The Nature, Possibility, and Duty, of a true Believer attaining to a certain Knowledge of his Effectual Vocation, Eternal Election, and final Perseverance to Glory.

2 Peter 1.10. Wherefore the rather, Brethren, give all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall.

That I may the more effectually discharge the Duty incumbent on me, and the more fully confute that pernicious Error of the Church of Rome; which hath declared, That a Believers assurance of the pardon of his sin, is a vain and ungodly confidence: It being (say they) impossible for any person to know that he is now pardoned, much less that he shall continue and persevere in the state of Grace; I have made choice of this portion of Scripture, as the Foundation of my present Discourse. Wherein it must be considered, that although Controversial and Polemical Treatises are usually large and full, yet the few moments allowed for our present delivery, and the few Pages allotted for the printing of this Discourse, necessitates me to manage things in a very contracted manner: So, as I must give you but only hints of some Arguments on our side, and also must rather obviate and prevent, than formally answer all our Adversaries Objections. Avoiding all unnecessary Amplifications, and popular Illustrations, which might make our style more smooth and pleasant, I shall only deliver what may rationally convince your judgment; leaving the exciting of your Affections to the more immediate Influence of the good Spirit of God.

Briefly then, the words I have read are an earnest Exhortation to an excellent Duty.
The words opened. Serm. XVIII.

1. The person exhorting, Peter.
2. One much tempted.

Matthew 16. 23.


Gal. 1. 2, 13.

In this we deny not but the Pope may be Peter's Successor.

Luke 22. 32.

Ibid.

2. The persons exhorting, true Brethren.

Verf. 1.
Verf. 2.
Verf. 3.
Verf. 4.

The persons to whom the Exhortation is given, are called in the Text Brethren; by which Title is not only expressed every true Believers Dignity, who is a Brother to the very Apostles themselves, (which Fraternity is infinitely more desirable than that Bastard Nepotism which some Romish Cardinals boast of;) but also by this Compendium the truth of their Graces is declared. For the Apostle had before described them to be, 1. Such as had obtained like precious Faith with himself. 2. Such as were induced with saving Knowledge. 3. Such to whom God had communicated all things pertaining to life and godliness.
4. Such as God had called to glory and virtue. 5. Such to whom God had given exceeding great promises. 6. Such as were made partakers of the Divine Nature. Lastly, Such as had escaped the pollutions of the world through life.

These are the persons who although they had obtained precious Faith, yet had not attained certain knowledge of their own spiritual state, but were in a possibility, yea in a very great preparation thereunto.

It is an abominable falsehood which Bellarmine boldly reports that we teach, that except men have Assurance, they are not true Believers, or shall they ever be faved: This is an impudent calumny: for if any particular perons abroad have thought that a special and full perception of pardon of their sin, was of the essence of Faith, let them answer for it; our Divines at home generally are of another Judgment: Bishop Davenant and Bishop Prideaux, and others, have fhewn the great difference between Fides and Fideitas, between Recumbence and Assurance; and they all do account and call Assurance a Daughter, Fruit and Consequent of Faith; and the late learned Arrowsmith tells us, that God seldom bestows Assurance upon Believers till they are grown in Grace; for (faith he) there is the fame difference between Faith of Recumbence, and Faith of Assurance, as is between Reason and Learning. Reason is the Foundation of Learning, so as there can be no Learning if Reason be wanting, (as in Beats) in like manner there can be no Assurance where there is no Faith of adherence. Again, as Reason well exercised in the study of Arts and Sciences arises to Learning; so Faith being well exercised on its proper Object, and by its proper Fruits, arises to Assurance. Further, as by negligence, non-attendance, or some violent Disease, Learning may be lost, while Reason doth abide; so by temptation, or by spiritual sloth, Assurance may be lost, while saving Faith may abide. Lastly, as all men are rational, but all men are not learned; so all regenerate persons have Faith to comply savingly with the Gospel-method of Salvation, but all true Believers have not Assurance.

The Believers in the Text were in a state of Salvation, but wanted Assurance: hence, 3. The Apostle puts them upon diligence to attain it; which acquaints us with the matter exhorted to: where observe, 1. The matter ultimately intended, viz. The making of their calling and election sure. 2. The means suberviently directed to, viz. The giving diligence to attain it. 3. The order of directing their diligence, first, to make their calling, and secondly, their election sure; for no man knows any thing of his election further than he is assured of his being effectually called.

4. The fourth and last part of the Text affords us the Motives by which the Exhortation is enforced, which are, 1. Either implied in these words, Therefore the rather; and if you look back upon the two next preceding Verses, you will find in them a double Argument, 1. Ab
The words opened.  

Serm. XVIII.

Ver. 8. uti, from the fruitfulness that accompany Assurance, If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. 2. Ab incomodo, from a double danger, 1. Of growing more and more ignorant of Spiritual Truths. He that lacketh these things is blind, (the word signifies purblind) purblind persons do see, but they see only things near at band: many true Believers are weak Believers; not so strong-lighted as Abraham was, that could see Christ’s day afar off: unassured persons are not able to look steadily to those things that are to come. 2. There is danger of more frequent falling into actual sin: For although God will not suffer them to fall into any habitual custom of sin; yet they are very apt to forget that they were purged from their old sin, and so are so much the more ready to return with the Dog to the vomit, and the Swine that was washed to the wallowing in the mire: not that any truly regenerate person doth so; but, there is a moral tendency in spiritual sloth and laxness to procure such Apostacy; 2. which is further also intimated in this 10 Verse, where you have the Motive expressed in the Text it self, If you do these things, ye shall never fall: that is, live you in a diligent exercise of fasting Faith till you come to Assurance, and God will make good his own promise, that you shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation; Perseverance being designed, decreed and promissed by God in the behalf of all those that he hath effectually called, and did eternally elect.

The words thus opened, afford us these two general Propositions.

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

The second general Proposition.

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

The first general Proposition doth branch it self into three special Propositions.

1. That ’tis possible for a true Believer to make his calling sure.

2. ’Tis possible thereby to know he was elected. 3. And by both to become assured that he shall persevere unto Glory.

I begin with the first special Proposition, That ’tis possible for a Believer to make his calling sure: Here ’tis necessary that two things be undertaken and performed: 1. Explication: 2. Probation.

1. what is an effectual call.

Two things are to be opened: 1. What is understood by our calling.

2. What is meant by a sure calling.

Quest. 1. What is to be understood by our calling?

Ans. Calling strictly taken is an act of a person declaring his desire of
of another persons approach and access to him: Thus the Centurion tells Christ, that he could say to one Servant, Come, and he cometh; Luke 7. 7: and thus Christ bids the Samaritan-woman call her Husband, and come John 4. 16. to him. But the word more largely taken, is used for any declaration of the will of one person to another, where compliance with that will is required. Thus 'tis said, that Jacob called his Son Joseph, when he declared his will to him, saying, Bury me not in Egypt, and he made him swear: and in this large sense God is said to call a Sinner, when he reveals his own will, and a Sinners duty; as when God calls him to repentance, to faith, to holiness, 'tis the work of God to make known his pleasure, and 'tis the duty of men to comply therewith.

The word here our calling, is nomem participiale, and 'tis taken not actively for our calling upon God, as when 'tis sometimes put for all that worship which we perform to God, as in that phrase, Then began men to call upon God: but 'tis taken passively for God's calling of us, the nature of which act is fully expressed, 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14. But we are bound to give thanks unto God always for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth whereunto you were called by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus. That which I would have you observe at present from hence, is this, that the preaching of the Gospel, and the revelation of God's will therein, is God's call: so the Apostle faith, Ye were called by our Gospel, i.e. our preaching of the Gospel. But here we must distinguish that the call of God in the Gospel is two-fold: 1. In word only: 2. In word and power conjoined; so Paul distinguishes in 1 Thess. 1. 5. Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Now according to the different means which God uses in calling, so there follows a different fruit, success, or consequent of God's calling.

Hence it comes to pass, that God's call sometimes is ineffectual, and sometimes effectual; so the same Apostle plainly declares in 1 Thess. 2. 13. For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe. Observe hence, that 'tis the work of God's Spirit in the heart, superadded to the Word of the Gospel, as spoken by men, that makes any call effectual: without this inward work, God may call, and the Soul will never answer. But when the Spirit co-operates with the Word, the Souls of the Elec become obedient unto God's call; they so hear his voice as to live; there is then an enlivening, yea, a creating power appearing therein. I grant there is a sort of men arising among us, that scoff at this great work of Regeneration, and deny the infusion of principles or habits of Grace; but we have not to do with these men (at this time) who have totally fallen from the Faith, and are greater.
greater enemies to the Cross of Christ than the Papists themselves. Sure I am, that Thomas Aquinas, that famous person whom the Church of Rome have Canonized for a Saint, tells us, that since there are some men induced with such habits which cannot be attained by the power of Nature, (because by them some men are fitted for the end of Salvation) therefore "tis necessary that God be own'd as the immediate Infuser of these habits. And he further adds, that as God produces some natural effects without the help of second causes, (as health is sometimes bestowed without the help of Physick) so God infuses habits of Grace without and beyond the power of Nature. And whereas this learned person foresaw that some men might here object, that God's infusion of these habits into some persons and not into others, doth plainly prove discriminating Grace; (which Doctrine of late hath been denied and derided by the Socinians and some others) therefore this Angelical Doctor makes his Confession plainly, that he for his part doth own discriminating Grace; and that he doth firmly believe, that God (agreeable to his own wisdom, and for reasons reserved to himself) beffows more Grace on some, than upon others: And that though it be most agreeable unto Man's nature, that habits should arise from frequent acts, and much exercise, yet God may, and doth work such habits of Grace in some Men, which Nature cannot work; and therefore he concludes that they are supernaturally produced. I have given you the opinion of this Author about an effectual call the more fully, because I am confident, that had some men (who oppose the infusion of habits) been old enough, or diligent enough to have perused the Writings of such a person as Thomas Aquinas, before they had divulged their own fond Notions and Opinions, they would (out of a kind of ambition to be accounted learned, like-minded with such learned men) not have made such an open scoff and derision of discriminating and effectual Grace; wherein they do not only contradict the express words of holy Writ, but also oppose the Doctrine of the most learned of the Fathers and Schoolmen, and that with a most bold, as well as blind confidence.

I must beg pardon for this short (but necessary) digression, because 'tis this effectual work of God's Spirit in regenerating the Soul by infusing habits of Grace, which distinguishes an internal effectual call of God, from a meer external and ineffectual one; and this is the thing which is chiefly intended in the Text, to be made sure, viz.

That it might be known whether or no God hath so called thee by his Word, as that also he hath wrought in thee by his Spirit; whether God hath illuminated thy understanding, and inclined thy will, so as thou hast complied with God's will, and hast answered his call; whether when God did draw thee, thou didst run after him; whether when God did knock at the door of thy heart, thou didst open to him; whether when God did intreat and persuade thee to be reconciled to him, thou didst consent; whether when he did woo thee, he did also win thee; whether
whether when he invited thee to the Wedding-Supper of his Son, thou
Luk.14.18.
didst make no excuse or delay, but didst accept, and welcome, the offer
of the Gospel with faith and love: all which if thou didst do, it did
arise from the power of an inward call, being superadded to the out-
ward call of the Word; the very essence of an effectual call consisting
in the Spirit’s regenerating the Soul, and giving a new heart, (which is
Scripture-Language) or in the Spirit’s infling of new principles and
habits of Grace, (according to the phrase of the Schools) so that now
by calling here in the Text, you must understand an inward effectual
change wrought in the heart by God himself in the work of Conversion
and Regeneration, or the Spirits infling of habits of Grace into thy
heart.

Ques. 2. What is meant by sure calling, or wherein consists the na-
ture of Assurance?

Ans. There is a double certainty of an effectual calling: 1. One,
the certainty of it in it self: 2. The other, the certainty of it un-
to us.

1. Our calling is sure in it self, so soon as ever God hath effectually
called us, whether we know it, or know it not: God may effectually call,
and we may have surely answered God’s call, and yet we may not be
sure that God hath so called us, or that we have so answered; but yet
our calling hereby is made sure in it self; and this the Schools call,
Certitudo Objetii, the certainty of the Object.

2. Our calling is sure unto us, when we know that God hath effec-
tually called us; and this the Schoolmen call, Certitudo Subjetii, the
certainty of the Subject: the word in the Text signifies firm, stable,
stead, and fixed, and sure; either, 1. as a Building is sure that hath a
good Foundation; 2. or as a Conclusion is sure that is drawn from cer-
tain Premises: in like manner our calling may be said to be sure, 1. ei-
ther when it hath the efficacy of God’s Spirit as its sure Foundation;
or, 2. when it hath the evidence of proper fruits, which are as good
Premises or sure Arguments, from which we may conclude our selves
to be effectually called.

That the Text hath respect both to Subjective as well as Objective
certainty, is beyond all dispute with considerative men: for the persons
here exhorted (as I have shewn) were true Believers, and consequently
their calling was sure in it self before the Exhortation was here given
to them to make it sure; and therefore the Exhortation must chiefly re-
spect Subjective certainty, as something to be superadded to objective
certainty. Hence when Bellarmine would (from this Text) prove Ju-
ification by works, because in some Copies the words are read thus,

Chammier Pard.
frat. Tom. 34.
Lib. 15 cap. 16.

Give diligence to make your calling sure ou res rerum tps., by good works;
the most learned Chamier answers him, That granting the words be
to read, (Beza owning that he had seen such a Copy) yet ’tis very ab-
surd and illogical for Bellarmine to argue that mens persons are therefore
justified.
The Nature of Assurance.  

Serm. XVIII.

justified by good works, In Foro Divino, (as the Jesuite doth contend) because (according to this Text) mens calling may be justified or made sure by good works In Foro Conscientiae: for this there is no colour from these words, because when Vocation is said here to be made sure by good works, 'tis (faith Chamier) to be understood primarily and properly of subjective certainty; ut confiteat esse efficacem, & ut ejus certitudo ostendatur signo proprio nempe bonis operibus, that it may appear to be effectual, and its certainty may be manifested by its proper signs, namely, by good works, and in that sense we also own that men may be justified by works, i. e. declared so in Conscience: but by a sure calling in the Text, is chiefly to be understood a calling assuredly known by the subject to be an effectual and saving calling. See Beza and Calvin on the place.

