήθεια ἐστίν*. John xvii. 17. from whence it hath its verity, thence it hath its authority ; for its whole authority is founded in its truth. Its authority in itself, is its authority in respect of us ; nor hath it any whit more in itself, than, *de jure*, it hath towards and over all them to whom it comes ; that, *de facto*, some do not submit themselves unto it, is their sin and rebellion. This truth, and consequently this authority, is evidenced and made known to us, by the public testimony which is given unto it by the Holy Ghost speaking in it, with divine light and power, to the minds, souls, and consciences of men : being therein by itself proposed unto us, we being enlightened by the Holy Ghost (which, in the condition wherein we are, is necessary for the apprehension of any spiritual thing or truth in a spiritual manner), we receive

it, and religiously subject our souls unto it, as the word and will of the ever living, sovereign God, and judge of all: and if this be not a bottom and foundation of faith, I here publicly profess, that for aught I know, I have no faith at all.

Having laid this stable foundation, I shall, with all possible brevity, consider some pretences and allegations for the confirmation of the authority of the Scripture, invented and made use of by some to divert us from that foundation, the closing wherewith, will in this matter alone bring peace unto our souls; and so this chapter shall, as it were, lay in the balance, and compare together, the testimony of the Spirit before mentioned and explained, and the other pretences and pleas that shall now be examined.

1. Some say, when on other accounts they are concerned so to say, that we 'have received the Scripture from the church of Rome, who received it by tradition, and this gives a credibility unto it.' Of tradition in general, without this limitation which destroys it, of the church of Rome, I shall speak afterward. Credibility, either keeps within the bounds of probability, as that may be heightened to a manifest uncontrollableness, whilst yet its principles exceed not that sphere; in which sense it belongs not at all to our present discourse; or it includes a firm, suitable foundation, for faith supernatural and divine. Have we in this sense received the Scripture from that church, as it is called? is that church able to give such a credibility to any thing? or doth the Scripture stand in need of such a credibility to be given to it from that church? are not the first most false, and is not the last blasphemous? To receive a thing from a church, as a church, is to receive it upon the authority of that church: if we receive any thing from the authority of a church, we do it not because the thing itself is ἀποδοχῆς ἄξιος, 'worthy of acceptation,' but because of the authority alleged. If then we thus receive the Scriptures from the church of Rome, why (in particular) do we not receive the apocryphal books also, which she receives? How did the church of Rome receive the Scriptures? shall we say that she is authorized to give out what seems good to her, as the word of God? not: but she hath received them by tradition; so she pleads, that she hath received the apocryphal books also; we then receive the Scriptures from Rome; Rome by

tradition; we make ourselves judges of that tradition; and yet Rome saith, this is one thing, that she hath by the same tradition, namely, that she alone is judge of what she hath by tradition. But the common fate of liars is befallen that harlot: she hath so long, so constantly, so desperately lied in many, the most, things that she professeth, pretending tradition for them, that indeed she deserves not to be believed, when she telleth the truth. Besides, she pleads that she received the Scriptures from the beginning, when it is granted that the copies of the Hebrew of the Old, and Greek of the New Testament were only authentic: these she pleads now under her keeping to be wofully corrupted, and yet is angry that we believe not her tradition.

Some add that we receive the Scripture to be the word of God upon the account of the miracles that were wrought at the giving of the law, and of the New Testament; which miracles we have received by universal tradition. But first I desire to know whence it comes to pass, that seeing our Saviour Jesus Christ wrought many other miracles besides those that are written, John xx. 30. xxi. 25. and the apostles likewise, they cannot by all their traditions help us to so much as an obscure report of any one, that is not written (I speak not of legends); which yet at their performance were no less known than those that are; nor were less useful for the end of miracles than they. Of tradition in general afterward. But is it not evident that the miracles whereof they speak, are preserved in the Scripture and no otherwise? And if so, can these miracles operate upon the understanding or judgment of any man, unless they first grant the Scripture to be the word of God, I mean to the begetting of a divine faith of them, even that there were ever any such miracles. Suppose these miracles, alleged as the ground of our believing of the word, had not been written, but like the sibyl's leaves had been driven up and down, by the worst and fiercest wind that blows in this world,—the breath of man; those who should keep them by tradition, that is, men, are by nature so vain, foolish, malicious; such liars, adders, detractors; have spirits and minds so unsuited to spiritual things, so liable to alteration in themselves, and to contradiction one to another, are so given to impostures, and are so apt to be imposed upon; have been so shuffled

and driven up and down the world in every generation; have for the most part so utterly lost the remembrance of what themselves are, whence they come, or whither they are to go; that I can give very little credit to what I have nothing but their authority to rely upon for, without any evidence from the nature of the thing itself.

