

THE SECOND BOOK.

CONCERNING THEIR FIRST POSITION WHO URGE REFORMATION IN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND : NAMELY, THAT SCRIPTURE IS THE ONLY
RULE OF ALL THINGS WHICH IN THIS LIFE MAY BE DONE BY MEN.

THE MATTER CONTAINED IN THIS SECOND BOOK.

- I. An answer to their first proof brought out of Scripture, Prov. ii. 9.
- II. To their second, 1 Cor. x. 31.
- III. To their third, 1 Tim. iv. 5.
- IV. To their fourth, Rom. xiv. 23.
- V. To their proofs out of Fathers, who dispute negatively from authority of Holy Scripture.
- VI. To their proof by the Scripture's custom of disputing from divine authority negatively.
- VII. An examination of their opinion concerning the force of arguments taken from human authority for the ordering of men's actions and persuasions.
- VIII. A declaration what the truth is in this matter.

BOOK II.
Ch. i. 1.
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AS that which in the title hath been proposed for the matter whereof we treat, is only the ecclesiastical law whereby we are governed ; so neither is it my purpose to maintain any other thing than that which therein truth and reason shall approve. For concerning the dealings of men who administer government, and unto whom the execution of that law belongeth ; they have their Judge who sitteth in heaven, and before whose tribunal-seat they are accountable for whatsoever abuse or corruption, which (being worthily misliked in this church) the want either of care or of conscience in them hath bred. We are no patrons of those things therefore, the best defence whereof is speedy redress and amendment. That which is of God we defend, to the uttermost of that ability which he hath given ; that which is otherwise, let it wither even in the root from whence it hath sprung¹. Wherefore all these abuses being severed and set apart,

¹ [Acts v. 38, 39.]

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which rise from the corruption of men and not from the laws themselves ; come we to those things which in the very whole entire form of our church polity have been (as we persuade ourselves) injuriously blamed by them, who endeavour to overthrow the same, and instead thereof to establish a much worse ; only through a strong misconceit they have, that the same is grounded on divine authority.

Now whether it be that through an earnest longing desire to see things brought to a peaceable end, I do but imagine the matters whereof we contend to be fewer than indeed they are ; or else for that in truth they are fewer when they come to be discussed by reason, than otherwise they seem when by heat of contention they are divided into many slips, and of every branch an heap is made : surely, as now we have drawn them together, choosing out those things which are requisite to be severally all discussed, and omitting such mean specialties as are likely (without any great labour) to fall afterwards of themselves ; I know no cause why either the number or the length of these controversies should diminish our hope of seeing them end with concord and love on all sides ; which of his infinite love and goodness the Father of all peace and unity grant.

[2.] Unto which scope that our endeavour may the more directly tend, it seemeth fittest that first those things be examined, which are as seeds from whence the rest that ensue have grown. And of such the most general is that wherewith we are here to make our entrance : a question not moved (I think) any where in other churches, and therefore in ours the more likely to be soon (I trust) determined. The rather, for that it hath grown from no other root, than only a desire to enlarge the necessary use of the Word of God ; which desire hath begotten an error enlarging it further than (as we are persuaded) soundness of truth will bear. For whereas God hath left sundry kinds of laws unto men, and by all those laws the actions of men are in some sort directed ; they hold that one only law, the Scripture, must be the rule to direct in all things, even so far as to the "taking up of a rush or straw¹." About which point there should not need any