Now this subjective certainty is two-fold: 1. Perfect: 2. Imperfect. Perfect subjective certainty is when a thing is so known, as it cannot be better known; or when the subjective is so certain of the truth of a thing, as that he cannot be more certain of it, because he hath not the least ignorance of the thing, or the least doubt concerning it: this is perfect certainty. But here are three things to be noted: Let it be considered, 1. There is no such thing as this perfect subjective certainty in this world, perfect certainty is only to be found in perfect men, and 'tis folly to say any men are perfect, or that there is any such thing as perfect knowledge in this world: The Apostle faith, We know but in part, and therefore it is impossible that we should be certain any more but in part, that is, imperfectly certain. 2. Another thing which I would have our Adversaries consider, is, that imperfect certainty, though imperfect, yet it may be true and certain certainty, and is in many cases to be accounted more than conjectural or mere opinionative knowledge. For instance, we are told by God himself, that no man can find out the Almighty to perfection; and the most holy men in the world have some Athem in remaining in them; yet I hope many men have a true and certain knowledge of God, although no man hath a perfect knowledge of him: so a man may have a true and certain knowledge that he is effectually called, although he hath not a perfect knowledge of it. 3. Let it be considered, that the nature of imperfect subjective certainty, is always such a knowledge as hath these four properties: 1. 'Tis built upon, or drawn from most certain proofs and evidences; and therefore, 2. It is such as doth prevail against all irrational doubts; and, 3. It is accompanied or followed with proper fruits of undoubted certainty, (notwithstanding a mixture of ignorance, and some impressed or indiscoverive fears which may confine with it;) 4. 'Tis such as God doth own for true and proper assurance in holy Writ.

1. When knowledge is built upon rational assuring evidences, then it ought to be accounted certain knowledge, notwithstanding some irrational and unaccountable doubts may arise. A man that walks upon the Leads
Leads of a very high, but very strong well-built Tower, encompassed with Battlements, doth know rationally that he cannot fall; (and he is not rationally in any fear of falling) but yet when he looks from that heighth, he hath irrational fears impressed upon him; and yet such fears as these hinder not, but that he is still certain that he shall not fall, because he can rationally prove that he cannot fall: Thus a person assured of his effectual calling by good evidence, is really and properly certain; although possibly when he looks down from the heighth of future expected Glory, into the Bottomless-Pit of misery, (from whence he hath escaped) some indiscursive or irrational fears and doubts may be impressed upon him, which may leaue, but not destroy assurance.

2. When assurance is actually stronger than diffidence, and doth certainly prevail against distracting fears, then it is to be accounted certain assurance, though it be still imperfect: the truth, and the degree of a Believers assurance, doth hold proportion to the truth and degree of his Grace; and by this proportion of one to the other, they do very much illustrate each other. Thus, first, there is an analogy between Grace and Assurance, in this, that as Grace may be true, although it be not perfect; so may Assurance be true Assurance when imperfect. Again, as where Sin reigns, there is no Grace; so where Doubting reigns, there is no Assurance: but as when Grace prevails, 'tis accounted true Grace; so when Assurance prevails over Doubts, 'tis to be reckoned true Assurance. Lastly, where Grace is perfect without Sin, (as in Heaven) there Assurance will be perfect without all doubt, and not till then.

3. When a true Believers imperfect assurance is accompanied with the proper fruits of true assurance, 'tis then true assurance. Such fruits as these: 1. Inward peace and satisfaction of mind, the feast of a good Conscience. 2. Joy in the Holy Ghost. 3. Power and strength over temptations. 4. Victory over the World. 5. Inlargedness of heart in the love of God. 6. Delight in his ways. 7. Ready obedience to his will. 8. Patient bearing of the Cross, and rejoicing in tribulation. 9. Freedom and boldness of access to the Throne of Grace. 10. A Spirit of Grace and Supplication. 11. Dependance upon God in all states. 12. Great expectations from him. 13. All willingness to go hence, and a desire to be dissolved. When assurance is accompanied or followed with such fruits as these, (and the assurance of many a Believer is thus attended) although it be not perfect, yet it is true and proper assurance.

4. That assurance which God himself owns as true and proper assurance, and is called so by the Spirit of God in Scripture, is to be acknowledged by us as such. God hath given divers names to a Believers assurance, which speaks it properly to be so. 1. 'Tis called πεπεπώθος, a sure persuasion; St. Paul saith, 'that he was persuaded that neither life nor death, &c. should separate him from the love of God, Rom.8.38. 2. 'Tis called
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called "certidum," certain knowledge: St. John faith, Hereby we know that we are in him. 1 John 1. 5. 3. *ExovO, an evident probation; so a Believers faith is called the evident proof of things not seen, Heb. II. 1. 4. *Terebra, a substantial prepossession of Heaven; so Faith is also called by the same Apostle in the same place. 5. "Tis called θρησεως, a fullness of assurance both in Heb. 6. 11. and Heb. 10. 20. 1 Thess. 1. 5. A Believers assurance is owned by God, and faid to be full, although not perfect. So that the Controverfie between us and Rome is not,

1. Whether perfect assurance be possible, but whether certain assurance be possible; that is, whether a well-grounded, prevalent and influential assurance be not attainable. Bellarmine grants Believers may have a conjectural hope; we say true Believers may attain to proper assurance: Theirs grant an assurance of fancy; we contend for an assurance of faith: Theirs is an assurance of opinion; ours an assurance of knowledge. I confefs the Philippick Schools have divided all Argumentation into Demonstrative and Opinionative, and they divided all knowledge into perfect science, or meer conjecture; and hence arose two sorts of Philosophers amongst them: 1. The *dogmatiles, Dogmatiles, who thought themselves perfectly certain of every thing, and doubted of nothing, but were as infallible as the Pope in his Chair. 2. The *episteme, a kind of seekers that did restrain their affent, and doubted of all things; like the Popish Laity that are kept in the dark, and are taught to be blind: but the Protestants are of an elective kind of Divines, who know a middle way between both extremes, and therefore we do maintain a possibility of certain knowledge, while we own an imperfection also; there being various degrees of a Believers certainty, and of his assurance, and yet the lowest of them is more than moral conjecture or opinion. Bellarmine himself is forced to grant that there are three degrees of certainty; and although he doth not admit a true Believers knowledge of his effectual call into any of those degrees: yet I shall prove anon that a Believer may attain a very high degree of certainty therein.

2. But let it be observed in the second place, that our Controverfie is not about words or names of things: the Question is not, Whether a Believers assurance is to be called certitudo fidei, or certitudo fiduciae, or certitudo scientiae; whether an assurance of faith, or an assurance of confidence, or an assurance of sense or of knowledge, for indeed it is not properly any of these; but an assurance mixed, and arising partly from faith, partly from confidence, and partly from knowledge both of reason and sense. May.

1. It may be called an assurance of confidence, in as much as the degree of an assured Believers faith and knowledge must be such as excludes all rational and prevailing fears and doubts, according as I have already shewn.

2. It may be called an assurance of faith, from that special interest that
that faith hath therein, in as much as no Believer can attain to assurance of Salvation, that doth not first *Fiducially* and by way of Application believe those *peculiar* Declarations of God's Grace and will in the Gospel, which are the *Foundation* of a Believers Salvation and Assurance; more especially these three *Fundamentals*.  

1. The *way* of Salvation by Christ.  
2. The nature and *properties* of saving Faith.  
3. The *certain perseverance* of true Believers to glory.

2. *'Tis* called an assurance of Faith, *in as much as there must be an actual compliance* with the way of Salvation by an explicite exercise of saving Faith upon Christ Jesus; a Believer demeaning himself towards Christ, as towards the *Mediator* of the New Covenant.

3. It may be called an assurance of knowledge, *in as much as every assured Believer must first know what are the signs of true Faith, and secondly, must know assuredly that the signs of true Faith are in himself.*

4. *It may be called an assurance of sense, in as much as a Believer knows not only by way of rational proof, but also by way of spiritual, internal, and experimental sense, that the work of God's Spirit hath been effectual in a saving manner upon him:* All which I shall verifie and make good by several Arguments, *in the order and method following.*

For proof of this first Proposition, I shall first argue from the *Concessions* of our Adversaries, that is, from some *special Articles of their Doctrine*, which (although we do not grant them to be true in themselves, yet they) do *afford sufficient Argument* for *Conviction of a Papist* in our present case; *evincing that it is possible for a Believer to attain to assurance of his being effectually called.*

The first Doctrine of theirs which we shall take notice of, *is this; They grant and affirm that a Believer may be assured of the pardon of his sins, by *extraordinary means*, by some *immediate revelation*, *i.e.* either by a voice from Heaven, or the Million of an *Angel* sent from thence; but they deny it to be possible to know this by *ordinary means*, *i.e.* by the revelation of *God's will*, and of *man's duty* in Scripture, with reference to eternal life, although the *Mind* of man is饧by the *Spirit*, and although *Conscience* be enabled thereby to *compare a Believers heart and life with the Rule of the Word.* Now I would fain know how St. Anthony, St. Galla, or St. Francis, (who *Bellarmine faith* were extraordinarily assured) could be *so well assured* by a voice supposed to come from Heaven, (which may be subject to many delusions of phantase, and to divers cheats and impostures by Men or Devils, especially when heard by one simple person only) as by the voice of Christ Jesus, who was sent of God to reveal the *Rule of life*, and by the voice of a *man's own Conscience*, afflied by the Spirit enabling a Believer to discern his agreement with that Rule. *I grant, that God gave testimony unto Christ Jesus by a voice from Heaven: but observe,*
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Matthew 3:19.
John 5:29.
John 5:36.

Galatians 1:8.


Papish Doctrine.
That one may be assured of another's Salvation, but not of his own. Marcellinus Cervinus.

Papish Doctrine.
That the Priest can give assurance by his word, but deny God's Word to be any good ground of assurance: Bellarmine faith, that after Consecration, the Priest by the word of Absolution doth give such evidence of justifying Grace, as there can be no mistake therein; these are his very words: here he mentions Consecration as a help to assurance; yet afterwards he makes assurance to depend wholly on Absolution: for he faith it may often happen that a man may confess few or none of his sins, and yet the Priest may assure him of pardon, and he ought so to believe. You see here that the Priest can give assurance, and assurance of faith also; but with him the Word of God can give no assurance at all, much less of faith. The Jefuit will acknowledge that some dark conjectures or opinions may be built upon the Word of God, but no assurance; for he boldly, impiously and blasphemously

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faith, That the certainty of those things that are believed in the Word, is only dark and obscure, like that of opinion: Thus he intimates, as if God could not, but that the Priest could assure: This is as if Cornelius should have disbelieved what Simon Peter spake to him in the Name of God, and should have believed Simon Magnus whatever he spake in his own or the Devil's Name. Let all men judge whether if the Priest may give assurance by his word, whether God cannot do it by his Word much more infallibly.

4. They say men may attain to perfection, and yet not to assurance: the words of Soto are these: 'Tis possible for us so in this life to fulfil the whole Law of God, and the Precept of Love, that we may avoid all and every mortal sin; (by mortal sin, he means (as Luidamus interprets) whatever may lessen or violate our friendship with God.) Now if men may be thus perfect, certainly then they may know that they are thus perfect, otherwise they could be perfect without perfection; it is therefore a contradiction to say that men may be perfect, and not assured.

5. The Church of Rome say that men may attain to works of merit and supererogation: I ask whether works done ignorantly and without knowledge of rule or end, can be meritorious? Whatever act is blindly and casually performed, is so far from being a meritorious act, as it is not a moral act of obedience or service: If then men could perform any work of merit or supererogation, they must know first that they are sincere and accepted of God as upright, before they can imagine that their works shall be rewarded as meritorious. Yet our Adversaries teach, that men cannot be assured of acceptance, and yet they may not only be perfect, but may be more than perfect, (fo supererogation implies) that is, that they be righteous over much, or they may be not only good, but too good, (which we will grant in the proverbial sense) they mean by it, that men may be so righteous and so good, as to purchase pardon for a thousand of other sinners, and yet may remain unassured of their own pardon. Is not this strange Doctrine? Would you then know the reason why the Church of Rome holds these absurd opinions, and seek to maintain that both parts of a contradiction are true as in our present case they do, (and I could evidence it by many more instances) to satisfy you about this spirit of contradiction, I shall at once open the whole mystery of iniquity, and give you a Golden Key whereby you may unlock their more hidden contrivances; a Key of more worth than any of those which the Pope holds in his hand, or wears at his girdle; by which he opens the Treasures of all his inflamed Vassals at his pleasure: the print of our Key you have drawn by the Apostle Paul, 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5. whither I must remit you; only let me tell you, that the more you search into the Romish Religion, the more

Pietatum quae- potionem ducente illi, &c. Those count gain god-
lines, who think the Oracles of God are given to no other end but to serve their Avarice, and measure all Religion by their own profit. Calv. in 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5.
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you will find it calculated only for gain. Assurance is therefore denied by them to be ordinarily possible, because could the Laity attain to it without the extraordinary assistance of the Priest, the price of Pardons, Indulgencies and Absolutions would exceedingly fall: but although with them the Scripture be an insufficient thing, yet Money assures all things; and at Rome you may buy (if you be rich enough) not only assurance, but perfection, and power of merit, and works of supererogation, and what not? but no more of this.

My second Argument to prove that 'tis possible for a Believer to attain to a certain knowledge that he is effectually called, shall be from the Nature, Use and End of the Holy Scriptures: If Scripture be a good Foundation of assurance, then assurance is possible; but Scripture is a good Foundation of assurance upon a double account: 1. As the matter revealed; 2. As to the manner of revelation.

1. Scripture is a good Foundation of assurance, if you consider the matter of Scripture-revelation; the sum and substance of all Scripture-revelation, is the manifestation of God's Grace in Christ Jesus unto sinners; viz. that God so loved the world, as that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; 3 Joh. 16, or in fewer words, By Grace we are saved through faith, and that not of our selves, 'tis the gift of God, Ephes. 2.8. or in one word, Grace is the chief matter of Scripture.

Now God's Grace, as it is revealed in Scripture, is a good Foundation of assurance upon two accounts: 1. As it is free Grace: 2. As it is engaged Grace.

