BOOK II. Ch. vi. 4.

"This tree neither Paul planted, nor Apollos watered, nor God increased.' In like sort Leo saith, 'What needeth it to believe that thing that neither the Law hath taught, nor the Prophets have spoken, nor the Gospel hath preached, nor the Apostles have delivered?' And again, 'How are the new devices brought in that our Fathers never knew?' St. Augustine, having reckoned up a great number of the Bishops of Rome, by a general negative saith thus; 'In all this order of succession of bishops there is not one bishop found that was a Donatist.' St. Gregory being himself a Bishop of Rome, and writing against the title of Universal Bishop, saith thus, 'None of all my predecessors ever consented to use this undecent title; no Bishop of Rome ever took upon him this name of singularity.' By such negatives, M. Harding, we reprove the vanity and novelty of your religion; we tell you, none of the catholic ancient Fathers either Greek or Latin, ever used either your private mass, or your holy communion, or your barbarous unknown prayers. Paul never planted them, Apollos never watered them, God never increased them; they are of yourselves, they are not of God.

In all this there is not a syllable which any way crosseth us. For concerning arguments negative even taken from human authority, they are here proved to be in some cases very strong and forcible. They are not in our estimation idle reproves, when the authors of needless innovations are opposed with such negatives as that of Leo, "How are these new devices brought in which our Fathers never knew?" When their grave and reverend superiors do reckon up unto them as Augustine did unto the Donatists, large catalogues of Fathers wondered at for their wisdom, piety, and learning, amongst whom for so many ages before us no one did ever so think of the Church's affairs as now the world doth begin to be persuaded; surely by us they are not taught to take exception hereat, because such arguments are negative. Much less when the like are taken from the sacred authority of Scripture, if the matter itself do bear them. For in truth the question is not, whether an argument from Scripture negatively may be good, but whether it be so generally good, that in all actions men may urge it. The Fathers I grant do use very general and large terms, even as Hiero the king did in speaking of Archimedes. "From henceforward, whatsoever Archimedes saith, it must be believed!" His meaning was not that Archimedes could simply in nothing be deceived, but that he had in such sort approved his skill, that he seemed worthy of credit for ever after in matters appertaining unto the science he was skilful in. In speaking thus largely it is presumed that men's speeches will be taken according to the matter whereof they speak. Let any man therefore that carrieth indifferency of judgment peruse the bishop's speeches, and consider well of those negatives concerning Scripture, which he produceth out of Irenaeus, Chrysostom and Leo;"
which three are chosen from amongst the residue, because the
sentences of the others (even as one of theirs also) do make
for defence of negative arguments taken from human authority,
and not from divine only. They mention no more restraint
in the one than in the other; yet I think themselves will not
hereby judge, that the Fathers took both to be strong, without
restraint unto any special kind of matter wherein they held
such arguments forcible. Nor doth the bishop either say or
prove any more, than that an argument in some kinds of mat-
ter may be good, although taken negatively from Scripture.

VII. An earnest desire to draw all things unto the deter-
mination of bare and naked Scripture hath caused here much
pains to be taken in abating the estimation and credit of man.
Which if we labour to maintain as far as truth and reason will
bear, let not any think that we revolt about a matter not
greatly needful. For the scope of all their pleading against
man's authority is, to overthrow such orders, laws, and con-
stitutions in the Church, as depending thereupon if they should
therefore be taken away, would peradventure leave neither
face nor memory of Church to continue long in the world, the
world especially being such as now it is. That which they
have in this case spoken I would for brevity's sake let pass,
but that the drift of their speech being so dangerous, their
words are not to be neglected.

[2.] Wherefore to say that simply an argument taken from
man's authority doth hold no way, "neither affirmatively nor
"negatively," is hard. By a man's authority we here
understand the force which his word hath for the assurance
of another's mind that buildeth upon it; as the Apostle some-
what did upon their report of the house of Chloe; and the

Samaritans in a matter of far greater moment upon the report
of a simple woman. For so it is said in St. John's Gospel,
"Many of the Samaritans of that city believed in him for the
"saying of the woman, which testified, He hath told me all
"things that ever I did.""

The strength of man's authority is affirmatively such that
the weightiest affairs in the world depend thereon. In judg-
ment and justice are not hereupon proceedings grounded?
Saith not the Law that "in the mouth of two or three wit-
"nesses every word shall be confirmed? This the law of
God would not say, if there were in a man's testimony no
force at all to prove any thing.