Abstracting then from the testimony given in the Scriptures to the miracles wrought by the prime revealers of the mind and will of God in the word; and no tolerable assurance, as to the business in hand, where a foundation for faith is inquired after, can be given that ever any such miracles were wrought. If numbers of men may be allowed to speak, we may have a traditional testimony given to the blasphemous figments of the Alcoran, under the name of true miracles. But the constant tradition of more than a thousand years, carried on by innumerable multitudes of men, great, wise, and sober, from one generation to another, doth but set open the gates of hell for the Mahometans; yet setting aside the authority of God in his word, and what is resolved thereinto, I know not why they may not vie traditions with the rest of the world. The world indeed is full of traditions flowing from the word; that is, a knowledge of the doctrines of the word in the minds of men; but a tradition of the word, not resolved into the word, a tradition referred to a fountain of sense in seeing and hearing, preserved as an oral law, in a distinct channel and stream by itself, when it is evidenced, either by instance in some particular preserved therein, or in a probability of securing it through the generations passed, by a comparison of some such effect in things of the like kind, I shall be ready to receive it.

Give me then, as I said before, but the least obscure report of any one of those many miracles that were wrought by our Saviour and the apostles, which are not recorded in the Scriptures, and I shall put more valuation on the pretended traditions, than I can as yet persuade myself unto. Besides, many writers of the Scripture wrought no miracles, and by this rule their writings are left to shift for themselves. Miracles indeed were necessary to take off all prejudices from the persons, that brought any new doctrine from God; but the doctrine still evidenced itself. The apostles converted many, where they wrought no miracles; Acts xvi. 17,

18. and where they did so work, yet they for their doctrine, and not the doctrine on their account was received. And the Scripture now hath no less evidence and demonstration in itself of its divinity, than it had when by them it was preached.

But because this tradition is pretended with great confidence as a sure bottom and foundation for receiving of the Scriptures, I shall a little farther inquire into it. That which in this case is intended, by this מסורה or tradition, is a report of men, which those who are present have received from them that are gone before them.^b Now this may be either of all the men of the world, or only of some of them; if of all, either their suffrages must be taken in some convention, or gathered up from the individuals as we are able, and have opportunity. If the first way of receiving them were possible, which is the utmost improvement that imagination can give the authority inquired after, yet every individual of men being a liar, the whole convention must be of the same complexion, and so not be able to yield a sufficient basis to build a faith upon, *cui non potest subesse falsum*, that is infallible, and cannot possibly be deceived: much less is there any foundation for it, in such a report as is the emergency of the assertion of individuals.

But now if this tradition be alleged as preserved only by some in the world, not the half of rational creatures, I desire to know, what reason I have to believe those who have that tradition, or plead that they have it, before and against them who profess they have no such report delivered to them from their forefathers; is the reason hereof because I live among these who have this tradition, and they are my neighbours whom I know? by the same rule those who live among the other parts of men, are bound to receive what they deliver them upon tradition; and so men may be obliged to believe the Alcoran to be the word of God.

It is more probable, it will be answered, that their testimony is to be received because they are the church of God; but it doth not yet appear, that I can any other way have any knowledge of them so to be, or of any authority that any number of men, more or less, can have in this case, under that name or notion, unless by the Scripture itself; and if

^b Est rei de manu in manum, aut doctrinæ ex animo in animum mediante docentis voce, quâ seu manu doctrina alteri traditur. Buxtor. Comment. Mas.

so, it will quickly appear what place is to be allotted to their testimony, who cannot be admitted as witnesses, unless the Scripture itself be owned and received; because they have neither plea nor claim to be so admitted, but only from the Scripture: if they shall aver, that they take this honour to themselves, and that without relation to the Scripture they claim a right of authoritative witness-bearing in this case, I say again, upon the general grounds of natural reason, and equity, I have no more inducements to give credit to their assertions, than to an alike number of men holding out a tradition utterly to the contrary of what they assert.

