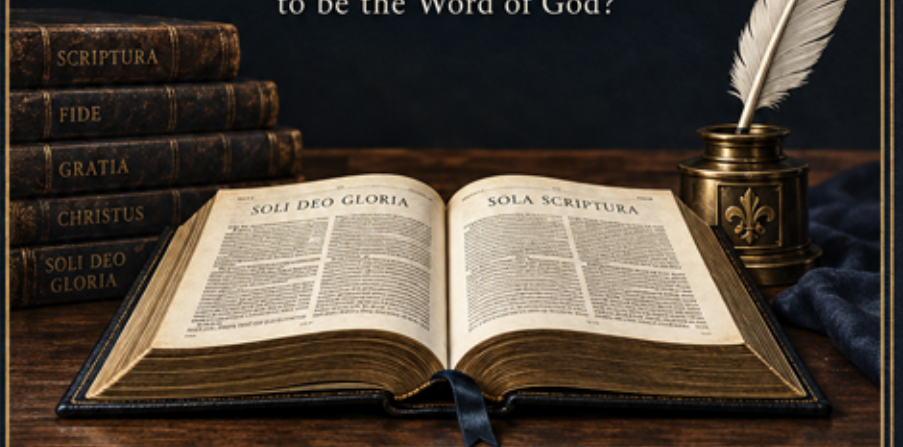


A SHORT
AND
PLAIN ANSWER
TO TWO
QUESTIONS

1. Where was your religion before Luther?
2. How do you know the Scriptures to be the Word of God?



JOHN OWEN

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**A SHORT AND PLAIN
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JOHN OWEN

1616-1683

A Short and Plain Answer to Two Questions

by John Owen

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HISTORICAL TITLE PAGE

A Short and Plain Answer to Two Questions by John Owen

I. Where was your Religion before Luther?

II. How do you know the Scriptures to be the Word of God?

By a Protestant.

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Prefatory Address

Sir,

I have received your letter, wherein you seem to be at a loss for a ready and pertinent answer to two capping questions, by which the Papists are wont to puzzle and confound those silly souls, whom they compass sea and land to make proselytes. I know you are well satisfied that Popery is a grand cheat, upheld by fraud and violence, and has nothing truly rational to recommend it. But yet sometimes a man of honesty and good principles may be at a stand to render a satisfying reason for his belief and to obviate the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. I suppose, moreover, you cannot expect anything from me but what has been said before and what is infinitely better performed in some hundreds of printed books already extant, than any scribbling of mine will ever amount to. But yet since men often make most use of those reasons which arise in their own minds, by thinking and meditation; I shall, for my own satisfaction rather than for yours, note down as briefly and plainly as I can, such answers to those two questions you mention as shall at present occur to my thoughts; which nevertheless I shall communicate to you if perhaps they may be worth your acceptance. The first is:

QUESTION 1

Where Was Your Religion Before Luther?

To this, the answer will be very short and easy, but then it will cast the whole stress of the business upon the later question. I say then, that our religion, as to the rules and principles of it, was before Luther, where it has been ever since, in the Scriptures: And as to the profession of it, it has been owned and maintained by the faithful in all ages, namely, such as have been kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, against whom the gates of Hell and Rome have not been able to prevail. The Protestant religion we contend for is nothing else but Christianity uncorrupted, which was in its greatest purity before ever the Pope was heard of in the world. And Popery, that we oppose, is Christianity adulterated, or rather paganism Christianised, which was in the cradle when the mystery of iniquity began to work, and grew up to be the man of sin, when Popes had gulled the world into so much slavery, as to endure their trampling upon princes. And this truth, as it appears in great measure from the Fathers and historians of the Church, and from all antiquity that has had the good fortune to escape the Expurgatory Index; so it is more especially, and most evidently manifest from the Scriptures, which makes way for the second question, which is the main subject of this epistle, namely:

QUESTION 2

How Do You Know the Scriptures to Be the Word of God?

