

SERMON XVIII.

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 I. 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 stile 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.

E c c e

In

The scope and division of the words.

Conc Trid. Sess. 6. Certitudo remissionis peccatorum est vana & omni pietate remota fiducia. Bellar. de Just. lib. 3. cap. 3. Primus Hæreticorum error est posse Fideles eam notitiam habere de sua gratia ut certa Fide sciant aut sibi remissa esse peccata.

- In which Exhortation, it will be very much to our purpose to consider: 1. The *Person* that gives the Exhortation: 2. The *Persons* to whom it is given: 3. The *Matter* exhorted to: 4. The *Motives* enforcing. The Person that gives the Exhortation, is the Apostle *Peter*, one eminent, 1. For his frequent Temptations: 2. For his great falls by these Temptations: 3. For recovery after those falls. 1. *Peter* was a person subject to frequent and violent Temptations unto sin; at one time the Devil had so transformed himself into an *Angel of light*, that he had almost thereby transformed *Peter* into an *Angel of darkness*: *Peter* thought he acted the part of a *Saint* and Friend to dissuade *Christ* from going to *Jerusalem*; but *Christ* intimates that *Peter* acted therein the part of a *Devil*, when he said to him, Get thee behind me, *Satan*: at another time, the Devil desired to *winnow Peter as wheat*, and you know how he was lifted in the High Priest's Hall.
- Peter* was one that being tempted, had greatly miscarried, and fallen into gross sin; for you do not only read of his *disssembling*, and of his too great complying with the superstitious Jews in their Ceremonies and Worship, but appearing like a down-right Apostate renouncing of *Christ*, and forswearing any knowledge of him, *Matth.* 26. 24. He that shall consider the experience which *Peter* had of *Satan's* power and subtilty, and of his own impotency and weakness, (both which Considerations might afford Arguments against the possibility of Assurance) may at first wonder that *Peter* should ever attain to any Assurance himself; much more that he should be the Author of such an Exhortation as this to others. But *Peter* (as he had experience of *Satan's* malice, of his own insufficiency, so he) had experience, 1. Of the prevalence of his Saviour's intercession: *Christ* had prayed that *Peter's Faith* might not fail in the habit, although it did fail in the act. 2. He had experience of the Spirit's efficacy in working true sorrow and repentance for his great sin; and hence (in part) it is, that *Peter* is most fit of all men to encourage weak Believers against their despairing and desponding fears, and to put them upon endeavours after Assurance: moreover, *Peter* had received a Command from *Christ*, that when he should be converted, (*i. e.* recovered from his partial Apostacy) he should endeavour to strengthen his Brethren, and probably 'tis in obedience to this Command of *Christ* that he is thus earnest in this Exhortation.
- 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 Compellation 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 indued with saving Knowledge. 3. Such to whom God had communicated all things pertaining to life and godliness. 4. Such
1. The person exhorting, Peter.
1. One much tempted.
- Mark 16. 23.
- Luke 22. 31.
2. One foully falling by temptation.
- Gal. 2. 12, 13.
- In this we deny not but that the Pope may be Peter's Successor.
3. One recovered from temptation by Christ's intercession, and the Spirit's efficacy.
- Luke 22. 32.
- Ibid.
2. The persons exhorted, true Believers.
- Verf. 1.
- Verf. 2.
- Verf. 3.
- Verf. 4.

4. Such as God had called to glory and virtue. 5. Such to whom God had given exceeding great pretious promises. 6. Such as were made partakers of the Divine Nature. Lastly, Such as had escaped the pollutions of the world through lust.

These are the persons who although they had obtained pretious 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 falshood which Bellarmine boldly reports that we teach, that except men have Assurance, they are not true Believers, or shall they ever be saved: This is an impudent calumny: for if any particular persons abroad have thought that a special and full perswasion 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 shewn the great difference between Fides and Fiducia, between Recumbence and Assurance; and they all do account and call Assurance a Daughter, Fruit and Consequent of Faith; and the late learned Arrowsmith tells us, that God seldom bestows Assurance upon Believers till they are grown in Grace; for (saith he) there is the same difference between Faith of Recumbence, and Faith of Assurance, as is between Reason and Learning. Reason is the Foundation of Learning, so as there can be no Learning if Reason be wanting, (as in Beasts) in like manner there can be no Assurance where there is no Faith of adherence. Again, as Reason well exercised in the study of Arts and Sciences arises to Learning; so Faith being well exercised on its proper Object, and by its proper Fruits, arises to Assurance. Further, as by negligence, non-attendance, or some violent Disease, Learning may be lost, while Reason doth abide; so by temptation, or by spiritual sloth, Assurance may be lost, while saving Faith may abide. 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 subserviently 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, Wherefore the rather; and if you look back upon the two next preceding Verses, you will find in them a double Argument, 1. Ab

Bell. de Just.
lib. 3. cap. 3.

Davenant de
Cer. 37.
Prideaux Cer.
Sept.

Taft. Sac. l. 2.

3. The matter
of Exhortation.

4. The Motives;
1. Implied.

Vers. 8.

utili, 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.

Mica 4.

He that lacketh these things is blind, (the word signifies purblind) purblind persons do see, but they see only things near at hand: many true Believers are weak Believers; not so strong-sighted as Abraham was, that could see Christ's day afar off: unassured persons are not able to look steadily to those things that are to come. 2. There is danger of

Joh. 8. 56.

Vers. 9.

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 laziness to procure such Apostacy; 2. which is farther also intimated in this 10 Verse,

2. Motive expressed.

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 saving Faith till you come to Assurance, and God will make good his own promise, that you shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation; Perseverance being designed, decreed and promised by God in the behalf of all those that he hath effectually called, and did eternally elect.

1 Pet. 1. 5.
Stabilis est Dei
gratia qua ful-
ciuntur ergo
imunes sunt a
periculo cadendi.
Cal. in
Loc.

The first general
Proposition.

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

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

The second general
Proposition.

That it is a 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.

The first special
Proposition.

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.

Explication.

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?

Answ. 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*: Gen. 47. 29: and in this large sence 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 *nomen 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 saith, *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 consequence 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 Elect 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

Gen. 47. 29.

Gen. 4. 26.

1. Cor. 1. 2.

God's Call of two kinds.

1. In word only.

2. In word and power both.

Hence ineffectual, or effectual.

Prov. 1. 27.

Joh. 5.

The Judgment
of T. Aquinas
about infused
habits of Grace.

1. 2. Q. 51.

Ar. 4.

1. Q. 12. Ar. 4.

1. Q. 12. Ar. 4.
Non iniquus
est Deus si ine-
qualia equali-
bus præparat.

Chrysostom,
Augustine,
Bernard. See
Catharinus and
Eisengrenius
de certiu.
Gratiz.

Can. 1. 4.

Rev. 3. 20.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

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 owned as the immediate Infuser of these habits. And he further adds, that as God produces some natural effects *without the help* of second causes, (as health is sometimes bestowed without the help of 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) bestows more Grace on some, than upon others: And that though it be most agreeable unto Man's nature, that *habits* should arise from frequent *acts*, and much exercise, yet God *may*, and *doth work such habits of Grace* in some Men, which Nature cannot work; and therefore he concludes that they are supernaturally produced. I have given you the opinion of *this Author* about an effectual call the more *fully*, because I am confident, that had some men (who oppose the infusion of habits) been *old* enough, or *diligent* enough to have perused the Writings of such a person as *Thomas Aquinas*, before they had divulged their own fond Notions and Opinions, they would (out of a kind of ambition to be accounted *ἰσοψόφοι*, 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 of 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 outward call of the Word; the very *essence* of an effectual call consisting in the Spirit's regenerating the Soul, and giving a new heart, (which is 2 Pet. 1. 4. Scripture-Language) or in the Spirit's infusing of new principles and habits of Grace, (according to the phrase of the Schools) so that now *by calling* here in the Text, you must *understand* an inward effectual change wrought in the heart by God himself in the work of *Conversion* and *Regeneration*, or the Spirits infusing of habits of Grace into thy heart.