But yet suppose, that this also were granted, and that men might be allowed to speak in their own name and authority, giving testimony to themselves, which, upon the hypothesis under consideration, God himself is not allowed to do; I shall desire to know whether, when the church declares the Scriptures to be the word of God unto us, it doth apprehend any thing in the Scripture as the ground of that judgment and declaration or no? If it says no; but that it is proposed upon its sole authority; then surely, if we think good to acquiesce in this decision of this doubt and inquiry, it is full time for us, to lay aside all our studies and inquiries after the mind of God, and seek only what that man[says], or those men say, who are intrusted with this authority, as they say, and as they would have us believe them, though we know not at all how or by what means they came by it; seeing they dare not pretend any thing from the Scripture, least thereby they direct us to that in the first place.

If it be said, that they do upon other accounts judge and believe the Scripture to be true, and to be the word of God; I suppose it will not be thought unreasonable if we inquire after those grounds and accounts, seeing they are of so great concernment unto us; all truths in relations consisting in their consonancy and agreement to the nature of the things they deliver, I desire to know how they came to judge of the consonancy, between the nature of the things delivered in the Scripture, and the delivery of them therein? The things whereof we speak being heavenly, spiritual, mysterious, and supernatural, there cannot be any knowledge obtained of them but by the word itself. How then can they make any judgment of the truth of that Scripture in the relation of

these things, which are no where to be known (I speak of many of them), in the least, but by that Scripture itself.

If they shall say, that they found their judgment and declaration upon some discovery, that the Scripture makes of itself unto them; they affirm the same that we plead for: only they would very desirously appropriate to themselves the privilege of being able to discern that discovery so made in the Scripture. To make good this claim, they must either plead somewhat from themselves, or from the Scriptures: if from themselves, it can be nothing, but that they see, like the men of China, and all others are blind, or have but one eye at the best, being wiser than any others, and more able to discern than they. Now though I shall easily grant them to be very subtle and cunning, yet that they are so much wiser than all the world besides, that they are meet to impose upon their belief things that they neither do, nor can, discern, or know, I would not be thought to admit, until I can believe myself and all others, not of their society or combination, to be beasts of the field, and they as the serpent amongst us.

If it be from the Scripture that they seek to make good this claim; then as we cause them there to make a stand, which is all we aim at, so their plea must be from the promise of some special assistance granted to them for that purpose; if their assistance be that of the Spirit, it is either of the Spirit that is promised to believers, to work in them as before described and related, or it is some private testimony that they pretend is afforded to them: if the former be affirmed, we are in a condition, wherein the necessity of devolving all on the Scripture itself, to decide and judge who are believers, lies in every one's view; if the latter, who shall give me assurance, that when they pretend that witness and testimony, they do not lie and deceive; we must here certainly go either to the Scripture, or to some cunning man to be resolved; Isa. viii. 19, 20.

I confess the argument which hath not long since been singled out, and dexterously managed, by an able and learned pen,^c namely, of proving the truth of the doctrine of the Scripture from the truth of the story, and the truth of the story from the certainty there is that the writers of the books

^c D. Ward, Essay, &c.

of the Bible, were those persons whose names and inscriptions they bear, so pursuing the evidence, that what they wrote was true and known to them so to be, from all *requisita* that may possibly be sought after for the strengthening of such evidence, is of great force and efficacy. It is, I say, of great force and efficacy as to the end for which it is insisted on; that is, to satisfy men's rational inquiries; but as to a ground of faith, it hath the same insufficiency with all other arguments of the like kind; though I should grant that the apostles and penmen of the Scripture were persons of the greatest industry, honesty, integrity, faithfulness, holiness, that ever lived in the world, as they were; and that they wrote nothing, but what themselves had as good assurance of, as what men by their senses of seeing and hearing are able to attain; yet such a knowledge and assurance is not a sufficient foundation for the faith of the church of God; if they received not every word by inspiration, and that evidencing itself unto us, otherwise than by the authority of their integrity, it can be no foundation for us to build our faith upon.