With this question chiefly, they think to undo the simpler sort of heretics, as they are pleased to speak; and 'tis not impossible but some weak and unsteady minds may be shaken by it. For since we never heard God vocally pronounce it, nor ever saw Him deliver it unto the world as His act and deed; they would have us so easy and credulous as to believe that there is no way to be assured of its being His word, but upon the authority of the Church, and that no Church but theirs can have that authority. But this plea is as far from satisfying an inquisitive mind as my arguments are likely to be from convincing our adversaries. Now, if any unlearned, well-meaning person shall happen to be attacked by this or any such like question, and shall doubt of his own ability to repel the sophistry whereby they are wont to manage their needy cause: I should advise him to deal with them, as our Saviour sometime did with the captious and impertinent Jews; namely, to answer their question by asking another. As, who gave you authority to call in question the Scriptures? How dare you insinuate doubts into any Christian's mind concerning the truth and authority of that book, which is the rule of our duty both to God and man? Away with these too curious questions, of which a fool may ask more than a wise man can tell how to answer. It argues a desperate cause, and a religion highly suspicious, that cannot be maintained otherwise than by such pleas as tend to make men atheists.

But though it be safe and prudent for some people to put them off in this manner, yet without any tergiversation, I shall address myself to answer directly, as soon as I have proposed a query or two, which, I think, will help introduce an answer to this grand question of theirs. I demand therefore of our adversaries, how they know that the sun shines, or that there are any bodies in the world? Why may not all the objects we discern about us be certain phantasms only, or apparitions

of the brain, which have no real existence in nature? Or, how come we to be assured that our whole life is any more than a dream? For since in our dreams, we verily believe the truth and reality of such things, as we laugh at when we are awake, why may we not hereafter awake into another state of life, in which we shall conclude our past life to have been a mere shadow?

If they will answer these enquiries, according to the nature of their own principles, then, all the proof we are to expect is only this: we have heard many people say this and that; or, thus we have been taught by our parents, or by our tutors and governors; and we believe them, and trouble ourselves no further. In this manner they would have us speak in the case of the Scriptures. They will not allow us to expect, or to endeavour, any rational satisfaction in the point; it is enough if we can but gape so wide as to swallow that Trojan Horse of papal authority. But verily we are not yet persuaded to make ourselves brutes for the Catholic cause; that is, we are unwilling to lay aside our own senses and human faculties, to commit the whole reason and conduct of our lives to "he said" and "she said."

And surely he that should pretend to dispute, and yet so palpably beg the question, would gain to be laughed at instead of a conclusion. Upon supposition therefore, that they would be a little more philosophical and genteel in answering my questions, in case they were proposed to them, I will endeavour the like, according to my small skill, in answer to theirs. And that I may deal as civilly as I can, I shall insist particularly upon none but the first, between which and this question of theirs, I will run a parallel, and attempt to show, that by the same arguments they will prove that the sun gives light, I will prove the Scriptures to be the word of God.

In the first place then, I shall consider what would be said by our adversaries, in answer to those extravagant questions I mentioned just now; and if I mistake their sense in this matter, I pray you inform me better by the next opportunity. For I seldom come into their company, and when I do, if they forbear, I am not forward to raise disputes. I suppose therefore they would tell me that these questions are about such things as all the world takes for granted upon the evidence of sense, and the uniform experience of all ages; that thus to deny principles were to turn sceptic, and so take the ready way never to come to any conclusion; just as if one that pretended to the

mathematics should deny the definitions and postulata of geometry, which have endured the test of most ages, and, as the common notions and sentiments of mankind, have bid defiance to all exceptions. Who would trouble his head to argue with such a person, as should deny that two and three make five, or that the whole is bigger than the half? We find by daily experience, and nobody can persuade us to the contrary, that when the sun is above the horizon we can see our way before us, the objects that are about us, and how to do our business, which in the dark we cannot do. "If any man walk in the day," (saith our Saviour) "he stumbleth not;" why? Because he seeth the light of this world; he needs not that any man should tell him it is light, he sees it himself, and his own sight is beyond all other men's arguments. But if a man walk in the dark, he stumbleth; and when night cometh, men cannot work. So that these questions you propose are altogether unquestionable;

- (1.) from the undeniable evidence of our senses;
- (2.) from the clearest inferences of reason; and
- (3.) from the universal acknowledgment of mankind.