Quest. 2. What is meant by *sure calling*, or *wherein* consists the nature of Assurance? 2. what is meant by sure calling.

Ans. There is a *double* certainty of an effectual calling: 1. One, Certitudo duplex objecti vel subjecti rei vel spec. the certainty of it *in it self*: 2. The other, the certainty of it *unto 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 Objecti*, the certainty of the *Objecti*.

2. Our calling is sure unto us, when we know that God hath effectually called us; and this the Schoolmen call, *Certitudo Subjecti*, the certainty of the *Subject*: the word in the Text signifies *firm, stable, steady, 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 certain Premises: in like manner our calling may be said to be *sure*, 1. either when it hath the efficacy of God's Spirit as its sure Foundation; or, 2. when it hath the evidence of proper fruits, which are as good Premises or sure Arguments, from which we may conclude ourselves to be effectually called. Belatior.

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 respect *subjective certainty*, as something to be *superadded* to objective certainty. Hence when *Bellarmino* would (from this Text) prove Justification by works, because in some Copies the words are read thus, Chameir Pau strat. Tom. 3. Lib. 15 cap. 15. Give diligence to make your calling sure *δι' ἡλικον ἔργων*, by good works; the most learned *Chamier* answers him, That granting the words be so read, (*Beza* owning that he had seen such a Copy) yet 'tis very *absurd* and *illogical* for *Bellarmino* to argue that mens persons are therefore justified.

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 Conscientie*: for this there is no colour from these words, because when *Vocation* is said here to be made sure by good works, 'tis (saith *Chamier*) to be understood primarily and properly of subjective certainty; *ut constet 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.

Subjective certainty is of two kinds.

1. Perfect.
3. Imperfect.

Note 1. There is no perfect certainty amongst men.

1 Cor. 13. 9.

Note 2. Some imperfect certainty is proper certainty.

Job 11. 7.

3. Imperfect certainty hath these four properties.

1. Founded upon assuring evidences.

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 subject is so certain of the truth of a thing, as that he cannot be more certain of it, because he hath not the least ignorance of the thing, or the least doubt concerning it: this is perfect certainty. But here are three things to be noted: Let it be considered, 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 saith, *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 proper certainty, and is in many cases to be accounted more than conjectural or meer 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 Atheism remaining in them; yet I hope many men have a true and certain knowledge of God, although no man hath a perfect knowledge of him: so a man may have a true and certain knowledge that he is effectually called, although he hath not a perfect knowledge of it. 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 indiscursive fears which may consist 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 *rationaly* that he cannot fall; (and he is not *rationaly* in any fear of falling) but yet when he looks from that height, he hath *irrational* fears impressed upon him; and yet such fears as these hinder not, but that he is *still* certain that he shall not fall, because he can *rationaly* prove that he *cannot* fall: Thus a person assured of his effectual calling by good evidence, is *really* and *properly* certain; although possibly when he looks down from the *height* of future expected Glory, into the *Bottomless-Pit* of misery, (from whence he hath escaped) some indiscursive or irrational fears and doubts may be impressed upon him, which may *lessen*, but not *destroy* assurance.

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. *Dependence 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 *perswasion*, a *sure perswasion*; 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

2. *Prevailing over all rational doubts.*

3. *Followed with the proper fruits of assurance.*

Phil. 4.7.
Gal. 5.22.
1 Joh. 5.4.
2 Cor. 5.14.
Psal. 40.8.
Job 1.21.
Jam. 1.2.
Heb. 4.16.
Gal. 4.6.
Zac. 12.10.
Psal. 62.8.
Phil. 1.23.

4. *Owned by God, and so called.*

called *πίστις*, certain knowledge: St. John saith, *Hereby we know that we are in him*, 1 John 1. 5. 3. *Εἰρηνη*, an evident probation; so a Believers faith is called the evident proof of things not seen, Heb. 11. 1. 4. *ῥακάσις*, a substantial prepossession of Heaven; so Faith is also called by the same Apostle in the same place. 5. 'Tis called *πνευματική*, a fulness of assurance both in Heb. 6. 11. and Heb. 10. 20. 1 Thess. 1. 5. A Believers assurance is owned by God, and said to be full, although

Our Controversie with Rome in this point is about the proper, not the perfect assurance of a Believer.

not perfect. So that the Controverlie 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 confess the Philosophick 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 *Δογματικοί*, Dogmatists, who thought themselves perfectly certain of every thing, and doubted of nothing, but were as infallible as the Pope in his Chair. 2. The *Ἐπὶστωτοι*, a kind of seekers that did restrain their assent, and doubted of all things; like the Popish Laity that are kept in the dark, and are taught to be blind: but the Protestants are of an elective kind of Divines, who know a middle way between both extreams, 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.

In certitudine res quasi gradus distinguuntur, &c. Bellarm lib. de Jus. 3. cap. 2.

2. Our Controversie not about words or names. Justi securitas leonis instar dum quolibet contra se insurgere conspicit, ad mentis suae confidentiam redit, & scit quod cum eos adversantes superet, &c. Greg. 1. 31. Moral. cap. 23.

2. But let it be observed in the second place, that our Controversie is not about words or names of things: the Question is not, Whether a Believers assurance is to be called *certitudo fidei*, or *certitudo fiducia*, 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.

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 explicate 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 verify 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 Mission 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 be savingly illuminated 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 *Bellarmino* saith) were extraordinarily assured) could be *so well* assured by a voice supposed to come from *Heaven*, (which may be subject to many delusions of phantasie, 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*, assisted by the Spirit enabling a Believer to discern his agreement with that Rule. I *grant*, that God gave testimony unto Christ Jesus by a voice from Heaven: but

2. Probation.
1. Arg. from the Concessions and Articles of the Church of Rome.

v. Popish Doctrine, that assurance is possible in an extraordinary way, but not in an ordinary way.
See Bell. lib. 3: Just. cap. 5.

Matth. 3. 19.
Luke 3. 12.
Joh. 12. 28.

Joh. 5. 29.

Joh. 5. 36.

observe, 1. This voice was frequently repeated: 2. It was given in the hearing of multitudes: 3. God did speak *nothing* from Heaven immediately, but *what* he had *tanta mount*, spoken before in the Scripture: Hence it is that Christ appeals not to this voice, but bids men *search the Scriptures, for they testified of him*; and when Christ tells his followers again, that God had given testimony of him, *he makes mention of the works* that the Father had enabled him to do, but makes no mention of his voice.

Gal. 1. 8.

Luke 16. 29.

And as for assurance *given by Angels*, it must needs fall short of the assurance *given by the Spirit of God*: for the Apostle supposes that an Angel from Heaven (*i. e. Satan transforming himself into an Angel of light*) may preach false Doctrine, and be *accursed*; which is blasphemy to suppose of the Holy Spirit. Hence also our Saviour intimates in the Parable of *Dives*, that *the Writings of Moses and the Prophets* in Scripture, are much more convincing and assuring, than the words of *one arising from the dead*, or one sent from Heaven. If men may then be assured in *Bellarmino's* extraordinary way, they may much better be assured by the ordinary way revealed in Scriptures.

2 Popish Doctr.
That one man
may be assured
of anothers Sal-
vation, but not
of his own.
Marcellinus
Cervinus.

The second Popish Doctrine is this, They say that one man may be assured of anothers Salvation, but that no man can be assured of his own: The Pope declares that he was sure of *Bellarmino's* Salvation *when he Canonized him for a Saint*, but *Bellarmino* was not sure of his own Salvation himself when he died; for his own Nephew relates that he trembled at the thoughts of death; and that when some standing by desired him that he would pray for them in Heaven, he answered, That for his part he knew not (when he was just expiring) *whether ever he should come there*. Now of all sorts of men the Church of Rome ought to grant assurance possible to Believers themselves, when as the Pope hath declared himself to be so infallibly sure of the Salvation of so many millions whom he hath Canonized.