Before the committing of the Scriptures to writing, God had given the world an experiment, what keepers men were of this revelation by tradition; within some hundreds of years after the flood, all knowledge of him, through the craft of Satan, and the vanity of the minds of men, which is unspeakable, was so lost, that nothing, but as it were the creation of a new world, or the erection of a new church-state by new revelations, could relieve it. After that great trial, what can be farther pretended, on the behalf of tradition I know not.

The sum of all is; the merciful good providence of God having by divers and various means, using therein, amongst other things, the ministry of men and churches, preserved the writings of the Old and New Testament in the world; and by the same gracious disposal afforded them unto us, they are received and submitted unto by us, upon the grounds and evidences of their divine original before insisted on.

Upon the whole matter, then, I would know, whether if the Scriptures should be brought to any man, when, or where, he could not possibly have it attested to be the word of God, by any public or private authority of man or church, tradition or otherwise, he were bound to believe it or no? whe-

ther he should obey God in believing, or sin in the rejecting of it? Suppose he do but take it into consideration, do but give it the reading or hearing, seeing in every place it avers itself to be the word of God, he must of necessity either give credit unto it, or disbelieve it; to hang in suspense, which ariseth from the imperfect actings of the faculties of the soul, is in itself a weakness, and in this case being reckoned on the worst side, is interpretatively a rejection. If you say it were the duty of such a one to believe it, you acknowledge in the Scripture itself, a sufficient evidence of its own original authority; without which it can be no man's duty to believe it. If you say, it would not be his sin to reject and refuse it, to disbelieve all that it speaks in the name of God; then this is that you say, God may truly and really speak unto a man (as he doth by the Scripture), and yet that man not be bound to believe him. We deal not thus with one another.

To wind up then the plea insisted on, in the foregoing chapter, concerning the self-evidencing light and power of the Scripture, from which we have diverted, and to make way for some other considerations, that tend to the confirmation of their divine original, I shall close this discourse with the two general considerations following.

1. Then, laying aside these failing pleas, there seems to be a moral impossibility that the word of God, should not manifest its own original, and its authority from thence. '*Quælibet herba deum.*' There is no work of God, as was shewed, but reveals its author. A curious artificer imparts that of form, shape, proportion, and comeliness, to the fruit of his invention, and work of his hands, that every one that looks upon it, must conclude, that it comes from skill and ability. A man in the delivery of his mind, in the writing of a book, will give it such an impression of reason, that though you cannot conclude that this or that man wrote it, yet you must, that it was the product of a man, or rational creature: yea some individual men of excellency in some skill, are instantly known, by them that are able to judge in that art or skill, by the effects of their skill. This is the piece, this is the hand, the work of such a one. How easy is it for those who are conversant about ancient authors, to discover an author by the spirit and style of his writings. Now certainly

this is strange beyond all belief, that almost every agent should give an impress to its work, whereby it may be appropriated unto him, and only the word, wherein it was the design of the great and holy God, to give us a portraiture as it were of his wisdom, holiness, and goodness, so far as we are capable of an acquaintance with him in this life, is not able to declare and evince its original. That God who is *prima veritas*, the first and sovereign truth, infinitely separated and distinguished from all creatures, on all accounts whatever, should write a book, or at least immediately indite it, commanding us to receive it as his, under the penalty of his eternal displeasure, and yet that book not make a sufficient discovery of itself to be his, to be from him, is past all belief. Let men that live on things received by tradition from their fathers, who perhaps never had sense of any real transaction between God and their souls, who scarce ever perused the word seriously in their lives, nor brought their consciences to it, please themselves in their own imaginations; the sure anchor of a soul, that would draw nigh to God, in and by his word, lies in the things laid down.