¹ T. C. I. ii. p. 59, 60. [The "that St. Paul speaketh here of words are (p. 59,) "When he seeth "civil, private, and indifferent ac-

question to grow, and that which is grown might presently end, if they did yield but to these two restraints: the first is, not to extend the actions whereof they speak so low as that instance doth import of taking up a straw, but rather keep themselves at the least within the compass of moral actions, actions which have in them vice or virtue: the second, not to exact at our hands for every action the knowledge of some place of Scripture out of which we stand bound to deduce it, as by divers testimonies they seek to enforce; but rather as the truth is, so to acknowledge, that it sufficeth if such actions be framed according to the law of Reason; the general axioms, rules, and principles of which law being so frequent in Holy Scripture, there is no let but in that regard even out of Scripture such duties may be deduced by some kind of consequence, (as by long circuit of deduction it may be that even all truth out of any truth may be concluded¹), howbeit no man bound in such sort to deduce all his actions out of Scripture, as if either the place be to him unknown whereon they may be concluded, or the reference unto that place not presently considered of, the action shall in that respect be condemned as unlawful. In this we dissent, and this we are presently to examine.

The first pretended proof of the first position out of Scripture, Prov. ii. 9.

[3.] In all parts of knowledge rightly so termed things most general are most strong. Thus it must be, inasmuch as the certainty of our persuasion touching particulars dependeth altogether upon the credit of those generalities out of which they grow. Albeit therefore every cause admit not such infallible evidence of proof, as leaveth no possibility of doubt or scruple behind it; yet they who claim the general assent

"tions, as of eating this or that kind of meat (than which there can be nothing more indifferent) he might easily have seen that the sentence of the Apostle reacheth even to his case, of taking up a straw." Which refers to Whitg. Def. 85: "It is not true that whatsoever cannot be proved in the word of God is not of faith, for then to take up a straw... were against faith, and so deadly sin, because it is not found in the Law of God." Again, T. C. ii. 60. "Seemeth it so strange a thing

"unto him that a man should not take up a straw but for some purpose, and for some good purpose?" &c.]

¹ [So Bishop Butler, Analogy, part I, ch. vii: "Things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance; so that any one thing whatever may, for ought we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other." p. 182. ed. 1736.]

of the whole world unto that which they teach, and do not fear to give very hard and heavy sentence upon as many as refuse to embrace the same, must have special regard that their first foundations and grounds be more than slender probabilities. This whole question which hath been moved about the kind of church regiment, we could not but for our own resolution's sake endeavour to unrip and sift; following therein as near as we might the conduct of that judicial method which serveth best for invention of truth. By means whereof, having found this the head theorem of all their discourses, who plead for the change of ecclesiastical government in England, namely, "That the Scripture of God is in such sort the rule of human actions, that simply whatsoever we do and are not by it directed thereunto, the same is sin;" we hold it necessary that the proofs hereof be weighed. Be they of weight sufficient or otherwise, it is not ours to judge and determine; only what difficulties there are which as yet withhold our assent, till we be further and better satisfied, I hope no indifferent amongst them will scorn or refuse to hear.

[4.] First therefore whereas they allege, "That Wisdom" doth teach men "every good way¹," and have thereupon inferred that no way is good in any kind of action unless wisdom do by Scripture lead unto it; see they not plainly how they restrain the manifold ways which wisdom hath to teach men by, unto one only way of teaching, which is by Scripture? The bounds of wisdom are large, and within them much is contained. Wisdom was Adam's instructor in Paradise; wisdom endued the fathers who lived before the law with the knowledge of holy things; by the wisdom of the law of God David attained to excel others in understanding²; and Salomon likewise to excel David by the selfsame wisdom of God teaching him many things besides the law. The ways of well-doing are in number even as

¹ T. C. i. i. p. 20: "I say, that the word of God containeth whatsoever things can fall into any part of man's life. For so Salomon saith in the second chapter of the Proverbs, 'My son, if thou receive my words, &c. then thou shalt understand justice, and judgment,

"and equity, and every good way.'" [In T. C. literally it is, "The word of God containeth the direction of all things pertaining to the Church, yea, of whatsoever things can fall into any part of man's life." (p. 14.)]