3 Popish Doctr.
That the Priest
can give assu-
rance by his
word, but God
cannot do it by
his Word.

3. They say that the Priest or Confessor can give assurance by his bare word, but deny God's Word to be any good ground of assurance: *Bellarmino* saith, that after Confession, 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 Confession as a *help* to assurance; yet afterwards he makes assurance to depend *wholly on Absolution*: for he saith it may often happen that a man may confess *few or none of his sins*, and yet the Priest may assure him of pardon, and he ought so to believe. You see here that the Priest can give assurance, and *assurance of faith* also; but with him the Word of God can give no assurance at all, much less of faith. The Jesuite 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

Confessio pœ-
nitentis & ver-
bum absolven-
ti sunt signa
Gratiæ Justifi-
cantis practica
& efficacia ad-
eo ut falsa esse
non possint,
Bell. de Pœn. Lib. 1. Cap. 10. Facile potest accidere ut viz. minimam partem suorum criminum
Quis aperiat, & tamen vere absolvitur, & certo absolutus creditur. Bell. de Pœn. Lib. 3. Cap. 21.

saith,

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 Magus* 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.

Obscura est certitudo earum rerum quæ solo Fide vel opinione Nituntur. Bell. de Just. Lib. 3. Cap. 2.

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.

4 Popish Doctr. They say men may attain perfection, yet not assurance.

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, (so 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 enslaved 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 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.

5 Popish Doctr. They say men may merit, and yet not know they are sincere.

Pietatem quantum ducunt illi, &c. Those count gain god-

you

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.

2 Arg. From the Nature, Use and End of the Holy Scriptures, which are a good Foundation of assurance.

1. As to the matter of them, viz. The Grace of God in Christ.

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 whosoever 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.

Jam. 1. 10.

Jam. 3. 2.
Rom. 6. 14.

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 Papists that hold Justification by works, must necessarily deny the possibility of assurance: for if Justification were by works, then if a Believer should keep the whole Law, and fail but of one particular, he were guilty of all; 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 as 'tis 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

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 it self) 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 essential *goodness* and *kindness* of God as the ground of a natural faith. I grant that this Divine benignity and goodness doth afford some lesser *hope* or *expectation* of pardon, but it gives no *solid* ground of assurance. The essential bounty, goodness and mercy of God, is like a *deep* and *wide Ocean*, upon which the mind of man may (as a Vessel at Sea) bear it self up in a *calm*; but if a *storm* arise, every wise Pilot will make towards the shore, or to a *safe Rock*, because 'tis *there* only he can find good *Anchor-hold*: Grace in a *Covenant*, or in a conditional *promise*, may seem to be Grace *bounded* and *limited*; but yet *hope* even *there* hath better anchorage than it hath upon God's general Grace and Philanthropy, which may bear up the Soul in a *calm*, but afford *little peace* to an *unquiet* mind: '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 feigning faith by those certain *notes* or *marks* which are laid down in the Word; what can hinder the possibility of a Believer's assurance? Especially if you shall consider in the second place the manner of Scripture-revelation, which proves it to be a good Foundation of assurance, in that it is, 1. full, 2. plain, 3. assuredly divine, 4. designed for assurance.

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

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.

3. Scripture reveals the nature of that faith whereby a Believer attains an interest in Christ.

2 Joh. 16.
2 Joh. 17, 18.
1 Tim 1.

2. The manner of Scripture-revelation shows it to be a good Foundation of assurance.

Joh. 15. 15.

Joh. 7. 17.

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 *unsanctified* person cannot *wholly* be a stranger to *himself*, surely then the man that dwells much at *home*, that frequently *descends* into his own heart, that *summons* his own Soul to *appear* before him, and to *come* to trial, this man cannot *easily* be ignorant what *agreement* there is between the Rule of God's Word, and the *method* of his Conversation. Bellarmine doth much urge that Text of the Prophet, *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, (saith the Cardinal) then none can attain to assurance. But we answer:

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

2. The Question is propounded of *one mans* knowing the heart of another, but not of a mans 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 *αὐτεγνωσις*, by which power it is able to eye its Rule.

2. *Συνείδησις*, a power to compare man's actions with the Rule.

3. *Κρίσις*, a power to pass sentence or judgment either of *condemnation*, whereby it doth *καταγγεῖν*, accuse; or of *absolution*, whereby it doth *ἀπολογεῖν*, excuse, as the Apostle speaks *Rom. 1.*

Conscience is both a Judge, a Witness, and an Executioner upon the trial 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 (saith 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

if our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence (even) before God: that person that is acquitted at the Bar by a Judge, acting according to Law, needs not fear to appear before the King himself on the Throne.

2. 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 lye 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, *Conscientia mille testes*, Conscience is a thousand witnesses: but the Apostle speaks yet more, when he joins the Spirit of God as a co-witness with our spirits, 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 sentence given.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

Prov. 15. 15.

Prov. 14. 14.

Prov. 9. 17.

Prov. 14. 10.

Rev. 2. 17.

4 Arg. Because it hath been attained.

Job 19. 25.

Verf. 26.

Psal. 119. 130.

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 *Spir*; if Conscience doth *acquit*, no such Comforter and Rewarder; this (saith Paul) is our *rejoycing*, 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 know but those that have them, even the sons of consolation.

4. Assurance is possible to be attained because it hath been attained, *ab esse ad posse valet consequentia*. 1. Job declares his assurance in that he saith, *He knew that his Redeemer did live*; his, (emphatically his, not anothers 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*, (saith he) *therefore save me*. 3. Another instance of assurance we have in *Hezekiah*, who could appeal to God on a death-bed, *That he had walked before God in truth with a perfect heart, and had done that which was right in God's sight*; and 'tis evident his assurance was good, for God accepts of the appeal, and declares it to be true, *Isai. 38. 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 perswaded 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 perswasion, but Pareus proves that the Apostle never useth the word *πίστεωμαι*, *I am perswaded*, (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 perswaded* (that is, I am assured) that

Stapleton.
Vasques.

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 further, since no Creature can do any thing towards our separation from God but by our wills, 'tis folly (saith he) to think that the Apostle doth not include a Believers will, when he saith, No Creature shall separate a Believer from God. Bellarmine, to avoid the Text, runs to his old refuge, and grants that Paul was truly assured, but it was by an extraordinary revelation, which no other Believer can ordinarily attain to: The folly of this evasion I have already in part detected; two things more I desire may here be considered. 1. That when any persons have declared (in the Scripture) their full assurance, they have spoken of it not as of a thing of extraordinary revelation, but as of a thing of evident probation. 2. That yet they have spoken of their assurance as of a thing of as great certainty as can be desired. For the proof of both these, I shall instance in the Apostle John, who often asserts his assurance: but, 1. He reckons it not grounded upon immediate revelation, but upon rational evidence and probation, his words are these, 1 John 2. 3. Hereby (ἐν τούτῳ) we know (saith 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, Ἰνῶς τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἐννοήσεως, scimus 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 assurance, 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 favour to us: There could be no greater reason of the institution of circumcision and the Passover under the Law, and of Baptism and the Lord's

Salmero.
Pererius.

Paustrat. Ca-
thol. Tom. 3.
Lib. 13.

Lib. de Just. 3.
Cap. 5.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκ-
ομεν ὅτι ἐν τῇ
ἀληθείᾳ ἔσμεν,
ὅτι ἐμπεσέν αὐτῷ
πίστευσεν τὰς κα-
θάρσεις.
1 Joh. 3. 19.

6 Aug. From
the Institution,
Nature, use and
End of the
Sacraments.
Rom. 4. 11.

Rom. 4. 11.

