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THEOLOGICAL COLLOQUIES;

OR,

A COMPENDIUM OF CHRISTIAN DIVINITY,

SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL,

FOUNDED ON SCRIPTURE AND REASON.

DESIGNED TO AID HEADS OF FAMILIES, YOUNG MEN ABOUT TO ENTER THE MINISTRY,

AND THE YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES,

IN THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AND COMMUNICATE A KNOWLEDGE OF TRUE PIETY.

BY THOMAS C. THORNTON,

OF DUMFRIES, VIRGINIA.

Νόει α᾽ λεγω· δώη γάρ σοι ὁ Κύριοσ συνεσιν ἐν πασι.

CONSIDER WHAT I SAY; AND THE LORD GIVE THEE UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS.

2 *Tim.* ii. 7.

BALTIMORE:

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1837.

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TO THE

REV. BEVERLY WAUGH,

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

This work is inscribed, with that respect, which has long been entertained for him, personally, as a fellow labourer in the gospel of Christ, and for that office which he fills, as a Christian Evangelist, whose life is devoted to the dissemination of religious knowledge, into the treasury of which, I would cast my mite.

THE AUTHOR.

BALTIMORE, *August* 1, 1837.

ADDRESS TO THE READER.

THE Author deems it his duty, to call the attention of the reader, to a few particulars, before he shall enter upon the perusal of the following work.

The Bible being the gift of God to the world, may be considered as the common property of every man, and that system of theology which it teaches, ought not only to be studied, but practised by all, for with this are connected the interest and happiness of the whole human family. Long since has this truth been admitted, by the good and the learned.

'Theology,' says a learned philosopher, 'is a science incomparably above all the rest.' 'It is the comprehension of all other knowledge, directed to its true end,' 'that noble study which is every man's duty, and every one that can be called a rational creature is capable of.' 'This is that science, which would truly enlarge men's minds, were it studied or permitted to be studied every where, and with that freedom, and love of truth and charity, which it teaches.'[1]

'To study the Scriptures and facilitate that study in those whom nature has made weak, or education left ignorant, or indispensable cares detained from the regular processes of inquiry' is represented as the duty of every man by another renowned Essayist of the last century.[2]

It is gratifying to believe, that there are now living the EQUALS of these great men, who, not only entertain the same views, but have become the instruments of connecting a knowledge of the Sacred Writings, with other valuable departments of science. 'The Bible,' says a talented writer of our own age, whose works command the profound respect of all who peruse them, 'affords the only authentic history of the origin, and multiplication of mankind, and by exhibiting the actual manner, in which society was generated, and communities were formed, offers the best theory of the social compact, a point on which there has been great misconception.' Having shown that the principles of morality, which are prevalent among the rudest nations, may be evidently traced to a revelation from the Deity, in

[1] Locke. [2] Dr. Johnson.

a most striking manner, he sets forth the superiority of that system of morals taught by the Lord Jesus Christ, over the best that have ever been fabricated by men. 'How meagre and lifeless,' says this learned jurist, 'are even the 'Ethics' of Aristotle, the 'Morals' of Seneca, the 'Memorabilia' of Xenophon, or the 'Offices' of Cicero, compared with it.' 'In the morals of the New Testament we have the *fulness* of LIGHT, the *radiance* of DIVINE TRUTH.'[1]

Such is the noble testimony of those, whose learning has numbered them with the benefactors of mankind, and whose exalted condition, it must be admitted, frees them even from the suspicion, of impure motive. By such the Scriptures are commended as alike important and profitable to ALL. As containing a science involving in its knowledge, consequences of eternal moment.

But it may be asked, why has the author presumed to offer to the world his views on this science? The answer may be found in the design of this work as originally issued, a quotation from which may not be improper. 'When an individual undertakes to publish a treatise on a subject, on which so many excellent things have been written, he is bound by a kind 'of literary justice,' to assign some reason for obtruding himself on public notice. I have felt the want of a work on Christian Theology, in a form and dress adapted to the use of families, and many pious persons have expressed to me, a great desire for such a publication. The papers which form the foundation of this volume were written some years since, for the religious instruction of my own household. Enough has been published on theology for the STUDY. My object is to bring its every principle under the investigation of the young, for their improvement in piety.' These are my reasons. He who searches the heart knows, that I have not published, much less written this work from mercenary motives.

Some persons no doubt, will consider it an act of presumption, almost unpardonable in *me*, to set forth a work of the character, which is here professed. Others will of course, look for the commendatory letters of those, whose exalted condition, ecclesiastical and literary, has rendered them conspicuous in the world. To the former, I have nothing to say, they are surely entitled to their opinions. To the latter, I can only repeat what was announced in the prospectus for this work. 'It is customary when proposals are issued, also to issue recommendations. This I shall never do. I have simply to say, that friends in whose piety and literary attainments, I have the utmost confidence, press its publication. If when submitted for the inspection of the world, it shall be found to possess no merit, I am prepared to endure the consequences, and do not wish to involve others in them.'

[1] Course of Legal Study by David Hoffman, Jur. Utr. Doct. Gottingen. This is a work replete with sound religious principle, and will be found of infinite value in every department of learning.

Perhaps I owe it to myself to add, that as soon as the Printer began to issue the sheets, I handed several copies of them over to brethren, of exalted standing in the christian ministry, I have not felt at liberty to ask their opinions, much less to seek their commendation.

I have already alluded to the origin of this work, and will further inform the reader, that some years since my health so failed, as to justify the opinion that I could live but a short time. I felt earnestly anxious to leave, for the benefit of my children, then very young, my testimony in favour of the christian religion.

I commenced addressing them a series of letters on divine subjects, generally throwing in what I had already written, in the course of my studies, on the doctrines and duties of the gospel of Christ.

When first stationed in this city I was more than ever convinced, that a work adapted to the use of the young, which would assist parents, plain common sense persons, in obtaining and imparting a knowledge of the christian system, would be a valuable acquisition to every family library. On the suggestion of one or two friends, I converted my letters into conversations, as somewhat calculated to answer such a desirable end. The religious public must judge of their tendency to promote the knowledge and practice of true piety, among such.

In writing the original letters I had the use of a well selected, though small library, in the Institution over which, I then presided; and also those of several valued friends, some of whom presented me with books, which I shall always esteem an acquisition to my own collection.[1]

In preparing the copy of this work, I have had an opportunity of referring to treatises on theology, but lately published.

To assist the biblical student I have generally referred to the authorities; but as there are set forth in the Colloquies, both sides of each subject, I must notify the reader, that authors are sometimes referred to, who differ from, as well as those who accord in the opinions here advanced. I have not deemed it necessary, except on some controverted points, to refer to the chapter, pages, or editions; because, most theological works of any note, have a table of contents or index; and to refer to the chapters, &c. would have encumbered my pages unnecessarily.

Some may criticise the names selected, Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos. I see no reason why these in a colloquial discussion, may not be as appropriately used, as others, of ancient date. My object, in their selection is mani-

[1] I feel under obligations here particularly to name the kindness, and that of the large families in all their branches, of John Campbell, Esq. and Col. Samuel Blackwell, formerly attorneys at law, and John Murphy, Fleming Bates, and James M. Smith, Esqrs. of Westmoreland and Northumberland counties, Virginia. All of whom, except the last named gentleman, have gone to the grave. For years I had access to their libraries, and have esteemed it an honour, to be permitted to number them and their families, among my kindest friends.

fest. I wished the reader to have before him, a pious man and his wife, employed in instructing a youth, zealously engaged in his inquiries after truth. An example alike worthy, the notice of the more experienced, and the young.

I should not feel at liberty to remark on the *originals* of the Sacred Writings, without both the capacity and honesty to investigate them, according to the received rules of construction. In almost every instance, I have examined the texts, in a Polyglott Bible, comparing the different translations, and have never failed closely to consult the various readings of a text, as well as the meanings of the words with the assistance of more than one Lexicon. As it respects the arrangement, I have followed that, which is most generally pursued by Protestant divines, taking up the subjects, and points for discussion, chiefly after the plan of Stackhouse, Limborch and Dr. Gill.

From those authors referred to in the work, I have frequently borrowed, both ideas and arguments, and from some of them, as Dr. Clarke, Limborch, Watson, Dwight, Dick, and others, I have often quoted largely. These quotations I have not marked, because the authors, in almost every instance, are referred to. Some of these works are doubtless exceptionable in some parts. Some are Calvinistic, others Pelagian, but surely valuable in many respects. I think it will be found that I have guarded against these extremes: and, although the quotations are numerous and large, it will be seen from the very face of the page that the work itself is original. Others have broken down mountainous difficulties, and it is righteous to declare, that few ideas or arguments, can now be advanced on theology, that have not been presented by other men, in other times. The attentive reader will see the effort that is made, to render every point plain and easy to be understood. It must be borne in mind, that these conversations were written with a view to bring the great subject of christian divinity, within the capacity and reach of all. Hence the author is sometimes verbose, and many will think, that there is an unnecessary repetition of argument on some points: but it must be remembered, the Scriptures teach that the young should have 'line upon line, and precept on precept.' I have, however, reason to believe, that those who take an interest in divine subjects will not think that I am too explicit. Had I been writing only for the inspection of the learned, I would have selected a different dress for those arguments here presented; and it must be obvious to all, that it is very difficult to bring the rules of composition to bear, on a work written in the colloquial style.

I have always felt it my duty, honestly to declare my sentiments, on all points, in christian theology. Since fourteen years of age I have been a seeker after truth. I have never been afraid of being proved in error, as to my doctrines, for I have ever been as much disposed to renounce an error,

when convinced of it, as I feel now disposed, frankly to sustain, what I believe to be the truth.

Although it will be found in these pages, that I differ on some points, as might be naturally expected, with some of my Protestant brethren; yet am I bound to say, that among the various Protestant denominations, I number many valuable friends, whose personal kindnesses lay me under many obligations, and in whose friendship, I shall ever esteem it an honour to share. The question between us is one that regards in most instances, points not directly essential to man's salvation. We coincide in fundamentals, and agree to differ in non-essentials.

The question, however, between Protestants and Romanists, is one of principle, one of vital interest to the cause of Christ; because we can never substitute their dogmas, for the glorious truths of our holy religion.

This is not all, it is one of life and death, for if there be a predominance of power, growing out of the prevalence of papal principles, it is most evident that Protestants must yield, not only their religion, but liberty and lives. For popery admits of no association with *Protestant Heretics.* The author has, therefore, felt constrained, amidst the mighty efforts that are making, to advance the cause of popery in this country, to expose frankly and firmly, the errors of a system, alike hostile, as all history proves, to the march of science, piety, and liberty both civil and religious. Under this conviction, I have exposed by arguments, founded in reason and Scripture, the fallacy of their claims to *universal dominion.* From the conscientious and considerate reader, I expect a decision according to truth.

Since this work has been in the press, I have been so much indisposed, as often to be wholly incapable of correcting a proof sheet, and I had no friend on whose time and goodness, I could encroach, for any permanent assistance, in so large a work. And although, there are many errors, which, I request, the intelligent reader to correct, it is due to the printer to say, that few are attributable to him.

I have appended a course of study, only at the suggestion and special request of a few young friends, and have named those works, which it is presumed, a youth anxious to acquire knowledge, may procure in his vicinity, and these only as a commencement.

As I am held responsible by that religious denomination, to which I belong, for any 'obnoxious matter' that may be published to the world; I expect, that my brethren in the ministry, especially the members of the Baltimore Annual Conference, of which I have the honour to be a member, will give this work a serious and an impartial perusal. I must, however ask, and it will doubtless be granted by them, and I trust, by all who read this volume, that they distinguish between what is advanced as a doctrine, and what is presented as merely a matter of opinion. If

this be done I have nothing to fear, as to the reception of what I have written, on any subject, by those, with whom I delight to live, and among whom I expect to die. At least, I ask of all, a candid and an impartial hearing, before that I be condemned. I am sure that piety will suggest it to the reader, as much easier to find fault, than prepare for public inspection, a work of this magnitude.

THOMAS C. THORNTON.

BALTIMORE, *August*, 1837.

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SACRED WRITINGS.

COLLOQUY I.

A DESIRE OF INFORMATION—THE OCCASION OF—AND THE BENEFIT OF MAN, THE END PROPOSED IN THESE CONVERSATIONS.

Apollos.[1]—Dear brother Aquila, I have long studied the Holy Scriptures, I have acquired some information concerning their doctrines, and have openly and boldly declared, that Jesus is the Son of God, and the 'author of eternal salvation to all them that believe,' still, I find them a great deep, and plainly perceive that I am just beginning to know many of those glorious truths, revealed therein. The kindness of yourself and sister Priscilla, the instruction you have already imparted, and my anxiety to understand more about divine things, induce me, my friend, to trouble you again: I want you to 'expound to me, the way of the Lord more perfectly,' that I may be able to convince the world from the Sacred Writings, that Christ our Lord is the Redeemer of men.

Aquila.—Apollos I am ever ready to aid you and all my brethren in any way. This is my duty, and this the reason why Priscilla and I took you to our house, and seconded your efforts to understand, and point out the 'path of peace,' to perishing sinners.

God uses instruments, and doubtless has a great work for you to perform. Be assured I shall not consider it an irksome duty, to expound to you 'the way of the Lord' as I understand it, but I frankly confess, I know too little of that blessed *way* myself.

Apollos.—I cannot express my gratitude for your condescension and care. An all absorbing subject preys upon my mind. I feel that 'woe is me if I preach not the Gospel,' and am incompetent to this task. I will embrace every opportunity to wait on you privately, and propose those questions which I desire to have answered. At your house I have learned more of the gospel and *experimental* religion than I ever knew before. Now I know the Saviour. He *lives* in my poor heart, and 'the life I live, is by the faith of him who loved and gave himself for me.' Influenced by his spirit which testifies to my acceptance, my ardent soul pants to fathom the depths of *redeeming grace.* I long, my dear friend, to teach others the knowledge of his *mercy.* Do instruct me how to guide the *lost* in the road to *heaven.*

Aquila.—Perhaps you are not aware of the difficulties attendant on such a work. Our united exertions will be required to solve them. Theology consi-

[1] See Acts, 18th chap. from 24th verse to the end.

dered as a science is intricate in its study. Curiosity must be repressed, and we must closely adhere to the subject under consideration, otherwise there will be no method in our discussions. You must accustom yourself to inquire into the reason of things, but at the same time submit to the *word* of God, as the highest authority. Above all, you must devoutly and constantly pray for supernatural aid. The Almighty encourages you to do this, saying 'ask and you shall receive, and if any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.'

You may honestly present all your objections. Fear not. We will try to remove every obstacle from the way of truth, and march up and face it. We must digest well each subject. Recollect, the man who *studies* and *prays* most, is most likely to obtain *true* wisdom.

Apollos.—I will wait on you then as soon as may be convenient.

Aquila.—You proposed to attend me *privately*, to this I cannot consent. I am responsible for the instruction of my family, and if our conversations are profitable, they should participate in all their advantages.

Moreover, Priscilla is my prompter. She often removes difficulties from my mind, admonishes me of my duty, sometimes acts as our chaplain, accompanies me in all my devotions, has been my associate in much suffering and is indeed my helper in every arduous undertaking. It is to your interest as well as mine that she be present.

Apollos.—I hope my friend does not think that I wish to exclude others from those benefits: far from it. I know the pleasure that servants, and even children, will take in such a work.

Sister Priscilla has often pointed me for comfort, in the hour of affliction, to Him that can alone relieve, and has taught me lessons which could not be learned from every christian. And could I object to her presence? By no means. To this, I the more readily consent, because in your absence she can aid me in the prosecution of my theological studies. I have marked all you say about my future course, I am the scholar and you my instructor. I submit implicitly to your advice, humbly relying on the mercy of God for strength and support.

Aquila.—My young friend, your last remarks humble me and exalt you. I accept the office of becoming your teacher only to honour and glorify the Lord. Our conversations shall be for mutual improvement. We must prepare for them the preceding morning, and record the result of every interview. The subjects must be pursued in a regular and systematic manner, lest we become confused, and pass some important points without investigation.

Apollos.—I hope you will not depart from system. Do follow that plan which your superior judgment may dictate. I not only want instruction in the doctrines of the gospel and the duties of christians, but also a view of the great moral principles in which they originate. Give me the arguments, speculative and practical, by which they are enforced, and the application that should be made of every doctrine.

Aquila.—It shall then be your part to interrogate, and mine to answer. As we proceed, every impediment to a proper understanding of that great system of truth, privilege and law, set forth in the Bible must be removed.

Apollos.—You know, on experimental godliness your wife is pre-eminent. I must insist, as you need no help, that she aid me in preparing my questions, so as to elicit an investigation of every material point in christian divinity.

Aquila.—I cannot thus yield up my auxiliary in this great undertaking. I am however, willing that she shall help both. Our object is truth, and for this we will diligently search.

Apollos.—I shall anxiously wait for the arrival of that hour when it may be convenient for you to commence. For the present, adieu!

COLLOQUY II.

THE ARRANGEMENT.

Aquila.—Well Apollos, I have called you to make the arrangements, preparatory to our theological examinations. I have laid the whole plan before Priscilla, she is delighted with it. We will have a good fire and diligently prosecute our work, during the winter nights, they are long, and ought to be improved. Through the day we will prepare for our evening labours.

Apollos.—I feel most sensibly the obligations I am under to you. I know the trouble you take must be a source of improvement to me. I hope Heaven will grant you an ample reward.

Priscilla.—I am truly pleased with the plan proposed for our advancement in knowledge. I think we ought to feel obliged to you, Apollos. I know that my husband rejoices in the opportunity to do good, and his efforts to help you, may be a source of lasting benefit to our family. Only let me guard you both, against one thing. Do not speculate. I presume you may safely reason; but speculation on divine subjects is a dangerous thing. Cleave to the *old land marks*, as they are laid down in the oracles of God. Bear in mind, 'great is the mystery of godliness,' and one grain of true christian experience, is worth a pound of speculation. The private christian, who takes the Scriptures for his guide and constantly implores the mercy of God, finds easy access to Deity, and safely ascends to eternal life; while the speculating divine finds hard toiling to gain the shore.

Apollos.—Sister, I am sure I do not want the knowledge that *puffeth* up, but I really do desire and devoutly pray for the 'wisdom that is from above, that is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy.'

Aquila.—To-morrow evening we commence. I have thought much of the arrangement, and have finally concluded, that we had better divide the whole system of christian divinity into subjects, and discuss them in order. I may bring in all that I can say on this interesting science, by selecting judiciously those subjects that involve the whole. I will announce them. I know the number is small, but you may rest assured that to investigate them properly, will oblige us to survey the whole ground.

Apollos.—My friend I leave all to you. I come to learn, not to dictate, and you will find me as teachable, I think, as a child. However, should an objection occur, you must let me state it, you can then answer; otherwise, I shall still be in the dark.