In this manner I presume they would answer my queries, nor do I know any better way. And just thus it is in the case before us; for, from these very grounds it will appear, that the Scriptures have proceeded from God. The sun does not more plainly direct our steps than the Scriptures do our lives and actions. The first enlightens our natural, and the latter, our moral walking. The one makes us discern the creatures that are about us, the other teaches how to use them to our greatest comfort and highest advantage. By the one we may conclude there is a God, as he is knowable by the things that are made; by the other we are instructed what to think of him, and how to behave ourselves in reference to him, and to our neighbour. The Scriptures are a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our ways; and whilst we take heed thereto we walk securely, and never fail to find the benefit thereof; but when we forsake their conduct, we fall into a thousand errors and mischiefs, often discovered to our outward senses, in the discomposure of our bodies, and detriment of our estates; often too in the trouble and disorder of our minds, and not seldom in both these respects at once.

As for Example, the Scripture commands us to live soberly, to love our neighbour, to feed the hungry, to forgive injuries, and to deal

justly with all men. And what are the consequences of our obedience in these things? Why, these: sound sleep, a healthy body, a peaceful soul, a cheerful life, bread to eat, the love of neighbours, the prayers of the poor, and a kind of universal respect and deference which virtue commands wherever it comes.

But then our disobedience to these precepts is usually followed by restless nights, racking pains, anxious thoughts, scaring dreams, trembling fears, perplexing doubts, the hatred of some, the curses of others, and the just condemnation of all. It's true, there are some reserved cases; God does sometimes try a virtuous soul with afflictions and often makes a soul virtuous by afflictions. He does again sometimes feed the epicure unto the day of slaughter and court the vicious by temporal enjoyments to reclaim them. Yet, in the meantime, the good are borne up with peace of mind and the expectation of a crown, and the wicked are busied in stupefying their senses to abate the sting of conscience and fear of hell.

But notwithstanding these reserved cases, I dare venture to affirm that there is not anything in the world whereof I am more certain, than that the Scripture is a most excellent rule for the government of my life and actions; and the ground of this assurance, in a great measure, is taken from sense. I am no more assured that the sun shines, or the fire warms, than I am that my conformity to the Scriptures is highly advantageous to me. The sun is not more necessary to the being of mankind than the Scriptures are to his well-being. The one gives natural life and light to the creation, the other enlightens the mind and teaches how to manage our lives, and the blessings thereof, to the best purpose. Without the first, the world would be a chaos; without the latter, it would be a kind of hell. Now the very first step of reason infers the conclusion: For, from whence should such a treasure of wisdom and truth proceed, but from the inexhaustible fountain of all goodness, God Almighty?

And let any man in the world (unto whose hands Divine Providence shall bring it) carefully peruse that book, and consider well the vast stock of wisdom, the immense treasures of love and bounty therein contained; let him observe the excellent rules it propounds, so fitted for all purposes and occasions of human life, that a universal conformity to it would make heaven upon earth; let him mark how all the disorders and miseries, contentions and bloodshed

in the world, proceed from men's disobedience thereto, and do constitute the formal reason of hell itself; and in a word, let him observe that whatever he does well, and which afterwards leaves him a grateful relish and ease of mind, is done according to the precepts of that book; and whatever he does amiss, which leaves a sting and poison behind it, is nothing else but a deviation from that rule. I say, let him but diligently read, and impartially consider these things, and he can be no better assured that there is a God, who is good and wise, merciful and just, than that the Holy Scriptures are the result of his goodness and mercy towards the sons of men; and that they do contain a declaration of his mind with respect unto us, and the rule of our duty in relation to him.

