

"spoken, be contented quietly to hear, and do not think my speech tedious: Quoniam ostensiones quæ sunt in Scripturis non possunt ostendi nisi ex ipsis Scripturis; Because demonstrations that are in Scripture may not otherwise be shewed than by citing them out of the Scriptures themselves "where they are." Which words make so little unto the purpose, that they seem as it were offended at him which hath called them thus solemnly forth to say nothing.

And concerning the verdict of Jerome¹; if no man, be he never so well learned, have after the Apostles any authority to publish new doctrine as from heaven, and to require the world's assent as unto truth received by prophetic revelation; doth this prejudice the credit of learned men's judgments in opening that truth, which by being conversant in the Apostles' writings they have themselves from thence learned?

St. Augustine exhorteth not to hear men, but to hearken what God speaketh. His purpose is not (I think) that we should stop our ears against his own exhortation, and therefore he cannot mean simply that audience should altogether be denied unto men, but either that if men speak one thing and God himself teach another, then he not they to be obeyed; or if they both speak the same thing, yet then also man's speech unworthy of hearing, not simply, but in comparison of that which proceedeth from the mouth of God.

"Yea, but we doubt what the will of God is." Are we in this case forbidden to hear what men of judgment think it to be? If not, then this allegation also might very well have been spared.

In that ancient strife which was between the catholic Fathers and Arians, Donatists, and others of like perverse and froward disposition, as long as to Fathers or councils alleged on the one side the like by the contrary side were opposed, impossible it was that ever the question should by this means grow unto any issue or end. The Scripture they both believed: the Scripture they knew could not give

¹ [viii. 127. C. sup. Psalm. 86. v. 6. "Dominus narrabit in scriptura populorum et principum, horum qui fuerunt in ea." Principum: hoc est, Apostolorum et Evangelistarum. Horum qui fuerunt in ea. Videte quid dicat: "ut exceptis Apostolis, quodcumque aliud postea dicitur, abscindatur: non habeat postea auctoritatem. Quamvis ergo sanctus sit aliquis post Apostolos, quamvis disertus sit, non habet auctoritatem."]

sentence on both sides; by Scripture the controversy between them was such as might be determined. In this case what madness was it with such kinds of proofs to nourish their contention, when there were such effectual means to end all controversy that was between them! Hereby therefore it doth not as yet appear, that an argument of authority of man affirmatively is in matters divine, nothing worth.

Which opinion being once inserted into the minds of the vulgar sort, what it may grow unto God knoweth. Thus much we see, it hath already made thousands so headstrong even in gross and palpable errors, that a man whose capacity will scarce serve him to utter five words in sensible manner blusheth not in any doubt concerning matter of Scripture to think his own bare *Yea* as good as the *Nay* of all the wise, grave, and learned judgments that are in the whole world: which insolency must be repressed, or it will be the very bane of Christian religion.

[7.] Our Lord's disciples marking what speech he uttered unto them, and at the same time calling to mind a common opinion held by the Scribes, between which opinion and the words of their Master it seemed unto them that there was some contradiction, which they could not themselves answer with full satisfaction of their own minds; the doubt they propose to our Saviour, saying, "Why then say the Scribes "that Elias must first come¹?" They knew that the Scribes did err greatly, and that many ways even in matters of their own profession. They notwithstanding thought the judgment of the very Scribes in matters divine to be of some value; some probability they thought there was that Elias should come, inasmuch as the Scribes said it. Now no truth can contradict any truth; desirous therefore they were to be taught how both might stand together; that which they knew could not be false, because Christ spake it; and this which to them did seem true, only because the Scribes had said it. For the Scripture, from whence the Scribes did gather it, was not then in their heads. We do not find that our Saviour reproved them of error, for thinking the judgment of the Scribes to be worth the objecting, for esteeming it to be of any moment or value in matters concerning God.

¹ [S. Matt. xvii. 10.]