And if it be admitted that in matter of fact there is some
credit to be given to the testimony of man, but not in matter
of opinion and judgment; we see the contrary both acknow-
ledged and universally practised also throughout the world.
The sentences of wise and expert men were never but highly
esteemed. Let the title of a man's right be called in question;
are we not bold to rely and build upon the judgment of such
as are famous for their skill in the laws of this land? In
matter of state the weight many times of some one man's
authority is thought reason sufficient, even to sway over whole
nations.

And this not only "with the simpler sort;" but the learn-
eder and wiser we are, the more such arguments in some
cases prevail with us. The reason why the simpler sort are
moved with authority is the conscience of their own ignorance;
whereby it cometh to pass that having learned men in admira-
tion, they rather fear to dislike them than know wherefore
they should allow and follow their judgments. Contrariwise
with them that are skilful authority is much more strong and
forcible; because they only are able to discern how just
cause there is why to some men's authority so much should
be attributed. For which cause the name of Hippocrates (no
doubt) were more effectual to persuade even such men as
Galen himself, than to move a silly empiric. So that the
very selfsame argument in this kind which doth but induce
the vulgar sort to like, may constrain the wiser to yield. And
therefore not orators only with the people, but even the very

1 iv. 39. 5 Deut. xix. 15; Matt. xviii. 16.
profoundest disputers in all faculties have hereby often with the best learned prevailed most.

As for arguments taken from human authority and that negatively; for example sake, if we should think the assembling of the people of God together by the sound of a bell, the presenting of infants at the holy font by such as commonly we call their godfathers, or any other the like received custom, to be impious, because some men of whom we think very reverently have in their books and writings nowhere mentioned or taught that such things should be in the Church; this reasoning were subject unto just reproof, it were but feeble, weak, and unsound. Notwithstanding even negatively an argument from human authority may be strong, as namely thus: The Chronicles of England mention no more than only six kings bearing the name of Edward since the time of the last conquest; therefore it cannot be there should be more. So that if the question be of the authority of a man’s testimony, we cannot simply avouch either that affirmatively it doth not any way hold; or that it hath only force to induce the simpler sort, and not to constrain men of understanding and ripe judgment to yield assent; or that negatively it hath in it no strength at all. For unto every of these the contrary is most plain.

[3.] Neither doth that which is alleged concerning the infirmity of men overthrow or disprove this. Men are blinded with ignorance and error; many things may escape them, and in many things they may be deceived; yea, those things which they do know they may either forget, or upon sundry indirect considerations let pass; and although themselves do not err, yet may they through malice or vanity even of purpose deceive others. Howbeit infinite cases there are wherein all these impediments and lets are so manifestly excluded, that there is no show or colour whereby any such exception may be taken, but that the testimony of man will stand as a ground of infallible assurance. That there is a city of Rome, that Pius Quintus and Gregory the Thirteenth and others have been Popes of Rome, I suppose we are certainly enough persuaded. The ground of our persuasion, who never saw the place nor persons before named, can be nothing but man’s testimony. Will any man here notwithstanding allege those mentioned human infirmities, as reasons why these things should be mistrusted or doubted of?

Yea, that which is more, utterly to infringe the force and strength of man’s testimony were to shake the very fortress of God’s truth. For whatsoever we believe concerning salvation by Christ, although the Scripture be therein the ground of our belief; yet the authority of man is, if we mark it, the key which openeth the door of entrance into the knowledge of the Scripture. The Scripture could not teach us the things that are of God, unless we did credit men who have taught us that the words of Scripture do signify those things. Some way therefore, notwithstanding man’s infirmity, yet his authority may enforce assent.

[4.] Upon better advice and deliberation so much is perceived, and at the length confest; that arguments taken from the authority of men may not only so far forth as hath been declared, but further also be of some force in “human sciences;” which force be it never so small, doth shew that they are not utterly naught. But in “matters divine” it is still maintained stiffly, that they have no manner force at all. Howbeit, the very selfsame reason, which causeth to yield that they are of some force in the one, will at the length constrain also to acknowledge that they are not in the other altogether unforcible. For if the natural strength of man’s wit may by experience and study attain unto such ripeness in the knowledge of things human, that men in this respect may