1. Scripture reveals free Grace.

1. The Scriptures reveal the Grace of God in its freeness, and so it affords a good Foundation of assurance: were sinners to be justified by works, or by their own merits, assurance were impossible, but it is by Grace that we are saved, i.e. by the merits of our Mediator: God freely accepts of that expiation which Christ hath made by the sacrifice of his own blood upon our account. The Passivis that hold Justification by works, must necessarily deny the possibility of assurance: for if Justification were by works, then if a Believer should keep the whole Law, and fail but of one particular, he were guilty of all: in that case therefore no man could attain to assurance, for in many things we offend all. But blessed be God, Believers are not under the Law, but under Grace: Now Grace accepts (for Christ's sake) sincere obedience, where no perfect obedience can be performed. Where-ever sin is neither deliberate or habitual, it cannot weaken a Believer's evidence; neither ought the imperfections of Believers to hinder their assurance, because the Grace of God in Christ is free, accepting satisfaction from Christ.

2. Scripture reveals engaged Grace.

2. The Grace of God revealed in Scripture is a good Foundation of assurance: it is engaged Grace, that is, as it is Grace revealed in a Covenant or Promise: Grace as to any merit of ours is free, but as to the promise of God it is engaged; and as assurance were impossible were not Grace
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Grace free, i. e. were Believers still under a Covenant of works; so assurance were impossible still if Believers were under no Covenant-Dispensation at all. Believers could have no hold of Grace, (were it never so free in itself) had not God given us assurance of his Grace in the Covenant, and bound himself by promise. I know some men do highly magnifie the essentiai goodness and kindness of God as the ground of a natural faith. I grant that this Divine benignity and goodness doth afford some leffer hope or expectation of pardon, but it gives no solid ground of assurance. The essentiai bounty, goodness and mercy of God, is like a deep and wide Ocean, upon which the mind of man may (as a Vessel at Sea) bear it self up in a calm; but if a storm arise, every wife Pilot will make towards the shore, or to a safe Rock, because there only he can find good Anchor-Safe: Grace in a Covenant, or in a conditional promise, may seem to be Grace bounded and limited; but yet hope even there hath better anchorage than it hath upon God's general Grace and Philanthropy, which may bear up the Soul in a calm, but afford little peace to an unquiet mind: 'Tis the Rock of our Salvation revealed in the promise, that only can stay that Soul which is once thoroughly awakened and convinced of guilt. Now the Scripture doth reveal God's Grace engaged by Covenant to accept for Christ's sake all those that do depend upon his Son's merits, and obey his Commands by an effectual faith.

3. And that is another thing revealed in the Word, viz. The nature of that faith by which Believers do obtain an interest in God's Grace through Christ; and upon this account the Scripture is a good Foundation of assurance, in as much as, 1. It reveals certainly and undoubtedly that by faith in Christ we have an interest in God's most free and promised Grace. 2. That it reveals certain and undoubted marks of the nature of true faith in Christ. If then a Believer be by the Word informed that through faith in Christ he may certainly obtain pardon of sin; and if he be also sufficiently therein taught how to discover unfeigned from feign'd faith by those certain marks or evidences which are laid down in the Word; what can hinder the possibility of a Believer's assurance? Especially if you shall confide in the second place the manner of Scripture-revelation, which proves it to be a good Foundation of assurance, in that it is, 1. full, 2. plain, 3. assuredly divine, 4. designed for assurance.

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

2. All things are revealed plainly, clearly, and so intelligibly, as that the lowest capacity may reach and know the will of God so far as concerns Salvation; and he that is humble and obedient, may understand whatever is necessary to be known concerning Salvation or Assurance.
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3. All things are abundantly assured to us to be of divine Authority. God having been pleased to set the Seal of Miracles to the Patent of every Ambassador sent by him, and have attested the Commission of every Pen-man of Scripture, as appears Heb. 2. 3, 4. But I do omit the full proof of the sufficiency, perspicuity and divine Authority of the Scripture, because it is so abundantly done by others in the Discourses annexed.

A fourth property of Scripture-revelation is this, that it was revealed to this very end that men might attain to assurance thereby; so we are frequently told by God himself; viz. That whatsoever things were written, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, Rom. 15. 4. And left any one should think that the Spirit of God by hope doth only understand a conjecture, (as Bellarmine interprets the place) the Apostle John doth tell us, that the express design of his Epistle was, that those who believe might not only hope, but know they had eternal life, 1 Joh. 5. 12. and Christ himself tells Believers that he spoke all those things that they might have joy, and that their joy might be full, Joh. 15. 11. and the Author to the Hebrews gives us this very account, why God did not only make a Covenant of Grace, but did also confirm and ratify it by an Oath, namely, That Believers might have strong consolation, or assured comfort. From all which 'tis evident Believers have a good Foundation of assurance in and by the Word. And moreover 'tis evident that the Word was designed for this end. Now the Rule is most true, Deus & Natura nihil molimentur frutica, God and Nature design nothing in vain.

As God hath given Believers a good Foundation of assurance in the Word, so he hath given them sufficient help and power rightly and assuredly to build upon that Foundation, in as much as he hath indued them with such faculties as are able to observe, discern and judge of their regular building upon that Foundation: that is, God hath enabled them to discern certainly whether their hearts and lives agree with the rule of faith and manners. If God had creat the Sun, but had denied men eyes, no man could have known the path which he walks in, or have discerned the end which he aims at; but God hath given both light streaming forth from the Word, and he hath given the eye of Conscience, that by both these men might come assuredly to know that they are called out of darkness into light, and that they walk in that narrow way that leads to life, because they always make Salvation the constant white and mark of their way. The Church of Rome perverts all true Religion at once, and destroyeth all rational obedience to God's command, as well as they do undermine all the best joys and comforts of a good man's life, while they deny that any man can know assuredly what it is which he chooses for his portion, or what he doth mostly prosecute, or what is the chief bent, 

Luther faith, that if there were no other error in Rome but their denying the possibility of assurance, all men ought to reject communion with them. Luther in Gen 41.
frame or complexion of his heart, or what is the tenour or course of his life and conversation; whereas there are few persons living that bear not about them in their own breasts a convincing Argument from the testimony of Conscience, how much the general Conversation of some men do depart from the Rule of the Word, and how near other men (in the tendency of their lives) do approach to it. The dictates of most men's Consciences do tell them, how great a discerning they have of good and evil, and also of the nature of their own actions: No man can be wholly ignorant of the Law of God which is written in his own heart; and few men who live under the preaching of the Gospel, but are conscious of the strivings of the Spirit of God with them, and they know in what instance they have complied with its motions, and against what calls thereof they have stopped their ears: How much more then may every true Believer certainly know the saving work of God upon him? If an unconverted person cannot wholly be a stranger to himself, surely then the man that dwells much at home, that frequently descends into his own heart, that summons his own Soul to appear before him, and to come to trial, this man cannot easily be ignorant what agreement there is between the Rule of God's Word, and the method of his Conversation. Bellarmin does much urge that Text of the Prophet, Jer. 17. 9. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? If no man can know his heart, (faith the Cardinal) then none can attain to assurance. But we answer:

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

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

There are three Offices of Conscience which it is able to discharge, and thereby it doth exceedingly promote a Believers assurance.

1. There is in Conscience a power, by which power it is able to eke its Rule.
2. Evidence, a power to compare man's actions with the Rule.
3. Conviction, a power to pass sentence or judgment either of condemnation, whereby it doth accuse; or of absolution, whereby it doth excuse, as the Apostle speaks Rom. 3.

Conscience is both a Judge, a Witness, and an Executioner upon the tryal of man's heart and life.

1. Conscience is a Judge; I will not say it is a King to give Law; but it is a Judge to try and to pass sentence according to Law: Hence the Apostle John doubts not to say that the voice of Conscience is one and the same with the voice of God; Hereby (faith he) we know we are of him in truth, and shall assure our hearts before him; if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things; but...
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1. Conscience a witness as to matter of fact.

2. Conscience discharges the Office of a Witness; St. Paul calls it a witness, Rom. 9. 1. I speak the truth in Christ, I live not, my Conscience bearing witness, and St. John gives it the same title, 1 John 5. 10. He that believeth hath a witness in himself. Heathens could say, Conscience willing testifies, Conscience is a thousand witnesses: but the Apostle speaks yet more, when he joins the Spirit of God as a co-witness with our spirits, Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.

3. Conscience is a Rewarder or Punisher according to the nature of the sentence which it pronounces: if Conscience doth accuse, no such severe Tormentor as Conscience is, as is evident in the instances of Cain, and Judas, and Sodom; if Conscience doth acquit, no such Comforter and Rewarder; this (faith Paul) is our rejoicing, the testimony of our Conscience, &c. no such joy, no such feast, as the joy and feast of a good Conscience. Well may it be said, that a good man is satisfied from himself: This bread is often eaten in secret; 'tis hidden Manna, and is so much the more pleasant: this is joy that a stranger meddles not withal, and is so much the more secure: the new name and the white stone none knows but those that have them, even the sons of consolation.

4. Assurance is possible to be attained because it hath been attained. Job declares his assurance in that he faith, He knew that his Redeemer did live; his, (emphatically his, not another Redeemer) his Redeemer as to eternal as well as temporal concerns; so he describes him, He shall stand on the earth at the latter day, (the day of resurrection) after worms had devoured his skin and his flesh, then should he see him owning and receiving of him into Glory, Job 19. 25, 26. 2. David also was so assured of his interest in God, that he with assured confidence requires Salvation from God's hand; I am thine, (faith he) therefore save me. 3. Another instance of assurance we have in Hezekiah, who could appeal to God on a deathbed, That he had walked before God in truth with a perfect heart, and had done that which was right in God's sight; and 'tis evident his assurance was good, for God accepts of the appeal, and declares it to be true, 2 Ch. 31. 3, 4. But the most convincing instance is that of Paul, in the 8. Rom. 38, where he declares so great a Plerophory of assurance, that he was persuaded neither life, nor death, nor any other thing should separate him from the love of God. The Romanists do variously excruciate themselves to evade the force of this Text, some of them say the Apostle speaks only of a conjectural persuasion, but Paresus proves that the Apostle never useth the word πεπεισδω, I am persuaded, (with reference to his own Salvation) but he intends full assurance by it: so in 2 Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, (that is, I am assured) that...
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that he is able to keep that thing I have committed to him unto the great
day. God's power is not an object of conjecture, but of knowledge and
assurance. Others of that Church say, that although Paul was assured
that not any Creature could separate him from the love of God, yet he
was not sure but he might separate himself by the apostacy of his own
will. Of these men the learned Chamier doth well demand, Whether
the Apostles Will were not a Creature; and also, Whether God cannot
by his own power keep our wills to himself, after he hath made us of
unwilling to be a willing people. For notwithstanding there may after
conversion remain a natural power in men to alienate their hearts from
God, yet by Christ's Mediation and the Spirit's superintendency in true
Believers, there remains no moral power actually to do it. And furth-
more, since no Creature can do any thing towards our separation from
God but by our wills, 'tis folly (faith he) to think that the Apostle
do not include a Believers will, when he faith, No Creature shall se-
parate a Believer from God. Bellarmine, to avoid the Text, runs to
his old refuge, and grants that Paul was truly assured, but it was by an
extraordinary revelation, which no other Believer can ordinarily attain
to: The folly of this evasion I have already in part detected; two things
more I define may here be considered. 1. That when any persons have
declared (in the Scripture) their full assurance, they have spoken of it
not as of a thing of extraordinary revelation, but as of a thing of evident
probation. 2. That yet they have spoken of their assurance as of a thing
of as great certainty as can be desired. For the proof of both these, I
shall instance in the Apostle John, who often affirms his assurance: but,
1. He reckons it not grounded upon immediate revelation but upon
rational evidence and probation, his words are these, 1 John 2. 3. Here-
by (in ratio) we know (faith he) that we know him, if we keep his
Commandments: and again, 1 John 3. 19. Hereby (the same word is
here used again) we know we are of him in truth, and shall assure our
hearts before him: you see, in both places he speaks Argumentatively,
not by way of Revelation; and yet observe. 2. That his assurance was
full and strong, for it is expressed by words importing as great assurance
as can be expected, quod novimus, We know that we know him; and in the other Text the emphasis seems greater,
Hereby we know we are of him in truth, and we know we shall assure our
hearts before him: so that you see many Believers have attained to assu-
rance, and therefore 'tis possible.