[8.] We cannot therefore be persuaded that the will of God is, we should so far reject the authority of men as to reckon it nothing. No, it may be a question, whether they that urge us unto this be themselves so persuaded indeed¹. Men do sometimes bewray that by deeds, which to confess they are hardly drawn. Mark then if this be not general with all men for the most part. When the judgments of learned men are alleged against them, what do they but either elevate their credit, or oppose unto them the judgments of others as learned? Which thing doth argue that all men acknowledge in them some force and weight, for which they are loath the cause they maintain should be so much weakened as their testimony is available. Again, what reason is there why alleging testimonies as proofs, men give them some title of credit, honour, and estimation, whom they allege, unless beforehand it be sufficiently known who they are; what reason hereof but only a common ingrafted persuasion, that in some men there may be found such qualities as are able to countervail those exceptions which might be taken against them, and that such men's authority is not lightly to be shaken off?

[9.] Shall I add further, that the force of arguments drawn from the authority of Scripture itself, as Scriptures commonly are alleged, shall (being sifted) be found to depend upon the strength of this so much despised and debased authority of man? Surely it doth, and that oftener than we are aware of. For although Scripture be of God, and therefore the proof which is taken from thence must needs be of all other most invincible; yet this strength it hath not, unless it avouch the selfsame thing for which it is brought. If there be either undeniable appearance that so it doth, or reason such as cannot deceive, then Scripture-proof (no

¹ [Christ. Letter, p. 8: "We pray you to explaine your owne meaning, whether you thinke that there be anie naturall light, teaching knowledge of things necessary to salvation, which knowledge is not contained in holy Scripture." Hooker, MS. note: "They are matters of salvation I think which you handle in this

"booke. If therefore determinable only by Scripture, why presse you me so often with humane authorities? Why alleage you the Articles of Religion as the voice of the Church aganst me? Why cite you so many commentaries, bookees and sermons, partly of Bishops, partly of others?"]

doubt) in strength and value exceedeth all. But for the most part, even such as are readiest to cite for one thing five hundred sentences of holy Scripture; what warrant have they, that any one of them doth mean the thing for which it is alleged? Is not their surest ground most commonly, either some probable conjecture of their own, or the judgment of others taking those Scriptures as they do? Which notwithstanding to mean otherwise than they take them, it is not still altogether impossible. So that now and then they ground themselves on human authority, even when they most pretend divine. Thus it fareth even clean throughout the whole controversy about that discipline which is so earnestly urged and laboured for. Scriptures are plentifully alleged to prove that the whole Christian world for ever ought to embrace it. Hereupon men term it *The discipline of God*. Howbeit examine, sift and resolve their alleged proofs, till you come to the very root from whence they spring, the heart wherein their strength lieth; and it shall clearly appear unto any man of judgment, that the most which can be inferred upon such plenty of divine testimonies is only this, That *some things* which they maintain, as far as *some men* can *probably conjecture*, do *seem* to have been out of Scripture *not absurdly* gathered. Is this a warrant sufficient for any man's conscience to build such proceedings upon, as have been and are put in ure for the stablishment of that cause?

[10.] But to conclude, I would gladly understand how it cometh to pass, that they which so peremptorily do maintain that human authority is nothing worth are in the cause which they favour so careful to have the common sort of men persuaded, that the wisest, the godliest and the best learned in all Christendom are that way given, seeing they judge this to make nothing in the world for them. Again how cometh it to pass they cannot abide that authority should be alleged on the other side, if there be no force at all in authorities on one side or other? Wherefore labour they to strip their adversaries of such furniture as doth not help? Why take they such needless pains to furnish also their own cause with the like? If it be void and to no purpose that the names of men are so frequent in their books,

what did move them to bring them in, or doth to suffer them there remaining? Ignorant I am not how this is salved, "They do it not but after the truth made manifest first by reason or by Scripture: they do it not but to control the enemies of the truth, who bear themselves bold upon human authority making not for them but against them rather¹." Which answers are nothing: for in what place or upon what consideration soever it be they do it, were it in their own opinion of no force being done, they would undoubtedly refrain to do it.

A declaration what the truth is in this matter.