² Psalm cxix. 99.

many as are the kinds of voluntary actions ; so that whatsoever we do in this world and may do it ill, we shew ourselves therein by well-doing to be wise. Now if wisdom did teach men by Scripture not only all the ways that are right and good in some certain kind, according to that of St. Paul¹ concerning the use of Scripture, but did simply without any manner of exception, restraint, or distinction, teach every way of doing well ; there is no art, but Scripture should teach it, because every art doth teach the way how to do something or other well. To teach men therefore wisdom professeth, and to teach them every good way ; but not every good way by one way of teaching. Whatsoever either men on earth or the Angels of heaven do know, it is as a drop of that unemptiable fountain of wisdom ; which wisdom hath diversely imparted her treasures unto the world. As her ways are of sundry kinds, so her manner of teaching is not merely one and the same. Some things she openeth by the sacred books of Scripture ; some things by the glorious works of Nature : with some things she inspireth them from above by spiritual influence ; in some things she leadeth and traineth them only by worldly experience and practice. We may not so in any one special kind admire her, that we disgrace her in any other ; but let all her ways be according unto their place and degree adored.

The second proof out of Scripture.
1 Cor. x. 31. II. That "all things be done to the glory of God²," the blessed Apostle (it is true) exhorteth. The glory of God is the admirable excellency of that virtue divine, which being made manifest, causeth men and Angels to extol his greatness,

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16. "The whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable to teach, to improve, to correct, and to instruct in righteousness, that the man of God may be absolute, being made perfect unto all good works." He meaneth all and only those good works, which belong unto us as we are men of God, and which unto salvation are necessary. Or if we understand by *men of God*, God's ministers, there is not required in them an universal skill of every good work or way, but an ability to teach whatsoever men are bound to

do that they may be saved. And with this kind of knowledge the Scripture sufficeth to furnish them as touching matter.

² T. C. l. i. p. 26. [14.] "St. Paul saith, 'That whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do it to the glory of God.' But no man can glorify God in any thing but by obedience ; and there is no obedience but in respect of the commandment and word of God : therefore it followeth that the word of God directeth a man in all his actions."

and in regard thereof to fear him. By "being glorified" it is not meant that he doth receive any augmentation of glory at our hands, but his name we glorify when we testify our acknowledgment of his glory. Which albeit we most effectually do by the virtue of obedience ; nevertheless it may be perhaps a question, whether St. Paul did mean that we sin as oft as ever we go about any thing, without an express intent and purpose to obey God therein. He saith of himself, "I do in all things please all men, seeking not mine own commodity but" rather the good "of many, that they may be saved¹." Shall it hereupon be thought that St. Paul did not move either hand or foot, but with express intent even thereby to further the common salvation of men ? We move, we sleep, we take the cup at the hand of our friend, a number of things we oftentimes do, only to satisfy some natural desire, without present, express, and actual reference unto any commandment of God. Unto his glory even these things are done which we naturally perform, and not only that which morally and spiritually we do. For by every effect proceeding from the most concealed instincts of nature His power is made manifest. But it doth not therefore follow that of necessity we shall sin, unless we expressly intend this in every such particular.

[2.] But be it a thing which requireth no more than only our general presupposed willingness to please God in all things, or be it a matter wherein we cannot so glorify the name of God as we should without an actual intent to do him in that particular some special obedience ; yet for any thing there is in this sentence alleged to the contrary, God may be glorified by obedience, and obeyed by performance of his will, and his will be performed with an actual intelligent desire to fulfil that law which maketh known what his will is, although no special clause or sentence of Scripture be in every such action set before men's eyes to warrant it. For Scripture is not the only law whereby God hath opened his will touching all things that may be done, but there are other kinds of laws which notify the will of God, as in the former book hath been proved at large : nor is there any law of God, whereunto he doth not account our obedience his glory. "Do therefore all

¹ 1 Cor. x. 33.