'Tis possible to attain to assurance, because God hath designed our
assurance in the instituting of these Ordinances, which do properly tend
to the begetting and increasing of assurance: that is, God hath therefore
confirmed his promises and the Covenant of his Grace by visible signs and
seals, for the begetting and promoting our assurance of his love and fa-
vour to us: There could be no greater reason of the institution of cir-
cumcision and the Passover under the Law, and of Baptism and the Lord's
Supper.
Supper under the Gospel, than God's intending thereby the giving all necessary and useful helps and furtherance of subjective assurance. Hence it is that the Apostle Paul tells us, That the promise and the blessing was sure (in its self) to Abraham long before he was circumcised. It may then be enquired, to what end was Circumcision instituted? The same Apostle tells the end was, that it might be a ground of greater assurance; for so he faith, Abraham received the sign of Circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had being uncircumcised: Now unto this seal of Circumcision under the Law, the seal of Baptism answers in the Gospel; and as the striking of the Blood of the Paschal Lamb on the door-posts of the Israelites, gave farther assurance (after the promise was made) that the destroying Angel should not smite the first-born of any Israelite; so the Institution of the Lord's Supper was intended for a begetting the greater assurance in the heart of a true Believer, that God will not destroy him for the sake of the Blood of His Son that is thereby represented; both Sacraments being intended as Seals of the Covenant of Grace more visibly ratifying thereof to sense, and confirming Faith thereby. Moreover, God in the Sacraments doth confirm a Believer's Faith, in as much as he doth therein, by his Ministers, make a more particular and personal Offer and Application of his Grace to every true Believer. In the Sacraments there are to be considered, 1. The Confirmation; and, 2. The more special Application of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace; and by both these a Believers Faith is strengthened, and his assurance is promoted. It is one Argument that Because the Papist useth against the possibility of assurance, viz. because God hath not by name declared to any person that his sins are forgiven, any where in Scripture: but this Cavil and Objection we have already obviated, and told you that all universal and general Propositions do include singular and particulars: It is no where said, that Thomas or John shall not do any murder, or shall not steal; but the command is as binding as if they had been named; the case is the same in Promises as in Commands: but we might answer (sine senso) farther with St. Bernard, That in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is an actual Exhibition and particular Application made of the Grace of God, whereby all true Believers are personally and actually invested into that Grace by a direct and immediate assurance given. The Father explains himself thus: The Priest (faith he) in the Eucharist doth as it were invest the Receiver with an assurance of pardon, as some men are invested into an Estate by a Rod or Staff, or as a Woman is invested into an actual interest in her Husband's Estate by her Husband's putting a Ring upon her Finger, or as a Canon is invested by a Book put into his hand, or as an Abbot is invested by a Staff. We do not say with the Papists, that the Sacraments do actually confer Grace by virtue of the external application: but we say that in the Sacrament there is an assured offer of Grace made to every Receiver, and unto all true Believers they do sign, seal and assure a certain and undoubted interest in
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in pardon. Bellarmine faith, That after the receiving of the Sacrament, as he calls it, of Absolution, very many Believers have, and all Believers ought to have a certain and confident assurance of pardon of sin: In which words of the Jesuite, I define three things to be observed: 1. How openly and plainly Bellarmine contradicts himself. 2. How he hath incurred the Anathema of the Trent-Council. And, 3. How he hath conceded what we plead for. 1. This admired Doctor takes liberty to contradict himself, (as so great a Scholar may much better than another) for if you consult his third Chapter of his third Book of Justification, he there tells you that it is a gross error to say that any Believer can have any such sure knowledge of their own Grace, so as that they can (by an assured Faith) determine that their sins are forgiven: but in the second Chapter of his third Book of Repentance, now quoted, you see that he had said before that after Absolution many Believers have, and ought to have an assurance of Faith that their sins are forgiven: if these things be not contradictions, I know not what are: some of his Friends would help him, by saying that there is difference between an assured Faith in one place, and an assurance of Faith in another; or between certa fide statuere, and fiducia certitudinem habere, if any one shall so distinguish: he will but farther discover his own folly, because (certitudo fiduciae) assurance of Faith is (of the two) more large and comprehensive than (certa fides) which we translate sure Faith. Assurance or Confidence doth always suppose sure Faith, or certain assent, as the ground, root and foundation thereof. There may be Faith where there is no Confidence, but there can be no Confidence where there is no Faith: He that therefore faith, That 'tis possible for a man to be assuredly confident of the pardon of his sin, doth contradict him that faith, 'Tis not possible for any man to believe his sins are pardoned. Bellarmine by saying both these things doth plainly contradict himself. 2. But we shall wonder at this the less, because in the second place we may observe that he makes bold to contradict in most express terms his most holy Council of Trent; the words of which Council I quoted in the entrance of this Discourse; wherein they declare that (certitudo fiduciae) assurance of Faith, or assurance of Confidence (translate it as you please) concerning pardon of sin is vain and impious: but Bellarmine faith that many Believers have (and all ought after Absolution to have) this (certitudinem fiduciae) assurance of faith or confidence, call it by what name you will, yet the contradiction is direct: the same word being used by the Council and by the Jesuite. Now who can by any distinction reconcile these two contradicting Positions? and therefore I suppose none can free our poor Doctor from the Anathema passed upon him by the Council. For my part, I always thought a Council to be more infallible than the Pope, (though I will try before I will trust either of them) I am therefore confident the Pope did err when he made a Saint of this Cardinal, who we find accursed by the Council.

3. But
3. But we Protestants ought to pardon and absolve the Jesuite from this Anathema, pronounced for his contradicting the pretended general Council, since he doth not in this contradict the truth, but doth grant all that which we plead for, even almost in the very words and terms by which the Protestants themselves express it; for there is little or no difference between the very phrase which I have quoted out of Bellarmine's second Book of Penance, and the very words of his Adversary Chemnitus in his Examen, which are these, That a true Penitent, or one that acts true Faith on Christ, may by an assured confidence determine that his sins are pardoned.

I shall conclude this Argument with this note, that if it be granted, that after the pretended Sacrament of Penance and Absolution by a Priest, a Believer may become assured of the pardon of his sin; he may much better conclude his sins to be pardoned after the right use of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was designed to be a Seal and Confirmation to his faith.

The sixth Argument is this, 'Tis possible for a Believer to prove that he is effectually called, by all assuring evidences; and therefore 'tis possible for him to attain to a certain knowledge that he is effectually called. There are three, and but three sorts of assuring evidences: 1. Demonstrative Argument: 2. Uncertain sense: 3. Infallible Testimony. Now 'tis possible for a Believer to prove that he is effectually called by all these several sorts of evidences.

1. By Demonstrative Argument, that is a Demonstration which proves either the being and existence of a thing by its inseparable and distinguishing effects, or proves the nature and kind of a thing by the special and essential properties of it. Now a Believer may prove that he is effectually called, or that he is regenerated, and that the Spirit of God hath infused the habits of saving Grace into him,

First, by peculiar, proper, and distinguishing effects of infused habits of saving Grace: the effects of all habits are their respective acts; and although all sorts of gracious acts do not prove habits of true Grace, yet God hath declared in his Word that there are some acts, and some exercises of Grace, which do demonstratively prove infused habits of Grace, and do evidence an effectual call; this is proved by 1 Thess. 1.3. compared with Verse 5. In the 5 Verse Paul tells the Thessalonians, That the Gospel came not to them in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance: that is, he tells them they were effectually called: but how may this be proved? what evidence is it built upon? See Verse 3. he proves it by two things: 1. By the indwelling habits of Grace, viz. Faith, Love, and Hope: 2. By the distinguishing acts of those Graces, viz. working, labouring, and patience; remembering (faith the Apostle) your work of faith, your labour of love, and patience of hope. Now in the same manner (as Paul doth) 'tis possible for many true Believers to prove Demonstratively also the truth of their Grace. 1. They may
may prove the truth of their Faith by its work; the Apostle James faith, that works do prove, or (as the words signify) demonstrate the truth of Faith: all sorts of works do not prove Faith to be saving, but some works do manifest it; and by them 'tis possible to prove an effectual call. I will name (and I must but name) some works of Faith, which are all as so many Demonstrations of true Faith. 1. Prizing the Lord Jesus above all things, Phil. 3. 8. 2. Receiving him in all his Offices as offered in the Gospel, John 1. 8. 3. Victory over the World, 1 Job. 4. 4. Quenching of Satan's fiery darts, Eph. 6. 16. 5. Purifying of the heart, All. 5. 9. Wherever these works or effects of Faith are, there certainly is saving faith.

2. Love may be demonstrated by its labour, that is, by its exercise and peculiar fruits and effects. The word labour of love, mentioned by the Apostle, is used not to signify any irk somemess or burthen that love feels, for nothing more delightful and pleasing than the work of love; but to intimate the diligence, constancy, and universality of loves exercise: where love to God is sincere, there love commands the heart; the interest of God in such souls is superior to all other Interests; hence God's Commands are not grievous; and this is a property of love, that demonstratively proves it to be the work of the Spirit in an effectual call: if the Apostle John had any Logick in him, he thought this to be a Demonstration, That he that keepeth his Word, in him verily (i.e. certainly, undoubtedly) is the love of God perfected; that is, Evangelically compleat and sincere. The nature of true love is such, that it will make itself manifest; if men would design to conceal it from others, 'tis difficult to be hid; but for a man to hide it from himself it is impossible: the consideration of which forces Bellarmin to confess, that love to God, or charity, is a most certain note whereby alone the Children of God may be distinguished from the Children of Satan. Thus again while our Adversary opposes the possibility of assurance, he doth contradict himself, and most fully grant it to be possible, because there are confessedly some certain marks and signs of the Children of God; and by these fruits they may be known: we have instanced in two Graces of faith and love; we shall instance but in one other, viz.

Hope: this Grace may be demonstratively proved to be wrought by the Spirit in an effectual call, by that distinguishing effect or consequence of it, (which the Apostle mentions also in the fore-quoted place) viz. a constant, patient submission to the Will of God, in parting with any or all the enjoyments of this life, and in bearing whatever affliction God in his Wisdom shall think fit to try a Believer with. I do not say that either hope or patience, when separately taken, but only in conjunction one with the other, are certain signs of true Grace: there is a great deal of presumption or false hope in the World; but false hope is never followed with self-denial, or with an entire resignation to the Will of God, so as to forsake all and to follow Christ. On the other hand, there may be some
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Our Adversaries grant a certainty of hope, and therefore mult grant a certainty of Faith; for Scripture useth often to speak of both these as one.

Grace, and the Hebrew word signify both to believe and hope.

2. From the essential properties of saving habits.

All these properties are comprehended in these two words in Psal. 51. 11. & 21. a free spirit, 115 an effectual spirit, Maimon more Nev.

2. Intenring fense. The Lord faith, Every being is induced with fense, even the very Elements: Eft in quavis inarticulato & incanito Elemento, infidentius quidam Naturalis, Herb. de Vernate. The Pythagoreans thought it equal cruelty to cut off the branch of a tree, as to break the leg of an Ox, or the arm of a man, affirming that all trees were induced with fense. Diog. Laert. de vitas Phil.
an unerring sense. Every kind of life is induced with a sense proper to its nature; for there is a certain connexion between life and sense; and the more high and noble any principle of life is, the more clear and perspicuous are the sensations and perceptions of that principle. The senses of the animal life are evident, and the perceptions of the rational life are more discernable than they; but no sense so quick and clear as that of the divine life, because the principle thereof is more high and noble. Here possibly a half-witted Pretender to Reason, will cry out, That to discourse of spiritual senses and the perceptions of the divine life, is to speak nothing but Enthusiasm, and things which none understand. I answer, Mounseur des Cartes was far enough from Enthusiasm; yet that Master of Reason builds all his Philosophy upon a principle of inward sense, viz. Cogito ergo sum, I know I think, therefore I know I am. And he farther tells us, That the Idea, or inward sense of a God, is the best Argument to prove there is one. Again, I ask were the Philosophers of old, Plato and Aristotle, Enthusiasts, who agreed in this, that all men are naturally endued with a double faculty of discerning? one they called, facultas divinior, a discursive faculty; the other, facultas rerum, an intellectual faculty; by the latter of which, some truths (they said) were intuitively and directly seen, not by augmentation, but by internal sense; and this all men know and acknowledge who are self-acquainted in any measure. And agreeable hereunto the Spirit of God is pleased to represent the perceptions of the divine life by expressions of sense, as of seeing the Just One, Acts 22. 14. of hearing, and learning of the Father, John 6. 45. of smelling a savour and sweet odour in Gospel-revelations, 2 Corinth. 2. 14. of tasting that God is good, Psalm 34. 48. of touching and handling the Word of Truth, 1 Joh. 1. 1. Now as 'tis folly to strew Scripture-allusions too far, and to take its Metaphors in the literal and proper sense; so 'tis madness and gross ignorance on the other hand to think that by these expressions the Spirit of God did not intend to inform us, that every true Believer doth as truly discern spiritual objects by an internal sense, as any man doth discern material objects by his bodily senses.

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

1. Many Believers do see such a light breaking in upon their understanding, as doth manifestly declare it self to be the special work of God's own Spirit; for by two properties the teaching of God's Spirit may be distinguished from the common teachings of men, or from the sole convictions of a natural Conscience: 1. By the clearness and fulness of this light; when the Spirit co-operates with the Word, then a Believer in God's light sees light, as the Psalmist phraseth it, he sees eye to eye, as the Prophet Isaiah expresseth it, Isa. 51. 8. Divine light is full, and descends deep, and enters far into the minds of men; Wisdom enters the soul, Prov. 2. 4. God shines into the heart, 2 Pet. 1. 19. And hence
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hence truth is said to be wrote, Heb. 8. 10. to be engraven, 2 Cor. 3. 3. to be sealed, Job 33. 16. on man's heart and soul. 2. By its influence on practice; no truly divine teaching is or can be detained in unrighteousness; and hereby 'tis distinguished from common teaching; Sun-light is distinguished from Moon-light by its brightness, and by its warmth also, a mere natural conviction is like a flash of lightning in the night, which makes a short discovery of some objects, but vanishes before a man takes one step of his journey: but when the Spirit teaches by the Word, the Spirit makes the Word a light to a Believer's feet, and a lamp to his paths; that is, it becomes a practical light, and hereby 'tis also known to be effectual.

2. He feels a divine power prevailing upon his will, which he proves to be supernatural both by the exceeding greatness of it in its principle, and also by the mighty working of it in its effects: The Apostle Paul defiles of God that the Ephesians might know that they were effectually called, and that they might also know the hope thereof, in Ephes. 1. 18. And in Verse 19. he declares how this might be obtained, namely, 1. by discerning the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them that believe, (that is in its principle: 2. by discerning the working of this mighty power in them that believe; that is, in the effects thereof. God's power exercised upon, and towards Believers, is said here in its self to be great; nay more, 'tis greatness; farther yet, 'tis greatness of power; higher yet, 'tis exceeding greatness of power: Can this power be put forth upon man, and man be wholly insensible thereof? 'tis impossible; especially if you add the other consideration of the effects that are wrought by this power in Believers, such as these, the quickening of life-less Sinners, and the raising of them from the dead; the renewing of the Spirit of the mind; the putting on the new man, which is created after the image of God in Christ Jesus, in righteousness and true holiness; these signal effects which a Believer cannot but feel, do as certainly prove an effectual call, as the work of the old Creation do prove the existence of a God; or the Miracles wrought by Christ, did prove him to be the Son of God.