VIII. But to the end it may more plainly appear what we are to judge of their sentences, and of the cause itself wherein they are alleged: first it may not well be denied, that all actions of men endued with the use of reason are generally either good or evil. For although it be granted that no action is properly termed good or evil unless it be voluntary; yet this can be no let to our former assertion, That all actions of men endued with the use of reason are generally either good or evil; because even those things are done voluntarily by us which other creatures do naturally, inasmuch as we might stay our doing of them if we would. Beasts naturally do take their food and rest when it offereth itself unto them. If men did so too, and could not do otherwise of themselves, there were no place for any such reproof as that of our Saviour Christ unto his disciples², "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" That which is voluntarily performed in things tending to the end, if it be well done, must needs be done with deliberate consideration of some reasonable cause wherefore we rather should do it than not. Whereupon it seemeth, that in such actions only those are said to be good or evil which are capable of deliberation: so that many things being hourly done by men, wherein they need not use with themselves any manner of consultation at all, it may perhaps hereby seem that well or ill-doing belongeth only to our

¹ "If at any time it happened unto Augustine (as it did against the Donatists and others) to allege the authority of the ancient Fathers which had been before him; yet this was not done before he had laid a sure foundation of his cause in the Scriptures, and

"that also being provoked by the adversaries of the truth, who bare themselves high of some council, or of some man of name that had favoured that part." T. C. lib. ii. p. 22.

² Matt. xxvi. 40.

weightier affairs, and to those deeds which are of so great importance that they require advice. But thus to determine were perilous, and peradventure unsound also. I do rather incline to think, that seeing all the unforced actions of men are voluntary, and all voluntary actions tending to the end have choice, and all choice presupposeth the knowledge of some cause wherefore we make it: where the reasonable cause of such actions so readily offereth itself that it needeth not to be sought for; in those things though we do not deliberate, yet they are of their nature apt to be deliberated on, in regard of the will, which may incline either way, and would not any one way bend itself, if there were not some apparent motive to lead it. Deliberation actual we use, when there is doubt what we should incline our wills unto. Where no doubt is, deliberation is not excluded as impertinent unto the thing, but as needless in regard of the agent, which seeth already what to resolve upon. It hath no apparent absurdity therefore in it to think, that all actions of men endued with the use of reason are generally either good or evil.

[2.] Whatsoever is good, the same is also approved of God: and according unto the sundry degrees of goodness, the kinds of divine approbation are in like sort multiplied. Some things are good, yet in so mean a degree of goodness, that men are only not disproved nor disallowed of God for them. "No man hateth his own flesh¹." "If ye do good unto them that do so to you, the very publicans themselves do as much²." "They are worse than infidels that have no care to provide for their own³." In actions of this sort, the very light of Nature alone may discover that which is so far forth in the sight of God allowable.

[3.] Some things in such sort are allowed, that they be also required as necessary unto salvation, by way of direct immediate and proper necessity final; so that without performance of them we cannot by ordinary course be saved, nor by any means be excluded from life observing them. In actions of this kind our chiefest direction is from Scripture, for Nature is no sufficient teacher what we should do that

¹ Ephes. v. 29.

² Matt. v. 46.

³ 1 Tim. v. 8.

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Ch. viii. 4, 5. light of Nature is by the light of Scripture so fully and so
perfectly herein supplied, that further light than this hath
added there doth not need unto that end.

[4.] Finally some things, although not so required of necessity that to leave them undone excludeth from salvation, are notwithstanding of so great dignity and acceptation with God, that most ample reward in heaven is laid up for them. Hereof we have no commandment either in Nature or Scripture which doth exact them at our hands; yet those motives there are in both which draw most effectually our minds unto them. In this kind there is not the least action but it doth somewhat make to the accessory augmentation of our bliss. For which cause our Saviour doth plainly witness, that there shall not be as much as a cup of cold water bestowed for his sake without reward¹. Hereupon dependeth whatsoever difference there is between the states of saints in glory; hither we refer whatsoever belongeth unto the highest perfection of man by way of service towards God; hereunto that fervour and first love of Christians did bend itself, causing them to sell their possessions, and lay down the price at the blessed Apostles' feet². Hereat St. Paul undoubtedly did aim in so far abridging his own liberty, and exceeding that which the bond of necessary and enjoined duty tied him unto³.