BOOK II. "things unto the glory of God (saith the Apostle), be inof-
Ch. ii. 3-
 iii. 1. fensive both to Jews and Grecians and the Church of God ;
 ——— "even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own
 "commodity, but many's, that they may be saved." In the
 least thing done disobediently towards God, or offensively
 against the good of men, whose benefit we ought to seek for
 as for our own, we plainly shew that we do not acknowledge
 God to be such as indeed he is, and consequently that we
 glorify him not. This the blessed Apostle teacheth ; but
 doth any Apostle teach, that we cannot glorify God other-
 wise, than only in doing what we find that God in Scripture
 commandeth us to do ?

[3.] The churches dispersed amongst the heathen in the
 east part of the world are by the Apostle St. Peter exhorted
 to have their "conversation honest amongst the Gentiles, that
 "they which spake evil of them as of evil-doers might by the
 "good works which they should see glorify God in the day
 "of visitation¹." As long as that which Christians did was
 good, and no way subject unto just reproof, their virtuous
 conversation was a mean to work the heathen's conversion
 unto Christ. Seeing therefore this had been a thing altoge-
 ther impossible, but that infidels themselves did discern, in
 matters of life and conversation, when believers did well and
 when otherwise, when they glorified their heavenly Father
 and when not ; it followeth that some things wherein God is
 glorified may be some other way known than only by the
 sacred Scripture ; of which Scripture the Gentiles being
 utterly ignorant did notwithstanding judge rightly of the
 quality of Christian men's actions. Most certain it is that
 nothing but only sin doth dishonour God. So that to glorify
 him in all things is to do nothing whereby the name of God
 may be blasphemed² ; nothing whereby the salvation of Jew
 or Grecian or any in the Church of Christ may be let or hin-
 dered³ ; nothing whereby his law is transgressed⁴. But
 the question is, whether only Scripture do shew whatsoever
 God is glorified in ?

III. And though meats and drinks be said to be sanctified
 by the word of God and by prayer⁵, yet neither is this a

The third
 Scripture
 proof,
1 Tim. iv. 5.

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 12.

² Rom. ii. 24.

³ "And that which St. Paul said

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 32.

⁵ Rom. ii. 23.

"of meats and drinks, that they are

reason sufficient to prove, that by Scripture we must of neces-
 sity be directed in every light and common thing which is
 incident into any part of man's life. Only it sheweth that
 unto us the word, that is to say the Gospel of Christ, having
 not delivered any such difference of things clean and unclean,
 as the Law of Moses did unto the Jews, there is no cause but
 that we may use indifferently all things, as long as we do not
 (like swine) take the benefit of them without a thankful ac-
 knowledgment of His liberality and goodness by whose pro-
 vidence they are enjoyed. And therefore the Apostle gave
 warning beforehand to take heed of such as should enjoin to
 "abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received
 "with thanksgiving by them which believe and know the
 "truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to
 "be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, because it is
 "sanctified by the Word of God and prayer¹." The Gospel,
 by not making many things unclean, as the Law did, hath
 sanctified those things generally to all, which particularly each
 man unto himself must sanctify by a reverend and holy use.
 Which will hardly be drawn so far as to serve their purpose,
 who have imagined the Word in such sort to sanctify all
 things, that neither food can be tasted, nor raiment put on,
 nor in the world any thing done, but this deed must needs be
 sin in them which do not first know it appointed unto them
 by Scripture before they do it.

IV. But to come unto that which of all other things in
 Scripture is most stood upon ; that place of St. Paul they say
 is "of all other most clear, where speaking of those things
 "which are called indifferent, in the end he concludeth,
 "That 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' But faith is not
 "but in respect of the Word of God. Therefore whatsoever
 "is not done by the Word of God is sin." Whereunto we
 answer, that albeit the name of Faith being properly and
 strictly taken, it must needs have reference unto some uttered
 word as the object of belief : nevertheless sith the ground of
 credit is the credibility of things credited ; and things are
 made credible, either by the known condition and quality of