3. A true Believer hath a spiritual taste of God's love and favour, and of the goodness of his ways, and by it he is able to prove that he is born of God, according to that of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 2. 1. But Beliarminé here doth object, That Hypocrites and Apostates are supposed in Heb. 6. to have a taste of the good Word of God. I answer, 1. An Hypocrite may have a taste of the Word, but 'tis but a taste; whereas a true Believer drinks so deep of these waters of life, that they become a well of living water bringing up to everlasting life. 2. Although a Hypocrite may have some taste of the sweetnes of the Word; yet he always tastes a greater sweetness in the Word: but 'tis contrary in Believers; David tasted the Word to be sweeter than Honey, and more precious than much fine Gold. The stony ground received indeed the Word with
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with joy at first, but parted with it again, rather than undergo the sorrow of perfection. 3. An Hypocrite may taste some sweetness in the promises and priviledges of the Word, and the gifts of the Spirit, but not in the precepts of the Word, or graces of the Spirit: Simon Magus Acts 8. 18, 19, would part with the World, and give Money for the miraculous power of the Spirit; but he regarded not the sanctity of the Spirit, or obedience to its Laws; but a Believer thinks that in the very keeping of God's Psalms 19. 11, Commands there is great reward; and David professes his delight to do the will of God: so that by these, and many other acts of sense, (which I must not name) a Believer is able to prove that he is effectually called, and and that certainly, and without error or mistake: For the Rule holds good in the due exercise of spiritual as well as bodily sense. That Sensus non fallitur circa primum objectum; Sense cannot be deceived about its proper object: bodily sense is so certain, as that Christ himself appeals to it; in a proper case, Reason discerns that Spirits have neither flesh or bones, and Christ bids his Disciples to exercise their sense, and to feel that he had both. From the certainty of outward sense, we do most justly reject the Doctrine of Transubstantiation: The Receiver sees bread, feels bread, smells bread, tastes bread, and yet the senseless Priest would have men believe that 'tis flesh. But a Papist will tell you, that there may be disceptio visus, a mistake in sight and sense, both external and internal. I answer, The evidence of sense in general is certain and unerring, (although there may be some mistake in particular acts of sense) upon two accounts: First, Because the causes of particular errors may always be known to be, 1. either the ill disposition of the Organ, as in a Jaundice-eye; or, 2. the distance of the object, as the apparent smallness of heavenly bodies; or, 3. the different medium through which the object is beheld, as a staff half in water and half out seems crooked. Secondly, Because by much experience, observation and guidance of reason, men have been able to form and establish certain Rules whereby to rectifie all these mistakes. In like manner (by the Guidance of the Spirit) God hath given in his Word most certain Rules whereby men may know from whence the mistakes of internal sense do arise, and in what manner, and by what means they may be corrected. From all which I may safely conclude, that as there are certain Sciences built upon the certainty of bodily sense, (as Opticks, and many other Mathematical Sciences) notwithstanding particular mistakes in some acts: so 'tis possible by experience and observation, together with the Guidance of the Word and Spirit, for a Believer to prove, 2 Pet. 1. 19, that his spiritual sense doth not err, and consequently that he is effectually called.

H h h h 2
In the last place, I say, 'tis possible for a Believer to prove that he is effectually called, by infallible testimony of the Spirit: this sort of evidence, by Authority or Witness, Logicians call Argumentum artificiale, an artificial Argument; but in our case 'tis Argumentum certissimum, a most certain proof: for if God hath said, That in the mouth of two or three humane Witnesses every word is established, that is, made sure; how much more sure is the evidence that is given in by the Spirit of God, who cannot lye?

Now the testimony of the Spirit of God, is either written in the Word, or real in its Works: How far the written testimony of the Spirit in Scripture (which is σημείου) is a foundation of assurance, I have already declared: The real testimony of the Spirit is two-fold: 1. Material, mediate, and only objective, viz. When the Spirit of God by the work of sanctification wrought in a Believer, doth thereby afford to a Believer objectively (and mediatly by the fruits of the Spirit) matter of proof or evidence, whereby he may convince by argument, that he is effectually called. This sort of evidence I have also already spoken to; therefore 'tis yet another kind of testimony of the Spirit that I would here more especially insist upon; namely, the efficient, immediate, and formal testimony of the Spirit of God. Several Divines call it by several names, but they all understand one and the same thing, that there is a witnessing work of the Spirit, distinct from the regenerating work, and from the sanctifying work thereof, is evident by that plain Text of the Apostle to the Romans, where he saith, That the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God: Where observe, 1. The text; 2. The testimonium; 3. The modus stigmatici.

First, observe the Witnesses; these are two: 1. The Spirit of God: 2. Our own Spirit: These are two distinct Witnesses, and we ought always to consider them as truly and properly distinct: For as the Spirit of God is really and personally distinguished from our spirits; so the act of the Spirit in witnessing is as truly distinct from the act of our own spirits. A Believer's own spirit doth sometimes prove, and may witness actually and truly its effectual call; and yet the Spirit of God may at that time suspend its immediate testimony, pro bie, & nunc. Now all those things which can be really separated, are to be considered as distinct, even then when they are conjoined; and that the testimony of the Spirit of God is distinct from the testimony of our spirits, is evident from the words themselves, being duly considered: for the Apostle saith, That the Spirit itself witnesseth with our spirits; but of this more, after we have considered,

2. The testimony, or the thing witnessed; which is this, That we are the sons of God; which phrase comprehends, 1. A Believers Regeneration. 2. His relation, of an adopted son of God. 3. His partaking of the divine nature, or being conformed to the Image of Christ. 4. His obtaining
obtaining of a right of co-inheritance with Christ. Now Regeneration, and an effentiai call, (I have shewn) are one and the same thing: the matter of this testimony therefore, witnessed both by our spirits, and also by the Spirit of God, is this, That we are effectually called.

3. The manner of witnessing is expressed by the word Συμμετήριον; 3. The manner of witnessing, the Spirit doth co-witness, which cannot be meant (as some would have it) only of the Spirit's using the faculties of our mind instrumentally, (as a Scribe useth a Pen as his Instrument to attest any Writing.) 'Tis true, that the Spirit of God doth bear witness with our spirits, that is, by our spirits; in as much as our own faculties are employed in receiving and discerning the testimony of God's Spirit; but yet we must be careful that we do not confound the act of God's Spirit with the acts of our own faculties in this testimony: for so we should also confound the distinction of the Witnesses themselves; and we should hardly escape confounding the distinction that is between the Spirit's objective or material testimony, and its efficient and formal testimony. For avoiding of which, and for opening of the manner of the Spirit's immediate witnessing, I desire that these things may be considered.

1. That the Spirit of God when it is said to witness with our spirits, is not to be supposed to give its testimony by any external voice or words, but it gives even its immediate testimony by some work or operation upon the mind of man. That all sorts of spirits can express themselves to spirits without words, is manifest in the acknowledged converse or communion that is between Angels amongst themselves, good Angels with good, and bad with bad; as also by the suggestions of good Angels and bad Angels upon the minds of men; as also by that which the Scripture faith of mental or unexpressed unuttered prayer, in Rom. 8: 26, and by the instance of Hannah. If created spirits can express themselves to spirits without words, much more may the Eternal Spirit reveal himself to the mind of man how or as he pleaseth. He that created the faculties of man's mind, can put them into all and exercise by what ways or means ever he pleaseth: He that knows our thoughts before we think them, can cause us to think or know whatever he pleaseth to impress upon them.

2. As all the Revelations of God's Spirit are harmonious, and confonnant one with another, so are all the Works of God's Spirit always concordant and concordant, so as one work thereof destroys not another work of the same Spirit; and thence it is, that God having endowed men with faculties of judging and discerning of truth by its proper evidences, doth never cause the soul of man to believe any truth, but he gives them a ground or reason of its belief. I do not say that he gives always a reason of the thing, but he gives a reason of our belief: the supernatural works of the Spirit, do not destroy, but restore and perfect Nature. Now the natural way of conviction of man's mind being by evidencing the reason of things; hence, when the Spirit convinces man of
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The Spirit of God convinces men of righteousness, and of pardon of sin, in the same manner that it convinces of sin, and its guilt, which is by way of Argument, as the word doth signify, in Job. 16. 8. Hence Faith also (which is wrought by the Spirit) is said to be 

The Argumentative evidence of things not seen. I hope no man is so weak as not to think that the Spirit convinces by "verbal expression of the terms of three Propositions of an Argument; but yet it doth something equivalent thereunto. For,

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

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

1. If it be asked, Why this act of the Spirit of God is called a co-witnessing with our spirits? I answer, First, because the Spirit adds its special assistance to our spirits, in all and every exercise of our faculties, about their giving in their testimony. In particular, 1. It irradiates the mind; and, 2. It more emphatically reveals to the soul the truth of the promise, that every one that believes shall be saved; 3. It more fully makes known its own work, and shews to the soul by good evidences that it doth believe; 4. It assists the reason of man more convincingly to draw the conclusion, that therefore it shall be saved: And in this manner the Spirit witnesses to every Proposition of the assuring Argument. Secondly, and more especially, the Spirit is said to witness with our spirits, because the matter witnessed by the Spirit of God, is the same which is
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is witnessed by our own spirits; and this properly speaks it to be a co-wit-
ness; for it witnesses not only in the same manner, but it also witnesses the
same matter which our spirits do witness.

2. If it be demanded, How a Believer may be assured that the Spirit
doth certainly witness with our spirits? I answer, he may be assured by
two things: 1. By that special distinguishing light that accompanies
the testimony of the Spirit, which doth manifest it self so as to overbear
all doubts and distinguishes both about our spiritual estate, and about this
testimony it self: just as the light of the Sun doth not only discover other
things, and reveal them; but doth manifest it self by its self-evidencing
property, which is able to convince every beholder. 2. By the harmony
and agreement that is between the testimony of the Spirit of God, and
our spirits; just as we know the testimony of our spirits to be certain
and true by its agreement with the Word; except all these three agree
in one, there can be no full certainty: but a Believers assurance is al-
ways confirmed by the concurring testimony of these three: 1. Of the
Word, 2. Of Conscience, and 3. Of the Spirit, all witnessing one and
the same thing. 1. The sure Word of God lays down certain signs and
marks of true Grace, and witnesses these signs to be good evidences.
2. Then Conscience, or our own spirit witnesses that these signs are
found in a Believer. 3. Then God super-adds the witness of his own
Spirit, which enables us yet more fully to know the things which are
freely given us of God: And now what doubts can remain? 'Tis true,
we are bid to try every spirit, and we have a way to try them by, viz.
the agreement of their testimony with the testimony of Scripture and
Conscience: although there may be such things as παραλαβ, or Mock-Suns,
and sometimes the Glory of the true Sun (which yet is a prodigiously
rare instance) is not able to distinguish it self from its Αρες; yet in this
very case (by the Rules of Calculation) an Astronomer is able to di-
stinguish the true Sun from the false, so that the Science of Astronomy
is never a whit the less certain: 'Tis so as to the Spirit's testimony; 'tis
certain that by the Word and Conscience a Believer may infallibly prove
the testimony of the Spirit to be true, and not false, because there is and
must be an universal agreement between all these three.

Our Adversaries have (many of them) endeavoured to erewute the
ingle testimony of Scripture, because of the mysteriousness of Scripture,
as they call it. Others seek to debilitate the testimony of Conscience,
because men are apt to be partial. Others would weaken the testimony
of the Spirit, because 'tis apt to be mistaken. But should we grant that
none of those three Witnessses were separately sufficient, yet when they
are conjoined, from thence there doth arise an undoubted assurance. Al-
though the strength of one Pillar, or the soundness of the Foundation alone
not prove a House to be well built; yet the strength of all the Pillars,
and of the Foundation considered together, do fully prove it to be
strong. What if one single Souldier be not sufficient to secure a Fort?
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yet may not many Souldiers do it? How much then do our Adversaries trifle, while they seek to engage one single Combatant as no good Witness of assurance? but they dare not look our Army in the face: Behold, we are compassed about with a Cloud of Witnesses; let them dipel this Cloud if they can. Although no man can be made sure of the time of the day by a Dial that hath no Figures upon it; and although a blind man cannot know the hour when there are Figures upon the Dial; and although one that hath good eyes, and seeth the Figures, yet cannot know the time if the Sun shines not: yet from hence it doth not follow, but that if there be a concurrence of Lines and Figures, of Sight and Sun-shine together, and the Dial be made, and placed by infallible Rules of Art, it will then certainly evidence the time of the day. In like manner the Graces of God's Spirit imprinted on the heart, the eye of Conscience open in examination and observation, and the Light of the Spirit as the Sun-shine, thefe three concurring together, and all of them agreeing with the Word, which is the standing Rule of judgment, by which all the other are regulated and ordered; I say, from hence arifeth a demonstrative, undoubted, and infallible certainty; and this concurrence being possible, 'tis therefore possible for a Believer to attain to an assured knowledge that he is effectually called.

I proceed to the proof of the second special Proposition, That 'tis possible for a Believer who is sure of his effectual vocation in time, to be assured also of his election in eternity. I shall need to be but brief in the proof of this, having already in part proved that there is such a thing as special and discriminating Grace, whereby one call of God proves effectual, another not. Now our Adversaries themselves grant, that if God doth exercise a discriminating Grace in special effectual vocation, 'tis necessary that he should eternally decree to exercise that special Grace upon those persons from eternity. The proof of this Proposition will depend upon these two Arguments.

If an effectual call doth depend upon God's eternal election, as upon its necessary cause, then he that knows that he is effectually called, may know he was eternally elected; (no man of reason will deny this Consequence, and therefore I need not prove it.) But an effectual call doth depend upon God's eternal election, as upon its necessary cause; and therefore he that knows the one, may also know the other: this I shall prove from some plain and express Texts of Scripture; see Ephef. i. in the beginning of which Chapter you have the nature of election opened in all its causes and properties, (which I must not particularly name) in brief, you may obferve that according to the Apostle's description thereof, election is that decree of God, whereby out of the meer good pleasure of his own will, he did eternally choice some certain individual persons out of the corrupt mass of mankind, unto the infallible attainment of Grace hereafter, and Glory hereafter. Now if this be the nature of election, viz. that Grace (or an effectual call) was thereby eternally decreed to be conferred and
may know that he was eternally elected.

and bestowed; it will then necessarily follow, that Grace, or an effectual call, doth depend upon election as its cause: which is plainly expressed, Ver. 4, where Holiness and blamlessness (which are insuperable properties of an effectual call) are said to be the effects of God's election and choice. 'Tis a very good note of Thomas Aquinas, who observes that love and choice in God doth very much differ from love and choice in men: for love in men (faith he) doth not cause loveliness in the beloved, but men first discern a loveliness, and this causes a love and choice; whereas God first exercised a free love in his eternal election, predetermining the way and means of farther manifestation of his love, and then in time he effects his own purpose, making the objects of his love to become lovely, by his renewing his own image upon them in an effectual call. Agreeable hereunto is that expression of the Council of Orange, God loved us not as we are by our desert, but as he designed to make us by his gift. He that would rightly understand the relation of vocation in time, hath unto election in eternity, and he that would know the dependence which that effect hath upon this cause, must first consider, that although all the decrees of God are in themselves but one simple act of God's will; yet as to humane apprehension many men have conceived that there are three distinct acts of the Divine Will comprehended in his decree of election. 1. \textit{Exsult}, a choice, or a separating and flinging out of some individual persons to be the objects of his love. 2. \textit{Persever}, a purpose, or an intention and design of bestowing saving Grace in effectual calling of those chosen ones. 3. \textit{Resist}, a Predestination, or a pre-determination of bringing those called and gracious persons unto Glory. I shall not here meddle with the Controversie which is agitated about the priority or precedency of these two last acts of the Divine Will; only you must consider, that as the decrees of God, whereby he purposed to bestow both Grace and Glory, was truly in itself but one eternal act of his Will, (and so there could be no priority of time amongst them) so we ought not in our Conceptions to distinguish between Glory and Grace, as if one were designed as the end, and the other as the means, (which is too common a mistake:) for in truth, Grace and Glory differ only as lesser and greater measures of the same thing; and therefore we say, that God's absolute and inconsiderate purpose effectually to call some persons, and to give them Grace, falling by others, both declare the whole nature of God's decree of election, in as much as the selection of the objects of God's love, and also the nature both of the act and end of his love, are all comprehended in that one purpose of effectual calling, which the Salamurian Divines do how more fully in their explication of election: all which being duly considered, do abundantly manifest that vocation in time, was a most assured effect of election in eternity, according to that of Rom. 8. 23. where almost in express words our calling is said to be the effect of God's purpose; and agreeable also is that of 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14. where justification and faith wrought

Tales nos amat Deus, Quales Futuri sumus, ipsius dono non quales sumus nostro merito Conc.