Aquila.—Certainly, I desire this. Our object is light, and we can obtain it if the proper means be used. To-morrow evening we meet to receive and impart instruction in the science of divinity. To set forth its parts profitably, I prefer the colloquial form, and shall therefore call the record you make of our family conversations, THEOLOGICAL COLLOQUIES. This science we will divide into six subjects, which we propose closely to examine. In order to this, we will subdivide each subject into colloquies, or conversations of convenient length. The first shall be the Sacred Writings; the second, Deity and his works; the third, Redemption; the fourth, Predestination; the fifth, the New Covenant; and the sixth, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I propose this plan because it will allow me to introduce the opinions of many learned and pious men, who, have written elaborately on the truths of christianity; men who, however they may have differed in opinions, have faithfully laboured to promote the salvation of the world.

Apollos.—I am all anxiety. Before I retire, let me see if I have in mind your plan. Our science is theology. This you propose to divide into six subjects: the sacred writings, Deity and his works, redemption, predestination, the new

covenant, and the church of Christ; each subject is to be subdivided into colloquies of suitable length. I shall not forget this arrangement. Good night.

COLLOQUY III.

THEOLOGY, DERIVATION OF THE WORD—EXPOSITION OF THE SCIENCE—PRACTICAL PIETY ITS PROXIMATE OBJECT.

Aquila.—I have already informed you, my friend, that the first subject which demands the attention of a student in divinity, is that which involves in it a question of vital importance. I mean the truth of the Sacred Writings. Are they true or false? If true they should be received as the rule of our actions, and our highest interests are inseparably connected with obedience to their precepts.

Apollos.—Before you enter fully on this subject, I want you to give me a definition of the word Theology, a concise exposition of the science, and its immediate object and end.

Aquila.—Many of our English terms, especially the names of the sciences, come from the ancient languages. Theology[1] is derived from two Greek words Θεος Theos, God, and Λογος Logos, a word, speech, notion, &c. It is that science which teaches correct notions of the true God and his service.[2] The object of theology is two-fold, proximate and remote. The service of the Deity or practical piety, is the more immediate object of this science, while God who is indeed the direct object of religion, is the remote object of a correct system of christian divinity. This may be proved thus. True piety is the love of God, hence the Deity is certainly the direct object of it. But it is the part of theology to teach true religion, which is the service or love of God, and, therefore, it is the proximate, while God is the remote object of that science. The ultimate end it proposes, is that we by serving him according to a prescribed rule, may obtain eternal life as the reward of that obedience, by which his wisdom, mercy and justice, are alike magnified.

Apollos.—It is apparent then, that this is not a science merely speculative, nor is it a mixed science, partly speculative and partly practical, but wholly practical, its very end being such.[3]

Aquila.—Yes—practical piety is the great object of theology; and the religion it teaches, simply the right way of knowing, and serving the living God, in expectation of receiving from him an everlasting reward. It comprehends the duties of '*love, fear, faith, hope and obedience.*'

Apollos.—Religion has been divided into natural and revealed. What is natural religion?

Aquila.—Hereafter we will spend more time in the consideration of the nature of piety, and the essential difference between natural and revealed religion. At present you may learn that natural religion[4] is said to depend on the dictates of right reason, as stamped on the minds of men, by the light of which they may come to the knowledge of God and their duty.

Apollos.—Indeed then I am no believer in natural religion. True piety never was, I think, the offspring of human reason.

Aquila.—But for a primary communication from Heaven, at some one period or other, it is not reasonable to suppose that benighted man could attain to the knowledge of an infinite and an invisible intelligence.[5] The carnal mind is certainly averse to such an investigation, even if it were competent thereto. Moreover, the Sacred Writings represent man as in darkness, without God, that is, ignorant of him, his existence, nature, perfections and service. On the admission, however, of a previous revelation, it is easy to see how all creation proclaims his

[1] Parkhurst and Bailey.
[2] Buck and Watson.
[3] Buck and Watson.
[4] Paley and Limborch.
[5] Schmucker.

being, and the perfections of his nature. You must also remember, that man is not certainly in the condition, in which our first parents were after the fall, but previous to the promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the tempter's head. That promise brought with it, in part, the life and divine influence which were forfeited by the fall. Jesus from that moment became 'a quickening spirit,' and a 'manifestation of his spirit is given to every man to profit withal.' Thence we see that our Heavenly Father has not left himself without a witness in every heart. And it will readily appear, that the truth of his existence being indelibly imprinted on the mind, by observations on the works of nature, we may infer much that is correct, in regard to the character and perfections of our Creator.

Apollos.—You will please pardon this interruption; but I am convinced that the world, without a previous revelation, knows nothing of true piety. Besides, the most learned and civilized nations of antiquity were the most wicked and idolatrous, notwithstanding their ability, closely to investigate all the laws and works of nature. Please proceed; but do tell me what is revealed religion?

Aquila.—Revealed religion depends on the manifestations which Deity has made of himself, in the various dispensations under the Old Testament; and in his late full declaration of his will by Jesus Christ, under the New. This last economy is called the christian religion; with this we have to do, and in its possession there is bliss eternal.

Priscilla.—Truly—I too begin to perceive more fully the value of this science. If designed to make us more intimately acquainted with the Donor of all good,—if it teaches the great business of human life, to 'love and serve him,' and proposes as an end, the attainment of that happiness which is durable as eternity; it surely is the duty of all, to make it their constant study. Indeed I had not thought at the very threshold of your labours, to be so deeply impressed with the fact, that practical piety is the true object of christian theology.

Aquila.—Shall we proceed in our investigations?

Apollos.—My friend, please stop here, and give me an opportunity to secure what I may recollect of this evening's conversation. I must record it now, or lose it forever. At your convenience correct my notes. Farewell.

COLLOQUY IV.

FAITH IN THE EXISTENCE OF DEITY, THE FOUNDATION OF PIETY—PROOFS OF HIS EXISTENCE—IMPROVEMENT OF THAT DOCTRINE.

Aquila.—The Scriptures say, 'he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' This belief is the foundation of all true piety. The idea we have of God, is, that he is a sovereign, independent in his existence, and owing his being to no other cause; that he is the cause of all other beings, and directs and governs them by his infinite wisdom and counsel.[1]

Apollos.—All this I admit. I not only believe that he does exist, but know that he has often manifested himself in my poor heart. Some atheist will however say, there is no God. I want the arguments by which I may refute this error.

Aquila.—I proceed to supply you with some of them, at once. The sources from whence we derive testimony in favour of the absolute existence of the Divinity, are various.[2] Some argue from innate ideas; some from natural causes, and some from revealed truth.

Priscilla.—What do you mean by innate ideas?

Apollos.—Innate means natural; and innate ideas are principles, supposed to be stamped on our minds when we come into the world, or rather at our first make.[3]

[1] Dr. Clarke. [2] Limborch. [3] Locke.

Priscilla.—Can you admit that 'innate ideas' of the Deity are stamped on man's mind? The testimony of Scripture is, that all are without God.

Aquila.—The doctrine of innate ideas may certainly be fallacious, and that every man has these inbred or natural principles, is surely disputable; and it remains yet to be proved that this is the case with any mind. But when we view man, as an intellectual being, we can readily admit that by an application of his powers, he may deliberately come to the conclusion, that he who created all, is superior to all creation, and has an absolute existence. He may also form very correct notions of his true character, and the principles of his government, admitting, as we have elsewhere done, that God had in another way, and at another time, more directly communicated to men the fact of that existence.

Apollos.—What proofs are adduced from natural causes?

Aquila.—Simply these. Whatsoever is, or exists, did not make itself, but owes its being to another; and indeed there is no natural cause that did not originate in some other.[1] We are therefore forced either to admit a progression of natural causes, or a circular motion of them, both of which are false and contradictory; or we must admit that there is a great first cause who is God over all.[2] Again, natural conscience is a very strong evidence of the existence of Deity. That the conscience of man does condemn him for a bad act, and acquit and justify him on his doing good, is evident, and that he is comforted in his deed, is equally evident.[3] Now this does not arise from any innate ideas of *fear*, for we agree to abandon that ground, nor as is supposed from any prejudice of education, but from the apprehension, whether or not it be founded on a communication from Deity, that there is a God, to whom he must at last account for all his actions, and who is the first of all causes.

Apollos.—Do not all men admit that there is a God?

Aquila.—Yes—and this is a very strong argument in favour of his existence.[4] The world agrees in this point and has ever done so. It is true a few men have denied this great truth; but they are not to be accounted rational, so profligate and so destitute of good principle have they been, that they are rather to be esteemed the disgrace of their species. We do not therefore take them into the account, especially as it is doubtful whether or no they had honesty enough, to give a candid expression of opinion.

Apollos.—Do not the works of God prove his existence?

Aquila.—They do. The design evidently set forth in all his works, testifies that he does exist. Thus all nature, animate and inanimate, answers some sure and certain end, and to this it constantly tends. Even admit that irrational animals are capable of design, which I am not prepared to do, it is certain that inanimate nature, as plants, herbs, &c. is incompetent to any fixed purpose, but they all tend to some established end, and to this they are forced by some cause, and that cause is God.[5]

Apollos.—But some have supposed that chance effected all this.

Aquila.—The philosopher Epicurus[6] and those *little creatures* who borrowed the idea from him, supposed, that by a fortuituous concussion of atoms nature tended to a certain end. This is easily disproved. All created beings, whether celestial or terrestrial, are appointed for the use, and are subservient to man. This could not be brought about by us, much less by chance, beyond the reach of which, all these products of nature lie. It is most certainly effected by an infinitely wise being, who is the author of all.

Apollos.—I confess to you that these arguments are very satisfactory to my mind, and although without a revelation, we never could have been so deeply impressed with the idea of a Supreme Being, and although I admit that by a course of reasoning, such as you suggest, we could not arrive at the knowledge

[1] Paley. [2] Limborch. [3] Watson. [4] Dr. Clarke and Paley. [5] Paley. [6] Limborch.

of God, it is plain that those arguments must add force and strength, to the testimony given in the sacred volume, of the absolute existence of the one true God, by whom all things were made.[1] From the Scriptures, I presume, you deduce your main arguments for this existence?

Aquila.—I do most certainly. Nor did I place these first, because we had not yet entered on the authenticity of the divine oracles. This will be attended to at the proper time. Let me now say, that this book stands as well authenticated as any extant. Yea, better; for the very writings of its enemies prove the truth of its history. And in it, we have an account of numerous miracles. A miracle is a work above the power of nature, and contrary to its laws. Miracles the most astounding were performed by Moses and many others, before the christian era, and by Christ and his disciples after that era.[2]

Apollos.—I remember the dead were raised, and the mind is naturally led to ask, who suspended the laws of nature? What mighty power came in to perform a work, to which nature was utterly incompetent? I confess the conclusion is irresistible. It was God.

Aquila.—My dear friend, the fulfilment of prophecy is a miracle. All works which cannot be performed simply by the laws of nature, are miracles, and all miracles, prove the existence of God. Look at it. Prophecies the most ancient, are fulfilling at this time, and thereby daily attest the existence of one, who governs all. The present state of the Jews, proves, beyond a doubt that he lives and directs the affairs of this vast universe, and a firm belief in him as King of kings, is the only sure foundation of our blessed religion.

Priscilla.—My dear husband, there is one more argument for his existence, which I fear you will forget.[3] It is the internal evidence of God's spirit, whereby all his children are enabled to say, we know that he lives. I think the evidence of so many thousands to the fact of divine influence, is no small argument in favour of that existence.

Aquila.—In the multiplicity of arguments I had well nigh forgot this. I am truly glad Priscilla—that you are so watchful. Keep us close to experience.

Apollos.—The interesting conference of this evening, will afford me matter of study for days to come.

Aquila.—In the improvement of the principles laid down in the preceding colloquy, it was suggested, that as Theology is the science of salvation, all ought to study it, for it belongs alike to all, and is not the exclusive property of the priesthood, its object being the service of God, and its consummation, an eternity of bliss. You will, my friend, permit me before we part, to hint the application that may be made of this: Does God exist, and is faith in him the foundation of true piety? If so, should we not diligently cultivate the means calculated to increase and confirm that faith?

COLLOQUY V.

THE SACRED WRITINGS CONSTITUTE THE LAW OF PIETY—THE BOOKS CONTAINING THAT LAW.

Aquilla.—Piety is that correspondence between the actions of the creature, and the rule for the government of his conduct as prescribed by his Creator. The opinions as well as the experience of men vary, therefore, it is obvious that neither can be made the standard or rule of religion. In our last conversation, we noticed the fact, that a belief in God, is the foundation of religion. We are now to consider its rule. Let me tell you, that the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of a pious man's conduct, and indeed the chart of his salvation.[4]

[1] Watson, and Dick's Lectures on Theology. [2] Paley. [3] Watson. [4] Wesley.

Apollos.—But there is a difference of opinion as to the validity of some parts of the Sacred Writings. What do you think of it?

Aquila.—The books of the Old Testament, have always been considered canonical by all christians, and according to the rules of the church have been admitted as inspired.[1] I will name them. The Pentateuch, or five books of Moses; the book of Joshua, the book of Judges, and the book of Ruth, formerly joined together; the two books of Samuel; the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles; the book of Ezra, and that of Nehemiah; the books of Esther and Job; the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles or Songs of Solomon; the four greater and the twelve minor Prophets. These are all the books which, by the ancient Jews, were admitted as canonical, and these are all, which the primitive christians appear ever to have received of the Jewish canon.[2]

Apollos.—Have these books been always thus classed?

Aquila.—No!—they have not. They have been differently classed by different authors. Our Lord divides them thus:—The LAW of MOSES, the PROPHETS, and the PSALMS.[3] This was the Jewish mode, as is well known to those acquainted with their history.[4]

Apollos.—What of the Apocryphal books?

Aquila.—These were never received as divinely inspired. They contain many things true in themselves, but this is no reason why they should be acknowledged as of God, and be made thereby a rule of our faith and practice.

Apollos.—Have they not been admitted by a part of the christian church?

Aquila.—The church of Rome receives them and styles them *deutro canonical,* but the reception of them by that church, does not prove them to be divinely inspired. The primitive church never accepted them as a part of the sacred canon. They are allowed to be read in families and sometimes in public for the edification of the people, by one of the reformed churches, but they never have been viewed by the church, as entitled to equal authority with the acknowledged canon.[5]

Apollos.—Do, if you please, be particular here and assign the reasons for rejecting them.

Aquila.—They contain fabulous stories and relations wholly inconsistent with history and fact. And some of them were written under false names; for instance, the book of Wisdom is said to have been written by king Solomon, though it evidently is none of his. But the most material and important of all arguments against them is, that the Holy Ghost must ever be consistent with himself, and that which he declares he cannot contradict. He must be unique or one, if he give a revelation at all. In several places these Apochryphal books contradict what is said in the books which are canonical, from which, it is evident, they could not have been dictated by the Holy Ghost. The word Apocrypha, is derived from the Greek Απο *apo* and Κρυπτο *krupto,* to conceal, and the very name which is appropriate, would seem to import something brought forth from concealment, something feigned.

Apollos.—What was the opinion of the Jews?

Aquila.—They believed that the spirit of prophecy ceased with Malachi. I may moreover say that none of the New Testament writers mention them. The christian churches for many ages knew nothing of them, and to crown the whole argument against their validity, they are not even named by Josephus, by Origen, or by any other writers of their day; and all who give a catalogue of the sacred canon, unite in rejecting them.[6] They were doubtless penned by some Jews, a long time after that period in which they are represented to have been written.

[1] Paley and Chalmers.
[2] Calvin's Institutes.
[3] Luke xxiv. 44.
[4] Josephus and Prideaux.
[5] Schmucker.
[6] Josephus.

Apollos.—You said they were contradictory.

Aquila.—If you will examine the first and second books of Maccabees, you will find palpable contradictions and fables concerning the death of Antiochus.

Apollos.—On what ground then does the church receive the books that are said to be canonical?

Aquila.—For all the reasons exactly opposite to those, which are offered against the Apocryphal books; and over and above these, that they were received by the primitive church and by them used, and after diligent inquiry into their validity, pronounced canonical by the Council of Laodicea.

Apollos.—And yet you say that a reformed church has admitted these Apocryphal books and has granted the use of them to its members. I do not wonder that the Church of Rome should receive them, but I really am surprised that any Protestant church should follow the example.

Aquila.—By the 6th Article of the English church, they are ordered to be read for the example of life and manners, but it does not apply them to establish any doctrine. This and the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States are the only reformed churches that go even thus far.[1]

Priscilla.—I never understood these things before for the want of proper information. Do proceed to the New Testament, I am almost ready to receive it off hand, because the church has done so and I have felt its power on my own heart. But I will master this subject. I see all turns on this one point: the Bible is either true or false.

Apollos.—Impart to us, my friend, all the light you can.

Aquila.—Permit me then, to tell you, that in the council of Laodicea, which was held about the year of our Lord 363, the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the fourteen epistles of Paul, the epistle of James, the two epistles of Peter, the three of John, that of Jude, and the Apocalypse or Revelation of John, were all received as given by divine inspiration.[2] In regard to this, it will be seen that there is a difference of opinion among authors. This respects the time rather than the fact, that there was such a council. It is admitted, that it was not a general one. And although it hesitated at first as to some books, it did pronounce upon, and as far as its jurisdiction extended, authorized to be used, those generally received by us. So that the decree itself rather declared, than regulated public judgment. This is evidence at least of the fact, stated by all the christian authors of the times, and admitted by their opponents; that the books of the Old and New Testaments, had been generally acknowledged, and were then used by all the churches as divinely inspired. And further, that they were then attributed by all, to those authors whose names are appended thereto.

Apollos.—Is it possible that as early as the 363d year from the christian era, these books were all received? I had understood that the second epistle of Peter, the epistle of James, and that of Jude, were doubted by some modern divines, and that some of the reformers were opposed to these epistles.

Aquilla.—At first these were considered by some of them doubtful, but after a close and honest examination, they were not only approved, but also the two last epistles of John, the epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse, all of which had been questioned,[3] and I think they carry the evidence of inspiration on the very face of the page.

Apollos.—Why then did Luther reject them?

Aquila.—Luther only doubted the epistle of James, and hesitated because he thought there was an essential difference between Paul's doctrine of justification[4] and that of St. James, and therefore he was ready to reject it. But afterward, when antinomianisms began to prevail among the reformers, he plainly saw that

[1] Articles in Book of Common Prayer; also Buck.
[2] Watson, Paley, and Dick.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Limborch and Fletcher.

the epistle of James presented the very path, in which the soul justified according to Paul's doctrine must tread, in order to retain and enjoy divine favour. In fact, that there was no difference between Paul and James in doctrine. Not so with one of his followers,[1] who said, '*Jacobum mentiri caput suum.*' Perhaps we may notice this subject at another time.

Apollos.—I perceive that at the period when all the means of information were within the power of the church, after a close and solemn examination, and after maturely deliberating the matter, it did admit as canonical each and every, the books which are now received by us and published in our Bible.

Aquila.—It is even so, and a subject too, of gratulation, that Christ himself acknowledged all the books of the Old Testament, and regularly read and quoted from them, and so did his apostles. The books of the New Testament, soon after their delivery, were received into the sacred canon, and that by competent judges, who at the same time rejected other writings, as not bearing the stamp of inspiration.[2]

Apollos.—My friend, I am thus far out of my difficulties. All in my Bible was received by my brethren from an early date; many of them were learned, and some of them as holy men as ever lived. These learned and holy men, some of whom sacrificed life for the sake of truth, handed down this blessed book, after ascertaining its validity, to us, as a sacred deposite, an invaluable treasure. In this I find no contradictions in doctrine. I have read it again and again. I have felt the force of its blessed truths. I am sure that holy men of old *spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* and still I want all the arguments for its authenticity. Give me these, and let me be able to meet infidelity on the field, and war a good fight for the cause of truth.