"sanctified unto us by the word of "ever we have the use of." T. C.
 "God, the same is to be under- l. i. p. 26. [14.]
 "standed of all things else whatso- ¹ 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

the utterer¹, or by the manifest likelihood of truth which they have in themselves; hereupon it riseth that whatsoever we are persuaded of, the same we are generally said to believe. In which generality the object of faith may not so narrowly be restrained, as if the same did extend no further than to the only Scriptures of God. "Though," saith our Saviour, "ye believe not me, believe my works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him²." "The other disciples said unto Thomas, We have seen the Lord;" but his answer unto them was, "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into them, I will not believe³." Can there be any thing more plain than that which by these two sentences appeareth, namely, that there may be a certain belief grounded upon other assurance than Scripture: any thing more clear, than that we are said not only to believe the things which we know by another's relation, but even whatsoever we are certainly persuaded of, whether it be by reason or by sense?

[2.] Forasmuch therefore as it is granted that St. Paul doth mean nothing else by Faith, but only "a full persuasion that that which we do is well done⁴," against which kind of faith or persuasion as St. Paul doth count it sin to enterprise any thing, so likewise "some of the very heathen have taught⁵, as Tully, 'That nothing ought to be done whereof thou doubtest whether it be right or wrong⁶;' 'whereby it appeareth that even those which had no know-

¹ Psalm xix. 8; Apoc. iii. 14; 2 Cor. i. 18.

² John x. 38.

³ John xx. 25.

⁴ "And if any will say that St. Paul meaneth there a full *πληροφορία* and persuasion that that which he doth is well done, I grant it. But from whence can that spring but from faith? How can we persuade and assure ourselves that we do well, but whereas we have the word of God for our warrant?" T. C. l. i. p. 27. [14.]

⁵ "What also that some even of those heathen men have taught, that nothing ought to be done whereof thou doubtest whether it be right or wrong. Whereby it

appeareth that even those which had no knowledge of the word of God did see much of the equity of this which the Apostle requireth of a Christian man: and that the chiefest difference is, that where they sent men for the difference of good and evil to the light of Reason, in such things the Apostle sendeth them to the school of Christ in his word, which only is able through faith to give them assurance and resolution in their doings." T. C. l. ii. p. 60.

⁶ [De Offic. i. 9: "Bene præcipiunt, qui vetant quidquam agere, quod dubites æquum sit an iniquum."]

"ledge of the word of God did see much of the equity of this which the Apostle requireth of a Christian man;" I hope we shall not seem altogether unnecessarily to doubt of the soundness of their opinion, who think simply that nothing but only the word of God can give us assurance in any thing we are to do, and resolve us that we do well. For might not the Jews have been fully persuaded that they did well to think (if they had so thought) that in Christ God the Father was, although the only ground of this their faith had been the wonderful works they saw him do? Might not, yea, did not Thomas fully in the end persuade himself, that he did well to think that body which now was raised to be the same which had been crucified? That which gave Thomas this assurance was his sense; "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou believest," saith our Saviour¹. What Scripture had Tully for this assurance? Yet I nothing doubt but that they who allege him think he did well to set down in writing a thing so consonant unto truth. Finally, we all believe that the Scriptures of God are sacred, and that they have proceeded from God; ourselves we assure that we do right well in so believing. We have for this point a demonstration sound and infallible. But it is not the word of God which doth or possibly can assure us, that we do well to think it his word. For if any one book of Scripture did give testimony to all, yet still that Scripture which giveth credit to the rest would require another Scripture to give credit unto it, neither could we ever come unto any pause whereon to rest our assurance this way; so that unless beside Scripture there were something which might assure us that we do well, we could not think we do well, no not in being assured that Scripture is a sacred and holy rule of well-doing.

[3.] On which determination we might be contented to stay ourselves without further proceeding herein, but that we are drawn on into larger speech by reason of their so great earnestness, who beat more and more upon these last alleged words, as being of all other most pregnant.

Whereas therefore they still argue, "That wheresoever faith is wanting, there is sin;" and, "in every action not

¹ John xx. 29.