Why might not our adversaries demand of us, how we come to be certain that God is righteous and the Devil wicked? Is it lest the question should recur upon themselves? For since so many of their holy fathers have been so flagitious, as history makes mention, and since villainy is so far patronised by their Church, that the blackest criminals in that communion are often canonised for the greatest saints: one would be apt to suspect, they worship no other deity but the Pope, and that whilst they pronounce his Holiness, the secret reservation may be, his Wickedness.

I have heard indeed of a Pope that made this question, unless perhaps it were spoken by way of exclamation:

Quantum lucri ista fabula de Christo nobis peperit!

And this seems to be the proper language of that Church: For if they did believe the New Testament to be aught but a fable, they could not allow those doctrines and practices that are everywhere visible amongst them. For I reckon, that imposing upon the conscience things unrevealed, and beyond all possibility of belief, upon no less penalty than the Inquisition here, and damnation hereafter, is the very next door to infidelity and atheism. How can he be said to believe the truth, that would force another to believe a lie? So that whilst our adversaries would seem to question the grounds upon which we assent unto the Scriptures, it's more than probable they themselves do not believe them at all.

I nothing doubt, for all that, but there are within the Romish Church, thousands of pious and devout souls, whose education and other unhappy circumstances, God will in great mercy consider; and,

though under gross error and much ignorance, will bring them through the power of his grace unto salvation. If their foundation be upon the Rock, though they have built thereon hay and stubble, they may indeed suffer loss but shall escape utter ruin. I think too there are amongst them some learned men, as the Jansenists, and perhaps some others, whose lives and principles are far better than the rest, and who by an odd kind of fatality preserve their station in that Church. These, if they pursue their own rules and practice according to what they write, shall not (I hope) smart with the rest, when God comes to visit their iniquity. But as for those designing men, whose business it is to pry into the cabinets of princes, and to influence the affairs of kingdoms for the advantage of the Catholic cause; who though priests, affect to be ministers of state, not of Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world; they whose gospel is fire and sword, and their glad tidings of salvation some bloody massacre; whose faith is in the Pope, and whose heaven it is to be courted and canonized by a scarlet whore: I look upon these to be a generation of the vilest wretches that ever the earth bore, and in a far worse condition than Turks or pagans. And yet these are the men that would have me receive the Scriptures upon their credit, who are the great shame and discredit of that holy Christian religion contained therein, and whose lives are one entire contradiction thereunto.

I suppose it will not be denied, that had we no inspired writings at all to direct us, there were nevertheless many reasons to believe the being of God. Scarce any people under heaven so brutish, as not to have some impressions of a deity. Scarce any person in the world so profligate, as not to have some checks of conscience: Besides what arguments may be drawn from the beauty of providence and harmony of the creation. Now the very notion of a God includes goodness, and the notion of goodness supposes a God: One is the stream, the other is the fountain. Let any man try how he can fancy the stream that should proceed from no original fountain at all. It is not imaginable sure, that any creature should be in the world, or that good things should be bestowed upon any creature, but they must proceed from some original, and that can be nothing else but God blessed forever. From whence I argue thus: If the invisible things of him from the creation be clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, much

more may the visible characters of divine goodness, everywhere evident in the Scriptures, be clearly concluded to be from God.