Priscilla.—Apollos, you are too anxious; you must digest what you have already learned; it is now late, and I think you will be better prepared at another time.

Aquila.—We are approaching a momentous subject; one on the truth of which depends our all. If this book, a part of which has been in the world and has been received as God's word for thousands of years, all of it for at least fourteen hundred, by the best of men, be a *message* from God to man, of *peace* and *grace,* then all is well; if not, we have followed 'a *cunningly devised fable.*' Take the advice of Priscilla, retire, read, study, pray. At our next meeting we will discuss the truth of the sacred volume.

COLLOQUY VI.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SACRED WRITINGS ORIGINATES IN THEIR TRUTH—THEIR AUTHENTICITY.

Apollos.—My dear friend, I perceive that the Holy Scriptures constitute the rule of religion; but before you advance farther in this subject, tell me, in what does the authority of this rule consist? on what does it depend? why am I under obligations of obedience?

Aquila.—This is the point which at this moment I approach. The authority[3] of the Bible depends on the fact of its truth or falsehood. If it be true, I am bound to obey; if false, I am under no obligation of obedience.

Apollos.—The mere declaration that the Holy Scriptures are the word of God, with the light of God's spirit, which I have often felt, and now feel in my heart, is sufficient for my mind. But infidelity is very bold. Will you be kind enough to lay before me the arguments by which you establish their truth?

Aquila.—Let us then commence with the Old Testament; though I think this unnecessary, for the law was given by God to Moses in the presence of so many

[1] Andrew Althamner.

[2] Luke, as before, Mosheim, Milner, and Jones.

[3] Chalmers.—Calvin's Inst.

thousands, who heard the voice and saw the lightnings, that it is needless to prove it; especially as the prophecies it contains have been fulfilled in such a manner, that while we have on our minds a conviction of its truth, we have also the accomplishment of prophecy, for the confirmation of that conviction.

The New Testament writers have every where acknowledged the truth of the Old Testament, and to prove the one is to establish the other, for the one is only the fulfilment of the other.[1]

Apollos.—I perceive this, and it is the reason why infidelity has waged such an inveterate war against Christ and his disciples. If they can overturn the blessed Gospel, they will of course set aside the whole Bible; but if the New Testament stands on a good foundation, the Old must also. Its writers ever acknowledged and taught, that the things spoken in the Old are fulfilled in the New. This is bringing the whole matter into a small compass. Do let me have the proof.

Aquila.—Have patience, and remember one thing; it is the point at which we start, and must be deeply impressed on the mind. The whole depends on the competency of those witnesses who have testified to the truth of the Scriptures.

Apollos.—What do you mean by competency?

Aquila.—That the New Testament writers were not only able to tell the truth, and did speak of what they saw and heard, but that they would not tell a falsehood, and related only the things they knew.[2] My first argument is, that the authors of the New Testament could, that is, they were fully competent, to write the history of Christ and his deeds. You will recollect, they do not profess to give a history of things that happened in a distant country, or at a remote period, but a history of circumstances that transpired in their own immediate presence, to which they were eye and ear witnesses. They do not testify to that which happened before their time, but to that which happened in their own day, and among the very people to whom they proclaimed it, some of whom had witnessed the very same things of which they wrote. Hear what they say. 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the words of life. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may also have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' 'For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty.' You well recollect that Matthew and John were the constant attendants of Christ. Luke was his disciple. Mark, a companion of Peter, and I think all capable of relating the mighty deeds of their glorified master.[3] You will also remember, that Paul, a chief writer in the New Testament, declares, in the epistle to the Galatians, that his apostleship was not of 'man, but of God.'

Apollos.—I confess that, abstract from a direct revelation from God, it is reasonable to suppose that the New Testament writers could give a faithful account of Christ and his works. But what have you to say in regard to their honesty in this matter? You said they could, that is, they were capable of doing it; infidels say, would they do it?

Aquila.—I think it easy to prove that they would not do otherwise than tell the truth, and the whole truth. Can it be believed that men of such mean and illiterate parts would be capable of imposing a falsity, on an age so wise and understanding, who would soon have discovered the imposture, if there had been one.[4]

They were men of probity and piety, who abominated a lie, and looked upon it, by the laws of their religion, as a crime, prohibited under pain of damnation; so that a man must be bereft of all his sense and reason, that can think they

[1] Chalmers—also, Limborch. [3] Paley, Buck and Chalmers. [4] Ibid.
[2] Chalmers, Buck, Watson, and Paley on the authenticity of the Scriptures.

would obtrude upon the world a falsehood, whereby they could reap no advantage, pleasure, or honour in this world; but on the contrary, were exposed to the loss of all these, nay, even of life itself, for being preachers of the doctrines of the cross, and bearing witness to the truth of a crucified Jesus.

Add to this, that so far from concealing their faults, they published them to the world; and this appears the more forcible, as they might have concealed them.[1]

The denial of Jesus by Peter, his prevaricating with the Jews and Gentiles, the struggle between the apostles for superiority, the contention between Barnabas and Paul, are all told in the most frank and candid manner. Such was their love of truth, that nothing, however it might expose their own infirmities or faults, was in the slightest degree covered by them.

Apollos.—These arguments seem forcible; but what security have we that the different books constituting this sacred volume belong to those authors under whose names they are inscribed, and how do we know but that they are adulterated?

Aquila.—That these books are ascribed to the proper authors is evident from the fact, that by constant tradition, in the very times when they were written, they were attributed to them, and immediately after those times, and directly succeeding to them, by those who were competent to know, and after a strict inquiry, they were determined genuine, while others, attributed to the same authors, were pronounced spurious, and therefore rejected.[2]

As to the second part of the question, it yet remains to be proved that they are adulterated. Some may assert it, but we deny it. The multitude of copies in all languages evinces that this is not the case. The providence of God has so ordered it, that no important corruption has crept into the text, but what has been detected; all the learned know and if frank, must agree, that the various readings are no evidence of adulteration.[3]

Apollos.—These things admitted, how will you prove the divinity of these writings?

Aquila.—These competent witnesses professed to have received them of God himself. By a reference to the Scriptures it will be seen in sundry places, and you may refer to them with a concordance, that Christ is said to be sent of the Father, and that those Gospel ministers, who laboured in the primitive church, 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' It is also said that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration.'

Apollos.—It is plain then that the apostles, those good men, proved to be such, taught that the Sacred Writings are a revelation from God. Proceed my friend, with your argument.

Aquila.—Their doctrines were confirmed by many miracles, that transcended the power of any created being.[4]

Apollos.—This is very plain; I fear I interrupt you.

Aquila.—Jesus Christ, the author of the doctrine, confirmed it by his resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven. This being the test of the truth of his mission, and of his being the true Messiah, to which he appealed when the Jews sought of him a sign; 'Jesus said, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up;' 'but he spake of the temple of his body.'

Apollos.—I assure you I gain confidence and strength at every step. Proceed.

Aquila.—The very history of the New Testament and the doctrines it contains, have in their own nature the character of Divinity stamped on them. In the history we have such wonderful effects as we never should have known but by a revelation from God; and in the doctrines we have such precepts to be obeyed,

[1] Watson and Buck.
[2] Mosheim and Milner.
[3] Dr. Clarke's preface to his Commentary.
[4] Paley.

and such promises to excite us to practise them, as none but God could prescribe or propose to us.[1] Another very striking proof of their divinity is the wonderful effects of these doctrines. Consider the persons who propagated them, the opposition they met with; the spreading of the Gospel, notwithstanding the debility of the one and the mighty power of the other. Does not this prove its author to be God? To all this I may add, my dear friend, that the apostles themselves made a distinction between what was commanded of God and their own private opinion. Witness the case of Paul recorded in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, how particularly, when giving his advice, in times of deep affliction and persecution, concerning marriage, he distinguishes between his own opinion and the commandment of the Lord. From all this we see how careful the apostles were not to obtrude upon the church for divine precepts what were not really such.[2]

Apollos.—The conclusion, to which my mind comes from all this, is irresistible. The Sacred Writings were spoken and written, as the spirit of God dictated and directed. Their authors have not only not erred, but could not, in declaring the divine will to us. They did not speak as they pleased, but as they were 'moved by the Holy Ghost.'

Aquila.—Most certainly. The apostle Peter says, 'the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;' and St. Paul affirms the same, saying, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

Apollos.—The authority then of the Sacred Writings *depends* on their truth. But how is it that Romanists contend that the authority of the Scriptures rests on the tradition of the church?[3]

Aquila.—Though we should pay due deference to the evidence of the primitive church, and own that this is one means by which we ascertain the persons who were the authors of certain books, still we cannot allow the church to determine whether they were divinely inspired or not! This must be proved by greater authority, viz.—the veracity and divinity of the writings themselves.[4] The church owes its origin and authority too, to the Scriptures, and to say that these oracles *depend* on the church, will never convert an infidel from the error of his way.[5]

Apollos.—I assure you of the pleasure I feel in being furnished with arguments for the authenticity of my precious Bible. I loved it much before, but more now. I believed it before, but now I feel able to encounter the arguments of those who deny its truth.

Aquila.—Much more might be said on this momentous subject; but I refer you to the elaborate arguments of those who have written on it, if you desire to investigate it more extensively.

I have purposely dispensed with many, because they would demand more time than we can now devote to their consideration. Before we part let us review the whole.

The testimony for the authenticity of the Scriptures is generally classed thus:—Internal and external evidence.[6] By sundry arguments from these two classes, the Sacred Writings, so called by way of eminence, sometimes Canonical, &c. are proved to have been divinely inspired. Among the selections of argument from these two sources, which have been made by various authors, we notice:—1. The character of the sacred penmen, disinterested men, who went about hungry, thirsty, and afflicted, whose grand initiating

[1] Chalmers and Paley's works.
[2] Watson's Inst. and Limborch.
[3] Calvin's Inst. also Dick's Theology.
[4] Dwight's Theology.
[5] Limborch, and Watson's Inst.
[6] Watson's Inst. and Dick's Theology.

maxim was 'except a man forsake all, he cannot be my disciple:' securing nothing on earth, they sealed the truth in most instances, by the sacrifice of their own lives.[1]

2. While they did live, they attested the truth of their mission and the divinity of their message by miracles the most astonishing.[2]

3. Reason says, that in contemplating the effects of this message, nothing but the plainest matter of fact could ever have induced multitudes of Jews, to abandon their bigotry and prejudice and become its friends, and thousands of lawless, luxurious and idolatrous heathens, to embrace its self-denying truths and transmit them to posterity.[3]

4. To all this may be added, that the Bible carries on the face of its pages the eternal stamp of truth, seen in those prophecies which have been accomplished, and are being fulfilled at this time, and which shall be fulfilled in time to come.[4]

Apollos.—You say are being fulfilled *now?*

Aquila —Yes. Look at the present state of the Jews. For hundreds of years, in the verification of prophecy, they have been scattered and are yet to be scattered throughout the world.[5]

5. Look also at the harmony, simplicity, antiquity and sublimity of these writings. Remember they give the only reasonable account of creation, the nature of God, angels, men, and of man's immortality; and it is not the least argument, that they proclaim the existence of an only God, a truth so congenial with every principle of reason.[6]

6. Consider their doctrines, pure, holy, benevolent and consistent; though spread over sixty-six different books, written by various authors, and at sundry and distant periods of the world.[7]

Apollos.—I confess this is a powerful argument.

Aquila.—Will you, my friend, in the last place, mark the glorious effects of these doctrines on individuals and on society. Wheresoever they are propagated the *savage* is civilized, the *lion* is tamed and lies down with the *lamb*, the *prodigal* is reformed, the *sinner* is saved, and wretched apostate man, who had forfeited all, is guided by the light of that holy book, in a path unknown without it—a path, my friend—that leads to happiness on earth, to a triumphant death even under the most afflicting circumstances, and at last to an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God, to spend a blissful *eternity*, in Eden's fair garden, fast by the 'tree of life.'

Apollos.—My dear brother, you must excuse my tears, they flow freely. I never loved my Bible so much before. I esteem it next a Saviour's sacrifice, that best boon of God to man. I will read and meditate therein 'day and night,' and ever consider it as the '*light*' of my path and a '*lantern*' for my feet.

Priscilla.—My husband—I have not uttered a word during the whole time you have been engaged in this interesting subject; I have been learning in 'silence.' I cannot now forbear saying, that I will be more diligent in teaching my family the 'word of the Lord.'

Apollos.—For this pleasant duty there is every encouragement. The Saviour says, 'search the Scriptures, they testify of me.'

Aquila.—At our next interview we will discuss the perfection of this rule.

[1] Buck, Paley, and Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Schmucker.
[4] Paley and Newton on the Prophecies.
[5] Faber and Newton on the Prophecies
[6] Dick's Theology and Watson's Inst
[7] Buck and Chalmers.

COLLOQUY VII.

THE PERFECTION OF THE SACRED WRITINGS AS A RULE OF PIETY.

Apollos.—Since our last meeting, I have been thinking what you could mean, by the perfection of the Sacred Writings, of which you are to speak this evening.

Aquila.—Simply this, that whatever is necessary for us to know, believe, hope, and practise, in order to salvation, is fully contained in the 'oracles of truth.' So that no opinion or doctrine is to be reckoned necessary that is not recorded therein.[1] By this I do not intend to suggest that every thing therein is necessary to salvation. But I say, some things taught in the Bible are absolutely necessary to salvation, and others only useful to that end.

Of those only useful, they are more or less important, as they stand related to those things requisite to 'eternal life.'

But it appears that even those necessary, as the sacrifice of Christ and the only absolute condition of salvation, an 'evangelical faith,' are not always delivered after the same manner in Scripture.[2] Some are declared in express terms to be necessary, as when it is said, 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;' 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' While, at the same time, other important truths are not set down or thus positively affirmed, but may be, by a natural consequence, proved to be necessary to any reasonable mind, at least as preparatory, and thus requisite to the exercise of 'living faith.'[3]

Apollos.—Does not this view preclude the operation of the spirit, and that direction of the same which are needful to our safety and comfort here?

Aquila.—Some have taught that the Scripture does not contain all things necessary to salvation. There are two parties who agree in this, for reasons widely differing. It is said by some that the word within, inspired immediately by God, is the 'true word.' But the Papists say that several things were delivered 'viva voce' to the church; and although they admit that Christ and his apostles taught the doctrines sufficient for salvation, yet declare that all these doctrines are not there, and that there are several that are traditionary.[4]

Apollos.—These are certainly erroneous opinions, the means of answering which, I hope you will impart.

Aquila.—In answer to the first, I have to say, that Christ revealed to his apostles all things necessary to man's salvation. They faithfully preached them to his church, and committed them to writing in those books that we call the Holy Scriptures. To establish this, we have only to consult the Bible itself. There we are informed that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost revealed all things to the apostles that ever were necessary to man's salvation. Christ saith to them, 'All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you;' and again, 'I have given them thy word;' 'thy word is truth,' 'that they, Father, may be one, even as we are one;' and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it.' And 'the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.' 'When he the Spirit is come, he shall guide you into all truth,' and 'shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.' From this same word, it is evident that Christ as God is represented as knowing all things, and by the spirit as revealing them. But 'God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God.' And that all these necessary things are revealed to man, we see from other passages, with which the New Testament abounds. Look at the appointment and

[1] Calvin's Institutes.
[2] Dwight's Theology, also Schmucher.
[3] Watson's Inst.—Wesley's Works.
[4] Limborch and Calvin.

ordination of the apostles in the three last verses of Matthew, and on this account the Gospel is termed the word which 'endureth forever.'

Apollos.—All these I admit. But did the apostles of Christ teach the church all these necessary things.

Aquila.—Yes, faithfully. For it is said that 'they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following;' and this is attested by the powerful appeal of Paul to the Ephesians, 'I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God.'

If you consult scores of other texts, you will find that the Gospel is styled the 'word of life,' the 'word of salvation,' the 'savour of life unto life,' and the like, which could not be true, if the position assumed by us were false.

Our third assertion, that the apostles committed all things necessary to salvation, to writing, bears particularly hard, I confess, on the church of Rome.

Apollos.—How is that, brother?

Aquila.—First, the apostles committed to writing many things only useful in their day, and some things of very little use, then or now; and we can hardly suppose that they would leave out any thing actually necessary to salvation. 2. There is nothing absolutely necessary to salvation but faith in Christ, for this is the only condition of eternal life, and this is fully set forth in the Sacred Writings.

But 3. Papists are not able to show one solitary doctrine, not recorded in the Bible, that is necessary to be believed, or one duty to be practised, that is not plainly set forth therein. Moreover, there is no unwritten tradition among them, that by any argument, can be proved to be necessary to be believed or practised for salvation.[1]

Apollos.—But, my friend, several objections are offered by those who contend for the 'word within,' as they term it, which they say is 'God himself.' The first I have heard or read of, is, that the word of God is 'eternal,' and is the divine essence, therefore incorruptible and cannot be inscribed on paper.[2]

Aquila.—The absurdity of this is manifest. The word of God is a revelation of the divine mind, whether declared by speech or writing, and by neither of these ways can the spirit, life or power of that word be destroyed.[3]

Apollos.—Is it not said, 'they shall all be taught of God?'

Aquila.—The passage ought, I think, to be rendered 'taught concerning God.' But take it literally, it does not certainly mean, that God should immediately teach them, but that he should cause it to be done 'mediately' through his ministers, word, and by the operations of his spirit, which never can teach any thing in opposition to that word already inspired by it.

Apollos.—I have heard this text quoted, 'the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Behold the kingdom of God is in you;' therefore it is said, 'spiritual and eternal.'

Aquila—Certainly the kingdom here named does not mean the word of God, but the kingdom of the Messiah, which though spiritual, was nevertheless to be externally visible; yet not to come or be established in pomp, or earthly glory, but by the presence and power of its king, and the promulgation of his word, the blessed Gospel. And by being in you, is not meant merely that it is internal, and in your hearts, but also that it is in the midst or among you.[4]

I will also say, Apollos—that these enthusiastic persons, who are so strenuous for internal work, to the exclusion of God's holy word, often quote that beautiful passage in Hebrews, where the prophecy, which proclaimed the superiority of the new over the old covenant, is introduced by Paul: 'I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts; I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' That this passage is inapplicable to their opinions

[1] Limborch and Calvin.

[2] Buck on the word 'libertine.'

[3] Wat. Bib. Dic. on the term 'word.'

[4] Henry and Benson in loco,—also Limborch.

of divine operation, to the exclusion in part, or in whole, of God's word, is very evident for several reasons.

1. That it is a promise relating to the times of the Messiah, who taught by the Gospel or outward word. 2. That it is here promised, the law should be written in their minds and hearts, which could not be done, but by means of an outward word, explaining its principles; and 3. This promise extends not so much to the writing itself as the manner of inscribing it, by such great benefits as should excite in us a love of the divine law.[1]

Apollos.—It is said, 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'

Aquila.—The letter here means evidently, the law of Moses, in opposition to the gospel.