[5.] Wherefore seeing that in all these several kinds of actions there can be nothing possibly evil which God approveth; and that he approveth much more than he doth command⁴; and that his very commandments in some kind,

¹ Matt. x. 42.

² Acts iv. 34, 35.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 7, 9.

⁴ [Chr. Letter, p. 15: "Whether we may not justly judge, that in thus speaking you sow the seed of that doctrine which leadeth men to those arrogant workes of supererogation."

Hooker, MS. note: "Did God command Paul not to marry, or not to receive his daily maintenance from the Church? He refrained both without commandment, but not without approba-

tion from God. Yea, he himself doth counsell that which he doth not command, and they that followed his counsell did well, although they did it not by way of necessary obedience, but of voluntary choice.

"Was the sale of Ananias his land allowed in God's sight? I hope you will graunt it was, sith the Holy Ghost commendeth sundry others which did the like. His purpose in selling was good, but his fraud irreligious and wicked in withholding the price which

as namely his precepts comprehended in the law of nature, may be otherwise known than only by Scripture; and that to do them, howsoever we know them, must needs be acceptable in his sight¹: let them with whom we have hitherto disputed consider well, how it can stand with reason to make the bare mandate of sacred Scripture the only rule of all good and evil in the actions of mortal men. The testimonies of God are true, the testimonies of God are perfect, the testimonies of God are all sufficient unto that end for which they were given. Therefore accordingly we do receive them, we do not think that in them God hath omitted any thing needful unto his purpose, and left his intent to be accomplished by our devisings. What the Scripture purposeth, the same in all points it doth perform.

Howbeit that here we swerve not in judgment, one thing especially we must observe, namely that the absolute perfection of Scripture is seen by relation unto that end whereto it tendeth. And even hereby it cometh to pass, that first such as imagine the general and main drift of the body of sacred Scripture not to be so large as it is, nor that God did

"he pretended to give whole. Yeat
"did not God command Ananias or
"the rest to make any such sale.
"For then how should Peter have
"said it was free for Ananias to
"have retained it in his handes?
"God did therefore approve what
"he did not command in that ac-
"tion.

"Had not the Law as well free
"offerings, which were approved,
"as necessary, which were com-
"manded of God?

"If I should ask, have you
"sinned in not setting your name
"to your book, I am very sure you
"will answer, no, but that you
"have done what God alloweth.
"Yeat hath not God I think com-
"maunded that you should conceale
"your name: and so you have
"shewed yourself heere a Papist by
"doing a work of supererogation,
"if every thing done and not com-
"manded be such a work. The like
"might be said although you had
"put your name thereto. For the
"case is like in all workes indifferent.

"But as for supererogation in pope-
"rie, it belongeth unto satisfactory
"actions, and not unto meritorious.
"Whereas therefore with them
"workes not commanded are chiefly
"meritorious, and in merit no su-
"pererogation held, you do ill to
"say that he which maketh any
"thing not commanded allowable
"establisheth workes of superero-
"gation."

Chr. Letter, p. 15. "You appeare to us to scatter the prophane graines of poperie."

Hooker, MS. note. "It is not I that scatter, but you that gather more than ever was let fall."

¹ [Hooker, MS. note on Chr. Letter, p. 14. "De imperfectione bonorum operum vide Hier. contra Lucifer. cap. 6." (p. 142, D. "Conveniat unusquisque cor suum, et in omni vita inveniet, quam rarum sit fidelem animam inveniri, ut nihil ob gloriam cupiditatem, nihil ob rumusculos hominum faciat, &c.") "and Genebrard. in Symb. Athanas. p. 306."]

thereby intend to deliver, as in truth he doth, a full instruction in all things unto salvation necessary, the knowledge whereof man by nature could not otherwise in this life attain unto: they are by this very mean induced either still to look for new revelations from heaven, or else dangerously to add to the word of God uncertain tradition, that so the doctrine of man's salvation may be complete; which doctrine, we constantly hold in all respects without any such thing added to be so complete, that we utterly refuse as much as once to acquaint ourselves with any thing further. Whatsoever to make up the doctrine of man's salvation is added, as in supply of the Scripture's unsufficiency, we reject it. Scripture purposing this, hath perfectly and fully done it.