Will any man object and say, Where are those visible characters of divine goodness contained in the Scriptures? Many people cannot see them. True indeed, and there are some too that cannot see the sun, but then they are blind, and cannot see anything at all. The sun illuminates the material visible world, and the Scripture gives us a prospect of a spiritual world and lets us see things divine; but then we must have eyes, and if we complain of darkness in the meridian light, where's the fault? Now if any man will say he can see no marks nor footsteps of divine goodness in the Scriptures; I would ask him, whether health and vigour of body, whether easiness and pleasure of mind, are good things or not? And whether he would choose to lie upon a rack, or a bed of roses? Or suppose a man by his own default, and wilfulness in going astray, be fallen into a pit, where he is certain either to be stung with vermin, or to die by wild beasts, or famish to death; would he not account it a kindness, not only to be delivered from the present danger, but conducted throughout the remainder of his journey, in such a way as is both safe and easy? If he answer in the affirmative, he yields the cause; if he deny, he must be a madman, past all sense of understanding of good or evil. Now if I pursue our adversaries to the gates of Bedlam, they must excuse me if I there bid farewell, and follow them no further. The sum is this: That which teaches us the best way imaginable to preserve health in our bodies and peace in our souls, to live comfortably at home and profitably to our neighbours, to honour our Creator and know ourselves, to avoid misery and attain happiness, must needs be an excellent rule, very much for our good, and must proceed from the true fountain of all goodness. But such is the Scripture, therefore it is the word of God.

Thus far I have considered the Scripture in reference chiefly to its utility; let us now observe it a little with respect to its verity. For sometimes it happens that a thing may be useful, which yet is not exactly true. As, for example, decimal arithmetic resolves a question speedily but not altogether exactly; yet it will come so near the truth as not to miss the ten-thousandth part of a farthing. And a clock will follow the motion of the sun for a week's time, with the error only of some few minutes; but neither the one nor the other, in strictness of speech, can be said to be true, though both are very useful. But now,

if the Scriptures appear to be both useful in the highest degree and infallibly true, it must needs speak to the very great perfection of those sacred writings. They may be distinguished into four parts according as they contain:

1. Things related, or matter of history;
2. Things foretold, or matter of prophecy;
3. Things to be done, as matter of action, or duty;
4. Things to be believed, or matter of faith.

As for the historical part of that book, how has it bidden defiance to time to discover any just exception! Nay, even the enemies of truth have owned and confirmed the matters of fact therein contained. And many profane writers, who either knew not of, or have not rightly acknowledged the Scriptures, have nevertheless inserted into their own stories the same things therein contained, as is well known, and has been oft observed by those that look into books. And though the divine history bears such authority and majesty in its style that it needs not the confirmation of profane ones, yet the testimony of adversaries against themselves is always considerable.

And has not much of the prophetic part been verified to the amazement of all those that duly consider it? How many, and how punctually, were the prophecies concerning our redemption by Christ? How plain was that concerning the type thereof, namely, Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery (Gen. 15:13-14), and yet how wonderfully fulfilled, many hundreds of years after they were foretold? But I am not at leisure to enlarge upon these things; many learned men have done it, more especially the incomparable Sir Charles Wolseley.

And then for the preceptive part, containing rules of life and manners, it is so rooted in the nature of things, so obvious to sense, so agreeable to reason, so beneficial to the world, and so confirmed by the experience of all men, whose faculties are not depraved, that heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle thereof shall fail or be found deficient.

Lastly, the Divine Mysteries therein revealed, such as the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Blessed Jesus, etc., though they are beyond our capacity to explain the nature of them, yet

are they so suitable to God's goodness, and do make such a harmony of divine attributes, that reason itself will rather infer the truth of their being from thence, than conclude they cannot be because we understand not the manner of how they are. How could God be just if justice were not satisfied? And how could He be merciful if all men were to be damned? How could lost man redeem himself? Or how could he be saved if he should suffer for himself?