This law only contained the rudiments of religion; it is said to 'kill,' because its transgressors were guilty of death, without a promise of remission. But the gospel is called spirit and produces life, as it raises men dead in sins to a 'spiritual life,' that they may walk and live with Christ, no longer 'after the flesh, but after the spirit.'

Apollos.—I am glad to be confirmed in an opinion I have long since, though young, formed, that the Bible being a revelation by the Holy Spirit, that he, to be consistent with himself, can never teach any thing inconsistent with the doctrines and truths of the Bible; and that every christian, while he depends on God's spirit for help, should read and obey God's word.

Aquila.—This is certainly the true way. Hold to it; and while you pray for divine influence, not for a new revelation, look at and diligently obey the injunctions of the Sacred Writings. Perhaps the followers of that excellent man, John Fox, have done themselves and the world more injury, by an enthusiastic neglect of this sacred duty, than ages of united effort on the part of those who implore divine influence, while they follow the directions of revealed truth, will be able to repair.

Apollos.—In the gospel by John, it is said by our Lord, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now,' and in the last verse of that gospel, it is declared Jesus 'did many other things, which, if written, the world would not contain the books.'

These passages are quoted by the Romanists to prove that all Christ's doctrines necessary to salvation, are not contained in the written word.[2]

Aquila.—The former passage relates only to things that Christ should reveal, after his resurrection, and before his ascension, concerning his kingdom, and the latter to his miracles, which were exceedingly numerous, as well as to his deeds, as 'Lord of lords and King of kings;' neither of them certainly to doctrines necessary to salvation. This is like their saying that the Scriptures cannot contain all necessary doctrines, because many books truly canonical are lost, as the books of Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer—of Ahijah the shilonite, and Iddo the seer—the parables and songs of Solomon, with some others, in both the Old and the New Testaments.[3] Now the fallacy of all this will appear; 1. from the fact that they cannot prove those books named by them to be lost at all. The books of Nathan, Gad, Ahijah and Iddo, are doubtless comprised in those of Samuel and Kings; and Paul never mentions, as they say, an epistle sent to the Laodiceans, but one written from that place, which was the first to Timothy.[4]

2. Suppose all that is said about lost books to be true. It remains for them to prove that there were things in them necessary for salvation, which are not in those which we have. This they never can do, and reason is against them; for,

[1] Watson's Bib. Dic. word 'law.'
[2] Calvin and Limborch.
[3] Calvin and Limborch; also Dick's Theology.
[4] Limborch, also Doctor Clarke.

3. If God be so benevolent and merciful as to give his son to die for man, would he suffer books to be lost which contained things necessary to salvation, that could not be found elsewhere? The sacred canon is perfect; and though many be lost, yet all that is requisite for our edification and eternal happiness, has been preserved by his goodness.

Apollos.—I have heard Papists argue that in the Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle exhorts them to keep the things committed or delivered to them, that he does the same to Timothy, and certainly commends traditions in one of his Epistles to the Thessalonians.

Aquila.—To this I reply: That these traditions signify certain communications of christian doctrine,[1] whether written or oral, as appears from the very face of the text, 'Hold the traditions that ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.' And although Paul did teach some churches *viva voce,* does it therefore follow that what he taught was never written out by him or some other apostle, in none of their epistles? And I would further say,

2. That these traditions are either necessary or they are not. If they are not, then we need not dispute; but if they are necessary, it remains for Papists to prove that they were never written by any of the apostles. It is very probable that Paul referred to traditions concerning the government of the church, which if handed down in an uninterrupted manner, would be very useful to us, though they be not necessary to our salvation.[2]

Apollos.—But they say that it is necessary to have a genuine cannon of the Sacred Writings, and this cannot be without tradition.

Aquila.—It does not appear to me to be absolutely necessary to salvation, to have a genuine canon of Scripture, in the sense in which the Papists take it. To explain. A man may have a true canon, though he be ignorant of some books therein, provided that in those books that he does know, he meets with all that is requisite to salvation.[3]

2. When we oppose tradition, we do not, Apollos, mean those that depend on sensible or experimental knowledge, such as the traditions by which we know who were the authors of those books which compose the Sacred Writings. We mean those known by a special revelation, whereby it is pretended that God revealed to some men, some things necessary to be believed and practised by all, in order to salvation, which, nevertheless, he would not permit the sacred penmen to commit to writing; and which they would have all christians, every where and always, to look upon as apostolical, and of the same authority with the books which pass under the apostles' names.[4] These traditions are the inventions of men, imposed tyrannically on the christian church by the see of Rome. Against them we do most sincerely PROTEST.

Apollos.—You must be fatigued. I have brought forward all the objections to your position that I have ever heard, and have thus caused you to lengthen out our conversation. I think I am gaining ground. I see the Bible is true, and in it are all things recorded necessary for my salvation. A system of truth,[5] privilege, and law complete in all its parts.

COLLOQUY VIII.

THE PERSPICUITY OF THE SACRED WRITINGS.

Apollos.—After a hard day's study to master the subject of our last conference, I meet you, my friends, at the appointed hour, still anxious to progress in this my delightful task, to hear and learn 'the way of God more perfectly.'

[1] Calvin, Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Schmucker. [5] Benson.

Aquila.—Well then, Apollos, we will consider to-night the perspicuity of the Scriptures. By this I mean, that all things necessary to be believed, hoped for, and practised by man, in order to salvation, are so plainly laid down in the Scriptures, that every man who makes a right use of his reason may fully understand them.

Apollos.—Do you say that every thing in the Bible is plain and perspicuous?

Aquila.—I did not say so. Our ignorance of the languages in which they were penned, of the Jewish and other customs, the sublimity of the matter treated of, and other reasons may cause that some passages are hard to be understood.[1] But I say this, that whatever obscurity may present itself in some parts, all that is requisite for the knowledge of God and our qualification for heaven, is plain and easy to be comprehended, And although this itself may be set forth obscurely in some places, yet it is plainly declared in others. Indeed it is so plain that if a man bring a mind free from prejudice and passion, to its investigation, he will never need the magisterial interpretation of a church in order to understand its sense.[2] This may be easily proved.

Apollos.—How, my friend?

Aquila.—We have proved that the Sacred Writings are a revelation from God, and of course true. This admitted, we proceed thus:—

1. In the Old and New Testaments, this perspicuity is attested. Read from the Old, 'For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do it.' 'But the word is very nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it.' Here is the testimony of Moses to the perspicuity of the Scriptures. David says 'The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.' 'The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' And again, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' All confirmed by Solomon, who says 'for the commandment is a lamp and the law is light and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life.'

In the New Testament, Christ is proclaimed the 'light of the world,' and the apostles are termed the 'light of the Gentiles.' They are sent, says Paul, 'to turn them from darkness to light,' and the 'power of Satan to the living God:' but,

2. All men are bound to believe the doctrines necessary to salvation, under the penalty of being damned. From this, I infer their perspicuity, for they must be intelligible to all who read or hear; for by no means can assent and obedience be required to precepts and laws that men do not understand, any more than they would be bound by laws which had never been published, or published in obscure terms, or in an unknown language.[3] To punish for disobedience under such circumstances, especially with eternal damnation, would be injustice in the extreme.

Apollos.—Oh! this would be horrible to torment a man for what he could not help, or for not obeying a law of which he knew nothing.

Aquila.—Well, to proceed. 3. If there be obscurity insuperable in truths necessary to salvation, it argues that the Holy Ghost either could not or would not reveal them plainly, which would be blasphemous. Do not men every day, *Papists* not excepted, profess to be able to illustrate obscure passages, and is it possible that a popish priest can do more than the Holy Ghost? It reflects still more on the adorable God to say he *would* not reveal his mind more clearly, since it supposes that he left man under the necessity of remaining in the dark as to the means of salvation, and of being eternally damned.[4]

[1] Doctor Clarke's General Preface.
[2] Schmucker and Limborch.
[3] Watson's Inst.
[4] Watson and Limborch.

4. But you will also remember that while christians have differed on many points, they have always and every where understood those parts of Scripture containing doctrines necessary to salvation in the same way: this has ever been the case with those who respect the Sacred Writings as God's word.[1] I may add, if there had been obscurity there would certainly have been disagreement. Moreover, if the clearness of Scripture doctrine, necessary for salvation, be not admitted, it diminishes much from that benevolence and love to man, which are supposed to be so signally manifested by the Deity, in that revelation he has made of his will.[2]

Apollos.—Though your arguments are forcible, and I think conclusive, will you believe me, that Papists argue the obscurity of Scripture, from several texts which they quote? I will mention one or two. 'Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' 'Give me understanding and I shall keep thy law:' and then they say, if the prophet David prayed for understanding the Scriptures are obscure.

Aquila.—Did you know that, in this very Psalm, David affirms that he is wiser than his teachers and the ancients? As he made the law his study 'day and night,' he could not certainly, therefore, be ignorant of things necessary to salvation. He saw the wicked whom the law cursed, prosperous; and the righteous whom it blessed, in adversity. It was to him a mystery, and he prayed to understand it. He could not reconcile it and other things with divine justice. He asks light. This is the plain exposition of the text.[3]

Apollos.—Well, I heard one quote another text. 'Then he (Jesus) opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures.' These whom he enlightened were, say Papists, the apostles, though he had conversed with and taught them three years.

Aquila—The discourse here is, I think, concerning the prophecies of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, not doctrines necessary to salvation; and however the knowledge here imparted was necessary to the apostles to convince and convict Jews, yet is it not essentially necessary to our salvation.[4] For a man may be ignorant of prophecy and nevertheless wise in God's plan, of saving sinners.

Apollos.—But they say Philip asked the Ethiopian 'understandest thou what thou readest?' and he said 'how can I except some man guide me.'

Aquila.—I give the same answer to this as to the other text. Things necessary for salvation are not implied in the sense of the passage.[5] Every prophecy before its fulfilment and its being known to be fulfilled is obscure. He understood it when Philip informed him how it had been fulfilled by Christ. This, my friend, is like a Papist, who is ever quoting the remark of Peter, concerning some things in Paul's Epistles. In them, he says, 'are some things hard to be understood, which they that are *unlearned* wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.' Peter does not say the Epistles of Paul, but 'some things' contained in them; such as Christ's coming to judgment and other matters, which we readily admit are hard to be understood, while the way to heaven is so plain 'that he that runs may read, and a way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.'

Apollos.—But, again it is said, if the sacred oracles are so plain, why so many commentaries among Protestants, and these often repugnant to each other?

Aquila.—1. I have admitted, and indeed informed you from the beginning, there are many obscurities in the Scriptures, but I deny that these obscurities

[1] Dick and Dwight. [2] Paley. [3] Doctor Clarke.
[4] The reader will do well to consult on this text Watson's Exposition, Clarke, and Wesley.
[5] Limborch.

contain in them any doctrines necessary to salvation, and if they do, they are elsewhere clearly expressed.[1]

2. I moreover own that from some improper cause, commentators may obscure plain passages: but, 3. How wide soever they may differ in other things, there is but little difference amongst them in respect to things requisite to man's salvation.[2]

Apollos.—I have heard some Protestants admit as much as this, though not in express terms, yet by way of consequence. They acknowledge the perspicuity of the Scriptures in opposition to Papists; but with this restriction, that the Scriptures are clear and perspicuous in themselves, but our understandings dark and depraved, and that we cannot understand without special illumination which is granted only to the elect.[3]

Aquila.—The difference between this opinion and that of the Papists is, that the one attributes this illumination to the Pope alone, but the former grant it to all the elect.[4] The error is almost self-evident. Christ having died for all, as we shall have occasion hereafter to prove, though we be depraved and dark, yet grace reflects light on all, that all may fully know the things necessary for salvation.

Apollos.—I confess I am done. I am now more than ever convinced that the plain common sense meaning of God's word is that after which we should seek. It is the exposition that should be given, and when this is done, it is easier to understand it than some men think, at least that part of it in which is set forth the plan and condition of man's salvation. It does seem to me that Scripture ought to be explained by Scripture, and the more closely we cleave to its language the better.

Aquila.—I believe so too. I would here take occasion to say, that in explaining the articles of faith necessary to be believed, no man ought to be tied down to a language not contained in the Bible. It is true that the learned and pious in every age have diverged from this point. I do not say that they may not use other phrases, than those contained in the sacred volume, in presenting to the world their articles of faith, and in proposing to the sinner the condition of pardon; still I must say that the Sacred Writings are plain, and to present their truths in their own plain and simple style, so easy to be understood, would carry conviction to many a mind and heart that remain dark and impenitent.[5]

Priscilla.—How could the poor and ignorant enter upon the pathway to heaven, if it were obscured by the learning of men of science? A plain sermon, setting forth my condition as a sinner in Scripture language, and Christ's offer of mercy on his own conditions in the same way, reached my heart and brought a wanderer home.

Aquila.—I am glad to hear from you so appropriately, Priscilla—a practical exposition of my argument. I had almost thought you were not interested in our conversation. I am happy to find myself mistaken and hope you will assist us all you can.

Priscilla.—I never thought as closely in all my life, as I have done since you and our young friend have been engaged, in these theological discussions. I am sometimes afraid that I shall forget my domestic concerns. I hope I shall be able to attend all your meetings. Thank Heaven—all is plain that is necessary for our salvation, and I rejoice in the proofs adduced of this fact.

Apollos.—So do I, and there is abundant grace to aid us, that we may travel in that plain way. Good night.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

[3] Calvin's Inst. Dwight and Dick on the election privileges and perseverance of the saints, et alibi. [4] Limborch and Watson.

[5] See the example of the Rev. J. Wesley, in his sermons, perhaps the best extant.

COLLOQUY IX.

THE SACRED WRITINGS WERE DESIGNED FOR THE PROMISCUOUS USE OF ALL—THEIR CONSEQUENT TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

Aquila.—All that has been said on the canon, authority, perfection, and perspicuity of the Sacred Writings may be denominated their attributes. Let us now consider their use. And here, first, I propose to shew that they ought to be read by all men, as they contain all things necessary to be embraced for salvation.

The Church of Rome denies this to the laity only under several restrictions. That they should be thus read we prove: 1. By the express command of God, who makes it not only lawful to do so but obligatory. 'And these words saith the Lord, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and upon thy gates.' In the same book, but at another place, we hear him again saying, 'When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel, in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, women, and children and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children which have not known *any thing*, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go, over Jordan to possess it.'

Apollos.—These texts are very explicit.

Aquila.—Yes, and so are other parts of the same book, and indeed the same chapter, from which we made the last quotation. In the charge of the Almighty to Joshua, it is made the duty of Israel to see that the 'Book of the law depart not out of their mouth:' the Lord saith 'you shall meditate therein day and night.' This duty was enjoined by Christ, 'search the Scriptures;' and the apostle to the Gentiles says, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.' But if, 2. We consider the end for which God gave a revelation to man, we shall more forcibly perceive the obligation to read and study to understand it. This is set forth in the prefatory remarks of St. Luke to the 'excellent Theophilus,' 'that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.' And says St. John, 'these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.' St. Paul says 'that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' Hence the same apostle enjoins the reading of his epistles to other churches than those, to which they were directed, even to all the 'Holy brethren;' and we may, Apollos, 3. Infer all this from the commendations[1] given of the Sacred Writings. It is styled the 'word of life,' 'the power of God for salvation to every one that believeth,' 'the sword of the spirit,' and my dear friend, to cut off the laity from this privilege, is to expose them unarmed and naked, to the violence of Satan.[2]

Apollos.—Did not the Jews of old read the Scriptures every Sabbath day?

Aquila.—Yes, they did, and they do it now to the great shame of many who profess christianity and neglect God's word. This I offer, as a fourth and last argument in conjunction with the fact, that praises are poured on those who discharge this pleasing and solemn duty, which proves its importance. Read the

[1] Watson and Limborch. [2] Schmucker, Dick, and Dwight.

first Psalm, 'blessed is the man who delights in the law of the Lord, and meditates therein day and night.' See *Mary* at the *Master's* feet hearing the words of eternal life: Jesus commends her. Remember the eulogy passed on the 'noble Bereans,' who 'searched the Scriptures daily.' Timothy was praised for knowing them from a child, and my good friend, let me tell you, your old namesake *Apollos*, was styled 'a man mighty in the Scriptures.' I must say with Peter, whatever may be the opinion of the Pope, called his 'successor,' 'we have a sure word of prophecy—we would do well to take heed thereunto.'

Apollos.—I assure you I feel the force of these arguments. But Papists say that abundance of heresies are introduced by reading the Scriptures, and therefore it ought not to be allowed.[1]

Aquila.—For the same reason, I might say that abundance of injury has been done by eating and drinking, and therefore I must do neither. The fact is, the Scripture contains the plan of man's salvation, and all should seek to become acquainted with it; and moreover no heresy is to be attributed to the oracles of God, but to the depravity of those who read them.

Apollos.—It will then follow as a matter of course, if the Bible ought to be read promiscuously, that it ought also to be translated into the vulgar tongues, as they are called.

Aquila.—Not necessarily or absolutely, but accidentally so, as men are unacquainted with the Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible. If they would use as much diligence as they are accustomed to do for earthly things, they might easily obtain a knowledge of them; but as they do not understand them, for their benefit, the Sacred Writings must be translated.[2] The practice of the church in all ages recommends this course.

In the first ages of christianity, the church had not only the Greek version of the Old Testament, which was a translation of the *seventy*, called the Septuagint, but also several Latin translations of both the Old and New.[3] Jerome translated the Bible into the Latin and Sclavonian languages. Chrysostom into the Arminian; and Ulphilas, bishop of the Goths, and one of the Nicene council, into the Gothic. The Syriac version of the New Testament is very ancient, and my friend, the See of Rome, has allowed Arminians, Russians, Ethiopians, Sclavonians and Muscovites, to read the Scriptures in their mother tongues, and Dupin, a professed Papist, is of opinion that not only ought all the faithful to read the Bible, but that it ought to be translated into the vulgar tongues.[4]

Apollos.—Notwithstanding the necessity of such a translation, the practice of the christian church, and the opinion of Dupin, the Sorbonne doctor, Papists object to it. They say that after the Babylonish captivity, though the people could not understand the original of the Scriptures then extant, they were not translated into Chaldee for their use.

Aquila.—I had hoped that the opinion of that splendid man, as a man of learning—I mean Dupin, a member of the College of Divinity at Paris, founded by Robert de Sorbonne—and the practice of the christian church, the Papal branch of it not excepted, and the necessity of a translation, would have been a sufficient answer to every objection. To this last I reply: In Nehemiah it is said 'So they (the Levites) read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them (the Jews) to understand the reading.' Now it is apparent, that it is not said that Nehemiah or others, explained the text, but 'gave the sense,' which might well be done, though they understood the language. It may also be asked if a nation can forget its native tongue, in the short space of seventy years; and the few passages with Chaldee idiom, do not prove that they did

[1] See the elaborate tracts of Dwight, Dick and Watson, on this subject.
[2] Schmucker, Dick, and Limborch. [3] Ibid.
[4] Limborch and Dupin's Hist. of the canon and writers of the Old and New Tests. 1 vol. 9 ch.

forget it.[1] Let it also be remembered, that the Jews understood Paul when he addressed them in Hebrew, at the time of the uproar in Jerusalem, and after the lapse of many hundred years, they still retained a knowledge of their language, it being handed down from father to son.[2]

Apollos.—But they say the apostles wrote only in Greek.