I suppose it will not be denied, but that it was the mind and will of God, that those to whom his word should come, should own it and receive it as his; if not, it were no sin in them to reject it, unto whom it doth so come; if it were, then either he hath given those characters unto it, and left upon it that impression of his majesty, whereby it might be known to be his, or he hath not done so; and that either because he would not, or because he could not; to say the latter, is to make him more infirm than a man, or other worms of the earth, than any naturally effectual cause. He that saith the former, must know, that it is incumbent on him to yield a satisfactory account, why God would not do so, or else he will be thought blasphemously to impute a want of that goodness and love of mankind unto him, which he hath in infinite grace manifested to be in himself. That no man is able to assign any such reason, I shall firmly believe, until I find some attempting so to do; which as yet none have arrived at that height of impudence and wickedness as to own.

2. How horrible is it to the thoughts of any saint of God, that the Scripture should not have its authority from itself. Tertullian objects this to the Gentiles; Apol. cap. 5. 'Facit

et hoc ad causam nostram, quod apud vos de humano arbitratu divinitas pensitatur; nisi homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit; homo jam Deo propitius esse debet.' Would it be otherwise in this case, if the Scripture must stand to the mercy of man for the reputation of its divinity? nay of its verity; for whence it hath its authority, thence it hath its verity also, as was observed before; and many more words of this nature might be added.

CHAP. VI.

Consequential considerations for the confirmation of the divine authority of the Scripture.

I SAID, in the former chapter, that I would not employ myself willingly, to enervate or weaken any of the reasons or arguments that are usually insisted on, to prove the divine authority of the Scripture. Though, I confess, I like not to multiply arguments, that conclude to a probability only, and are suited to beget a firm opinion at best, where the principle intended to be evinced is *de fide*, and must be believed with faith divine and supernatural. Yet because some may happily be kept to some kind of adherence to the Scriptures; by mean grounds, that will not in their own strength abide, until they get footing in those that are more firm; I shall not make it my business to drive them from their present station; having persuaded them by that which is better.

Yea, because on supposition of the evidence formerly tended, there may be great use at several seasons, of some consequential considerations, and arguments to the purpose in hand, I shall insist on two of that kind, which to me, who have the advantage of receiving the word on the forementioned account, seem not only to persuade, and in a great measure to convince to undeniable probability, but also to prevail irresistibly, on the understanding of unprejudiced men, to close with the divine truth of it.

The first of these is taken from the nature of the doctrine itself, contained in the Scripture, the second from the management of the whole design therein; the first is innate, the other of a more external and rational consideration.

For the first of them, there are two things considerable

in the doctrine of the Scripture, that are powerful, and, if I may so say, uncontrollably prevalent as to this purpose.

First, Its universal suitableness, upon its first clear discovery and revelation, to all the entanglements and perplexities of the souls of men, in reference to their relation to, and dependance upon, God. If all mankind have certain entanglements upon their hearts and spirits, in reference unto God, which none of them that are not utterly brutish, do not wrestle withal, and which all of them are not able in the least to assoil themselves in and about, certainly that doctrine, which is suited universally to satisfy all their perplexities, to calm and quiet their spirits in all their tumultuatings, and doth break in upon them with a glorious efficacy, to that purpose in its discovery and revelation, must needs be from that God, with whom we have to do, and none else. From whom else I pray should it be. He that can give out the word, *ille mihi semper erit Deus*.

Now there are three general heads of things, that all and every one of mankind, not naturally brutish, are perplexed withal, in reference to their dependance on God and relation to him.

1. How they may worship him as they ought.
2. How they may be reconciled, and at peace with him, or have an atonement for that guilt which naturally they are sensible of.
3. What is the nature of true blessedness, and how they may attain it, or how they may come to the enjoyment of God.

That all mankind is perplexed and entangled with and about these considerations, that all men ever were so, without exception more or less, and continue so to be to this day; that of themselves, they miserably grope up and down in the dark, and are never able to come to any satisfaction, neither as to what is present, nor as to what is to come, I could manifest from the state, office, and condition of conscience, the indelible *προλήψεις*, and presumptions about them, that are in the hearts of all by nature. The whole history of all religion which hath been in the world, with the design of all ancient and present philosophy, with innumerable other uncontrollable convictions (which also, God

assisting, I shall in another treatise^a declare) do manifest this truth.