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 it 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 saith, *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 Believer's Faith is strengthened, and his assurance is promoted. It is one Argument that Becanus 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 murther, or shall not steal; but the command is as binding as if they had been named; the case is the same in Promises as in Commands: but we might answer (*sano sensu*) farther with St. Bernard, That in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is an actual Exhibition and particular Application made of the Grace of God, whereby all true Believers are personally and actually invested into that Grace by a direct and immediate assurance given. The Father explains himself thus: The Priest (saith he) in the Eucharist doth as it were invest the Receiver with an assurance of pardon, as some men are invested into an Estate by a Rod or Staff, or as a Woman is invested into an actual interest in her Husband's Estate by her Husband's putting a Ring upon her Finger, or as a Canon is invested by a Book put into his hand, or as an Abbot is invested by a Staff. We do not say with the Papists, that the Sacraments do actually confer Grace by virtue of the external application: but we say that in the Sacrament there is an assured offer of Grace made to every Receiver, and unto all true Believers they do sign, seal and assure a certain and undoubted interest in

Domino passio-
ni appropin-
quans, In-
vestiri suos de
Gratia sua
curavit, &c.
Bern de Coena
Dom. Serm. 1.

Offerunt non
conferunt, sig-
nant & obfig-
l. a.

in pardon. *Bellarmino* saith, That after the receiving of the Sacrament, as he calls it, of Absolution, very many Believers have, and all Believers ought to have a certain and confident assurance of pardon of sin: In which words of the Jesuite, I desire *three things* to be observed: 1. How openly and plainly *Bellarmino* 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 *fiducie certitudinem habere*, if any one shall so distinguish; he will but farther discover his own folly, because (*certitudo fiducie*) assurance of Faith is (of the two) more large and comprehensive than (*certa fides*) which we translate sure Faith. Assurance or Confidence doth always suppose sure Faith, or certain assent, as the ground, root and foundation thereof. There may be Faith where there is no Confidence, but there can be no Confidence where there is no Faith: He that therefore saith, That 'tis possible for a man to be assuredly confident of the pardon of his sin, doth contradict him that saith, 'Tis not possible for any man to believe his sins are pardoned. *Bellarmino* 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 fiducie*) assurance of Faith, or assurance of Confidence (translate it as you please) concerning pardon of sin is vain and impious: but *Bellarmino* saith that many Believers have (and all ought after Absolution to have) this (*certitudinem fiducie*) 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

Post receptum Sacramentum plurimi fidelium habent, & habere debent fiducie certitudinem de remissione peccatorum. Bell. lib. 3. de Pœn. Cap. 2. Primus Hæreticorum error est, posse Fideles eam notitiam habere de sua gratia ut certa Fide statuunt sibi remissa esse peccata. Bell. lib. 3. de Justif. cap. 3. Fides est Fiducie Fundamentum, Fiducie est Fidei actus. Prideaux Lectio 7.

Peccator in fœ-
ria pœniten-
tia ex fide in
Christum pos-
sit certa fidu-
cia statuere
sibi remissa
esse peccata
Chemn. Exa-
men, ad Sess. 6.

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 them selves express it; for there is little or no difference between the very phrase which I have quoted out of *Bellarmino's* second Book of Penance, and the very words of his Adversary *Chemnitius* 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.

6 Arg. Because
it is possible to
attain to all
assuring eviden-
ces:

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. Unerring 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 Demon-
strative Argu-
ment.

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,

1: From the
proper effects of
infused habits
of Grace.

First, by peculiar, proper, and distinguishing effects of infused habits of saving Grace: the effects of all *habits* are their *respective acts*; and although all *sorts of gracious acts* do not prove *habits* of true Grace, yet God hath declared in his Word that there are *some acts*, and *some exercises of Grace*, which do demonstratively prove infused habits of Grace, and do evidence an effectual call; this is proved by 1 *Thess.* 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* (saith 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* saith, *1. The work of Faith, design,* that works do *shew*, or (as the words signifie) *demonstrate* the truth of *Faith*: *Jam. 2. 18.* 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 Joh. 4. 4.* 4. Quenching of Satan's fiery darts, *Ephes. 6. 16.* 5. Purifying of the heart, *Act. 5. 9.* Where-ever 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 signifie any *irk* *slowness* or *burthen* that love feels, for nothing more *delightful* and *pleasant* 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 superiour 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 it self 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 *Bellarmino* 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 intire resignation to the Will of God, so as to forsake all and to follow Christ. On the other hand, there may be

2. Labour of Love, νόμος τῆς ἀγάπης, 1 Thess. 1. 3.
1 Joh. 5.
1 Joh. 2. 5.
Bell. Lib. 4. Just. Cap. 15. Charitas est ipsa sola certissima nota, Quia filii Dei a filijs Diaboli decernantur.

3. The patience of hope.

Our Adversaries grant a certainty of hope, and therefore must grant a certainty of Faith; for Scripture useth often to speak of both these as one Grace, and the Hebrew word **בטח** signifies both to believe and hope.

2. From the essential properties of saving habits.

All these properties are comprehended in those two words in **Psal. 51. רוח נדבורה** a free spirit, **רוח נכון** an established spirit, Maimon. more Nev.

2. Unerring sense. The Lord saith, Every being is indued with sense, even the very Elements: Est in q. ovis inarticulato & incan'o Elemento, instinctus quidam Naturalis, Herb. de Veritate. The Pythagoreans thought it equal cruelty to cut off the branch of a tree, as to break the leg of an Ox, or the arm of a man, affirming that all trees were indued with sense. Diog. Laert. de vitas Phil.

some kind of *patience* which may be nothing but a *Stoical apathy*, and a *senselessness* under sufferings, or only a *blind boldness* to engage with difficulties. Now this often-times arises from pride, not from Evangelical hope, nor from a sense of interest in the love of Christ. Now we do not say that such hope or patience when so divided are certain Arguments of Regeneration, but they are only so in *conjunction*; and we say that patience, *when 'tis* a fruit of Gospel-hope, 'tis then an effect of the Spirit's work, who hath infused that hope as an habit of saving Grace; and 'tis Demonstratively proved to be so, because this hope is of the same nature as saving faith, and it hath many evidences which certainly manifest it to be saving: 1. This hope *purifies the heart*, 1 Joh. 3. 3. 2. This hope *rejoiceth the heart*, Rom. 5. 2. 3. It assures the heart, *Heb. 6. 11, 19.* 4. It saves the soul, *Rom. 8. 24.* Now these effects are able to distinguish presumption from *right hope*; and also Argumentatively to evidence an effectual call.

2. 'Tis possible to prove by Demonstrative Argument that the Spirit of God hath infused the habits of saving Grace into the heart by the special and essential properties of these habits. There are four properties of some acts, which do prove the existence of *habits*; and do evidently shew, that those acts and exercises do *flow from principles or habits*, either, 1. naturally, or, 2. acquired, or, 3. infused; and the four properties are these: 1. *Facility* and promptness, or preparedness to act. 2. *Delight* and pleasure in acting. 3. *Universality* as to the object about which it acts. 4. *Constancy* as to continuance in acting. Now 'tis possible for a Believer to discern that the exercise of his Grace hath all these properties, and thereby he may demonstratively prove that his Graces are habitual, and consequently that they were infused in an effectual call, (for I have proved that they cannot be natural or acquired habits) and therefore they must be infused, that 'tis possible for a Believer to attain to these properties, and to discern them, I shall briefly prove (although I could be large) in the instance of *David*, who attained to, and discerned, 1. A facility and readiness, a fixedness and preparedness in the exercise of his Grace, as you may see *Psal. 108. 1. and Psal. 57. 7.* 2. A joy, delight, and pleasure in acting or doing the Will of God, *Psal. 40. 8. and Psal. 119. 16, 35, 47, 70, 92, 143, Verses.* 3. An Universality in his Obedience, and in that respect which he had to all God's Commands, *Psal. 119. 6.* 4. A constancy and continuance (not as to every particular, but as to the general course) of his Obedience, *Psal. 73. 25. Psal. 119. 44, 117.* That other Believers may attain to the same properties as *David* did, none can deny; and that they may discern them as *David* did, can be as little denied; and therefore 'tis possible to prove an effectual call by demonstrative Argument.