Aquila.—This is not so. All the ancients agree that Matthew wrote in Hebrew.[3] 2. The other apostles wrote in Greek, because that was then the common language, and they wished all to learn the wonderful works of God. That reason now ceases, as the ancient Greek is very imperfectly known in Greece, much less in other countries; and I offer it as a reason why it should be translated into other tongues.

Apollos.—If the design of these translations be, that all may understand the Bible, is it not thwarted by the fact that the learned cannot comprehend them.[4]

Aquila.—I reply, 1. They can at least understand those things *necessary* to *salvation,* as proved already by the Scripture. And 2. As to those parts not necessary, let them pray and study; and if after all, they cannot comprehend them, there will be no hindrance to their salvation; but if your argument holds good, then 3. The learned themselves are not to read, as they cannot understand.

Apollos.—The council of Trent ordained that the vulgar Latin version should be used in all controversies, &c. as equal to the original Hebrew and Greek.[5] Was this correct?

Aquila.—By no means. For great respect must be paid to the originals—they are the standard. This decree makes the Latin version infallible; whereas Pope Sextus 5th, and Clement 8th, since the decree of that council have made several alterations. Its claim also on the score of antiquity is very meagre.[6]

Apollos.—If the Hebrew and Greek be the standard, how careful ought a translator to be, and how decidedly honest?

Aquila.—Indeed he ought. 1. He should be learned in the original languages, so as to understand his work. 2. He should be a man of fidelity, who would religiously render every word, word for word. If the text is ambiguous, so let the translation be. That he note all words of his own, and touch not the text.[7] On the whole, perhaps a more honest set of men could not be engaged in such a labour, than those who translated from the original, our version—commonly called 'King James' version' of the Holy Bible.[8]

COLLOQUY X.

THE EXPOSITION OF THE SACRED WRITINGS, NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR SEEMING OBSCURITY, THE RIGHT OF ALL; AND THERE IS NO VISIBLE ARBITER IN MATTERS OF FAITH AND CONSCIENCE.

Apollos.—It is proved that necessary things are clearly revealed in the oracles of God; but it is also admitted, that while some truths are plainly set forth in some places, they are obscurely presented in others. Moreover, it is agreed that useful things, though not *absolutely* necessary, are often obscure, and need illustration. The causes may be various: as ignorance, inattention or carelessness in the reader, or the sublimity of the subject. I want you now to tell me the business of an expositor, or interpreter of God's word.

[1] Limborch.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Eusebius on the Gospel of Matthew; also the references he makes to Papias, St. Ireneus, Origen. Cruse's translation of Eusebius, Edi. 1833. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Jerome, Epiphanius, and Chrysostom, as referred to in Limborch.

[4] Dwight and Dick.

[5] Mosheim and Milner.

[6] Limborch.

[7] Ibid.—also Buck and Watson.

[8] The noble testimony of that great and good man, Doctor A. Clarke, in his general preface to his Com. et alibi.

Aquila.—God is the fountain of all light and goodness; and he who undertakes a work like this, should give the true sense according to the intention or mind of the Deity.

The schoolmen had anciently their mystical sense, and a variety of technical terms to be applied in giving the meaning of a text; but the plain literal common sense meaning of God's word, is the only one that can be given with a clear conscience.[1]

Apollos.—But surely there is a mystical sense in the prophecies.

Aquila.—True, in them there is what is called by some a mystical sense. These mostly relate to Christ. We have only to ascertain their literal meaning, and fulfilment in the type, and then apply them to Christ the Antitype.[2] Sometimes there is an entire fulfilment of the prophecy in the type, and yet the Holy Ghost applies it in a higher sense, as in Isaiah, where it is said 'the people that walked in darkness,' &c. and what is there used for a Jewish deliverance, in Matthew is applied to the emancipation of the Galileans and the tribe of Zebulon from spiritual blindness. So in Hosea, 'out of Egypt have I called my son,' spoken of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but applied in the New Testament to Christ's flight into that country.[3] It is also to be observed, that the prophecy is often expressed in an exalted sense, and cannot be confined to the type without manifest impropriety,—the words themselves show that we are to look for the meaning elsewhere, and that they are to be taken in a more sublime sense. See Isaiah again, 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel.' Though an address to Ahaz, yet the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary is evidently set forth. So in the 16th Psalm, 'Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption,' is a direct allusion to the resurrection of Christ.[4]

Apollos.—Are not the literal and mystical sense both set forth in some prophecies?

Aquila.—They are manifestly.[5] But sometimes it happens, though rarely, that a prophecy commences with the literal meaning, but in a short time leaves the type, and goes to the antitype, and expressly points it out, as in the 53d chapter of Isaiah. In the preceding chapter, under the type of the deliverance of the Jews from Babylonish captivity, is pointed out the spiritual deliverance of the church by Christ; but, at the end of that chapter, he describes the antitype, and through the fifty-third, points out Christ in the most lively strains. Hence, in opposition to the Jews, we say that many prophecies never were and never could be fulfilled in the type,[6] only imperfectly, and must have their completion in the antitype, Christ Jesus our Lord.

Apollos.—I therefore plainly see, that although in some passages of Sacred Writ there is both a literal and mystical sense, yet I am not bound to subscribe to any man's opinions against the convictions of my own conscience.[7] In thus doing, I may subscribe to errors the most gross.

Aquila.—Indeed it may be so, and hence there is no universal judge in matters of faith, who may decide controversies in religion. Papists say that God has appointed a public and visible judge of all controversies in matters of faith.[8] We say that every man is to interpret privately for himself, and the direction of his own conscience.

Apollos.—How can they prove such a judge?

Aquila.—They do not prove it. For 1. They are not agreed among them-

[1] Dr. Clarke's letter to a young minister.
[2] M'Ewen on the Types.
[3] Limborch and Newton.
[4] Ibid.—also Dr. Clarke.
[5] M'Ewen and Clarke's Com.
[6] M'Ewen.
[7] Dr. Clarke and Limborch, also Dick.
[8] Calvin, Schmucker and Limborch.

selves, who he is: the Jesuits say the Pope of Rome—others, that the right is in a general council, without the Pope, or in both; and as they are not agreed, it is evident they are in doubt about their own religion. But 2. We prove we are right concerning a private interpretation or exposition by these arguments. 1. Though it might remove some differences, God has no where signified that he would appoint such a judge, much less has he pointed out the man. 2. But God commands directly the contrary. To the Colossians the apostle says, they are to 'teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns,' &c. The same command is virtually given to the Corinthians: we are told not only to read, but to prove the Scriptures, 'all things.' We are taught to search them, to know whether the apostles themselves preached the truth,—from all which, we easily infer that God has left the Sacred Writings as a rule, for the direction of our conduct, and consciences too, but never has appointed a visible judge to preside over, much less dictate to them.[1]

Apollos.—Did you know that Papists make the Jewish church, its priesthood, and the sanhedrim a model for theirs; and quote for an example and the appointment of an infallible church, the seventeenth chapter of Deuteronomy, where the Lord instructs Moses, 'If there arise a matter too hard for thee,' &c. and directs the parties to the priest and judge, for a final decision; and therefore they say God has appointed such a judge in the christian church.[2]

Aquila.—I deny both the antecedent and the consequence.[3] In opposition to the former, God did not appoint a judge in matters of *faith*, but in civil and political affairs, for it is there said, 'if there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, stroke and stroke.' Again this judge was not infallible though you admit him to be the priest, or high-priest, for in Leviticus a sacrifice is appointed for the priest that *sins* through *ignorance*. And God, in the law, enjoined on them impartiality, which would have been unnecessary if they had been infallible, and in Malichi they are sharply reproved for departing from the way and causing others to do so. From all these, it is plain, that those infallible judges not only might err, but actually did so, with many aggravating circumstances. This is still more evident, if we notice their unjust sentence passed on the prophets, and finally on Christ himself, whom they delivered to Pilate.

Apollos.—But suppose, they say, the infallibility was in the council or sanhedrim?

Aquila.—I reply that this would be the last and least of all infallible. For it was made up of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, all of whom could not be right, being each different in sentiment, doctrine and practice, and above all, the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead, one of the most important doctrines of the Bible.[4]

In fact no judge of matters in faith was ever appointed in the Jewish church, and admit that there had been such a judge among the Jews, its inapplicability to Christ's church is manifest from the fact that none such is pointed out in the Scripture.[5]

Apollos.—But they say that if such a judge be not appointed, Christ has not provided as well for his church the *spouse*, as God did under the old dispensation for the Jewish church.

Aquila.—But I reply, as Christ has not done it, we may reasonably infer that the church is better without such a judge. The people of Israel lived in one land, and formed one body politic, and might have one head with no inconvenience, which cannot be said of christians scattered over all the world, and only bound to Christ their head.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Mosheim and Milner. [5] Limborch and Watson.

Apollos.—Some go so far as to say that if God has not appointed such a judge, then he has not made ample provision for our salvation.

Aquila.—We have proved the reverse by showing that the Scriptures which are clear and explicit, contain all things necessary for salvation, and the quotations that are made from them to prove that the pope has the power of determining controversies in himself, are impertinent beyond description. Any decision of the church on the conduct of an individual, is a decision of it as a body and not by an individual, who has any right to dictate to that whole.

Christ is the head, and the Bible the rule, by which all are bound to walk. In our next conversation we will consider a question that involves the rule for the exposition of the Sacred Writings.

COLLOQUY XI.

THE DECREES OF COUNCILS AND THE WRITINGS OF THE FATHERS, ARE NO RULE OR STANDARD FOR THE EXPOSITION OF SCRIPTURE, OR THE DECISION OF CONTROVERSIES CONCERNING IT. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE REQUIRED TO EXPOUND GOD'S WORD.

Apollos.—On an examination of the arguments adduced at our last interview, I find there are yet one or two things, about which I need information and want your opinion. It has been said, that the decrees of councils, and the writings of the fathers, are the rule for the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.

Aquila.—This is fallacious, and is easily proved to be so. Some of the fathers wrote nothing, and of course they will not be adduced; among those who did write, we are not able to discover their opinions about the disputes now existing among christians. This will be apparent, if we consider that there are very few writings of fathers who lived in the three first centuries, from whom we might chiefly expect information, and those that remain do not treat of points in dispute now, but maintain the divinity of the christian religion against both Jews and Gentiles, sometimes only refuting heresies,[1]—some are obtruded on us as writings of the fathers that never were written by them; and even the studious and learned, acknowledge that those extant are so adulterated, as that it is hard to tell the originals. Moreover, there is as much dispute, concerning the meaning of the fathers, as about the import of the Scriptures. All parties quote them, and all differing, cannot all be right; and from what is extant, as only a few wrote, 'we have the opinions only of a few.'

If we knew the opinions of the fathers, it is not to decide our controversies, because every one has been charged with some error, and all may be mistaken. They themselves denied that any man ought to be absolutely swayed by them, as they were liable to err.[2]

They also differ among themselves, in matters that the church of Rome thinks of vital importance; but in order that they be our judges, and decide for us, it is evident that they should agree.[3]

Apollos.—But you know that the Papists reject the opinion of the fathers, whenever they are opposed to the notions of that church.

Aquila.—Certainly, and after all it would take a lifetime to read all their voluminous writings; or if neglected according to the tenor of the argument, one might forfeit his salvation.[4]

Apollos.—You reject the decisions of councils too, I suppose?

Aquila.—I do. They are not handed down to us unadulterated. We do not know what were the genuine decrees; several spurious acts are foisted in, but if pure, they are not to decide our matters; for Papists themselves admit that general as well as particular councils may err.

[1] Mosheim and Milner. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch. [4] Ibid.

Apollos.—But there never were any general councils held. There always were more bishops and pastors absent, than were present, and I can plainly see how even a general council, would be as liable to err, as a particular one.

Aquila.—Truly, you are right; and numbers never can confer infallibility. It is also evident from history, that those councils consisted of party men, who decided in favour of their own opinions, and censured others without regard to truth.[1]

Apollos.—But the Romanists say, if a general council may err, so may the whole church.

Aquila.—Admitted,—and yet the consequence of the argument is easily disproved; for while a whole council may err, absent ministers or members may retain the true faith; and even admit that all the church apostatize, yet the faith and truth of God remain the same, as though this had not occurred.[2]

Apollos.—Then every man has his own or personal salvation to work out, in dependence on grace, and must give account of himself to God for his belief and practice. As the Deity has no where appointed a universal judge to decide the controversies in his militant flock, in matters of faith or practice, each individual of that flock, should most certainly judge for himself, directing his conduct according to God's word, which should be searched diligently, and obeyed conscientiously: Nor ought any member of Christ's church to assume to himself the right, to impose authoritatively his opinions on others.

Aquila.—An apostle has said, 'who art thou that judgest another man's servant, to his own master, he standeth or falleth.'

If our heavenly Father had appointed such a judge, it would avail us but little, unless fully persuaded that we are bound to submit to his decisions; and in vain may it be objected by Papists, that no Scripture is of private interpretation. A private interpretation is one thing, and an interpreter another. The Scriptures have a general and public application, to the necessities and condition of every member in Christ's general church.[3]

Apollos.—But you do admit that it is the special duty of *some men* to 'expound God's holy word.'

Aquila.—To this question, I have a two-fold answer. It is the positive duty of every man to expound or interpret the Bible, conscientiously, and according to his best apprehension of its meaning, for his personal edification and comfort: But again, some are called, specially, to this holy and blessed work, for the edification of the church, and the comfort of Christ's flock, over which they are appointed 'overseers,' being 'moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.' There are duties devolving on them of a *special* nature, which they should honestly and faithfully discharge.

Apollos.—Well, my friend, I suppose myself, or another, called of God to proclaim his gospel to men, and consequently bound to give a clear exposition of the Sacred Writings. I ask the qualifications for such a work.

Aquila.—The answer to this question must have a specific bearing on yourself. As you feel it your duty to expound that word, and intend devoting your life to the service of the church, I will point out some of those things, that I believe calculated to aid in the accomplishment of the great end of your calling, the instruction of the ignorant, the reformation of the sinner, and the consolation of God's dear children.

We have said that every christian has the right of expounding the Scriptures for his personal benefit; certainly not at random, but according to some consistent and certain rule. There surely are some things requisite for forming correct opinions of the revelation from God to man. I suppose they are either preparatory or concomitant,[4] and proceed to notice them.

[1] See Milner, Mosheim and Jones.

[2] Milner and Jones.

[3] Dr. Clarke, Henry and Benson.

[4] Smith, on the Sacred Office.

Apollos.—What do you mean by preparatory and concomitant?

Aquila.—By preparatory, I mean those things that qualify for the duty itself, and by concomitant, those that are brought into action while we are engaged in that duty.

I am certainly of opinion, that a *correct* knowledge of the original languages of the Sacred Writings, must be of great assistance to any man engaged in their exposition; but too much stress has been laid on the value of this knowledge, often by smatterers in learning, and mere novices in christian divinity.

An acquaintance with ancient languages is certainly a valuable acquisition; but if more time were spent in acquiring a knowledge of modern tongues, might not the christian preacher offer salvation to many, who now 'set in darkness and the valley of the shadow of death?' Ancient history, especially the connection between sacred and profane, will help to an exposition of prophecy; but above all, whether he have these qualifications or not, he must approach every theological subject, free from all prepossession and prejudice, as a disciple to learn, and not as a master to teach. It must be also remembered that human ability is incompetent to this great work, and as I once said to you, my friend, he must implore the assistance and grace of an all-wise God. Such a work is not to be approached by one filled with self-conceit, but with an ardent desire to know the truth, and a determination to embrace it at the hazard of all. Indeed there should be a mind sanctified, honestly and piously disposed, to depend on God, to guide and support him in the way of truth. 'Receive with meekness,' says St. James, 'the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls;' and 'desire the sincere milk of the word,' says St. Peter, 'that ye may grow thereby.'

Apollos.—Your remarks bring to my mind the declaration of our Redeemer, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;' and again, 'he that is of God heareth God's words.' I plainly see that these are indispensable qualifications for a correct understanding and honest exposition of the 'word of life.' What are those that are called concomitant?

Aquila.—I should suppose that one ought to examine the context, and carefully regard the intention of the author; otherwise he will make that author say what was never designed.[1] We should never, I think, attempt to explain a clear passage of God's word, containing a positive truth, by an obscure one; and moreover, that obscure texts should be illustrated by those that are clear and explicit.[2]

Apollos.—This is good advice.

Aquila.—Moreover, we ought ever to distinguish between literal and figurative texts, as I have elsewhere said. We are never to strain a figure, or extend its application further than its author designed Nothing is to be admitted that implies a contradiction, or that is contrary to the analogy of faith, which is every where plainly set forth in the oracles of redemption. I do believe, my friend, that these qualifications are of infinite importance, and you see now my key to an exposition of the Sacred Writings. *Scripture* and *Reason.*[3] The former can never contradict itself, and must be expounded so as not to do it; and the latter, or reason, will ever justify such an exposition.

Apollos.—But, brother, what share has reason in the interpretation of God's word?

Aquila.—A very important one. Special cases among men are almost infinite as to number, and there could not be a rule for every such case. It is the province of reason, to apply the general rules of Scripture to the condition of such, and besides, it is with the assistance of reason that obscure passages are so interpreted as not to allow of a contradiction, or that which is opposed to right reason.[4]

[1] Dr. Clarke's letter to a preacher, and Commentary.
[2] Smith's Lectures on the Sacred Office.
[3] Dr. Clarke—Watson, and Wesley.
[4] Watson's Inst.

Apollos.—But has not our religion its mysteries, and can reason comprehend them?

Aquila.—Some things are called mysteries because they depend on the free and arbitrary will of God, and of course cannot be comprehended by reason, and remain mysteries until God reveals them; but after this revelation they certainly are no longer such. And again some things are called mysteries, not in relation to the present time, but the period before their revelation; and some facts are revealed as such, that is, as mysteries, but why they are so, or how, we are not required or expected to know; and while reason does admit their existence on divine authority, it cannot comprehend the mode, nor is it necessary.[1]

Apollos.—It would seem evident that reason is thus useful in religion; but are we in Scripture commanded thus to use it?