That surely then which shall administer to all and every one of them, equally and universally, satisfaction as to all these things, to quiet and calm their spirits, to cut off all necessity of any farther inquiries, give them that wherein they must acquiesce, and wherewith they will be satiated, unless they will cast off that relation and dependance on God, which they seek to confirm and settle: surely, I say, this must be from the all-seeing, all-satisfying truth, and being, and from none else. Now this is done by the doctrine of the Scripture, with such a glorious uncontrollable conviction, that every one to whom it is revealed, the eyes of whose understanding are not blinded by the god of this world, must needs cry out *Ἐυρηκα*, I have found that which in vain I sought elsewhere, waxing foolish in my imaginations.

It would be too long to insist on the severals; take one instance in the business of atonement, reconciliation, and acceptance with God. What strange horrible fruits and effects have men's contrivances on this account produced? What have they not invented? What have they not done? What have they not suffered? and yet continued in dread and bondage all their days. Now with what a glorious soul-appeasing light doth the doctrine of satisfaction and atonement, by the blood of Christ the Son of God, come in upon such men. This first astonisheth, then conquereth, then ravisheth, and satiateth the soul. This is that they looked for, this they were sick for, and knew it not. This is the design of the apostle's discourse in the three first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Let any man read that discourse from chap. i. 18. and onward, and he will see with what glory and beauty, with what full and ample satisfaction this doctrine breaks out; chap. iii. 22—26.

It is no otherwise as to the particulars of present worship, or future blessedness; this meets with men in all their wanderings, stops them in their disquisitions, convinces them of the darkness, folly, uncertainty, falseness of all their reasonings about these things; and that with such an evidence and light, as at once subdues them, captivates their understand-

^a De Natura Theologiae.

ing, and quiets their souls: so was that old Roman world conquered by it; so shall the Mahometan be, in God's good and appointed time.

Of what hath been spoken, this is the sum. All mankind that acknowledge their dependance upon God, and relation to him, are naturally (and cannot be otherwise) grievously involved and perplexed in their hearts, thoughts, and reasonings about the worship of God, acceptance with him, having sinned, and the future enjoyment of him; some with more clear and distinct apprehensions of these things; some under more dark and general notions of them are thus exercised; to extricate themselves, and to come to some issue in, and about, these inquiries, hath been the great design of their lives, the aim they had in all things they did, as they thought, well and laudably in this world. Notwithstanding all which, they were never able to deliver themselves, no not one of them, or attain satisfaction to their souls, but waxed vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were more and more darkened; in this estate of things, the doctrine of the Scripture coming in with full, unquestionable satisfaction to all these, suited to the inquiries of every individual soul, with a largeness of wisdom and depth of goodness not to be fathomed, it must needs be from that God with whom we have to do. And those who are not persuaded hereby, that will not cast anchor in this harbour, let them put to sea once more, if they dare; turn themselves loose to other considerations, and try if all the forementioned perplexities do not inevitably return.

Another consideration of the doctrine of the Scripture to this purpose regards some particulars of it. There are some doctrines of the Scripture, some revelations in it, so sublimely glorious, of so profound and mysterious an excellency, that at the first proposal of them, nature startles, shrinks, and is taken with horror, meeting with that which is above it, too great and too excellent for it, which it could desirously avoid and decline; but yet, gathering itself up to them, it yields, and finds that unless they are accepted and submitted unto, though unsearchable, that not only all that hath been received must be rejected, but also the whole dependance of the creature on God be dissolved, or rendered only dreadful, terrible, and destructive to nature itself.

Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, of the incarnation of the Son of God, of the resurrection of the dead, of the new birth, and the like. At the first revelation of these things, nature is amazed, cries, How can these things be? Or gathers up itself to opposition; this is babbling like the Athenians; folly, as all the wise Greeks. But when the eyes of reason are a little confirmed, though it can never clearly behold the glory of this sun, yet it confesseth a glory to be in it, above all that it is able to apprehend. I could manifest in particular that the doctrines before mentioned, and several others are of this importance; namely, though great, above and beyond the reach of reason, yet upon search found to be such, as without submission to them, the whole comfortable relation between God and man must needs be dissolved.