2. 'Tis possible for a true Believer to prove that he is effectually called by

an unerring sense. Every kind of life is indued 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, *Monsieur 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 discipulorum*, a discursive faculty; the other, *facultas intuitiva*, an intellective faculty; by the latter of which, some truths (they said) were intuitively and directly see *εμαπαλίζε*, 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 strein 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 especial work of God's own Spirit; for by *two properties* the teaching of *God's Spirit* may be distinguished from the common teachings of *men*, or from the *sole convictions* of a natural Conscience: 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 *Isaiab* expresses it, *Isai. 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

Cartesius de Methodo.

Aristot. lib. 2. Post. cap. ult.

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

1. By discerning a divine light illuminating his understanding. Psal. 36. 9.

Rom. 1.

Psalm 119. 105.

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

ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος
ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐν
τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου
καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις
αὐτοῦ. ἡ τοῦ
ἁγίου πνεύματος
ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἐν
τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου
καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις
αὐτοῦ. Ephes. 1. 19.

Cap. 2. v. 1.

Cap 4. v. 13, 14

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

Bellarmino's
Objection from
Heb. 6. 4, 5.
answered.
Joh. 4. 14.

Psalm 19. 10.

Mat. 13. 20, 21.

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 meer 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. A true Believer feels a divine power prevailing upon his will, which he proves to be *supernatural* both by the exceeding greatness of it in its *principle*, and also by the mighty working of it in its *effects*: The Apostle Paul desires of God that the *Ephesians* might know that they were effectually called, and that they might also know the hope thereof, in *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 quickning 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 Bellarmine 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 springing up to everlasting life. 2. Although a Hypocrite may have some taste of the sweetness of the Word; yet he always tastes a greater sweetness in the World: 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

with joy at first, but parted with it *again*, rather than undergo the sorrow of persecution. 3. An Hypocrite may taste some sweetness in the promises and privileges of the Word, and the gifts of the Spirit, but not in the precepts of the Word, or graces of the Spirit: Simon Magus A. & 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 Psal. 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 that certainly, and without error or mistake: For the Rule holds good in the due exercise of spiritual as well as bodily sense, That *Sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*; Sense cannot be deceived about its proper object: bodily sense is so certain, as that Christ himself appeals to it; in a proper case, Reason discerns that Spirits have neither flesh 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 rectify all these mistakes. In like manner (by the Guidance of the Spirit) God hath given in his Word most certain Rules whereby men may know from whence the mistakes of internal sense do arise, and in what manner, and by what means they may be corrected. From all which I may safely conclude, that as there are certain Sciences built upon the certainty of bodily sense, (as 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.

Sense is a certain and unerring evidence, Luk. 24 39. The Papists are of the opinion of Heraclitus, Κανὴ μίσθους ἀνθρώπων ὁδωμένοι, No man must believe his eyes. Like as the Philistines dealt with Samson, they would put out our eyes, that we might grind in their Mill, or bring grist to it: Like the Pharisees, Joh. 9. 25. that would persuade the man born blind, that he was so still, because they were unwilling to own Christ, the Author of his sight.

3. By infallible testimony of the Spirit.

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?

This testimony either written, 2 Tim. 3. 26. or real: the real testimony is either, 1. Material, mediate and objective.

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 *omnibus*) 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 mediately by the fruits of the Spirit) matter of proof or evidence, whereby he may evince by argument, that he is effectually called. This sort of evidence I have also already spoken to; therefore '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 it self beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God*: Where observe, 1. The *tester*; 2. The *testimonium*; 3. The *modus testificandi*.

Rom. 8. 16.

Three things considerable in these words. 1. The witnesses.

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 Believers own spirit doth sometimes prove, and may witness actually and truly its effectual call; and yet the Spirit of God may at that time suspend its immediate testimony, *pro hic, & 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 it self witnesseth with our spirits*; but of this more, after we have considered,

Not τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα, but αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα.

2. The testimony or thing witnessed.

2. The testimony, or the thing witnessed; which is this, That we are the sons of God; which phrase comprehends, 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 *effectual 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 *Συμμαρτυρεῖ*; 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 saith 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 pleases. He that *created* the faculties of man's mind, can *put* them into *act* and *exercise* by what ways or means soever he pleases: He that knows our thoughts *before we think* them, can cause us to *think* or *know* whatever he pleases to impress upon them.

Opened in three parts.

1. 'Tis by some operation, not voice; spirits speak the language of spirits, and of their own region.

Some Philosophers have undertaken to shew the way whereby the Angels and Spirits do converse. 1 Sam. 2. 13. Ezek. 38. 10.

2. As all the *Revelations* of God's Spirit are *harmonious*, and *consistant* one with another, so are all the *Works* of God's Spirit always agreeable and *concording*, so as one work thereof destroys not another work of the same Spirit; and thence it is, that God having endued men with *faculties* of *judging* and *discerning* of truth by its proper evidences, doth never cause the soul of man to *believe* any truth, but he gives them a *ground* or *reason* of its belief. I do not say that he gives always a reason of the thing, but he gives a reason of our belief: the *supernatural* works of the Spirit, do not *destroy*, but *restore* and *perfect* Nature. Now the *natural* way of conviction of man's mind being by evidencing the *reason* of things; hence, when the Spirit convinces man

Heb. 11. 1.

of any thing, he doth (as it were) by Argument. The Spirit of God convinces men of *righteousness*, and of *pardon* of sin, in the same manner that it convinces of sin, and its guilt, which is by way of Argument, as the word *μαρτυρεῖ* doth signify, in *Job. 16. 8.* Hence Faith also (which is wrought by the Spirit) is said to be *μαρτυρία* & *βέβαιον*, the Argumentative evidence of things not seen. I hope no man is so weak as 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. 'Tis by special Illumination.

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.

Quest. 1. why is this called a co-witness?

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 witnessed by our *own* spirits; and this properly speaks it to be a co-witness; for it witnesses not only in the same manner, but it also witnesseth the same matter which our spirits do witness.

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 over-bear all doubts and disputes 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 always 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 *παρελκία*, 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 *Apes*; yet in this very case (by the Rules of Calculation) an Astronomer is able to distinguish the *true* Sun from the *false*, so that the Science of *Astronomy* is never a whit the *less* certain: '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 *enervate* the single testimony of *Scripture*, because of the *mysteriousness* of Scripture, as they call it. Others seek to debilitate the testimony of *Conscience*, because men are apt to be *partial*. Others would weaken the testimony of the *Spirit*, because 'tis apt to be *mistaken*. But should we grant that none of those three Witnesses were *separately* sufficient, yet when they are *conjoined*, from thence there doth arise an *undoubted* assurance. Although the *strength* of one *Pillar*, or the soundness of the *Foundation* alone, 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?

yet

Quest. 2. How is a Believer certain that the Spirit doth witness?

Ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα μαρτυρεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς
πὸν ἀμωβόλιαν.
Chrylost. in Rom 8.

Heb. 12.1.

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 Witnesse; let them dispel this Cloud if they can. Although no man can be made sure of the time of the day by a Dial that hath no *Figures* upon it; and although a *blind man* cannot know the hour when there are *Figures* upon the Dial; and although one that hath *good eyes*, and seeth the *Figures*, yet cannot know the time if the *Sun shines* not: yet from hence it doth not follow, but that if there be a *concurrence of Lines and Figures*, of *Sight and Sun-shine together*, and the Dial be made, and placed by *infallible Rules of Art*, it will then certainly evidence the time of the day. In like manner the *Graces of God's Spirit* imprinted on the heart, the eye of Conscience open in examination and observation, and the *light of the Spirit* as the *Sun-shine*, these three *concurring together*, and all of them *agreeing with the Word*, which is the standing *Rule of judgment*, by which *all* the other are *regulated and ordered*; I say, from hence ariseth 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.