Aquila.—Certainly. Paul says, to the Corinthians, 'Brethren, be not children in understanding, in understanding be men;' to the Ephesians, 'See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise; be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.' The same apostle reproves the Hebrew church for not using it, representing them as 'babes,' and 'unskilful in the word of righteousness.' And did not our Lord notice the want of its proper exercise when he said, 'do ye not yet understand?' Besides, Apollos, all divines, of every sect, appeal to this tribunal, however contradictory and false their preaching may be, which to me is strong evidence of the fact that the human mind must of necessity be influenced, by the reasonableness of a principle; and unless we allow reason this prerogative, we shall be able to refute no error, for all religionists quote Scripture to confirm their opinions. Let me also tell you, my brother, with the short exposition you have had of mysteries, revealed as such, that whatever is unreasonable is not of God.[2]

Apollos.—But is it not said, 'the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'

Aquila.—True. But by the 'carnal mind' we are not to understand the faculty of judging right, or reason.[3] It not only can, but does subject itself to the law of God, and it is by reason that men not only consent to the law, but are a law unto themselves, as may be plainly seen by the serious perusal of the fourteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. In the fifth chapter to the Galatians, we have, enumerated the works of the flesh, which indicate the carnal mind; but reason is not once named among them, which we know is directly opposed to them, and therefore the carnal mind and reason are different things.

Apollos.—But is it not said, 'we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness?'

Aquila.—St. Paul does not say to all Jews and Greeks, but only to those of a perverse mind. So far from this, he says in the next verse, 'of those who are called he is Christ the power of God and wisdom of God.'

Apollos.—Look where it is said, 'casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.' Are not these imaginations the reasonings of men?

Aquila.—Paul speaks of empty, vain reasonings, not solid, substantial arguments, founded in truth.

Apollos.—I want to be right, and you must bear with me. Recollect what the same apostle says: 'Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'

Aquila.—By philosophy here we are not to understand sound reason, any more

[1] Kidd on the Trinity, and Drew on the immateriality and immortality of the soul.
[2] Watson and Limborch. [3] Ibid.

than logic, physics, or ethics. God himself blessed Solomon with wisdom, and made him a philosopher, that is, a *wise* man. The philosophy here condemned is that which is opposed to the christian religion: as the philosophy of Aristotle, who contended for the eternity of the world, and that of Epicurus, who denied the divine Providence.[1]

Apollos.—Then philosophy has something to do with the Bible and religion?

Aquila.—That will depend on what you mean by philosophy. If by it is meant that discursive and reasoning faculty of man, by which he detects errors and discovers contradictions, I agree and have shown that this has to do with the Bible and religion. But if by philosophy is meant the fixing stated rules, or principles, which are not to help in expounding the sacred books, but by which they are to be tried, then I reject it altogether, for these reasons. Because every rule ought to be more certain than that which is to be tried by it;[2] but philosophy is much more uncertain than Scripture, and therefore ought not to be tried by it. Again if philosophy, or these stated rules and fixed principles, of which mention is made above, be necessary to an interpretation of the Scriptures, then those only would understand it, who fathom the mysteries of those principles and rules of *philosophy*, so *called.* Of course, many would not know their duty, or would be uncertain, concerning things necessary to salvation, and might be ultimately damned. Moreover, the Scripture would be wholly superfluous; for to understand such fixed rules, or the philosophy of this world, would be, to have all that is necessary to a knowledge of our state and obligations. Wherefore I conclude that reason is the key to God's word; by this we understand and apply it to our faith and practice; but it is not the only means.

Apollos.—I assure you this is a very strong and rational conclusion, and it occurs to my mind, that in our first interview, you pointed out reason as a means, but at the same time informed me of the value and importance of prayer, faith in Christ, and all their attendants, or those things immediately dependent on them.

Aquila.—Since, my friend, the method of obtaining everlasting life depends on the will of God, it was requisite that man should come to the knowledge of it by a revelation, which is but a manifestation of the divine will. Neither reason nor philosophy could ever have attained to this knowledge, or taught it to man; and even after a revelation, he constantly needs the light and influence of the Holy Ghost, to enlighten his mind, excite his hopes, strengthen his purposes, and help him to understand and tread in the way to everlasting life.

Apollos.—My brother, I am now not only fully satisfied of the authenticity of the Bible, but of the end for which God gave it to man. I am also furnished with arguments to establish its use, and shall know, I think, how to profit by them. O! precious, precious book; the best in all the earth.

Priscilla.—I think, Apollos, we shall now be ready to consider any subject set forth in its sacred pages. There is an indescribable joy in the recollection, that this blessed volume is a present from my Heavenly Father; the directions that he gives, for comfort here, and joy eternal beyond the grave.

Aquila.—Our next or second subject shall be Deity and his works.

[1] The reader is respectfully requested to consult Dr. A. Clarke, on the exposition of the texts referred to in this colloquy.

[2] Duncan, Watts, and Locke.

DEITY AND HIS WORKS.

COLLOQUY I.

THE NAMES OF THE DEITY AND THAT NATURE ASCRIBED TO HIM IN THE SACRED WRITINGS CONSIDERED—HIS ATTRIBUTES.

Apollos.—I come this evening, my friend, with a merry heart, equipped for the battle. The Scripture is a revelation from God. This is the rule of our religion, and it is proved to be not only true, but good. Now I am ready to attend to any subject, that you may select from it.

Aquila.—We have many on which to converse; I however promised to commence this evening with Deity and his Works.

Apollos.—None more pleasing to me, in all the Bible.

Aquila.—But before I enter on this delightful theme, I want you to attend to those terms that are used to designate the Deity, and by which he is called or named in the Sacred Writings.

Those that we shall consider at present are not the names of his attributes, nor such as have relation to his creatures. These we may converse of at another time, we mention now only those that regard his nature. They are five in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, viz.; יהוה Jehovah, contracted sometimes into יה Jah, אלהים Elohim or Aleim, אדני Adonai, אל El, שדי Shaddai, אל שדי El Shaddai; and also two in the Greek of the New, viz.: Θεος Theos, God, and Κυριος, Lord, which are simply translations into that language, of the two first names of the Deity here mentioned in the Hebrew, and they respect him as the fountain of all existence.[1]

To explain then the Hebrew, is virtually also to explain the names appropriated to the author of all things, in Greek; as they stand recorded in the New Testament. On these names you may consult commentators on the texts, where they occur, and those tracts in biblical and theological dictionaries, on this specific subject.

Apollos.—I hope you will give me a short exposition of them, and the manner in which they ought to be applied, for the encouragement of vital piety.

Aquila.—Well then, take the first, Jehovah, by contraction Jah, or as some say the Tetragrammaton. The Jews aver, that it was only used anciently by the high-priests, in solemn benedictions, that it ought not now to be used at all, and therefore they say, 'the Name bless thee.'[2] This is easily proved to be their superstition, by a reference to the fact, that the Israelites were required to call him by that name, and it was lawful to do so. Hear the words of Moses, which plainly set forth that practice; 'The Lord our God,' often repeated. This also was done by Joshua, as may be seen in the last chapter of the book by his name; by Elijah in his prayer on Mount Carmel, and in very many instances by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Amos. The Israelites also, in their common serious discourses, used this name in the same way. You doubtless remember the address of David to Goliah, and also that to Abigail the wife of Nabal.

[1] Parkhurst's Heb. and Gr. Lex.

[2] Clarke, Parkhurst, and Limborch.

The Jews and Christians all agree, that it is a term which denotes the essence of Deity, and signifies He who exists.[1] Others think that from what God says in Exodus, 'but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them,' that this name implies the constancy of God; as if he had said 'I am that I am, a faithful God, and will now perform my promises made to Abraham, in blessing his posterity.[2]

Apollos.—How, in a system of theology, would you for practice apply this name?

Aquila.—From it we learn what God is in himself, an eternal Being; the dependence of all others on him as such, for their existence, he being the fountain or source of all; and also what should be our confidence in his promises; for he will certainly fulfil them.

Apollos.—Will you please give me the interpretation of the word Elohim, the second name of the Deity, and then the others in succession.

Aquila.—Elohim, or as some say Aleim, is an appellative rather than a proper name or noun; in the original it means 'strong Judge,' and is in the plural number, the singular Eloah, being seldom used. This is sometimes applied to angels, and hence the Almighty is styled 'Lord of lords,' and 'God of gods.' As the word Aleim or Elohim, this being the pronunciation with the Masoretic points, is plural, some suppose, that it sets forth the Trinity, and thus argue from it; but I am happy to inform you, my friend, the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity rests on a firmer basis than a simple verbal criticism.[3]

Apollos.—Well, the meaning of Adonai.

Aquila.—This word is also plural, it is rendered Κυριος, Kurios, Lord, in Greek, and sometimes Δεσποτης, Despotes, a 'sovereign Lord.'[4] It has generally prefixed to it a pronoun of the first person, and its true meaning is 'my Lord,' by way of eminence. It is applied to God, though it is sometimes also used in application to creatures.

The fourth name is El, from which many other names are derived. It is an appellative and signifies a 'strong God.' And the fifth, Shaddai or El Shaddai, is wholly applied to Deity, and means the 'all sufficient or omnipotent God.' These are the names appropriated to the Almighty, in the holy Scriptures, as founded on the very essence of his nature; and every good man will take encouragement from the consideration of them.[5]

Apollos.—You may now, my friend—proceed with your subject, and do pardon the inquisitiveness that caused this digression.

Aquila.—It was a digression, but a very necessary one. We have to use names for the Almighty, they ought to be explained, and indeed, it was proper to do it at this time. In our first subject, you had the foundation and rule of true piety. We now proceed to the consideration of its several parts. They are two; the knowledge and worship of God. These are subordinate to and directly connected with each other. He that knows God, worships him, and he that adores the Deity aright must be acquainted with him. 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' is the language of inspiration. This knowledge is then the foundation of his worship, it is not separate from practice, much less barely speculative, spurious, and barren.[6]

The first part of piety is the knowledge of God, and this leads us to the investigation of our second subject, Deity and his works. I consented to explain the names appropriated to him to prevent confusion. We will consider first, the nature of the Deity as proclaimed in the Sacred Writings.

Apollos.—Brother, is not this an incomprehensible subject?

[1] Clarke, Parkhurst, and Limborch.
[2] Dr. Clarke and Scott's Com.
[3] Parkhurst Heb. Lex. also Watson's Bib. Dic. and Dick's Theo.
[4] Parkhurst's Gr. Lexicon and Watson's Bib. Dic.
[5] Watson, Stackhouse, and Limborch.
[6] Wesley's works.

Aquila.—My dear Apollos, the nature of God cannot be fully comprehended. He is 'Majesty infinite;' we are imperfect and 'see through a glass darkly.' We intend no subtile or intricate, much less metaphysical exposition, of the divine nature, such as schoolmen advance; they have no connection with piety. We simply undertake from the Bible to show, what sort of a nature that is called divine, and then, from the same book, to point out what kind of a Being He is, to whom this nature agrees.

This knowledge is delivered in Scripture in express words; or may be inferred from unexceptionable premises. Moreover such knowledge is declared to be the foundation of all true and spiritual worship.[1] We undertake to define nothing, that is not set forth in the records of truth; and taking these for our rule, let us approach this interesting subject with modesty and caution.

Apollos.—But, my friend, how will you come in this way at the nature of the Almighty?

Aquila.—By the consideration of those attributes or perfections ascribed to him in the Scriptures. They are not accidents, common or proper, distinct from the divine essence; but one and the same with it.[2] They denote to us the manifold perfection of THAT NATURE,[3] ACCORDING TO OUR ABILITY to apprehend it. There is therefore actually no distinction between his essence and attributes, but that which arises from our imperfect way of conceiving of them; and this imperfection in us is not feigned, but arises in the very nature of the thing to be considered.[4] Although the mind conceives of that which in itself is simple and uncompounded, as many distinct attributes; yet, in this operation of it, there is in fact no error, but an imperfect apprehension.[5]

Apollos.—Do you mean that there is but one perfection in Deity, and this is subdivided in order to be understood by us?

Aquila.—Yes; strictly speaking, God is a Being of immense perfection of goodness in *every* respect. This perfection we divide and subdivide, in order to reduce and bring down its operations to the weak capacities of men; while at the same time all these operations are but the diversified actions, of an Intelligence immensely good.[6]

Apollos.—I think I begin to apprehend it; pardon my numerous interruptions. You requested me to present every difficulty that should occur to my mind, as we proceed in our examinations of the doctrines of the Bible.

Aquila.—Two things are to be regarded in the divine attributes. First, as our distinction of them arises in the nature of the thing, we are never to confound them or their effects.[7] We are to explain each separately, distinguishing the effects of the one from those of the other. And, secondly, we are not to confound the effects of the attributes with the attributes themselves. As pardon with mercy, punishment with justice; for the effects are free and voluntary, and may be absent without detriment to the attributes, which in themselves are necessary to the divine nature.[8]

Apollos.—But, my friend, what are they?

Aquila.—Divines arrange them differently. I think they should be distinguished into two sorts or classes. Those that belong to God considered simply as a Being; which are essential to his very essence and existence, and constitute him, if I may so speak, what he is, namely God; and cannot of course be communicated to creatures, they being incapable of sharing in the same. These have been called the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, and are thus named:

[1] Dwight and Dick.
[2] Watson.
[3] Stackhouse and Limborch.
[4] Saurin.
[5] Locke.
[6] Clarke and Limborch.
[7] Archbishop Tillotson; also Schmucker.
[8] Watson and Saurin.

The UNITY, SPIRITUALITY, OMNIPRESENCE, and ETERNITY of God.[1] The other attributes of our Creator are those that appertain to him when considered as a *living* Being, exercising himself toward his creatures. These are called communicable, because they may be imparted in a degree to other intelligences.

Apollos.—Which are they?

Aquila.—Of this kind are Life and the properties thereof, Understanding, and Will. In the Will are two sorts of attributes. Some considered as passions, such as Love, Hatred, Anger, Desire, Aversion, Hope, Fear, Despair, Joy, Sorrow and Repentance. Others are considered as moral virtues, restraining those passions, as Justice, Clemency, Patience, and Severity; to which some add the Power, Glory, and Happiness of God.[2]

To all these, at another time, I design to call your attention.

Priscilla.—Oh, I have been wholly engrossed with the outline you have given of this important subject,—Deity, apart from his works. Who can understand the Almighty? If you undertake to consider and converse on this delightful topic, surely we may promise to attend diligently. But I must tell you plainly, I approach it, though accompanied by you, my husband, with 'fear and trembling.'

Aquila.—And thus we ought, Priscilla, to approach at any time, one of such extent. The God we worship, fills the universe; with what reverential awe should we contemplate those perfections, in the exercise of which he is continually engaged in doing good?

Apollos.—Darkness is now upon it. The veil may be rent and I may understand it more perfectly; but after all, I remember 'his ways are past finding out.'

Aquila.—Let us come to-morrow evening prepared, to consider and apply for our spiritual benefit, each one of these attributes.

COLLOQUY II.

UNITY OF THE DEITY ESTABLISHED BY SCRIPTURE AND REASON—IMPROVEMENT OF THIS DOCTRINE.

Apollos.—Well, my friend, we are seated and anxiously wait to hear your remarks on that interesting subject, the nature and perfections of the Deity; the outline of which you gave us at our last interview.

Aquila.—On that occasion I mentioned that the attributes of the Deity had been divided into communicable and incommunicable; that these last belonged to God considered simply as a Being, and that they were so far peculiar to his essence, that they could not be imparted to any other intelligence; no creature being capable of sharing in the Unity, Spirituality, Ubiquity, and Eternity of the Almighty. These perfections we may consider in that order in which they are here named. The first is the Unity of the Deity.

Apollos.—What do you mean by Unity, as a term applied to God?

Aquila.—In the last book of Moses, there is a declaration made to the Israelites, which was cited, in the Gospel of Mark, by our Redeemer. It is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' This is a positive annunciation of the Unity of the divine nature. By it, I understand, not a Unity in which there are several individuals under one species or genus; but a numerical Unity, whereby God is undivided in his nature, separate from all other beings, and incapable of being multiplied; for he exists as ONE and no more.[3] And as there is an eternal distance between infinity and finitude, this Unity must be essential to his

[1] Stackhouse and Limborch.
[2] Ibid. and Archbishop Tillotson.
[3] Calvin, Watson, Dick, and Dwight.

nature. That this notion of the Deity, which has been taught for so many thousand years, through that revelation which God has made of himself, is correct, we proceed to prove by his own word and by reason.

Apollos.—Will you be kind enough to give me the Scripture proof first?

Aquila.—To that already quoted you may add 'The Lord he is God, and there is *none* else besides him.' And again, 'See now that I, even I, am he, and there is *no* God with me.' In the New Testament it is written, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the *only* true God.' In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, 'And there is *none* other God but *one;*' 'to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things.' In Galatians, 'but God is *one.*' In Ephesians, '*One* God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all;' and Paul says to Timothy, 'There is *one* God.'

Apollos.—My dear friend, I had forgot the Scriptures are full of this doctrine; from every page testimony may be adduced to establish it. Do give me the arguments drawn from reason.

Aquila.—God is a necessary and self-existent being; for the very notion of God implies necessary existence. Can this be common to more than *one?* Certainly it cannot. For if we suppose more Gods than one, nothing will be found in each of them, singly, why they should necessarily exist. And why should we not as well suppose a thousand as ten, and ten as two? Again, in different individuals, there certainly are some peculiar or singular properties, by which they differ from one another. This cannot be said of God, who is a necessary, and therefore a most perfect nature.[1]

But suppose there were more Gods than one, they might each of them will, not only things different, but also things contrary to one another; for it is necessary that every one of them should be endued with freedom of will, in order to be a God. Now Apollos, what would be the consequence? In the confusion arising from a plurality of Gods, willing different and contrary things, the whole course of nature would be disturbed, and the subversion of all order ensue. Besides this, it would destroy all true religion, for if we admit of more Gods than one, no just reason could be offered, why we should obey one more than another. To obey all at one and the same time would be impossible.[2]

Apollos.—Your arguments shew me at once the madness of the Manichean heresy, which in the year of Christ two hundred and seventy-seven spread itself through Arabia, Egypt, and other parts of Africa.

Apollos.—Admit the notion of Manes, that arch Persian, who, educated among the Magi, would engraft their system on the christian stalk; and things contrary to common sense must be also admitted.[3] Suppose, as he taught, two principles ever active; the one good and the fountain of goodness, the other evil and the source of wickedness; these two principles are not only opposite, but never subject to each other. Nothing could be expected but the disorganization of all things. The arguments for the Unity of the Deity disprove these opinions. Besides it is contrary to every principle of right reason, to suppose a God that is evil or wicked; for the very notion of God carries with it the idea of infinite purity, and the most profligate cannot admit the reverse.

Apollos.—I assure you, my friend, the exposition you have given of this perfection of Deity is very clear. I feel the force of those arguments you have adduced. Suppose you were preaching on the Unity of God, what application would you make of that doctrine?

Aquila.—I would, after having established it as a doctrine taught in the Bible, and after proving it by reason, show that the Saviour's advice should most certainly be taken. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou

[1] Dick's Theo. also Paley's Nat. Theo. and Limborch.
[2] Tillotson and Limborch.
[3] Mosheim, Milner, and Buck.

serve;' for if there be but one God, we should certainly serve him according to his appointment. Again we should rely solely on him for eternal life, for if there be but one Almighty Being, he and he alone, can grant and secure to man, an eternity of bliss.

Priscilla.—My husband, the Scriptures say 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' This is called 'the first and the great commandment.' I would add to your application of the divine Unity, this idea: that if there were more Gods than one, we never could discharge this solemn duty; and indeed, no reason, as already argued, could be assigned why I should not love one more than another, if there were a plurality of Gods. But as there is only one true and living God, who bestows on me all the benefits I enjoy, he may and does justly claim the adoration of my whole heart.