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wrought in an effectual call, is declared to be the fruit of being chosen from the beginning: *We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification and belief of the truth whereunto be called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Observe here, first, that God hath designed to bestow Grace and Glory on some men: Secondly, that God actually accomplished his design by effectual calling of these persons; i.e. by working of faith, or a belief of the truth, and of sanctification in them: Thirdly, that the original and primitive ground or cause of an effectual call, is God's eternal election and choice of them. Therefore doth the Spirit bring the Elect into the state of Sons, because God hath predestinated them to the adoption of Sons. The Spirit is the immediate cause of Regeneration; but that the Spirit works otherwise in one person than it doth in another, is the effect of eternal election: And there is always so certain a dependance which an effectual call hath upon election, as that they are sometimes put for one and the same thing, Rom. 9.11.

Secondly, We prove that all those that know they are effectually called, may know that they were eternally elected, because effectual calling depends upon God's eternal election as its rule or measure; that is, effectual calling (as to the persons called) is commensurate with the objective matter of God's eternal election: my meaning is this, that all those, and only those persons that were eternally elected, shall be effectually called; and therefore whoever knows that he is effectually called, may know he was eternally elected. The very essence of an effectual call consists, as I have shewn, in the Spirit's working of *saving faith* in them whom it doth call; but the Spirit works saving faith in all the elect, and only in them, this is plainly manifest in *Acts* 13.48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed; so many and no more, as were ordained, or fore-determined: if the word be translated fore-disposed, (as some would have it) it must be meant of God's disposing, not of man's disposing himself. Some men talk much of a *tempus congruum*, a fit season for Conversion; but the Decree of God depends not upon our predispofition, but upon God's election, as appears in the instance of Saint Paul, who being a chosen vessel, was converted when he was in the height of his perdition. The working of faith depends so much upon God's election, as that *saving faith* bears the name of *the faith of God's elect*, *Tit. 1.1.* it being proper only to them. Moreover, it appears that only those that are elected shall be effectually called, because only the elect shall be saved: it is expressly said, That all those whose names are not written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, *Rev. 20.* ult. It was the custom of old to write down the names of persons designed to places of Honour in Books or Registors; hence the Spirit of God compares God's election of persons:
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fons to *Grace* and *Glory*, to that known custom: in allusion unto which also St. Paul faith that the names of *Enodins*, and *Syntiche*, and *Clement*, were written in the book of *life*; and Christ bids his Disciples rejoice that their names were written in *Heaven*; i.e. that they were *elect*: on the contrary, the non-elect are said not to have their names written in the Lamb's book of *life*, in Rev. 13. 8. and Rev. 17. 8. and the doom of all such is to be cast into the lake of fire, for these shall never be called effectually here, or saved eternally hereafter.

I know *Socinus* and *Crelius*, and some others, by the book of life, do understand the *Scripture*, wherein God hath declared that all pentent believers shall be saved, and all impenitent and unbelievers shall be damned; and consequently (fay they) all believers have their names written there; but unbelievers have not their names written, in as much as they come not under the Qualifications written in the Word. But to this I answer: 1. That by the Book of life must be meant God's eternal decree, not any declaration made by him in time: for the non-elect are described, Jude 4. to be men, πᾶροι ποτέ ἐγκατοικίζομεν τινὸς οἰς ἀναινέομεν, of old ordained, or eternally decreed, to this condemnation, as Bishop Dav. observes: and on the other hand, the elect are said to be *saved*, and called with an holy calling, not according to works, but according to his purpose and grace which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2. Again, in the Book of Life, there was an absolute election of persons recorded, and not a conditional Declaration of qualities declared: for by names (in all the fore-quoted places) are understood persons, as appears by many other Texts of Scripture, as Numb. 1. 2. by taking the number of names, is meant the number of persons, every male by pole: So Acts 1. 15. the number of names, that is, persons, were about an hundred and twenty: and Sardis had a few names, that is, a few persons that were upright, Rev. 3. 4. In vain therefore do either Papists or Socinians seek to divide those things that God hath conjoined, viz. eternal election, and effectual vocation; which have that relation one to another, as that he that knows one, knows both: for if vocation depends on election as its necessary cause, and as its adequate rule and measure, I hope I shall not need to prove the consequence, since all men grant that those things that are commensurate, and of equal extent, do necessarily make each other known.

He therefore that would make his election sure, may do it by making his calling sure; and that is the order he must proceed in: for although God at first chuses, and then calls; yet we must first know our calling, and then our election: God descends from love to choice, from choosing to calling; or to infusing of the principles of saving Grace, then to sanctifying, or adding of greater measure of Grace; but in the trial of Rom. 8 29. our state, and in our evidencing of our interest in God's love, we must ascend from sanctification to vocation, and from vocation to election: Election is as the Spring-head of all consequent acts of Divine love; he

**I i i** 2 that

Phil 4. 3.
Luk. 10. 10.
Voritus, &c.

See T. Aq. par. 1. q. 23. a. 7.
The elect, a determinate number as elects, 7000 which had not bowed to Baal, 1 Kings. 19.18. 14000 sealed, Rev. 7. 4.
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that would find the fountain, must begin at the stream, and so trace it upward to its first source: Election is (as the root or seed) hidden, and unknown in itself; he that would know the nature of a Tree, let him not uncover the root, but let him observe the fruits, for by them it may best be known. Weak eyes may better behold the beams of the light reflected, than by looking on the body of the Sun, which many having presumed to do, have left their sight wholly: and so it comes to pass, when men search directly into the decree of election, without considering that it is better and more easily manifested by an effectual call. It is not lawful for any man to look into this Ark, or to attempt to read the Law of God's eternal purposes, as they are there locked up in his decrees; 'tis sufficient that we may see the transcript of them written on our own heart: Secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us and our Children. No man must enter into the Council Chamber, that he may know the will of his Prince; but must wait for its discovery in the published Proclamation. Mordecai understood little of the King's love to him, when Ahashuernus consulted what should be done to the person whom the King delighted to honour; but he well knew that he was a favourite when he saw himself clothed in Royal Robes, and beheld the King's Signet upon his hand: so when a Believer finds himself clothed with the white linen of the Saints, and hath once received the Seal of God's Spirit, he may safely conclude that God from eternity decreed to honour him here, and glorify him hereafter.

Let me therefore for a close of this second Proposition, give all Believers the same counsel that Eliphaz gave to Job, and Job's friends, Desire not the night, (i.e. pry not into the dark secrets of God's decrees) but remember thou magnifie God's works which thy eyes do behold; i.e. the fruits and consequences of those decrees appearing in an effectual call: 'Tis boldness to break ope the Seal of a Decree, till thou hast read thy Name wrote in the Supercription; Election is Love under a Seal of secrecy, but an effectual call opens this most fully, and evidently makes known the purpose of God from eternity.

The third special Proposition, which remains to be proved, is this, That all true Believers that do assuredly know they are called, and were elected, may also know they shall persevere unto glory. Many have been the Disputes concerning the possibility of a Believers falling from Grace; but most of the Arguments that are used with design to prove the possibility thereof, will fall to the ground if the Question be rightly stated. To which purpose I shall in the first place lay down some premises, and which may obviate the Arguments and Objections of our Adversaries; and then give you our Arguments to prove the Proposition. When we say then that some Believers may assuredly know that they shall persevere, and that they shall not fall from Grace, we do premise, that,
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First, We do distinguish between Grace actively taken for God's favour to us, (Gratia gratis dans, as the Schools call it) and (Gratia gravis data) Grace passively taken, Grace wrought in us, (which is the effect of the former:) for it is not from the nature of Grace passively taken, or from Grace inherent in Believers, that they do persevere, and not fall away; but it is from the nature of that Grace (actively taken) that dwells in God's bosom; this is the ground that Believers persevere to Glory, as 'tis clearly expressed by Christ himself, Job. 13.1. He having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Concerning this active Grace of God, we do distinguish between the exercise of it, and the manifestation of that exercise: We deny not but God may seem to be angry; but yet we say, he never calls off his people, or forgets to be gracious. The Sun may be muffled for a time in a Cloud, yet some heat will be communicated during the time it is hid, and in due time the beams of light will break through, and disperse the Cloud also. Christ may stand behind the Wall, yet then he will show himself through the Lattice, and in time the Wall of Separation also shall be broken down. God may correct his Children, but will not disinherit them.

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

Again, we distinguish between a shew of Grace, and true Grace: there are several instances in the Word of God of persons falling from a shew of Grace, Demas, Judas, Saul, Hymeneus, fell from hypocrisy into open prophaneness and impiety: but no sincere person ever fell from true Grace. Paint may be soon wash't off, when a healthful, beautiful complexion will abide: a Bristol-fine is soon broken, but a true Diamond will abide the fiercest stroke. Many Professors have suffered shipwreck as to faith, and others have lost their first love; but 'tis such faith as had no root, like that of the stony-ground, and such love as had no principle, 'twas only a passion and transport, and such love may be soon cold.

Common fire is soon extin'st; but the fire of the Sanctuary never went out. 

1. 1 Cor. xxx. 16. 2. Psal. xlii. 2. 3. Psal. cxxxiv. 1. 4. 1 Cor. x. 12. 5. Prov. xliii. 25. 6. Tit. i. 19. 7. Rev. ii. 7. 8. Matt. xiii. 19.
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As for those Texts that Bellarmine urges, that the *just do fall seven times a day*, Prov. 24. 16. and that in many things we offend all, Jam. 3. 2. the very words themselves carry a full answer to his Objections: for if the just fall seven times a day, 'tis supposed he *rises* as often; and if in many things we offend all, then 'tis in some but an *offence* or a stumble, not a final falling: there is difference between foils and falls, and there is difference between falling *into sin*, and lying *in sin*; there is difference between *recession* from Grace, and *excision* of Grace; the *first* is possible to happen for a time to a Believer, but God will *never* suffer the second to come upon him: for although a Believer may fall, yet he falls only as *Cork* falls into the water, which may for a time be immersed, but it will rise again, and get aloft; but an Hypocrite falls as *Lead* into the water, which sinks and rises no more. Having premised these things, I proceed to the Arguments, which evince the perseverance of all that are effectually called unto Glory.

First Argument is from the *immutability* and *unchangeableness* of God's *Purposes* and *Decrees*. I have already proved that God did from before the foundation of the World decree to make some particular persons the objects of his love, and that these persons were *fore-ordained* of God to be effectually called in time, and to be glorified in eternity: Now the gifts and calling of God are (faith the Apostle) *without repentance, *dispenation, such as God never can or will repent of. There is a necessary *connexion* between every *Decree* of God, and its full execution and performance: all the *powers* of *Hell* are not able to break by force, nor all the *subtility* of the *Jesuites of Rome* able to dissolve or unite by *skill*, that strong and necessary connexion of all those *links* of that *Golden Chain* that is drawn forth in that fore-quoted Rom. 8. 29, 30. Foreknowledge, or *Electiou*, *Vocation*, Justification and *Glorification*, are *inseparably* conjoined; so that whoever hath hold of one of them, hath hold of all; and he that *knoweth one*, *knoweth all*. The Apostle in Rom. 9. 11. doth fully assert that God did exercise Sovereign discriminating Grace in his eternal Decree of Election; and withal he declares the immutability and unchangeableness of that Decree: mark his words: The *Children* (faith he) not being yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God might stand, not of him that works, but of him that calleth, it is said, The elder shall serve the younger, &c. God's purpose must stand, nay, must remain steadfast, as Beza, or confirmed, as *Callalio* translates it: The Decrees of God are compared to Mountains of brass, Zech. 6. 1. unremoveable, because situate in the eternal Will. Consider the expression used by Samuel, 1 Sam. 15. 19. The *Strength of Israel* will not *lye* nor *repent*, for he is not as man that he *should repent*. God is strength it self, and able to preserve all his Decrees made in eternity: the word *"Zi"* translated strength, may also be translated eternity or victory; intimating the victorious power that accompanies eternal Decrees. See *Aug. Confess. Lib. 1. Cap. 6*.
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with an everlasting love, Jer. 31. 3. and he works with an invincible power, Isai. 14. 27.

Secondly, I argue from that special knowledge that God hath of all those that he hath built savingly upon the right foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ. God is no foolish Builder, to lay the Foundation, and not carry on the Superstructure; and this is the Apostle's own Argument, for the perseverance of Saints, in 2 Tim. 2. 19. where the Apostle having observed the Apostacy of some non-elect persons, adds, Nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his. Amongst many other uses of a Seal, this is one, that it gives ground of assurance: Now the Apostle therefore uteth that expression of God's knowing of his, that from the consideration thereof, Believers might have greater confidence, that they being God's Husbandry, and God's Building, God will never suffer them to be removed, and that because he knows them; which phrase signifies these six things.

1. That God did fore-know them, so the word is used, Act. 15. 18. For God to know, signifies 1. To fore-know, Act. 15. 18.

2. To know, sometime signifies to own in a peculiar manner, so Amos 2. 2. God speaking to his people Israel, faith, That he knew them above all the families on earth. God knew Egypt, and Babylon, and Moab, and Edom, but he did not know them to be his peculiar people above others; but so he did know Israel. Thus those that God hath elected, and effectually called, God knows them as his peculiar, his peculiar people, and this is a Seal that they shall persevere.

3. To know in Scripture, sometimes signifies for God to approve of, and to delight in, Psal. 1. 6. The Lord knows the way of the righteous: God knows the way of wicked men, but so as to curse it, it shall perish; but God knows the way of the elect, and of those that are effectually called, so as to approve of it, and delight in it; and this is a Seal, assuring them that they shall not perish, but persevere in their way to Glory.