2. *Special Proposition*, That 'tis possible for one that is assured of his calling, to be thereby also assured of his eternal election; proved from the nature of election, and the dependance effectual calling hath thereon.

Arg. 1. An effectual call depends upon eternal election, as upon its necessary principal cause.

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 *Ephes. 1.* in the beginning of which Chapter you have the nature of election opened in all its causes and properties, (which I must not particularly name) in brief, you may observe that according to the Apostle's description thereof, election is that decree of God, whereby out of the meer good pleasure of his own will, he did eternally chuse some certain individual persons out of the corrupt mass of mankind, unto the infallible attainment of Grace here, and Glory hereafter. Now if this be the nature of election, viz. that Grace (or an effectual call) was thereby eternally decreed to be conferred and

and bestowed; it will then necessarily follow, that Grace, or an effectual call, *doth depend upon election as its cause*: which is plainly expressed, Vers. 4. where *Holiness* and *blamelessness* (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*, T. A. Sum. I. who observes that *love and choice in God doth very much differ* par. Q. 23. from *love and choice in men*: for *love in men* (saith he) *doth not cause loveliness in the beloved*, but *men first discern a loveliness*, and this causes a *love and choice*; whereas *God first exercised a free love in his eternal election*, predestinating the way and means of farther *manifestation* of his love, and then in time he *effects his own purpose*, making the objects of his *love* to become *lovely*, by his renewing his own image upon them in an effectual call. Agreeable hereunto is that expression of the Council of Orange, *God loved us not as we are by our desert, but as he designed to make us by his gift*. He that would rightly understand the relation vocation in time, hath unto election in eternity, and he that would know the dependance 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. *Ἐκλογή*, a choice, or a separating and singling out of some individual persons to be the objects of his love. 2. *Προβλεψις*, a purpose, or an intention and design of bestowing saving Grace in effectual calling of those chosen ones. 3. *Προβούλευσις*, 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 *decree* of God, whereby he purposed to bestow both *Grace* and *Glory*, was truly in it self but *one* eternal act of his Will, (and so there could be no priority of time amongst them) so we ought not in our *Conceptions* to distinguish between *Glory* and *Grace*, as if *one* were designed as the *end*, and the other as the *means*, (which is too common a mistake:) for in truth, *Grace* and *Glory* differ only as *lesser* and *greater* measures of the same thing; and therefore we say, that *God's absolute* and *inconditionate* purpose effectually to call some persons, and to give them *Grace*, passing by others, doth declare the *whole nature* of *God's decree of election*, 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 *Salmurian Divines* do shew 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 *sanctification* and *faith*

Tales nos amat Deus, Quales Futuri sumus, ipsius dono non quales sumus nostro merito Conc. 2. Canon. 2.

Grace is Glory begun, Glory is Grace perfected, Preston New Cov.

Thef. Salm. de elect. Lib. 1. sec. 29. 30.

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 he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Observe here, first, that God hath designed to bestow Grace and Glory on some men: Secondly, that God actually accomplisheth his design by effectual calling of these persons; *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.*

2 Arg. Vocation
depends upon
election as its
rule or measure.

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 *th* se 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 *predisposition*, 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 persecution. The working of faith depends so much upon God's election, as that *saving faith* bears the name of *the faith of God's elect*, 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 Registers; hence the Spirit of God compares God's election of per-

Καὶ ὅσων ἐταράχθη-
σαν ἵνα κληθῶσι
ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ αἰ-
σῶν.

Ὁ ἅγιος Παῦλος,
ὡς ἕτος ἐκλεκτοῦ
ἐκκλησίας, Ἀκτ. 9. 15

Roman Sena-
tors called Pa-
tres conscripti

sons

sons to *Grace* and *Glory*, to that *known custom*: in allusion unto which also *St. Paul* saith that the names of *Euodius*, and *Syntiche*, and *Clement*, *Phil* 4. 3. 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 *Crellius*, and some others, by the *book of life*, do understand the *Scripture*, wherein *God* hath declared that all *penitent* believers shall be saved, and all *impenitent* and unbelievers shall be damned; and consequently (say they) all believers have their names written there; but unbelievers have not their names written, 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, *πίπτοι περὶ ἐργασμῶν* ἰς τὸ τὸ κρίμα, 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. A- gain, 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 *Act.* 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 chooses, and then calls; yet we must first know our calling, and then our election: *God* descends from love to choice, from choosing to calling, or to infusing of the principles of saving Grace, then to sanctifying, or adding of greater measure of Grace; but in the trial of our state, and in our evidencing of our interest in *God's* love, we must ascend from sanctification to vocation, and from vocation to election: Election is as the *Spring-head* of all consequent acts of Divine love; he

Episcop.
Vorstius, &c.

Καὶ ἰδὲν πρὸς
θεῷ ἐν κρίσει
δοξάζων πρὸς
κρίνον αἰώνιον,
2 Tim. 1. 9.
Numerus electorum est Deo
certus; non
solum, ut cog-
nitus, sed ut
electus & præ-
definitus.
See T. Aq. par.
1. q. 23. a. 7.
The elect, a de-
terminate num-
ber as elect,
7000 which
had not bowed
to Baal, 1 King.
19. 18. 144000
sealed, Rev. 7. 4.

Inter Gratiam
& prædestina-
tionem hoc
tantum in-
est, quod præ-
destinatio est
gratiæ præpa-
ratio; Gratia
vero est ipsa
donatio, Aug.
de præd. cap.
10.
Deut. 24. 24.

Esther 6. 10.

Rev. 19. 8, 14;
2. Cor. 1. 22.

Job 36. 20.

Third special
Proposition.

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 it self; he that would *know* the nature of a Tree, let him not uncover the *root*, but let him observe the *fruits*, for by them it may best be known. Weak eyes may better behold the *beams* of the light reflected, than by looking on the *body* of the Sun, which many having *presumed* to do, have *lost* their sight wholly: and so it comes to pass, when men search *directly* into the decree of *election*, without considering that it is better and more easily *manifested* by an effectual call. It is not lawful for any man to look into this *Ark*, or to attempt to read the Law of God's eternal purposes, as they are there locked up in his decrees; '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 *Abasuerus* 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 *cloathed in Royal Robes, and beheld the King's Signet upon his hand*: so when a Believer finds himself *cloathed 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 *Elibu* 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 *Superscription*; Election is *Love under a Seal of secrecy*; but an effectual call *opens* this most fully, and evidently makes known the purpose of God from eternity.

The third special Proposition, 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,

First,

First, We do distinguish between Grace actively taken for God's favour to us, (*Gratia gratis dans*, as the Schools call it) and (*Gratia gratis data*) Grace passively taken, Grace wrought in us, (which is the effect of the former :) for it is not from the nature of Grace passively taken, or from Grace inherent in Believers, that they do persevere, and not fall away; but it is from the nature of that Grace (actively taken) that dwells in God's bosom; this is the ground that Believers persevere to Glory, as 'tis clearly expressed by Christ himself, *Joh. 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 casts off his people, or forgets to be gracious. The Sun may be muffled for a time in a Cloud, yet some heat will be communicated during the time it is hid, and in due time the beams of light will break through, and disperse the Cloud also. Christ may stand behind the Wall, yet then he will shew 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 awry from the path of holiness, another thing, *semper discedere a pietatis via*, to forsake 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 washed off, when a healthful, beautiful complexion will abide: a Bristol-stone is soon broken, but a true Diamond will abide the smartest stroke. Many Professors have suffered shipwreck as to faith, 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 hot love may be soon cold. Common fire is soon extinct, but the fire of the Sanctuary never went out.

1 *Premise*
Ideas & desideria, desiderunt sicut causa & effectus vel ac lux in Sole & Lumen in aere, Bradward. de causa Dei, lib. 2. cap. 13.