Apollos.—This is an admirable appendage, my friend Aquila, to your application.

Aquila.—Indeed it is. We must try to profit by it. Let us devote to God our whole hearts, and from him *alone* expect a crown of unfading glory.

COLLOQUY III.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE DEITY CONSIDERED—OBJECTIONS TO IT ANSWERED—APPLICATION.

Apollos.—The second incommunicable attribute which you promised to notice, is the Spirituality of the Deity. I begin to be better pleased with the consideration of the attributes, than at the commencement. I think I see their value as subjects of meditation for every christian. The application of the Unity of God has left a lasting impression on my mind. I find I must 'love him with all my heart.' Pray tell me what is meant by his Spirituality?

Aquila.—The Redeemer declared to the woman of Samaria, 'God is a spirit.' By this, I understand, that he is a most pure immaterial essence, without body or parts, invisible, and not to be represented by any sensible image; whose essential act is to think.[1] In reflecting on this perfection of the Almighty, we must remove all ideas of corporiety or figure from our minds, and look upon him as an immaterial, incorporeal, intelligent Being.[2]

Apollos.—I know the sacred oracles positively affirm that 'God is a spirit;' and I cannot conceive of him as any thing else; but I want the arguments founded in reason to establish it, as well as those deduced from the volume of inspiration.

Aquila.—Well my friend—if you want reason, take this plain syllogism. Spirit is of a nature much more noble than matter, and superior to it; but God has created the spirits of angels and men, and must therefore be a spirit or of a nature superior to it.[3] Again, unless God is a spirit and immaterial, he would be a natural and necessary agent: indeed he would not be God, for all matter in its own nature is dull and inactive, and ever subject to certain laws. It cannot be moved, unless impelled by some force; its motions are proportionate to the force applied, and it rests not unless impeded by some body distinct from itself. Surely none of these laws can be applied to the Deity, without destroying that notion that all the world has of the excellency and independence of his nature.[4] The powers of finite creature are too weak to comprehend the actions of a spirit, hence terms are used in the Sacred Writings that convey in them, when speaking of God, the idea of matter, such as 'hands, ears, and eyes,' because we have none

[1] Locke and Chalmers.
[2] Saurin.
[3] Paley, Dick, and Dwight.
[4] Tillotson, Stackhouse, and Limborch.

that are better for pointing out the operations of an immaterial essence, or a most pure spirit, such as is God. Therefore the book of inspiration accommodates itself, if I may so speak, to the debility of our intellect and the poverty of our language; and for our spiritual benefit, uses terms which otherwise would be inadmissible.

Apollos.—The attributing those terms to the Almighty in a literal sense, was the ancient heresy of the Anthropomorphites; who took the declaration, that man was made in the likeness of God, in that erroneous way; unmindful of the fact, that it respected the internal condition of the soul, which had stamped upon it that holiness and purity, in which consisted its similitude to its great author. But how is it that you say he is invisible?

Aquila.—Because he is a spirit, it will follow that he is invisible; for a spirit is not only without corporeal extension and figure, and the other properties of body,[1] but also colour, which is properly the object of sight; hence the Bible says expressly that 'he cannot be seen.' Moses desired to see his face, but was informed 'Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live.' The apostle to the Gentiles styles him the 'invisible God,' 'whom no man hath seen nor can see.'

Apollos.—But does not the Scripture say that God did appear to several of the patriarchs and prophets of old? To Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, as well as to Abraham, the father of the faithful. To Gideon, to the parents of Samson, to Micaiah and Isaiah, as also to Nadab and Abihu, those wicked sons of the Jewish high-priest?

Aquila.—In none of these cases are we taught, as I think, that God himself was truly seen. He manifested himself by the divine *Shekinah,* that glorious appearance which he made in a bright cloud.[2] This was frequently done to the patriarchs, and also to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, and when the Shekinah overshadowed the tabernacle 'a voice was heard,' but there was no figure or shape by which the Deity could be designated. At other times he manifested himself by an *angel,* that represented him; thus he appeared to several of the patriarchs, thus to Moses, Gideon, and to the parents of Samson, of whom it is positively affirmed, that 'the angel of the Lord,' or 'the angel of his presence,' appeared to him. To Isaac, Micaiah, and the prophet Isaiah, the Lord manifested himself in dreams or visions of the night. Thus he appeared not only to the prophets under the Old Testament, but to several of whom we have account under the New, who are said 'to have been admonished by God in a dream.'

Apollos.—But, my brother, is it not affirmed that the saints in the other world, 'see God;' that they shall behold him 'face to face,' and see him 'even as he is?'

Aquila.—Permit me to say, my friend, that 'to see' there does not mean, in my opinion, to behold the divine essence; since, if there could be a vision of that, there must be some determinate figure or colour, which is the proper object of sight. By the beatific vision in heaven, I think we are to understand a familiar presence and constant conversation with God such as the angels enjoy; accompanied by the perpetual fruition of all the good that shall flow from the divine wisdom, power, and goodness. Let me say to 'see' means to enjoy God, and all that good granted to his saints in glory.[3] God, therefore, is not only *one,* but a *spirit,* uncompounded, for if otherwise, the principles composing this compound must have been antecedent to his existence, and would make him a dependent creature; but he is a simple, pure, unadulterated spirit, without body or parts.

[1] Tillotson, Stackhouse, and Limborch; also, Saurin, Dick, and Watson.

[2] Clarke, Henry, Scott, Benson, and others on those several texts.

[3] Limborch, Dwight, and Dick.

Priscilla.—O! how incomprehensible. He is 'past finding out.' 'No man hath seen him at any time.'

Apollos.—I confess this is a mysterious subject. It seems so difficult to conceive of any substance other than matter. Hence I suppose some have said that the idea of an immaterial substance implies a contradiction, and that there is no possibility of any other Being besides matter?

Aquila.—To this very objection, that great man, Bishop Wilkins, has replied, and I give you his words.[1] 'It hath been said that the idea or notion of an immaterial substance implies a contradiction, but though this has been said it was never proved; nor can it be, until either a man be able to evince that the notion of substance, according to the most general use of it, doth necessarily imply corporiety, than which nothing can be more false; or, unless a man shall pretend to the certain knowledge and comprehension of all things that are or may be, than which nothing can be more vain.'

Apollos.—I plainly see now, there is no inconsistency in this; for the notion of a substance does not necessarily imply corporiety.

Aquila.—Certainly not; and I am truly pleased that you arrive at such a consistent and rational conclusion. Can you not, my friend, undertake yourself the application of this subject?

Apollos.—It looks like presumption to attempt it. But as you were adducing your proofs, the woman of Samaria came into my mind, and all the circumstances of that case suggested the application and use of your doctrine.

Priscilla.—Do let us hear it.

Aquila.—Certainly—we must have it.

Apollos.—Your doctrine, and I think I can now say in truth, mine too, is that 'God is a spirit.' This our blessed Lord taught Samaria's daughter, and drew from it the practical conclusion, 'And they that worship him must do it in spirit and in truth.' I therefore would with diffidence suggest, that as God is a spirit he may and does exact a spiritual worship, and this only is acceptable in his sight. Again, my spiritual wants are innumerable. If God be a spirit, may I not confidently expect from him not only spiritual benefits, but all the comforts of a spiritual kind that I need, to effect my peace and joy here, and ensure my happiness hereafter. Besides, if God be a spirit and requires a spiritual worship, he being not represented by any similitude, as ONE without body or parts; to bow down before an image of the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, must my friends, be offensive to him.

Aquila.—Most assuredly it is. God has denounced it in an explicit manner, saying, 'Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire, lest ye corrupt yourselves and make unto you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.' And again, to whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? Under the New Testament dispensation we hear in effect the same by the apostle Paul, 'For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' Here, my friend, is a spiritual worship. I assure you of the pleasure I feel, at that practical and scriptural application you have made of the doctrine discussed this evening.

Priscilla.—I think we must have him at it often. You know, Apollos, if you have but one talent it is not to be 'buried.'

Apollos.—I am sure I do not desire to do this, but I came to learn not to teach, if I were capable of doing so.

[1] Bishop Wilkins' Nat. Religion, b. i. c. 8. p. 105.

COLLOQUY IV.

OMNIPRESENCE ONE OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES—THE EVIDENCE OF REVELATION IN REGARD TO IT—ITS PRACTICAL USE.

Aquila.—Divines differ widely respecting the ubiquity or omnipresence of the Almighty. Some understand it of his essence, others only of his *power, providence,* and *knowledge.* There are certainly difficulties on all sides, and I am not qualified to determine which is right. It is however sufficient for all the purposes of practice, my friend, that God declares that he is every where present exercising an oversight in the affairs of the universe, for the preservation of the order and harmony thereof. We have already said that man, who is finite, cannot expect to comprehend the Being, who is infinite and unlimited in all his perfections.[1]

Apollos.—What are the arguments for it, as a perfection of the Deity?

Aquila.—The Almighty declares that he is so far present in every place as to be excluded from, and circumscribed by, or included in none. After an unsearchable and an ineffable manner he is every where, so that no place can possibly be conceived of where God is not.[2] This may be argued from the fact of his infinity. A being who is boundless must be omnipresent. Arguments may also be drawn from the presence and exercise of other attributes, as the power and providential care of the Divinity, which are manifest in all his works, at one and the same time.[3] Some argue this perfection from the spirituality and unity of God. As he is separate from all creatures, a pure spirit of immeasurable perfection, not to be divided or multiplied, but in all and filling all.[4] However, from the consideration of all, we are forced to the conclusion of the Psalmist, 'Great is the Lord, and his greatness is unsearchable!' Indeed, my friend, the Scripture itself speaks of it in the same way. There God says, 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.' 'Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?' Solomon says, 'The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.' Job's friend said, 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is larger than the earth and broader than the sea.' But, Apollos, that sublime passage of the sweet singer in Israel, sets forth this perfection of Deity in a manner acknowledged to be unequalled by any thing in the whole world. 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.' This is the account which the Bible gives us of the divine immensity. It does not, I think, become us to speculate about it, much less to puzzle ourselves with intricate questions as to the mode. It is enough to know that the ubiquity of the Almighty is one of his perfections, essential to his nature, and evidently involved in the very notion we have of God.[5]

Apollos.—The more I consider, the more I am constrained to wonder at and adore my Maker. If my friend, I could comprehend him, he would not be worthy of my adoration. But the incomprehensibility of his nature, shows to me the value of that revelation he has made of himself, through which I may know enough of him, to ensure my happiness and interest, and engage my affections forever, even for ever and ever.

Priscilla.—O! this is a thrilling subject. God is every where present. Do let me tell you what have been my impressions during your conversation.

[1] Stackhouse and Limborch.
[2] Tillotson and Abernethy's Sermons.
[3] Saurin.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Watson and Saurin.

If Deity is in this and every place, how circumspectly should we walk, and what our reverence at the reflection we are in his presence, and he sees us? Indeed, my husband, I am forcibly struck with the fact, that if God is not every where, he could not justly claim the worship of men and angels, every where and at the same time; and I question whether they would be willing, but for this, to do him homage. But he is present, even now, in this and in every place. If so, with what confidence may all men, every where, pray and offer their petitions to him, resting assured he hears their prayers. Yes, he sees the tears of the widow, he hears the cry of the fatherless, he knows the sorrows of his children. This could not be so if he were not omnipresent. Besides, all our thoughts, words, and actions, are under his eye. How grave, how serious, how devout, ought I to be? O! it is an overwhelming thought: I sink into confusion. 'Thou, God, seest me.'

Aquila.—Indeed, Priscilla, you have obviated the necessity of my application. The subject, and your almost involuntary remarks upon it, bring forcibly to my mind the address of the Deity to old Abraham: 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' How serious are we in the presence of wise, great and good men. How much more so ought we to be in the presence of God.

Apollos.—Well, I find there is no subject in the Bible so unimportant as not to be susceptible of some practical improvement for the advancement of piety. I am sure I am gaining a little at every interview. Good night.

COLLOQUY V.

ETERNITY OF GOD, AND ITS PROPER USE.

Aquila.—The last incommunicable attribute that we are to consider, is the eternity of God.

Apollos.—What do you mean by the eternity of God?

Aquila.—By this I understand that the Almighty is of infinite duration, without beginning or end; that he is always the same, and of course without any alteration or change in his nature. Some have undertaken to inquire nicely into this subject, and have defined it to be a *fixed*, while others have contended that it is a *successive* duration.[1] Eternity has been called a circle, on the periphery of which immortal intelligences travel forever, without finding a termination to their existence.

Apollos.—What arguments do you adduce, to prove that this is an attribute of Deity, essential to his nature?

Aquila.—First, from the testimony of Scripture I establish it. This expressly says, that he is 'eternal,' and calls him the 'King Eternal,' immortal, who only hath immortality, the everlasting God, who fainteth not, neither is weary. The psalmist says concerning him, 'Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.' St. John speaks of him as the God 'who is, who was, and who is to come.' From all this it is evident that the Almighty is that being who knew no beginning of days, and will know no end of existence.

Apollos.—How can this be proved from reason?

Aquila.—You see that the Scriptures not only affirm that he is to live forever, but that he has ever had an existence. Now reason says, if God has not been from everlasting, or as the schoolmen say, 'a parte anteriore,' then he must have derived his being from some other source, or cause, and so could not have been eternal, but the being from whom he derived life, or some other, must be God, for it cannot be said that God derived his existence from nothing. If there ever was a time when nothing existed, it must be so now.[2]

[1] Dwight, Dick, Watson, and Buck. [2] Paley, Tillotson, Limborch, and Watson.

Apollos.—Yes, and nothing could not form something; in other words, creation and God himself could not originate in nonentity.

Aquila.—Unless some being existed from all eternity, it would be impossible that any thing should now exist. But as there are a variety of beings now in existence, it is proof that a being did exist from all eternity, from whom all other beings most certainly spring, and this being we have elsewhere proved to be God. Having established this, it follows, that as God is from all eternity, so he must exist forever, or, as schoolmen say, he must be so 'a parte posteriore,' to all eternity, since, being self-existent, he cannot be annihilated either by himself, or any other cause, and therefore must be, as the psalmist says, God 'from everlasting to everlasting. And moreover, the *independence* of the divine nature, and its *immutability* too, are to be traced to his eternity. For as an eternal God, he is not only independent in his nature and actions, but also immutable both in his substance, attributes, and purposes.[1]

Apollos.—I see at once the fallacy of supposing a God who has not existed forever, and whose existence may terminate. I am sure this is a notion, among the first I ever received concerning Deity, that he was a being who had been living always, and who would live forever.

Aquila.—From the consideration of this attribute, so essential to the divine nature, we ought to learn, that as God is eternal, we may, if we serve him, assuredly expect the reward of everlasting life. As an eternal being, he, and he alone, is able to grant this to his worshippers. Besides, all the denunciations of sin, and the warnings of the Deity, would be of no avail, unless the punishment threatened, which is eternal with regard to its duration, could be inflicted by him who threatens. But let the wicked know, that 'though hand be joined in hand, they shall not go unpunished;' and that eternal God, who is from 'everlasting to everlasting,' shall see that their punishment does not terminate. Thus we close our remarks on the incommunicable attributes of God, and at our next interview, shall undertake to consider those that are called communicable.

COLLOQUY VI.

ATTRIBUTES DENOMINATED COMMUNICABLE—DEITY CONSIDERED AS A LIVING BEING—SOME PRACTICAL INFERENCES DEDUCED FROM THIS TRUTH.

Aquila.—Having considered those perfections of the divine nature which by theologians have been called incommunicable, I promised at our last meeting to notice this evening, those that are denominated the communicable attributes of the Deity. I have already remarked that these belong to God as a living being; that they are life and its properties, viz. understanding and will; which, although in God, after an infinite and most perfect manner, yet are communicated in a lower and an imperfect degree to inferior beings. To God, then, as the 'Living God,' I invite your attention.

Apollos.—What do you mean by life, as applied to God?

Aquila.—You must permit me to premise one or two things, before I attempt an answer to your question. Life is attributed to God, and this is the foundation of all the other perfections and operations of the Most High, without which there would be no God, much less would he deserve to be worshipped. Hence is it that the Scripture says, in ascribing life to God, not only that he 'lives,' but likewise takes in some other of his attributes, suited to the subject it treats of, when it thus ascribes life to him. For instance, in opposing God to idols, and proving him to be true, it distinguishes Deity by calling him the 'Living God.' When it opposes him to the riches of this world, as fleeting and transitory, while God is

[1] Stackhouse and Limborch.

immovable, and able to do all things, it calls him the 'Living God.'[1] So when he is described as punishing the ungodly, he is styled the 'Living God,' that is one who has power to punish, and therefore ought to be dreaded; for, says an apostle, 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the 'Living God.' But by life, properly speaking, as attributed to God, we are to understand that internal and constant act and energy whereby the divine nature actuates internally itself, and is most perfectly happy, as depending on no other cause to which it owed its commencement, and having no seeds of corruption within itself, which might destroy it.[2]

Apollos.—Then I presume the life of Deity is to be looked upon as the most noble of lives.

Aquila.—Surely—for it is a life that is most simple, perfect, and eternal. Nor is God only a living being, but the author and source of the life of all other beings, as is apparent from every part of his word. There he is styled 'The giver of life and breath to all; in whom we live, and move, and have our being.' Hence he is represented as the 'quickener of all,' and indeed the 'fountain of' all 'life.'

Apollos.—I was forcibly struck with some of the arguments offered to substantiate and confirm your views of the incommunicable attributes of the Divinity. By what arguments, drawn from reason, would you support the position here assumed?

Aquila.—Because God is a most perfect being, and the supreme governor of the world; it is rational to suppose that he should be of such a nature as is capable of universal government, which consists in being endued with intellectual life.[3] Besides, it is easy to see that this is so necessary to be believed, that if any would form to himself a God without life, it would be no more than an idol, and totally unworthy of all adoration and obedience.

Apollos.—I see at once the drift and feel the force of your arguments. Our God actually exists.

Aquila.—Yes—rather let me say, lives; and from what has been said of the transcendent excellence of his life, it follows that it can have no end; but, as argued elsewhere, he is eternal, for there can be about him no principle, either internal or external, by which he can be destroyed. Hence he is said to have 'life in himself,' to be 'immortal,' 'incorruptible,' and to live 'forever and ever.'

Priscilla.—And because he is the fountain, as you said, of all life, by which I understand life vegetable, animal, spiritual, and eternal, we may look to him, the great fountain of life, for an entire emancipation from a 'death of sin, to a life of righteousness,' and for a final deliverance from this vale of affliction and death, to a state of eternal life and joy at his right hand.

Aquila.—The properties of life are understanding and will; so that in this are involved all the communicable attributes or perfections of the Deity. When we next meet we may discuss those relating to the divine understanding.

COLLOQUY VII.

DEITY CONSIDERED AS AN INTELLECTUAL BEING—THE DIVINE UNDERSTANDING—ITS NATURE, OPERATIONS, AND APPLICATION FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES.