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1 T. C. lib. ii. p. 19: “Although that kind of argument of authority “of men is good neither in human “nor divine sciences; yet it hath “some small force in human sci- “ences, (forasmuch as naturally, and “in that he is a man, he may come “to some ripeness of judgment in “those sciences,) which in divine “matters hath no force at all; as “of him which naturally, and as he “is a man, can no more judge of “them than a blind man of colours. “Yes so far is it from drawing credit, “if it be barely spoken without rea- “son and testimony of Scripture, “that it carrieth also a suspicion of “untruth whatsoever proceedeth “from him; which the Apostle did “well note, when, to signify a thing “corruptly spoken, and against the “truth, he saith, that it is spoken “according to man; Rom. iii. He “saith not, as a wicked and lying “man, but simply, as a man.” And although this corruption be “reformed in many, yet for so much “as in whom the knowledge of the “true is most advanced there “maineth both ignorance and dis- “ordered affections (whereof either “of them turneth him from speak- “ing of the truth), no man’s au- “thority, with the Church espe- “cially and those that are called and “persuaded of the authority of the “Word of God, can bring any as- “surce unto the conscience.”
Evidence being in various Degrees.

presume to build somewhat upon their judgment; what reason have we to think but that even in matters divine, the like
wits furnished with necessary helps, exercised in Scripture
with like diligence, and assisted with the grace of Almighty
God, may grow unto so much perfection of knowledge, that
men shall have just cause, when any thing pertinent unto faith
and religion is doubted of, the more willingly to incline their
minds towards that which the sentence of so grave, wise, and
learned in that faculty shall judge most sound? For the con-
troversy is of the weight of such men's judgments. Let it
therefore be suspected; let it be taken as gross, corrupt, re-
pugnant unto the truth, whatsoever concerning things divine
above nature shall at any time be spoken as out of the
mouths of mere natural men, which have not the eyes where-
with heavenly things are discerned. For this we contend
not. But whom God hath endued with principal gifts to
aspire unto knowledge by; whose exercises, labours, and
divine studies he hath so blessed that the world for their great
and rare skill that way hath them in singular admiration;
may we reject even their judgment likewise, as being utterly
of no moment? For mine own part, I dare not so lightly
esteem of the Church, and of the principal pillars therein.

[5.] The truth is, that the mind of man desireth evermore
to know the truth according to the most infallible certainty
which the nature of things can yield. The greatest assurance
generally with all men is that which we have by plain aspect
and intuitive beholding. Where we cannot attain unto this,
there what appeareth to be true by strong and invincible
demonstration, such as wherein it is not by any way possible
to be deceived, thereunto the mind doth necessarily assent,
neither is it in the choice thereof to do otherwise. And in
case these both do fail, then which way greatest probability
leadeth, thither the mind doth evermore incline. Scripture
with Christian men being received as the Word of God; that
for which we have probable, yea, that which we have necessary
reason for, yea, that which we see with our eyes, is not thought
so sure as that which the Scripture of God teacheth; because
we hold that his speech revealeth there what himself seeth,
and therefore the strongest proof of all, and the most necessarily
assented unto by us (which do thus receive the Scripture) is

there must be corresponding Degrees in Assent.

the Scripture. Now it is not required or can be exacted at our
hands, that we should yield unto any thing other assent, than
such as doth answer the evidence which is to be had of that
we assent unto. For which cause even in matters divine, con-
cerning some things we may lawfully doubt and suspend our
judgment, inclining neither to one side nor other; as namely
touching the time of the fall both of man and angels: of some
things we may very well retain an opinion that they are pro-
able and not unlikely to be true, as when we hold that men
have their souls rather by creation than propagation, or that
the Mother of our Lord lived always in the state of virginity
as well after his birth as before (for of these two the one, her
virginity before, is a thing which of necessity we must be-
lieve; the other, her continuance in the same state always,
hath more likelihood of truth than the contrary); finally in all
things then are our consciences best resolved, and in most
agreeable sort unto God and nature settled, when they are so
far persuaded as those grounds of persuasion which are to be
had will bear.

Which thing I do so much the rather set down, for that
I see how a number of souls are for want of right information
in this point oftentimes grievously vexed. When bare and
unbuilded conclusions are put into their minds, they finding
not themselves to have thereof any great certainty, imagine
that this proceedeth only from lack of faith, and that the
Spirit of God doth not work in them as it doth in true be-
lievers; by this means their hearts are much troubled, they
fall into anguish and perplexity: whereas the truth is, that
how bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it
cometh to the point of trial, such as the evidence is which the
truth hath either in itself or through proof, such is the heart's
assent thereunto; neither can it be stronger, being grounded
as it should be.

I grant that proof derived from the authority of man's
judgment is not able to work that assurance which doth grow
by a stronger proof; and therefore although ten thousand
general councils would set down one and the same definitive
sentence concerning any point of religion whatsoever, yet one
demonstrative reason alleged, or one manifest testimony cited
from the mouth of God himself to the contrary, could not
Human Authority how far admissible.

choose but overweigh them all; inasmuch as for them to be in defect of proof infallible, because the mind doth rather follow probable persuasions than approve the things that have in them no likelihood of truth at all; surely if a question concerning matter of doctrine were proposed, and on the one side no kind of proof appearing, there should on the other be alleged and shewed that so a number of the learnedest divines in the world have ever thought; although it did not appear what reason or what Scripture led them to be of that judgment, yet to their very bare judgment somewhat a reasonable man would attribute, notwithstanding the common imbecilities which are incident into our nature.