Again the scope and purpose of God in delivering the Holy Scripture such as do take more largely than behoveth, they on the contrary side, racking and stretching it further than by him was meant, are drawn into sundry as great inconveniences. These pretending the Scripture's perfection infer thereupon, that in Scripture all things lawful to be done must needs be contained. We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted. As therefore God created every part and particle of man exactly perfect, that is to say in all points sufficient unto that use for which he appointed it; so the Scripture, yea, every sentence thereof, is perfect, and wanteth nothing requisite unto that purpose for which God delivered the same. So that if hereupon we conclude, that because the Scripture is perfect, therefore all things lawful to be done are comprehended in the Scripture; we may even as well conclude so of every sentence, as of the whole sum and body thereof, unless we first of all prove that it was the drift, scope, and purpose of Almighty God in Holy Scripture to comprise all things which man may practise.

[6.] But admit this, and mark, I beseech you, what would follow. God in delivering Scripture to his Church should clean have abrogated amongst them the law of nature; which is an infallible knowledge imprinted in the minds of all the children of men, whereby both general principles for directing of human actions are comprehended, and conclusions derived from them; upon which conclusions groweth in particularity

the choice of good and evil in the daily affairs of this life. Admit this, and what shall the Scripture be but a snare and a torment to weak consciences, filling them with infinite perplexities, scrupulosities, doubts insoluble, and extreme despairs¹? Not that the Scripture itself doth cause any such thing, (for it tendeth to the clean contrary, and the fruit thereof is resolute assurance and certainty in that it teacheth,) but the necessities of this life urging men to do that which the light of nature, common discretion and judgment of itself directeth them unto; on the other side, this doctrine teaching them that so to do were to sin against their own souls, and that they put forth their hands to iniquity whatsoever they go about and have not first the sacred Scripture of God for direction; how can it choose but bring the simple a thousand times to their wits' end? how can it choose but vex and amaze them? For in every action of common life to find out some sentence clearly and infallibly setting before our eyes what we ought to do, (seem we in Scripture never so expert,) would trouble us more than we are aware. In weak and tender minds we little know what misery this strict opinion would breed, besides the stops it would make in the whole course of all men's lives and actions. Make all things sin which we do by direction of nature's light, and by the rule of common discretion, without thinking at all upon Scripture; admit this position, and parents shall cause their children to sin, as oft as they cause them to do any thing, before they come to years of capacity and be ripe for knowledge in the Scripture: admit this, and it shall not be with masters as it was with him in the Gospel, but servants being commanded to go² shall stand still, till they have their errand warranted unto them by Scripture. Which as it standeth with Christian duty in some cases, so in common affairs to require it were most unfit.

[7.] Two opinions therefore there are concerning sufficiency of Holy Scripture, each extremely opposite unto the other, and both repugnant unto truth. The schools of Rome teach

¹ "Where this doctrine is accused of bringing men to despair, it hath wrong. For when doubting is the way to despair, against which this doctrine offereth the remedy, it must need be that it bringeth comfort and joy to the conscience of man." T. C. lib. ii. p. 61.
² Luke vii. 8.

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Scripture to be so unsufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not contain all revealed and supernatural truth, which absolutely is necessary for the children of men in this life to know that they may in the next be saved. Others justly condemning this opinion grow likewise unto a dangerous extremity, as if Scripture did not only contain all things in that kind necessary, but all things simply, and in such sort that to do any thing according to any other law were not only unnecessary but even opposite unto salvation, unlawful and sinful. Whatsoever is spoken of God or things appertaining to God otherwise than as the truth is, though it seem an honour it is an injury. And as incredible praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation; so we must likewise take great heed, lest in attributing unto Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which indeed it hath most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed. I therefore leave it to themselves to consider, whether they have in this first point or not overshot themselves; which God doth know is quickly done, even when our meaning is most sincere, as I am verily persuaded theirs in this case was.