Let us take a view in our way of one of the instances. What is there in the whole book of God, that nature at first sight doth more recoil at, than the doctrine of the Trinity? How many do yet stumble and fall at it? I confess the doctrine itself is but sparingly, yet it is clearly and distinctly delivered unto us in the Scripture. The sum of it is, that God is one; his nature or his being one; that all the properties or infinite essential excellencies of God, as God, do belong to that one nature and being. This God is infinitely good, holy, just, powerful; he is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent; and these things belong to none but him, that is, that one God. That this God is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which are not diverse names of the same person, nor distinct attributes or properties of the same nature or being, but one, another, and a third, all equally that one God, yet really distinguished between themselves by such incommunicable properties as constitute the one to be that one, and the other to be that other, and the third to be that third. Thus the Trinity is not the union, nor unity of three, but it is a Trinity in unity, or the ternary number of persons in the same essence; nor doth the Trinity, in its formal conception, denote the essence, as if the essence were comprehended in the Trinity, which is in each person; but it denotes only the distinction of the persons comprised in that number.

This, I say, is the sum of this doctrine, as it is delivered unto us in the Scripture. Here reason is entangled; yet

after a while finds evidently, that unless this be embraced, all other things wherein it hath to do with God, will not be of value to the soul ; this will quickly be made to appear. Of all that communion which is here between God and man, founded on the revelation of his mind and will unto him, which makes way for his enjoyment in glory, there are these two parts: 1. God's gracious communication of his love, goodness, &c. with the fruits of them unto man : 2. The obedience of man unto God in a way of gratitude for that love, according to the mind and will of God revealed to him. These two comprise the whole of the intercourse between God and man. Now, when the mind of man is exercised about these things, he finds at last that they are so wrapped up in the doctrine of the Trinity, that without the belief, receiving, and acceptance of it, it is utterly impossible that any interest in them should be obtained or preserved.

For the first, or the communication of God unto us in a way of love and goodness, it is wholly founded upon, and inwrapped in this truth, both as to the eternal spring and actual execution of it. A few instances will evince this assertion. The eternal fountain of all grace, flowing from love and goodness, lies in God's election, or predestination. This being an act of God's will, cannot be apprehended, but as an eternal act of his wisdom or word also. All the eternal thoughts of its pursuit, lie in the covenant that was between the Father and the Son, as to the Son's undertaking to execute that purpose of his. This I have at large elsewhere declared.

Take away then the doctrine of the Trinity, and both these are gone ; there can be no purpose of grace by the Father in the Son, no covenant for the putting of that purpose in execution ; and so the foundation of all fruits of love and goodness is lost to the soul.

As to the execution of this purpose, with the actual dispensation of the fruits of grace and goodness unto us, it lies wholly in the unspeakable condescension of the Son unto incarnation with what ensued thereon. The incarnation of the eternal Word, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is the bottom of our participation of grace. Without it, it was absolutely impossible that man should be made partaker of the favour of God. Now this inwraps the whole doctrine of the Trinity in its bosom ; nor can once be apprehended, without

its acknowledgment. Deny the Trinity, and all this means of the communication of grace, with the whole of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, falls to the ground. Every tittle of it speaks this truth : and they who deny the one, reject the other.

Our actual participation of the fruits of this grace, is by the Holy Ghost. We cannot ourselves seize on them, nor bring them home to our own souls. The impossibility hereof I cannot now stay to manifest. Now whence is this Holy Ghost ? is he not sent from the Father, by the Son ? Can we entertain any thought of his effectual working in us, and upon us, but it includes this whole doctrine ? They, therefore, who deny the Trinity, deny the efficacy of its operation also.

So it is, as to our obedience unto God, whereby the communion between God and man is completed. Although the formal object of divine worship be the nature of God ; and the persons are not worshipped as persons distinct, but as they are each of them God ; yet as God they are every one of them distinctly to be worshipped. So is it, as to our faith, our love, our thanksgiving, all our obedience, as I have abundantly demonstrated in my treatise of distinct communion with the Father in love, the Son in grace, and the Holy Ghost in the privileges of the gospel. Thus without the acknowledgment of this truth, none of that obedience which God requireth at our hands, can in a due manner be performed.