But now in the person of our blessed Redeemer, the law is satisfied, justice is done, and even thereby, mercy does the more eminently appear; God is glorified, and man is not left to perish in his iniquity. If a man will be so morose as to urge that three in one, eternal generations, a virgin's conception, and the like, sound so harsh to human understanding that they cannot be true: He may after the same rate conclude that there is no such thing as human generation, since the nature and process thereof is very obscurely, if at all, understood. That there are no souls, because it is not yet agreed whether they are immediately created by God, or they are ex traduce, or pre-existent. No such thing as milk in a woman's breast, since anatomists are confounded with difficulties to find what matter it is made of, or by what secret channels conveyed thither: insomuch that one very learned writer in that faculty flies to the force of imagination to produce it. No such thing as quantity, because no man ever yet could demonstrate unexceptionably, whether it be infinitely divisible, or ultimately resolvable into indivisibles. No bodies in the world, since no man knows what kind of original particles they are made of. These and many more things, as to the manner how they are, have difficulties attending them, which are insuperable and incomprehensible. And methinks it is somewhat hard, that we should do things ourselves, and see many things before our eyes, of which we can give no tolerable account, and should yet think that God cannot do somewhat more than we can apprehend; and should be so inclined to reject even God himself, his word, and all his works of wonder, if they will not accommodate themselves to our little understandings.

From these considerations, and many more that will occur to any impartial thinking man, it does appear beyond all possibility of doubting that the Scripture is most certainly true; and if so, it must be the word of God, for it testifies of itself that it is given by divine

inspiration. Never did any book contain so much wisdom, kindness, and usefulness to the sons of men as it does. Summing up the whole world together, except the Bible and what is taken out of it, the total will neither afford you half so many excellent rules and observations for the government of men's lives, nor one thousandth part of that clear discovery of divine truth which that book contains. Shall we now say that this book is a forgery, a cheat, and an imposture of the devil? For so it must be, if it is not the word of God. And what follows? Why, that a corrupt tree brings forth good fruit, and that most pure and wholesome streams proceed from a putrid fountain. That truth is falsehood, that good is evil, and that light is darkness. He that denies the Scriptures to be the word of God must quit his sense, his reason, and his conscience, that he may admit of these conclusions.

To which it may be added, that all the malicious and cunning adversaries of God and true religion; all the pagans, popes, and hellish apostates; all the devils themselves, and their incarnate brethren the Jesuits, with all their subtlety and contrivance, have not been able to destroy nor discredit that book: no, nor to corrupt it either, in any such degree, but that still there remain good copies thereof in several languages. And though there may be deficiency and human frailty in some readings and versions, as to some particular words, yet is not that any blemish unto, or diminution of the beauty and excellency of the whole, but may rather teach us to value it the more. For since neither the failings of some, nor the fraud of others, have availed in sixteen hundred years to do any substantial damage to that book, it is a convincing argument that divine providence has been engaged for its preservation.

If it should be here objected, that since there are so many various readings of the Scriptures, it may be doubtful which of them is the best: I readily grant it, but then there can be no doubt, that every one of them, for the main substance of it, is the Word of God. Let us suppose

Religio Medici

to be translated into several languages; there may be diverse faults in every one of them, as is observed to be in the Latin copy, and some of them very gross ones. But will anybody from thence infer that Sir Thomas Browne is not the author? For though indeed he is

not the author of those errors, wherein the true sense of some particular words is mistaken, yet since they are not such, nor so many, as to evacuate the design and scope of the book, much less to denominate the whole work from the translator; I may say, with good propriety of speech, that that book was written by the learned Sir Thomas Browne, though I should find the same in Latin or French, and had never seen the original English. Thus I scruple not to say, the Rheims translation is the Word of God. That is, for the substance and main purpose of it, it is not so spoiled as to lose the nature of divine truth, but is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: And, to such as cannot procure a better, it may doubtless be sufficient to make them wise unto salvation. But I intend not in the meantime, to entitle God Almighty to the failings or frauds of that version, or of any other.

The errors that have been occasioned from various copies taken and translations made, are either of infirmity or knavery. As for this latter, I suppose it cannot be proved, that ever any person was so audacious as to attempt the palpable corruption of the Scriptures, until the aspiring Popes had set up an infallible chair at Rome, a court only fit to protect such undertakings, because indeed it could not be supported without them. So that in the primitive times, the errors which have crept into the Bible have been first, only such failings as have escaped unawares in the transcribing thereof: And secondly, afterwards, when it came to be translated into other languages, some difficulty and contest could not choose but arise about the rendering of such words as were of various and doubtful signification, from which I believe there are very few languages entirely free. Now I say, it was impossible that both these together, whilst men were sincere and honest, should ever stifle or quench the divine spirit which breathes everywhere in those sacred writings. And we may reasonably suppose, that the Christian Church was stocked with a competent number of good copies, before the mystery of iniquity came to such a height, as to attempt the willful depravation of the Scriptures.