4. To know, is to oversee and take care of, as a Shepherd knows his Sheep, so Job. 10. 27. My Sheep hear my voice, and I know them, that is, I take care of them: Christ is such a Shepherd as he himself describes, that if he hath a hundred Sheep, and one of them go astray, he leaves the ninety and nine, and goes after the lost Sheep till he find it: And this is also a ground of a true Believers perseverance, that if through non-attendance, or inanimadversion, or through the violent persecution of roaring Lions or Wolves they stray from the Fold, yet Christ redresses them again.

5. To
5. To deliver from, or to succour and support in trials, affictions, and temptations, Psal. 57:7. I will be glad (faith of David) and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my soul in trouble, and hast known my soul in adversity: that is, God did both support him in affliction, and deliver him from it in his own time. 'Tis an affuring Seal of the perseverance of Believers, that God will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; or else with the temptation will make a way to escape, that they may bear it.

6. To teach and instruct, to enlighten and inform, Gal. 4:9.

Hist. it becomes impossible to deceive the elect, Matt. 14:24.

The third Ground of a true Believer's perseverance, is from the nature of God's Covenant. Perseverance is one Article of the New Covenant that God hath made with the elect, the terms of which are these: I will, faith God, make an everlasting Covenant with them, I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart away from me. God hath absolutely engaged that elect Believers shall not depart from him, that is, not finally, because in an effectual call he will put his fear into their hearts; they may wander, but not depart; they may in some acts deviate, but they shall not be backsliders in heart; and the reason is, because though there may be a tendency in them to turn away from God, yet God stands engaged not to turn away from them: hence that expression of God to the Prophet, They say, if a man put away his wife, and she go from him, shall be return to her again? shall not that Land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, faith the Lord. God will not permit that to be done by men, which he may do himself in this case; and the reason is, because God can purge an adulterous heart, which it is not in the power of man to do; rather than the Marriage-Covenant between Christ and a Believer shall be defiloved, God will put forth his mighty power, to make and keep the hearts of Believers faithful and loyal to him. What a clear and full promise of perseverance is that also revealed by Christ, in Job. 10:27. My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me; I will give to them eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Both the Father and Son stand engaged by promise to preserve elect Believers unto
unto life. Another express promise of perseverance we find in 1 Cor. 1.8.9. He shall confirm you to the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus: God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. All those that are called have the promise of a most faithful God to preserve them blameless, even to the day of the Lord, and therefore they shall persevere.

A fourth Ground of their perseverance is the stability of the Covenant of Redemption, or the certain performance of every promise made mutually between the Father and the Son, between the Lord of Hosts and the Branch, when the Council of peace was betwixt them both, mentioned in Zach. 6.12, 13. When the Father and the Son agreed about the Redemption of fallen man, there were many Articles of this Covenant and Council of peace mutually consented unto, some of them relating to the work of Redemption itself, others relating to the reward of the Redeemer, as you may read in Vai. 53. Now this was one promise which the Father made unto the Redeemer, viz. That he should not die in vain, but that he should see of the travail of his soul, and should be satisfied. Ver. 10. Now should true Believers finally fall, Christ Jesus should not attain that satisfaction which is here promised. The Mother is not satisfied with an abortive birth; nor would the Hebrew women have been satisfied if their children had been murdered as soon as born; neither can Christ be willing that those for whom his soul was in agony should finally perish: The end of Christ’s sufferings was not only to bring forth sons unto God, but also to bring those sons unto Glory: Now should Christ fall short in this latter work, first, he could not (according to the Author to the Hebrews) be a perfect Captain of Salvation: For it did become him for whom all things, and by whom all things are, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of Salvation perfect through sufferings, Heb. 2.10. Secondly, Christ could not be able in the day of Judgment to say as it follows, Ver. 13. Behold I and the children which God hath given me. But Christ is a perfect Saviour, and will at that great day say to God as he doth in John 17.6, 12. That they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word: I have kept them, and none of them is lost but the Son of perdition. In which words there is not only intimated a Covenant, and an Agreement between the Father and the Son about the Redemption of the elect, but there is also expressed in them the faithful discharge of the mutual agreement on both sides; so that none of those that were God’s by election, and intrusted in Christ’s hand by donation, shall be lost: Judas was therefore a Son of perdition, because given only externally, and not eternally into Christ’s hand.

The fifth Argument I shall use is this, If Christ did pray while he was on Earth, and doth now intercede in Heaven; that all the elect (who are effectually called) may persevere; then they shall persevere: The Ground of this Argument you have in John 11.42. where Christ tells

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us, that the Father did hear him always: so that if I prove that Christ hath prayed for the perseverance of Believers, I shall thereby prove their certain perseverance. I beseech you therefore consider a few Verses of the 17 Chapter of John, and you will find that in Verse 9. Christ expressly tells us, that He did pray for all the elect, and for them only; and Verse 11. he tells us, that perseverance was the very matter of the petition which he put up, Holy Father, keep them through thy Name; and Verse 15. he explains how he would have them kept, namely, from the evil, or from all evil: And left any one should say that this prayer was made only for some few that were then called, Christ adds, Ver. 20. that be prayed for all that should believe, or be effectually called at any time after; and as perseverance was fundamentally petitioned for, so Christ (upon that Foundation) doth carry his petitions higher, for Verse 21. he prays for them that they might attain a higher degree of union with himself; and Ver. 22. that they might attain a likeness of glory with himself; and Verse 23. that they might attain to be loved, as he himself was loved of the Father. Now if all these petitions which Christ made for all the elect shall be infallibly granted, (as I have proved they shall from Christ's own-words) then it doth necessarily follow that all the elect shall persevere unto glory. And yet I shall add one thing more for a farther Confirmation of this Argument, viz. That as the perseverance of Believers is secured by the prayer which Christ made for them when he was on Earth, so they are yet more secured by the intercession that Christ makes for them now in Heaven. The Author to the Hebrews doth most fully prove that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, (which he should not be, if all true Believers should not persevere to glory) by this strong Argument, Because be ever lives to make intercession for them: as he prayed on Earth, so he prays in Heaven, and will ever live to pray for them. I conclude this Argument thus: If Christ's prayer were effectual to keep Peter from final falling, and to raise him up when he had fallen foully; if it kept the habit of his faith from failing, when it failed in the act; upon the same account the faith of every Believer is certainly secured (as to its principle) by the prayer which Christ did make for him on Earth, and now makes for him in Heaven.

My last Argument for the Saints perseverance shall be taken from the constant inhabitition, and powerful inoperation of the Spirit of God in and upon the hearts of true Believers: Believers are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and God lives in them, and walks in them. The Spirit infuses Grace, and he also administers Grace in them, and this preserves and keeps them from falling. Not the Grace wrought, but the Spirit working Grace, doth preserve Grace. Every prudent person will secure the place of Habitation; the Spirit of God dwelling in Believers, &c. doth super-intend their minds by a constant insecction over them: Christ assures Believers, That he would pray the Father, and he should give them another
another Comforter that should abide with them; viz. even the Spirit of truth that should dwell in them. If the Spirit of God abides and dwells in Believers for ever, then they cannot finally fall: The work of the Spirit in Believers is an abiding work, or an abiding anointing; it abides in them, and it causes them to abide in God. In the great work of Regeneration, the Spirit doth infuse radicated and fixed habits of Grace, and it works such a principle as continues and abides for ever: Hence it is called an incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. 1. 23. and a remaining seed, 1 John 3. 9. Moreover, the Spirit of God is said to establish Believers unto Salvation, in as much as it is given as a seal, and earnest thereof into our hearts, according to 2 Cor. 1. 22, 23. Now he that establisheth us with you, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath sealed us, and given us of his Spirit in our hearts. Observe here, first, that all true Believers are confirmed and established, and therefore they shall persevere: secondly, that the way of God's establishing them is by God's pouring upon them a holy Unction, or the anointing of his Spirit; thirdly, that this anointing gives security in the nature of a Seal, and an earnest; a Seal both obliges the Infurer, and also manifests the Assurance; an earnest doth so much also, and more, for it implies also something given in present possession: God working true Grace by his Spirit, secures us of Heaven as he secured Israel of Canaan, by giving them Escol, some Clusters of Canaan's Vineyards in the wilderness, which was a kind of Livery and Seizion, as when possession of an Estate is given by a Twig or Rod. God's giving of his Spirit is called his giving of the first-fruits, Rom. 8. 23, thereby indicating our assured full Harvest, whereof of this is an actual part: all those mult sensible are assured of Glory, who have a possession of Grace; and this seems to be the Argument of the very Text, viz. If ye do these things ye shall never fall: why? because hereby an entrance shall be administered to you into the Everlasting Kingdom. Possession is the best assurance; 'tis eleven Points; now by the Spirits indwelling in Believers, they have a kind of prepossession of Glory.

It remains now only that I speak to the second general Proposition included in the Text, That it is the duty of every Believer to give all diligence to make his calling, election and perseverance sure. This Proposition being of the nature of an Inference drawn from the former Proposition, and being also rather matter of practice than of controversy, I shall but briefly, and by way of Application speak unto it: yet here also the great Goliath of the Philistines stands in our way; for when Bel- larmine is no more able to maintain the impossibility of attaining assurance, he then retreats to this second redoubt, and tells us, that no man is bound to gain this assurance, although perchance he might possibly attain to it, if he would labour after it. I must with as few words as may be drive him out of this hold, and we shall draw towards a conclusion. I shall therefore prove, that it is a Believers duty to give diligence.
Tis the duty of true Believers

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Tis a Believers duty from the necessity of the command: there can be no plainer or more express command than the words in the Text, and a parallel place with the Text is that of the Author to the Hebrews. We desire (i.e. in God's Name we require) that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. Brethren, I might have used it as a strong Argument for the possibility of attaining assurance, because God hath so strictly enjoined us to effect it: for nemo tenetur ad impossibile, that no man is bound to impossibilities, is a true Rule, taking it of natural impossibility. Now there is nothing more clear than that we are bound to endeavour after assurance, by virtue of God's precept, which is so full as that many other duties are therefore enjoined because they are necessary means for our attaining assurance. Thus we are commanded, 1. To search the Scriptures; 2. To search and try our ways; 3. To search and examine our hearts. The end of all this searching of the Word as the Rule, and of our hearts and lives, as the things to be regulated by the Word, is but that we might come to an assured knowledge of the agreement or disagreement that is between them.

2. Many duties are enjoined Believers, because 'tis supposed diligence hath been given, and assurance thereby attained. Such as these a Believer is commanded, 1. To come with boldness and humble confidence to the Throne of Grace. 2. To rejoice in the Lord always. 3. To give God glory by believing. 4. To tell others what great things God hath done for their souls. 5. To comfort one another, and strengthen the faith of one another; all which duties are commanded, because the attaining of assurance is first commanded, and that first command is supposed (by these other commands) to have been obeyed: for no man can come in the Spirit of adoption, and (with a filial confidence) cry, Abba, Father, who first knows not himself to be a son by the image he bears. No man can rejoice in the Lord as he ought to rejoice, till he knows his name be written in Heaven, because the Law of God is written in his heart. How can a Captive triumph, or a Man in Chains dance? How can an Hebrew-song be sung in Babylon, in a strange Land? Again, when it is required that we should live in perpetual adoration of Divine Goodness, and in admiration of Free Grace, and that we praise, and bless, and magnifie the Name of God, giving him Glory by believing, this supposes that we do believe, and also that we know we do believe: For 'tis the joy of the Lord that gives us strength to do his Will, and doth enlarge our hearts to speak good of his Name.

2. Diligence is necessary, necessitate medii. The second Argument, proving it the duty of Believers with diligence to endeavour after assurance, is, because this diligence is necessary necessitate medii, as a necessary means. Here I desire you, to consider these two things: 1. That diligence is a necessary means for attaining assurance,
Serm. XVIII. to give diligence to attain assurance.

1. Diligence is a most proper and necessary means for attaining assurance. Faith of adherence (as one says) comes by hearing, but Faith of assurance comes not without doing. In God's giving first Grace, we are truly passive; but before God causes all Grace to be in us, and to abound, he makes us active and diligent: both in the direct act of Faith and also in the reflex act of it, it may be said, that act ait agimus, we act being acted; yet there is some difference between our living, and moving, and having our being in God: for as the Child owns the first principle of its life wholly to God and its Parents, wherein 'tis wholly passive in itself, but (afterwards) the exercise of those principles depends upon God's enabling of the Child to put forth those acts that properly flow from a vital principle; so first-principles, or the habits of Grace are (as I have already shewn) infused by God alone, but the acts and exercise of Grace are from God's concourse with our faculties and powers. We are bidden to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, notwithstanding it be most true that God works in us both to will and do of his own good pleasure. You see a just acknowledgment of God's Grace may be conjoined with a clear revelation of man's natural power before conversion, and of a Believer's moral power after regeneration, and both of them enforcing and engaging unto the greatest diligence, even from their conjunction and concurrence: for these things are very harmonious in themselves; 'tis man's ignorance or peevishness that divides the things that God hath conjoined. Acknowledgment of Free Grace in its power, efficacy, and discriminating prerogative, when duly considered, doth most effectually put us upon diligence. Men can easily reconcile those two Texts, where in one place 'tis said, the band of the diligent makes rich; in the other, the blessing of God maketh rich; men understand these things as they concur in natural things, I think they might as well be understood as relating to spiritual riches, riches of assurance, diligence with God's blessing being a proper means for gaining assurance.

2. Assurance is a most proper means for the more speedy attaining many excellent ends, which without it are most difficultly accomplished: and here I might enumerate many particulars; for indeed there is scarce any one act of Grace that can be (in any measure or degree) so well exercised by a person ignorant of his spiritual estate, as by him who knows that relation which he stands in to God, neither is any duty so well performed before assurance, as after that God hath fastened to a Believer the pardon of his sin. But I must mention only some consequents of assurance, so many as may stop the mouth of that Rabshakeh, Bellarmino, whose last Argument against assurance is this, That 'tis not convenient.

1. Diligence a means to gain assurance.

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

Pro. 10. 2.

Col. 2. 2.
nient that men attain to assurance ordinarily of the truth of Grace in their hearts; and his reason is, because it tends to carelessness and sloth. And Petrus a Soto faith, That it is not only most humble, but most safe to doubt of the Grace and favour of God. For Confutation hereof, I shall instance in three effects or conquments of true assurance, which are of great import; but are difficultly obtained by those that want assurance.