Hence the Scripture speaks not of any thing between God and us, but what is founded on this account. The Father worketh, the Son worketh, and the Holy Ghost worketh. The Father worketh not, but by the Son and his Spirit ; the Son and Spirit work not, but from the Father. The Father glorifieth the Son ; the Son glorifieth the Father ; and the Holy Ghost glorifieth them both. Before the foundation of the world, the Son was with the Father, and rejoiced in his peculiar work for the redemption of mankind. At the creation, the Father made all things, but by the Son, and the power of the Spirit. In redemption, the Father sends the Son ; the Son by his own condescension undertakes the work, and is incarnate by the Holy Ghost. The Father as was said, communicates his love, and all the fruits of it unto us

by the Son; as the Holy Ghost doth the merits and fruits of the mediation of the Son. The Father is not known nor worshipped, but by and in the Son; nor Father or Son, but by the Holy Ghost, &c.

Upon this discovery the soul that was before startled at the doctrine in the notion of it, is fully convinced that all the satisfaction it hath sought after in its seeking unto God, is utterly lost, if this be not admitted. There is neither any foundation left of the communication of love to him, nor means of returning obedience unto God. Besides, all the things that he hath been inquiring after, appear on this account in their glory, beauty, and reality unto him: so that, that which most staggered him at first in the receiving of the truth, because of its deep mysterious glory, doth now most confirm him in the embracing of it, because of its necessity, power, and heavenly excellency.

And this is one argument of the many belonging to the things of the Scripture, that upon the grounds before mentioned, hath in it, as to my sense and apprehension, an evidence of conviction not to be withstood.

Another consideration of the like efficacy, may be taken from a brief view of the whole Scripture with the design of it. The consent of parts, or harmony of the Scripture in itself, and every part of it with each other, and with the whole, is commonly pleaded as an evidence of its divine original. Thus much certainly it doth evince beyond all possible contradiction, that the whole proceedeth from one and the same principle; hath the same author; and He wise, discerning, able to comprehend the whole compass of what he intended to deliver and reveal. Otherwise, or by any other, that oneness of Spirit, design, and aim, in unspeakable variety and diversity of means of its delivery, that absolute correspondence of it to itself, and distance from any thing else, could not have been attained. Now it is certain, that this principle must be *summum* in its kind; either *bonum* or *malum*. If the Scripture be what it reveals and declares itself to be, it is then unquestionably the 'word of the living God,' truth itself; for that it professeth of itself, from the beginning to the ending; to which profession all that it reveals, answers absolutely and unquestionably in a tendency to his glory alone. If it be not so, it must be acknowledged that the

author of it had a blasphemous design to hold forth himself to be God, who is not so ; a malicious design to deceive the sons of men, and to make them believe that they worship and honour God, and obey him when they do not ; and so to draw them into everlasting destruction ; and that to compass these ends of blasphemy, atheism, and malice, he hath laid out, in a long course of time, all the industry and wisdom that a creature could be made partaker of : now he that should do thus, must be the devil, and none else ; no other creature can possibly arrive at that height of obstinacy in evil. Now certainly whilst God is pleased to continue unto us any thing, whereby we are distinguished from the beasts that perish ; whilst there is a sense of a distance between good and evil abiding amongst men, it cannot fall upon the understanding of any man, that that doctrine which is so holy and pure, so absolutely leading to the utmost improvement of whatever is good, just, commendable, and praiseworthy, so suitable to all the light of God, of good and evil that remains in us ; could proceed from any one everlastingly hardened in evil, and that in the pursuit of the most wicked design, that that wicked one could possibly be engaged in ; namely to enthrone himself, and maliciously to cheat, cozen, and ruin the souls of men ; so that upon necessity the Scripture can own no author but him, whose it is, even the living God.

As these considerations are far from being the bottom and foundation of our faith, in our assenting to the authority of God in the word ; so on the supposition of what is so, they have a usefulness, as to support in trials and temptations, and the like seasons of difficulty : but of these things so far.