Two things are considerable in this matter; first, that in the infant state of Christianity, believers were cordial, and in good earnest, about the business of religion. The power of godliness prevailed, and those who called themselves Christians were really such; nor had they

yet learned those crafts of cozenage and deceit, which afterwards, the mystery of iniquity furnished the world withal. And therefore they would be careful, in the highest degree, to transmit faithful copies of those precious papers unto posterity: a duty more especially incumbent on them, who had the keeping of the true originals. Secondly, that God Almighty, having by the Holy Ghost inspired His penmen to deliver His mind unto the world, it is not likely, that He should relinquish the same, to perish in the hands of ignorant or wicked men. For since the blessed Spirit did so manifestly appear in it, divine Providence was sure to guard it, and will doubtless secure it to the end of the world.

These inducements, with others of like nature, are sufficient, I count, to convince any man, unto whose hands the Bible shall come, that it does contain the words of eternal life. For it carries that self-evidencing light, that majestic plainness, that unaffected gravity, and substantial utility throughout the whole; that no man, who will but consider, can possibly doubt of its original. And though men's corruptions may prevail so far with them, as to make them pretend at least, to call in question the being of God, as well as the truth of His word: yet it shall certainly operate upon them so far, as to leave them without excuse. I do not believe that nature ever yet produced so profligate a wretch, but would be sensible of some reluctance and grief, to see his child murdered, his house fired, and have his limbs torn asunder, without any just cause or provocation given. But if these things have no evil in them, why should anybody be grieved at them? If they have, why should anyone do the like to his neighbour? Now, if men ought not to do wrong in one respect, no more ought they to do it in any other. From whence ought to follow the universal rectitude of all our actions. And where are there such rules of equity and righteousness as the Scriptures afford, teaching us to do unto others, as we would that they should do unto us? The faithful observation of which short precept would confine Astraea to this lower world, and yet banish all her courts, as being useless: it would set such a face on things, as would far exceed all the imaginary beauties of the golden age. From whence now should this proceed, but from the fountain of all righteousness, God Almighty?

There is yet a further means of assurance that the Scriptures are the Word of God, namely, from the evidence of the Spirit bearing

witness in our consciences to the truth of those things contained in our Bibles; of which there is a counterpart written in our hearts, and attested by the Holy Ghost. There are indeed many false spirits and many vain pretences to the true one; yet a measure thereof is given to every child of God, and promised to all those who seek it with sincerity and perseverance.

Now I say this evidence of the Spirit, wherever it is, fills the mind with assurance and satisfaction about divine truth, beyond all arguments: It is so convincing, that St. Paul calls it a demonstration. And though perhaps it may not have that force to those who deride it in others, and stifle its motions in their own breasts, (for neither is geometrical demonstration of force to them that understand it not) yet to a mind enlightened by it, and brought under the power of it, the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit is beyond all other arguments and demonstrations whatsoever.

To sum up all, we need not go to a corrupt and adulterous Church to have its authority and imprimatur stamped upon our Bibles, from whence on the contrary it ought to derive its own authority: And it will one day sink under the weight and force of those laws and precepts which it now vainly pretends to authorize. I say then, the Scriptures are known to be the Word of God beyond all possibility of mistake or doubt, by evidence of sense, by arguments of reason, and by demonstration of the Spirit.

This, Sir, is all I shall trouble you with in this matter, till either I have your objections or some further opportunity of discovering my zeal to serve you, according to the utmost of my power.

I am, Sir, &c.

FINIS