2 *Premise.*

Nebuchadnezzar lost possession of not right to his Crown. Cant. 2. 9.

3 *Premise.*

Actio pervertitur fides non evertitur, Bernard. de Gratia, & lib.

4 *Premise.*

Charitas quae dependitur nunquam fuit vera Charitas, Ansel. de Concord. praescient. & praedest. 1 Tim. 1. 19. Rev. 2. 3. Mat. 13. 43.

5 *Premise.*Vide Aug. de
cor. & Grat.
cap. 9.1 *Arg. From
the immutabi-
lity of God's
Decree.*

Rom. 11. 29.

As for those Texts that *Bellarmino* 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* (saith the Apostle) *without repentance*, ἀμεταμέλητα, 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 *subtily* of the *Jesuites* of *Rome* able to dissolve or untie by *skill*, that strong and necessary connexion of all those *links* of that *Golden Chain* that is drawn forth in that fore-quoted *Rom. 8. 29, 30*. Fore-knowledge, or Election, Vocation, Justification and Glorification, are inseparably conjoined; so that whoever hath hold of *one* of them, hath hold of all; and he that *knoweth one*, *knoweth all*. The Apostle in *Rom. 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* (saith 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, μένει, must remain steadfast, as *Beza*, or confirmed, as *Castalio* 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 צַחַק translated strength, may also be translated eternity or victory; intimating the victorious power that accompanies eternal Decrees. See *Aug. Confess. Lib. 1. Cap. 6*. God loves with

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 useth that expression of God's knowing of his, that from the consideration thereof, Believers might have greater confidence, that they being God's Husbandry, and God's Building, God will never suffer them to be removed, and that because he knows them; which phrase signifies these six things.

2 Arg. God's knowledge of the election a ground of perseverance.

2 Cor. 3. 11.

1. That God did fore-know them, so the word is used, *Act. 15. 18.* *Known unto God are all his ways from the beginning of the world;* i. e. God did from eternity fore-know and decree whatever should in time come to pass: now this is a ground of the Saints perseverance, viz. That God did fore-know the elect, or decree that all those that he should effectually call, should be justified, sanctified, and persevere unto Glory, as I have already shewn from *Rom. 8.*

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

2 Peculiarly to own, Amos 3. 2. 1770 Deut. 26. 24.

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.

3. To approve of, and delight in, Psal. 1. 6.

4. To know, is to oversee and take care of, as a Shepherd knows his Sheep, so *Joh. 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 reduces them again.

4. To oversee and take care of, Joh. 10. 27. Luke 15. 4, 5.

5. To deliver from, or to succour and support in trials, afflictions and temptations, Psal. 57. 7.
1 Cor. 10. 13.

5. To know, is to deliver from, or at least to support and succour in afflictions, trials and temptations, Psal. 37. 7. *I will be glad (saith David) and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my soul in trouble, and hast known my soul in adversity: that is, God did both support him in affliction, and deliver him from it in his own time. 'Tis an assuring Seal of the perseverance of Believers, that God will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able: or else with the temptation will make a way to escape, that they may bear it.*

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

Lastly, for God to know sometime, is as much as for God to teach and enlighten; so the Apostle uses the phrase, Gal. 4. 9. *How is it, that after you have been known of God, ye turn again to weak and beggerly elements?* The Galatians had been taught of God, but seducing Teachers would have brought them to join Jewish Ceremonies with Gospel-Worship; now the Apostle wonders at the very thought of such a thing, upon this very account, viz. because they were known of God, i.e. savingly enlightened by him. 'Tis a most assuring Seal of perseverance, to have been rightly enlightened by the Spirit of God, which is here called, a being known of him: so that you now see the Saints perseverance grounded, as in the first place upon God's election, so secondly upon his knowing of Believers in a special manner.

Hence it becomes impossible to deceive the elect, Matth. 14. 24.

3 Arg. Perseverance grounded upon the verity of God's Covenant. Jer. 31. 40.

The mercies of God's Covenant are both *רַחֲמֵי* and *רַחֲמֵי*, sure and holy Concessions, so Sept. translate Isai. 55. 3.

Jer. 31.

God saith concerning his people sin, as he said of Israels, *I have seen his sins, and I will heal them,* Isai. 57. 18.
Joh. 10. 27.

The third Ground of a true Believer's perseverance, is from the nature of God's Covenant. Perseverance is one Article of the New Covenant that God hath made with the elect, the terms of which are these: *I will, saith God, make an everlasting Covenant with them, 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 he return to her again? shall not that Land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith 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 dissolved, God will put forth his mighty power, to make and keep the hearts of Believers faithful and loyal to him. What a clear and full promise of perseverance is that also revealed by Christ, in 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 it self, others relating to the reward of the Redeemer, as you may read in *Isai. 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, *Vers. 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, *Vers. 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. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word: I have kept them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition.* In which words there is not only intimated a Covenant, and an Agreement between the Father and the Son about the Redemption of the elect, but there is also expressed in them the faithful discharge of the mutual agreement on both sides; so that not one of those that were God's by election, and intrusted in Christ's hand by donation, shall be lost: *Judas* was therefore a son of perdition, because given only externally, and not eternally into Christ's hand.

The fifth Argument 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

4 Arg. From the nature of the Covenant of Redemption, and the mutual promises made between the Father and the Son.

5 Arg. Because Christ hath prayed that they might persevere.

See Amefii
Coron. Colloq.
Hag.

us, *that the Father did bear 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 lest any one should say that this prayer was made only for some few that were then called, Christ adds, Vers. 20. *that he prayed for all that should believe, or be effectually called at any time after*; and as perseverance was fundamentally petitioned for, so Christ (upon that *Foundation*) doth carry his petitions higher, for Verse 21. he prays for them that they might attain *a higher degree of union with himself*; and Verse 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 he 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.

ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΑΥΤΕΛΙΣ.
Petrus negans
Christum
non perdidit
fidem, sed pec-
cavit contra
eius confessio-
nem. Cor.
Lap in Exod.
32. v. 5.

6. From the in-
habitation and
inoperation of
the Spirit.

1 Cor. 3. 16.

2 Cor. 6. 16.

Joh. 14. 16, 17.

My last Argument for the Saints perseverance shall be taken from the constant *inhabitation*, and powerful *inoperation* of the Spirit of God in and upon the hearts of true Believers: *Believers are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and God lives in them, and walks in them*. The Spirit *infuses* Grace, and he also *acuates* 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 *inspection* 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 Insurer, and also manifests the Assurance; an earnest doth so much also, and more, for it implies also something given in present possession: God working true Grace by his Spirit, secures us of Heaven as he secured Israel of *Canaan*, by giving them *Escow*, some Clusters of *Canaan's Vineyards* in the wilderness, which was a kind of Livery and Seizon, 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 this is an actual part: all those must needs be assured of Glory, who have a possession of Grace; and this seems to be the Argument of the very Text, 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 dili-*

See Gregorius de Valv. in primam secundæ Aq. q. 3.

Ὁ Θεὸς ἐκζητῶν ἡμᾶς, καὶ δὲς τὴν ἀρχαίαν τὴν πύλιν καὶ τὴν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν.

Ἀρχαίαν ἐστὶν pars prætii periclitata Bezæ in loc.

Ἀρχαίαν τὴν πύλιν.

2 Pet. 1.

2 Gen. Prop. 'Tis a Believers duty to give diligence to make his calling, &c. sure.

Nemo tenetur ad habendam hanc certitudinem, etiam si forte possit habere. Bel. lib. Just. 3. Cap. 3.

gence to make his calling, election and perseverance sure, from a double necessity incumbent upon him.

Necessitate
præcepti.
Heb. 6. 11.

1. '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 Cor. 13. 5.

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 magnify the Name of God, giving him Glory by believing, this supposes that we do believe, and also that we know we do believe: For '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.

Gal. 4. 6.

Luke 10. 20.

Neh. 8. 10.