[5.] And whereas it is thought, that especially with "the Church, and those that are called and persuaded of the "authority of the Word of God, man's authority" with them especially "should not prevail;" it must and doth prevail even with them, yea with them especially, as far as equity requireth; and farther we maintain it not. For men to be

1 T. C. lib. ii. p. 21: "Of divers "sentences of the Fathers them-"selves (whereby some have likened them to brute beasts without "reason which suffer themselves to "be led by the judgment and au-"thority of others, some have pre-"fered the judgment of one simple "rede man alleging reason unto "commonly learned men) I will "content myself at this time with "two or three sentences. Irenaeus "said. Whatsoever is to be shewed in the Scripture cannot be shewed "but out of the Scriptures them-"selves. lib. iii. cap. 12. Jerome "saith, 'No man be he never so "holy or eloquent hath any authority "after the Apostles:' in Ps. lxxxvi. "Augustine saith, 'That he will "believe none how godly and learn-"ed soever he be, unless he confirm "his sentence by the Scriptures, or "by some reason not contrary to "them.' Ep. 18." [al. 82. t. ii. p. "190.] "And in another place, Hear "this, the Lord saith; Hear not "this, Donatus saith, Rogatus saith," "Vincentius saith, Hilarius saith, "Ambrose saith, Augustine saith, "but hearken unto this, The Lord "saith. Ep. 48." [al. 93. c. 6. Opp. t. ii. p. 239. It may be questioned whether this place is at all relevant to Cartwright's purpose. "Gloris-"catum est nomen meum in gentibus, "dicta Dominus. Audi, dicta Dominus; "non, dict Donatus, aut Rogatus, "aut Vincentius, aut Hilarius, aut "Ambrosius, aut Augustinus; sed, "dicta Dominus; cum legitur, Et "benedictentur in omnis terrae "terra. . . . Et replavit gloria eius "omnis terra, fiat, fiat." Et tu sedes "Carnennis, et cum decem Rogatistas, "qui remansistis, dici, Non fiat, non "fiant.] "And again, having to do "with an Arian, he affirmeth that "neither he ought to bring forth "the Council of Nice, nor the other "Council of Arimin, whereby he "brings prejudice to each other; "neither ought the Arian to be "holden by the authority of the one "nor himself by the authority of "the other, but by the Scriptures.

how far rejected by the Fathers.  

"which are witnesses proper to "neither but common to both "matter with matter, cause with "cause, reason with reason, ought "to be debated. Cont. Max. Arian. "lib. iii. c. 14." [al. 114. § 3. t. viii. 704. Nunc nunc ego Nicenum, nec tu debes Ariminense tanquam "prejudicatarius proferre concilium. Nec ego hujus auctoritate, nec tu "illius deneris. Scripturam aucto-"ritatibus, non quorumpen tropropiis, "sed utriusque communibus testibus," res cum re, causa sum causa, ratio "cum ratione concertetur. "And in "another place against Petilian the "Donatist he saith, Let not these "words be heard between us, I say, "You say; let us hear this, Thus "saith the Lord. And by and by "speaking of the Scriptures he saith, "There let us seek the Church, "here let us try the cause. De "Unit. Eccles. cap. 5." [cap. 2, 3. Inter nos et Donatistas quidstable est, "ubi sit hoc corpus; t.e. ubi sit Ec-"clesia. Quid ergo facturi sumus? in "verbis nostris eam quesiuei; an in "verbis capitatis sui, Domini nostri Jesu "Christi? Futo, quod in illius potius "verbis eam querere debemus, qui "Veritas est, et optimae novit corpus "sumus, ut in verbis nostri Ecclesiae "siam quari nobis eum. . . . 5. Non "audiamus, "Hac dicis, hoc dico." sed audiamus. "Hac dicit Dominus." Sunt certe libri Dominici, quorum auctoritatis utique consentimus, utique cedimus, utique ser-"vimus: ibi quaramus Ecclesiam, ibi discediamus causam nostram."

"Hereby [here] it is manifest that "the argument of the authority of "man affirmatively is nothing "worth."" 1]


BOOK II.  Ch. vii. 6.  BOOK II.  Ch. vii. 6.