1. A more compleat Victory over the actions of remaining sin and corruption; this is much furthered by assurance. *Tis with Believers as it was with the Israelites, they bowed down under the Oppression of Egypt so long, as they despaired of deliverance; but when God had assurred them of his love and favour, and had given them a promise of bringing them forth from bondage; a new spirit immediately came upon them, and they suddenly vindicated themselves from slavery: they cast off their Oppressors Yoke, and went forth to liberty, not leaving one hoof behind them. Thus dependant persons, (who nourish their own fears) like Isaac might couch down between these two burdens, 1. sight of guilt, 2. and sense of strong corruptions; but when Gospel-grace appears, and a sight of the souls interest in the strength and power of Christ is once manifest, presently the soul lifts up its head, and breaks this yoke off from its neck, and bids defiance to its old lusts, and goes forth conquering and to conquer. Our Adversaries do indeed speak evil of the things they know not, and because they want this experience, that assurance doth most effectually purifie the heart; and are ignorant that he that hath the most assured hope, does most industriously design to purifie himself as God is pure: therefore they blaspheme this most sacred Truth; they deny Scripture; and (were it not for shame) would accuse Christ and his Apostles (Peter and Paul) for Libertines, as the Pharisees sometimes did. But was it not Christ's common method, first to say to afflicted souls, *Your sins are forgiven, and then take up thy bed and walk? And again, did he not first say, Thou art made whole, and then said, sin no more? Christ's opinion (or rather his certain knowledge) was this, that the sense of forgiveness was the most potent principle of love and obedience; Christ tells us, that Mary Magdalene therefore loved much, because much was forgiven her. If Paul understood any thing of Gospel-principles, it was his Doctrine, that the more clear the Grace of God doth appear, the more effectually it doth teach to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and holily in this present world. Our Adversaries forget that assurance is attainable by none but true Believers: now *tis impossible that true Believers should turn the Grace of God into wantonness. We affirm, that this new name, and the white stone, is never given to any but those that are partakers of the new nature, to such as are regenerate. God first principles the heart with holiness, and then smiles upon it; and for a holy person to know that he is so, can be no occasion to disobedience. I ask, *Who is more obliged, or *who feels the obligation to obedience most carefully?
Serm. XVIII. to give diligence to attain assurance.

gently? The Son who knows his near relation, and knows his Father loves him; or the Servant that hath great reasén to doubt thereof? God's Spirit seals none but those it hath made sanctified; neither would God reveal his love, but that he knows the constraining power of it. Fear is a weak and impotent principle, in comparison of love: the Apostile faith, The Law was weak; the terror of its curse weakened and infbected the hands of those that have obeyed it: but the Gospel-Declaration of Grace is mighty and prevailing, because it comes in the power of love. Terrours may awaken, love enlivens: terrours may almost persuade, love over persuades. Felix may tremble, and remain unconvered: Zachæus hears of certain Salvation, and makes haste to come down, and receives Christ gladly. Legal terrours may move affections, and storm the passions; but they make no change upon the will, and therefore there is no saving or through work effected; (as when a party of Souldiers only storm the Out-work of a Garifon, they are soon again repelled) but the Gospel takes the heart, the main Fort, upon friendly Articles, and voluntary surrender, and the soul becomes a most willing tributary and subject to its new Governor. Fear may force and offer violence, and commit a rape upon the heart, but can effect no Contract or Marriage-Covenant, for that is wrought only by love, and that in its clearest evidences and manifestations. 'Tis true, the Papists (who are great enemies to Marriage) will here be ready to object, that oftentimes affections cool after Marriage, which were strong before; and so it may happen after a Believer's knowledge of his interest in Christ.

I answer, that the Apostate Church of Rome (to which the Spirit of God gives the title of the great Whore, and of the Mother of FORNICATIONS and ADULTERIES both Spiritual and Civil) doth much delight to cast all the blemishes (they can) upon the state of Marriage, civilly or spiritually considered; but more innocent persons do know, that interest did never lessen love, nor the knowledge of interest abate affection, but rather increase it: all persons find that relation hath a strange influence upon men's minds to endear those objects that might otherwise be but little taking. S(the I am that a Believer's knowledge of his beloved is his, and he is his beloved, is found by experience to lay the most strong and cogent obligation upon him to loyalty and faithfulness unto the Lord Jesus: for, as to him that believes, Christ is precious; so, to him that knows he believes, to him Christ is so much the more precious, even the chiefest of ten thousand.

2. As assurance furthers our love to Christ, (and so gives power over sin) so it gives strength to overcome the world, and all the temptations of it, of what kind soever, be they either, First, on the right hand, viz. the smiles, flatteries, allurements and inticingements of the world; Assurance of an interest in God very much facilitates our conquest over all these. The fore-sight and prospect of Heaven, carries the soul so high in its contemplation of Glory, as when it looks down upon worldly enjoyments,
Tis the duty of true Believers

Heb.11.23.

joyments, they appear small, little, and very inconsiderable. Moses, after God had assured him of his love, and had caused his Glory to pass before him, how did he scorn to be tempted with the bait of being reckoned and accounted the son of Pharaoh's daughter? He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin that are but for a season, esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Whence arose this braveness and true greatness of mind? The Text tells you, He had respect to the recompence of reward. He knew the reward was great, and his title to it good. St. Augustine tells of himself, that after he had attained assurance of God's love and favour, he was so ravished therewith, as he could not but cry out with a holy exclamation, Oh how sweet is it to be without the world's sweets, since I enjoy all sweetnefs in God! Those things that once I was afraid to lose, I now let go, and want with joy, because hereby I enjoy thee more.

2. Temptations on the left hand. 2 Cor.4.16.

Heb.10.34.


3. Over the fear of death.

Heb.2.15.

See 2 Cor. 5.1. I know that if this earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, eternal in the heavens.

Affurance of our Salvation procures Victory over the fear of death. Old Simeon with Christ in his arms could pray for a dispensation hence. He that hath gotten good evidences in his bosom, and the Spirit's testimony of the pardon of his sin sealed upon his Conscience, will join with Simeon in this his petition. Until assurance be attained, 'tis impossible but that men should all their lives long be kept in bondage through the fear of death: but an assured person can wish for death, and say with Paul, Cuncto dissolesi, I desire to be dissolved. Assurance carries the soul to the top of Pisgah, and from thence a Believer (as he hath a general view of the whole Land of promise, so by the eye of an assuring Faith he) is able to espay his own lot and portion in Heaven and Glory; and can he be unwilling to go through Jordan (or the Chanel of the Grave) to take possession thereof? As the least degree of true Faith takes away the
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the sting of death, because it takes away guilt; so Plerophory of Faith breaks the very teeth and jaws of death, by taking away the fear and dread of it. When Evidences of an Estate are once sealed and attested, men are not afraid of that Turf and Clod, which (whilst it defiles their hands) gives them Livery and Seizion of large Revenues. When a true Believer knows his interest in those eternal Mansions of Glory to come, he is not troubled that his Cottage of Clay must first be pulled-down: The nature of death to a Believer is quite altered from what it was, and it seems to be another thing (in his present apprehension) differing much from what he once thought it to be. It once appeared only the wages of sin, but now it appears as the reward of patience: It was once thought the beginning of sorrow, but now the end of sin, and the consummation of grace. To a despairing person death appears like a grim Sergeant haling to prison; to an assuring person it acts the part of a Master of Ceremonies, who introduces Foreigners into the presence of the great King. Death holds forth a Crown to an assured person; it holds forth an Ax to a despairing person; such a change doth assurance make. I shall therefore add no more, but the words of Cyprian, who discoursing of death, hath these words: Beloved, faith he, the Kingdom of Heaven is begun already in us in joy and peace: there is no place left for fear, or doubting, or sorrow: be only can fear death, that is unwilling to go to Christ; and none can be unwilling to go to him, that know they shall reign with him.

And thus I have abundantly shewn how instrumental assurance is for the increase of sanctification, and obtaining a more complex victory over Sin, the World, and the fear of Death; and I have thereby confuted Bellarmine's grand Argument against assurance, as if it tended to licentiousness. The rest of his Objections and Arguments I have also sufficiently obviated; so as I hope every considering person will be able (from what hath been spoken) to defend the truth, although the stile (of necessity) hath been more concise than might have been desired: yet I hope those that are intelligent will be satisfied with the matter of Argument therein contained, although I have been forced to abbreviate my Discourse. I must make but little other Application, than, 1. To desire you to change the Arguments by which I have proved the necessity of diligence, into Motives to put you upon the practice: 2. I shall conclude with some necessary Directions for the better attaining to assurance.

1. Give diligence to make your calling more sure in itself, by adding unto faith, virtue; unto virtue, knowledge; unto knowledge, temperance, and the rest of those Graces here mentioned by our Apostle. Although now your calling may be sure and saving, yet it may be more assured: the Promises were sure before Christ's coming, yet he is said to confirm them, and make them more sure, Rom. 15. 8. A Believer, the more he grows in grace, the more effectual is his calling made; and the more sure it is in itself, the more easily may he attain to his assurance of it.
The more effectual it is, the more visible and conspicuous always is a Believers' call. Little Grace may be true Grace, but little Grace is next to no Grace; and therefore weak Grace is seldom discerned: just as those Motes or Atoms (as they are called), which are small particles of dust, and fly abroad in the Air, are true Bodies, but they are invisible Bodies: thus while Faith is but as a Grain of Mustard-seed, it may be true, but it will be hardly seen. When love to God is (as a small spark of fire covered with a heap of ashes) smothered with too great a mixture of sensual and carnal affections, it is not easily discovered: or found without much search: but Faith grown up to a Tree, and love blown up to a flame, cannot be hid, for thus they render themselves most visible and manifest. That poor woman that had left her Sleeper (her Great) was forced to light her Candle, and sweep diligently her house, and to look long before she found it, because it was but a dram, a very small piece; had it been a Talent, or Shekel of the Sanctuary, it would have been more easily found: Let the print be true and exact, yet if small, 'tis often not legible; especially to weak eyes: If you would attain to assurance, labour to make your calling more sure in itself, by growing eminent in Grace.

2. Labour to make it sure to your selves, by attaining to, and living in the exercise of those Graces that are properly and more effectually assuring Graces. The Spirit of God in Scripture hath declared that a Believer's assurance of Salvation depends upon the exercise of three assuring Graces. 1. Πίστις, a full assurance of knowledge and understanding. 2. Ελπίς, a full assurance of faith. 3. Ευλογία, a full assurance of hope.

1. Labour for full assurance of knowledge: When St. Paul is declaring to the Colossians, how much he desired that the Believers of Laodicea might have their hearts comforted and assured, he reveals the way of attaining this, to be by attaining all riches of full assurance of understanding; which phrase implies two things: 1. That all those things be known upon which a Believers assurance and comforts are built; and these fundamentals are many: there are several (πραγμάτα, or praecognita; several) things must be foreknown and understood before assurance can be attained; as, 1. You must labour to know the way of Redemption and Salvation by the Mediation of Christ. 2. You must know the way of a persons obtaining an interest in that Mediation; that is, you must know that Faith (effectually owning of Christ as Mediator, and deporting it self towards him as such) doth by virtue of the New Covenant obtain an interest in that Mediation. 3. You must know by what signs or evidences true saving Faith may be distinguished certainly from temporary and ineffectual Faith; 4. You must know that these certain evidences are found in your heart and life. 5. Full assurance of knowledge, implies a clear and distinct acknowledgment of all these, with reference to a Believers well-built and grounded consorts: Verhasselt, 6.
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1. Labour for full assurance of Faith. Now this implies these four things, (which I must but name, as in the former direction.) 1. Labour for full assent unto the truth of Gospel-revelation. 2. For full consent unto Gospel-method, terms, conditions and commands. 3. For full dependence upon Gospel-Grace. 4. For full experience of Gospel-Obdiance, or the Obedience of Faith. All these are included in what full assurance of Faith, wherewith the Apostle exhorts Believers to draw near to God, Heb. 10.22. and every one of these acts of Faith must be attained and put in practice before assurance can be attained.

2. Labour for full assurance of hope. And this supposes two things:
First, an actual explicit considering of the grounds of our hope, or laying a good foundation: all saving hope is rational and well-built. Hopes Anchor (in a Believer) holds not by the strength of a Spider's Web, as the Hypocrites hope doth; but it holds by the strength of a three-fold Cord, not easily broken; it holds by the evidence of, 1. Testimony, 2. Sense, and 3. Reason. Bellarmine (fondly adhering to the Philosophical definition of hope, and) departing from the Scriptural use and acceptation of the word hope, (which is the ground of many errors in the Church of Rome) denies that reason and hope can consist together; and consequently denies also that there is any such thing as full assurance of hope, but when he is urged with that plain Text in Heb. 6.11. where Believers are exhorted to give diligence for attaining full assurance of hope, (which supposeth that a full assured hope is in the first place built upon good evidence and proof.) The Jesuite in answer to this, doth most egregiously trifle, and doth nonsensically distinguish between the certainty of the will in opposition to the certainty of the understanding; although every Tyro knows, that the will is no subject of certainty, nor can there be any certainty of will separate from the certainty of the understanding: and yet more ridiculous is the Jesuites Argument, when he tells us, that what we have reason to hope for, we do not hope for it, but expect it: the folly of which distinction, between hope and expectation I need not say any thing further to it, than to assure you, that the Apostle Peter was wholly ignorant of Bellarmine's Logick, when he exhorts Believers to be ready to give & just mei, & in ipsis, a reason of the hope that was in them. But, Secondly, the phrase (full assurance of hope) supposes an actual building of our hope upon these good grounds, or an actual conclusion from rational principles, that we are pardoned, and shall be saved: this one thing to consider.
consider the grounds of such a conclusion, another thing to conclude actually from those grounds. Assured hope (as it is accompanied with rational evidences, fo) ’tis accompanied with right use of right reason to draw the inference: weak hope sometimes (acts as Children will do) it grants the premises; and yet denies the conclusion; but strong hope is accompanied with a full power to infer the assured conclusion from those assured premises, which those afore-named assuring Graces did lay down. Knowledge faith, Whoever believes, shall be saved; Faith faith, Peter doth believe, therefore Hope faith Peter shall be saved. And this Hope is that which will never make ashamed, because hereby the love of God is shed abroad more abundantly in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, Rom. 5. 5. Let every man therefore thus prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself, and not in another.