2. Diligence is
necessary, neces-
sitate 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.

assurance. 2. That assurance is a necessary means for the effecting some ends which we are bound to accomplish; but are such as without a certain knowledge of our interest in God, they are not possibly attained.

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 *acti 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 owes 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 *hand* 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 *sealed* 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, Bellarvine*, whose last Argument against assurance is this, *That 'tis not convenient*

1. Diligence a means to gain assurance.

2 Pet. 2. 13.

Prov. 10. 4. .
Prov. 10. 12.

Col. 2. 2.

2. Assurance a proper means helping us to attain more grace.
Non expedit ut homines certitudinem de gratia propria ordinarie habeant. Bell. lib. 2. de Just. cap.

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 saith, That it is not only most humble, but most safe to doubt of the Grace and favour of God. For Confutation hereof, I shall instance in three effects or consequents of true assurance, which are of great import, but are difficultly obtained by those that want assurance.

1. A more compleat Victory over the actings 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 assured them of his love and favour, and had given them a promise of bringing them forth from bondage; a new spirit immediately came upon them, and they suddenly vindicated themselves from slavery: they cast off their Oppressors Yoke, and went forth to liberty, not leaving one hoof behind them. Thus despondent persons, (who nourish their own fears) like *Issachar* may couch down between these two burthens, 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 Magdalen* 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 observance most cogently?

Acts 15.

1 Joh. 3. 6.

Tit. 1. 11.

gently? The *Son* who *knows* his near relation, and knows his Father loves him; or the *Servant* that hath great reason to *doubt* thereof? God's Spirit *seals* none but those it hath in measure *sanctified*; neither would God reveal his love, but that he *knows* the *constraining* power of it. Fear is a *weak* and *impotent* principle, in comparison of *love*: the Apostle saith, *The Law was weak*; the terror of its curse *weakened* and *infeebled* the hands of those that should have obeyed it: but the Gospel-Declaration of Grace is *mighty* and *prevailing*, because it comes in the *power* of love. Terrours may *awaken*, love *enlivens*: terrours may almost *persuade*, love *overpersuades*. *Felix* may *tremble*, and remain *unconverted*: *Zacheus* 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-works* of a Garison, 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* Governour. 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.

Rom. 8. 5.

Oderint dum metuant cau- not be divided.

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. Sure I am that a Believer's knowledge that his beloved is *his*, and he is *his beloveds*, is found by experience to lay the most *strong* and *cogent* Obligation upon him to *loyalty* and *faithfulness* unto the 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.

Amat ille non immerito qui amatur sine merito.

Amat sine fine qui cognoscit se amatum fuisse a principio, Ber. ep.

107.

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 ten ptations of it, of what kind soever, be they either, *First*, on the right hand, viz. the smiles, flatteries, allurements and inticements 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,

2. Victory over temptations of the world.

1. On the right hand.

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 worlds sweets, since I enjoy all sweetness in God! Those things that once I was afraid to lose, I now let go, and want with joy, because hereby I enjoy thee the more.*

Aug. lib. Confess. 3. quam suave est delectis hisce carere, &c.

2. Temptations on the left hand.

2 Cor. 4. 16.

Heb. 10. 34.

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

Viget apud nos spei immobilis virtus & firmitas, &c. *St. Cyp. Ser-mone de patientia.*

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.

3. Assurance of our Salvation procures Victory over the fear of death. *Old Simeon* with Christ in his arms could pray for a dismissal hence. 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*, *Cupio dissolvi*, I desire to be dissolved. Assurance carries the soul to the top of *Pisgab*, and from thence a Believer (as he hath a general view of the whole Land of promise, so by the eye of an assuring Faith he) is able to espy his own lot and portion in Heaven and Glory; and can he be unwilling to go through *Jordan* (or the Chanel of the Grave) to take possession thereof? As the least degree of true Faith takes away the

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 Seizon 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 Axe to a despairing person; such a change doth assurance make. I shall therefore add no more but the words of Cyprian, who discoursing of death, hath these words: *Beloved, saith he, the Kingdom of Heaven is begun already in us in joy and peace: there is no place left for fear, or doubting; or sorrow: he only can fear death, that is unwilling to go to Christ; and none can be unwilling to go to him, that know they shall reign with him.*

Cyprian de
mortalitate.

And thus I have abundantly shewn how instrumental assurance is for the increase of sanctification, and obtaining a more compleat 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.

Use.

1. Give diligence to make your calling more sure in it self, 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 it self, the more easily may he attain to his assurance of it.

1 Direction,
make it more
and more sure
in it self.
Vocatio est
primo & per se
certa sit, com-
pementum
tamen adhuc
expectat.
Chamier Tom.
3. lib. 13. cap.
15.

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 lost her *Drachme*, (her Groat) was forced to light her Candle, and sweep diligently her house, and to look long before she found it, because it was but a 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 it self, by growing eminent in Grace.

Luke 13. 18.

Luke 15. 4.

2 Direction,
make it sure to
your selves by
special assuring
graces.

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 especially assuring Graces. The Spirit of God in Scripture hath declared that a Believers assurance of Salvation depends upon the exercise of three assuring Graces. 1. Πληροφορία γνώσεως, a full assurance of knowledge and understanding. 2. Πληροφορία πίστεως, a full assurance of faith. 3. Πληροφορία ἐλπίδος, a full assurance of hope.

1. A full assurance of knowledge, Col. 2. 2. *ἵνα πληροφορησῶν αἱ κελεύειαι αὐτοῦ, εἰς πάντα πλεον τῆ πληροφορίας τῆ συνίστας εἰς ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν, &c.*

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 and these fundamentals are many: there are several. (περὶ ἡμέτερα, or *præcognita*; 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 comforts: *Verba sensus*

There is one more Fundamental of assurance than there is of salvation.

Intellectus continet affectum & effectum. Scripture-phrases of *sense* and *knowledge*; imply a *suitable* affection; and also such effects as are proper and agreeing: there must not therefore be only a *speculative* notion, but also an *influential* and *practical* Application of this knowledge for the founding of assurance thereupon: there must not be only *propos*, but *propos*; not only knowledge, but acknowledgment, as it follows in the same Verse.

2. Labour for full assurance of Faith: Now this implies these four things, (which I must but name, as in the former direction.) 1. Labour for full assent unto the truth of Gospel-revelation. 2. For full consent unto Gospel-method, terms, conditions and commands. 3. For full dependance upon Gospel-Grace. 4. For full experience of Gospel-Obedience; or the Obedience of Faith: All these are included in *that full assurance of Faith*, wherewith the Apostle exhorts Believers to draw near to God, Heb. 10. 22. and every one of these acts of Faith must be attained and put in practice before assurance can be attained.

3. Labour for full assurance of hope. And this supposes two things: 3. Full assurance of hope, Heb. 6. 11. First, an actual explicate considering of the grounds of our hope, or a 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. *Bellarmino* (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 *Bellarmino's* Logick, when he exhorts Believers to be ready to give λόγον περι τὸ ἐν ἐμῇ ἐλπίδι, 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: 'tis one thing to consider

Duplex est certitudo, alia voluntatis, alia intellectus: & videtur non posse certitudinem intellectus cum spe convenire, quia quod scimus nos habituros non speramus, sed expectamus, Bell. lib. 13. de Just. cap. 11.

1 Pet. 3. 15.

consider the grounds of such a conclusion, another thing to conclude actually from those grounds. Assured hope (as it is accompanied with rational evidences, so) '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 saith, Whoever believes, shall be saved; Faith saith, Peter doth believe, therefore Hope saith Peter shall be saved. And this Hope is that which will never make ashamed, because hereby the love of God is shed abroad more abundantly in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, Rom. 5. 5. Let every man therefore thus prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoycing in himself, and not in another.

Dicit fides pa-
rata sunt
magna dicit
spes mihi ista
servantur. Ber-
nard. Sermon. 50.

Gal. 6. 4.

SER-