Aquila.—We have already suggested, that when we contemplate the Deity as a living being, we are forcibly struck with the component parts of that life, or more properly, its faculties; which are displayed not only in the book of revealed truth, but also in all his works, and these are necessary to his existence, and directly connected with all the ideas we have of a Supreme Being; who, knowing

[1] Stackhouse and Limborch. [2] Limborch and Dwight. [3] Watson and Dick.

all things, in the freedom of his will, made and governs them, by his own laws. We have also named them, viz. understanding or intellect, and will; devoid of which, the Deity himself could not be said to live. Indeed, my friend, the faculties of understanding and will seem to be necessary to the absolute existence of any intellectual being.[1] I propose to consider, this evening, the divine understanding, as the first faculty of that most perfect life, which is ever exercised by our God.

Apollos.—What is implied in understanding, as thus used by you in relation to him?

Aquila.—Divines usually discuss this attribute of the divine nature, after that manner in which it contemplates things, as they are in themselves. Then it is called *knowledge*, or, as some say, science; or again as it directs the things that are known, to some certain end. Then they call it *wisdom*, or *sapience*.[2] To this nature of the divine understanding, as embracing in its range all that is knowable, I invite your attention. I will then consider its operations, which are called wisdom; and lastly, its application for the purposes of piety.

Apollos.—You say that this perfection of the Deity, which you call intellect or understanding, is to be considered then, as the capacity to comprehend all that may be known.

Aquila.—Certainly: and then it is called knowledge.

Apollos.—Be a little more particular. What is knowledge?

Aquila.—Simply the ability to consider things as they are in themselves, in their natures, powers, properties, and all that appertains to them.[3] In this ability to consider and weigh, two things present themselves. The first is, as I have already said, all that is knowable. This is called the object of the Almighty's knowledge.[4] So that whatever has had, now has, or shall hereafter have an existence, whether of an intellectual or a material nature, with all their properties, are fully comprehended by and known to him.

Apollos.—What incommunicable perfection or attribute of the divine nature is this founded on?

Aquila.—Truly upon all, as we could show; but especially on his omnipresence,—for he who sees all, being present at the very make and operation of all things, must be omniscient, which is simply to know all.

Apollos.—But again. What, my friend, are the objects of his knowledge?

Aquila.—Two things also present themselves as its objects. One is God himself; who in contemplating the perfections of his nature, is perfectly happy; and in the next place he observes and considers all things besides himself; such as his purposes, his external actions, the nature and actions, internal and external, of all creatures; and all things past, present and future.

This knowledge is ascribed to Deity in sundry parts of Scripture, and almost the first idea we form of him is, that he now knows no more than he did at the commencement of creation, and will know no more at the termination of the world than he does now.

Apollos.—But what say you of contingencies?

Aquila.—I am the more ready to admit that God understands and knows, or as some say, foresees contingencies from the fact of his foretelling them, and their happening under every circumstance as foretold by him.

Apollos.—But have there not been a variety of opinions among theologians concerning the divine prescience?

Aquila.—Certainly. Some have said that he cannot know beforehand, actions or events that depend on a free agent; and others say, if he does know them, he

[1] Locke, and Dugald Stewart.
[2] Stackhouse and Limborch.
[3] Dwight, Dick, Watson, and Buck.
[4] Calvin, Dwight, and Watson.

foresees as he has determined them by his decree, to one side or the other.[1] The first opinion, that contingencies are not knowable, is certainly erroneous; for as we have already argued, when they do happen, God will certainly know more than he did at another time, which knowledge will be ever increasing. This would certainly argue present imperfection in him. On the other hand, to say that he knows them as he determines them, is to make him the author of mischief as well as of good, and thus destroy all accountability as well as agency, in other beings; and also all rewards and punishments on a principle of justice. The middle is certainly the correct course.

Apollos.—What is that?

Aquila.—That God knows before they transpire, the actions of all agents, or rather all contingencies, but his knowledge does not determine them to happen, or constrain their event.

Apollos.—Since we commenced our examinations, it has frequently fallen to my lot, to offer objections; you granted me permission to do so. There are one or two objections to your positions which occur, and which I should like for you to consider now.

Aquila.—Let us, my brother—have them right out. I assure you I invite it. We are in search of truth, and should not dread to investigate any subject in theology closely.

Apollos.—The first that I have heard offered, is founded it is said in reason, and is in effect thus: If God foreknows any thing, that will come to pass as he foresees it, when it happens according to that prescience, it is no longer *contingent*, but *necessary*, being determined to be so, by the foreknowledge of God; or what has been considered the same, his decrees. It has therefore been concluded, that the divine prescience, extends not to future contingent, but necessary things.

Aquila.—But, my brother, remember what is future to us, is ever present with God. Surely all to him is an eternal now, and foreknowledge is a term that regards us, not the Almighty. Well,—suppose him beholding our actions, which are simply the results of volition in us, as contingencies now happening,—is there any difference between his looking on my actions and my looking on yours? Does my knowledge of a deed constrain its performance?[2] So that while the knowledge of the infinite Being, extends to all contingencies as before said, they by no means become necessary, as the result of that prescience, but remain contingencies still.

Apollos.—I see the natural conclusions to which you arrive, on the ground that all the actions of the universe are transpiring, as in one eternal now, before God. His observation of those deeds do not constrain them, or their events. But, my friend, it is said again, that the Scripture presents another cause of objection to your theory. If God 'foreknew,' how is it that he grieved at 'man's wickedness,' and also that 'he repents'—that he 'expected grapes, when wild grapes were brought forth.' And further, although he swore to bring the people into the promised land, he did not bring them 'on account of unbelief.' And again, some say, how can our heavenly Father entreat men to 'repent' when he knows that they never will 'repent?'

Aquila.—My friend—God not only knew what man would do, but also what he himself would do; and if prescience make the action necessary in one case, it certainly is so in the other.

The truth is, that God acts with all men, on the ground that all is an eternal *now* with him. He requires of all, an improvement of every talent, in the hope

[1] For the arguments on both sides, see Dr. Clarke, Calvin, Dwight, Dick, Stackhouse, Limborch, Watson, and especially the Rev. Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher. In these works the whole controversy may be found.

[2] The reader will consult the authors mentioned in the preceding note.

of a reward. Each one has grace to do it; yet some will not. The all-wise God sees and knows this; but leaves them as agents to determine their own course; yet in such a manner as not to interrupt the harmony of his government. Surely this knowledge of the acts of a free and unconstrained agent, cannot coerce those actions. These he knows as contingencies, whilst what he has decreed to be done, he knows as necessary.

Apollos.—Let me see if I understand your meaning. Your argument runs thus: God not only knew what man would do, but also what he himself would do; and by virtue of the divine prescience, it is necessary that Deity should first try man, admonish him according to his plan for salvation, before that man can disobey; and his knowledge of man's rebellion as a contingency, is in direct connection with a knowledge of the means used for his recovery. Therefore God calls all to repentance and faith in Christ. I confess to you that this, amidst the multiplicity of answers to the objection I urged, is to me the most consistent and satisfactory.[1] I am sorry to interrupt you so much. You must pardon it,—I assure you I would not do it, but for information. Do proceed.

Aquila.—Many distinctions have been made by theologians, concerning the 'knowledge' of God, some of them metaphysical indeed. One class ascribe a two-fold knowledge to God, saying that it is simple or pure intellect, and the next that of vision, both free, but one before and the other after the act of the free will. To these, some add a third, called 'scientia media' or the middle knowledge, because it partakes of both.[2] You must however, my friend, recollect there is little advantage in these speculations. Such also are those about this knowledge being as to its manner '*noetical*' and '*dianoetical*,' in order to convey the idea that the act is without consideration or reflection, as necessary to bring the whole before the Deity; i. e. there is no necessity for ratiocination in God. This knowledge is to us incomprehensible, and these theoretical notions of the schools are foreign from the great object we have in view, viz.: Theology as connected with practical piety. It is enough for us to know that God sees and is consequently acquainted with the thoughts of our hearts, the words of our mouths, the acts of our lives, and in fine all future contingencies.[3] Permit me, my friend, to suggest that knowledge in regard to God is simply the theoretical act of the divine intellect; but what we call wisdom in God, if I may so speak, is the practical act.

Apollos.—Be a little more explicit.

Aquila.—I have given you the nature of the divine understanding, which is called knowledge, or the power to consider and reflect on, as well as to weigh and comprehend all things that exist, with all their properties. We are now to consider its operations, by which I understand what is called the 'wisdom' of God. This is said to be that act of the divine intellect, by which Deity knows what means to use for the accomplishment of ends, congenial with the perfections of his nature and promotion of his glory. In other words he knows his own authority, power, equity, the laws he ought to enact, the punishment to be inflicted, and the means to be used for the assistance of man, in the path of obedience that he may obtain a suitable reward. At the same time, he knows what liberty or permission is necessary to be granted him, for the free and full exercise of his *agency;* though it be to obtain the punishment merited by his own voluntary act.[4]

Apollos.—I have often thought of what the Scripture styles wisdom in God. Paul calls him the 'only wise God.' The fountain of 'all wisdom.' Daniel in blessing his name, said, 'Wisdom and might are his,' 'he giveth wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the understanding.' The apostle Paul cries out, 'Oh, the

[1] Fletcher's Checks; Wesley on Predestination; Watson and Limborch.
[2] Stackhouse and Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Fletcher's Checks, Watson, and Limborch.

depth both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments are past finding out, for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?'

Aquila.—Do you not see here distinctly mentioned both the knowledge and wisdom of God? Knowledge, the first, is the thing or attribute itself. Wisdom, the other, is the act whereby this attribute is carried out in its operations, and these together constitute what is called the divine understanding.

Apollos.—You said that in the last place, you would apply this doctrine for the advancement of practical piety.

Aquila.—Indeed, my friend, there is a practical use that we ought all to make of wisdom in God, especially in our private moments. In secret as well as in public, we should walk circumspectly, for God is omniscient and he sees us. Moreover in doing right we should ever commend our cause to him. Though calumniated and injured here, he sees and will assuredly reward us; if not in this life, in the world to come, before angels and men. Besides we may pour out our prayers and tears before him, he sees and hears. Our groans shall find relief, and our sorrows be healed by him who knows them all. We should never, my friend, murmur or repine, he sees and knows what is best for us. He has his children under his care and will certainly assist them at the proper time. He is about our bed and our path, here, there, and every where; our Father and our God.

Priscilla.—Oh, I had been thinking that this evening's labour would end unprofitably. It seemed to me that there was so much mystery in this great subject, the divine understanding; but truly it is delightful to contemplate it. My God knows—and he, my Father, sees—all the actions of all intelligencies. I must make an application of it every day, to my own mind and heart, and remember amidst the wrongs of life, the Lord sees them, they shall work for the best.

Apollos.—I will retire and ponder this in my mind, and pray that it may better the condition of my heart.

COLLOQUY VIII.

THE DIVINE WILL CONSIDERED—ALL THAT IS GOOD ITS OBJECT—LIBERTY ITS INSEPARABLE PROPERTY—ITS PRACTICAL USE.

Aquila.—During our conversations on the divine attributes, I have more than once had occasion to mention that, in the life of God, it is supposed there are two faculties, intellect and will. The former we considered at our last interview, and I proceed now to notice the second. The divine will has been already named as that faculty or internal act of the divine life, from whence springs various other perfections, called the attributes of the will; all which display the infinite purity and perfection of God.

Apollos.—Define, if you please, 'will,' as a term used to represent a faculty, in lively and constant exercise, by the living God.

Aquila.—It is generally taken in a three-fold sense. Sometimes as the faculty of willing, and in this sense it is really the divine essence, by which he directly wills, as the rational soul of its own nature understands and purposes. Again, it is represented as the free efflux of that faculty, and in this sense, it may be considered as the designs of God, or as some say the divine decrees, which we may notice, Apollos, at another time. It also signifies whatever God wills or whatever proceeds from the divine volition, of which nature are all the precepts, promises, and threatenings of the Almighty,[1] as we shall see in the course of our

[1] Watson, Dick, Limborch, and Stackhouse.

conversations. I will barely notice now in a general way the *will* of God. The first thing that presents itself to my mind is its object.

Apollos.—What is its object?

Aquila.—Whatever is truly good and agreeable to the purity of his nature. This he wills for his own sake, and his purpose to do so is evidently immutable.

Apollos.—But in regard to evil, can this be an object of the divine will?

Aquila.—Most certainly not. That which is contrary to the laws prescribed by God, as a rule of right, whether through the medium of reason or revelation, cannot be said to be the object of that will; much less can God be delighted therein. Therefore sin, which is in its very nature opposed to this rule, and at variance with the divine purity, must also be opposed to his will.

Apollos.—I have heard some say something like this, that although God does not will sin as such, yet he does will it as the means of promoting the glory of his mercy by its pardon, and of his justice in its punishment.[1] Is this correct?

Aquila.—There is hardly any man so impudent as to suggest, in a manner to be understood in this enlightened day, that God wills sin; this would grate on the ear not only of every christian, but every hearer; but some by way of consequence assert it. That is as you say in your question, that he wills it to display his glory. The impiety of such a position is manifest from the fact, that God is supremely happy, blessed, and glorious, as we have proved in himself; and can he need the sins of the ungodly to display his glory? He is both stage and theatre, if I may so speak, Apollos—to himself; transcendently glorious, and among the infinite means of manifesting this glory, shall it be thought that he must descend to that, which would be a blemish on the purity of his own nature, and not only will, but decree and in secret purpose; that the sinner should sin to promote his glory, and that too by the eternal sorrow of an immortal intelligence, reduced to anguish the most extreme by the secret purpose of God?

Apollos.—Oh, I have always thought that it was nonsense to talk about God's secret will and revealed will; for if his will were secret and hid, how came any of us to know it? But how is it with what are called the evils of punishment?

Aquila.—The case is not the same. They are physically such, and are called evils; not because they are intrinsically so, but because they are unpleasant and disagreeable to the person on whom they are inflicted. If they be chastisements they are designed for man's amendment, and may therefore be willed by heaven. If they be punishments that destroy him, they illustrate the glory of God and display that justice, which has been voluntarily insulted by man, and as the demerit of his own acts, and a conservative of the divine authority may be willed by the Deity; while the transgression was never willed much less decreed or determined by him. In this sense we are to understand a variety of Scriptures: such as, 'I form light and create darkness;' 'I make peace and create evil;' 'I the Lord, do all these things.' 'Doth not out of the mouth of the most High proceed evil and good?' 'Shall there be any evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?'

Apollos.—What is the chief property of the divine will?

Aquila.—That which chiefly demands our consideration at this time, is its *freedom.* This is inseparable from it, as it is said, 'he works all things after the counsel of his will;' and it certainly is no obstacle to this that he cannot will sin, since his very perfection consists in doing only that which is good. There is evidently no diminution in the divine freedom of will in admitting this.[2]

[1] The words of Calvin are 'They (some men) consider it absurd that a man should be blinded by the will of God, and afterwards punished for his blindness.' And again, 'Men however can effect nothing but by the secret will of God, and can deliberate on nothing but what he hath previously decreed and determined by his secret direction.'—Calvin's In. b. i. p. 1, c. 18; and all for the glory of his perfections, as is stated in the chapter. [2] All theologians admit this.

Apollos.—What do you mean by freedom?

Aquila.—Simply that God can and does, out of the innumerable good things without him, i. e. in the universe, will such as may be most calculated to promote his glory, and ultimately be the greatest display of his goodness.[1] But in him it is self-evident there cannot be a contrariety or contradiction. He is holy. He is uniformly and immutably good.

Apollos.—But may not this be brought to bear on man, and may it not be consistent with the freedom of will, for him to be under the irresistible influence of God's grace?

Aquila.—I think not; for it is evident that God is a rule to himself; or rather the sanctity of his nature is his law, he is otherwise subject to none; but man is a subject to laws established on promises and threatenings, and the nature of free obedience in man, is that he should not be necessarily carried out, to what is good; but have the power to obey or disobey the law.

Apollos.—There was an allusion a while ago to the two wills of God, his secret and revealed will. The secret has been said to be the true will of God, or his decree, and, my remark notwithstanding, you know that theologians, great men too, have united in this division of the divine will.

Aquila.—I oppose this for several reasons. The most material are these:—If the secret will of God be his true will, then we who are unacquainted with it, could never know his true will at all, or with any certainty. Again it might so happen that God would have us do, what, in his revealed will he forbids, and 'vice versa.' Besides a transgression of his precepts or revealed will would be no violation of his secret or true will; and therefore many may be lost who have done the revealed will of God; and some saved who lived and died in sin, because of God's secret or true will These are absurdities not to be allowed.[2]

Apollos.—I assure you there seems to be manifest inconsistency in all this. But may not God will things unknown to us, and have laws for the government of other beings, of which we know nothing?

Aquila.—Certainly. But that will and those laws are unknown to us, and therefore do not concern us; as his will concerning our course and the means of our happiness is clearly revealed in his word. The other divisions of the divine will we may notice, when we come to consider the works of Deity, particularly his decrees. At our next meeting, I propose to notice the attributes of the will. In the consideration of which, you will be able to see in a clearer light, some of the operations of this perfection in Deity.

Apollos.—Will you not, my friend, give me the use or application of this attribute before we retire?

Aquila.—Although the subject is a mysterious one, it is most certainly susceptible of improvement. From the nature and exercise of this perfection we may learn, ever to be grateful to our Heavenly Father, for all the mercies we enjoy, as they proceed from his free, and I may say, good will toward us. Add to this, we ought ever to pray to him for grace, as he can bestow or withhold the same at pleasure. Moreover what God does or permits to be done, I am not to measure by the laws of sense, 'His ways are not my ways.' Under all the ills of life, I should learn to say, 'Father, thy will be done;' especially, as from his very nature and the sanctity thereof, he can only will what is best for me. Besides all this, we must remember that all *our* work on earth should be to do his will, by grace assisting us, as revealed in the Bible; looking thus for everlasting life, whatever others may think or say about his secret will. 'Secret things belong to God.'

[1] Fletcher, Watson, and Limborch. [2] Schmucker and Limborch.

COLLOQUY IX.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE WILL—LOVE, HATRED, ANGER, AS NAMES APPLIED TO PERFECTIONS OF THE DEITY, CONSIDERED.

Aquila.—The attributes of the will, according to the plan announced, demand our attention this evening, my friend Apollos. When we proposed the division of the divine goodness, that one great perfection of the Almighty, according to the arrangement set forth in the Bible; evidently with the view of imparting to ignorant mortals, what could not otherwise be obtained, viz: a knowledge of the operations and actions of an eternal and most pure spirit, we named explicitly the attributes of the will. And lest, my friend, they should have escaped your memory, I will here repeat them. We remarked that in the will there were two sorts of attributes. Some considered simply as passions or affections of the divine mind; while there were others that were called moral virtues, which are supposed to restrain, moderate, and govern them. Of the former class are Love, Hatred, Anger, Desire, Aversion, Hope, Fear, Despair, Joy, Sorrow, and Repentance. Of the latter class are Justice, Clemency, Patience, Severity, as also the Power, Blessedness, and Glory of God. The first class of attributes we proceed to consider: and this evening from it select the first three, viz.:—Love, Hatred, Anger, as the names applied to certain perfections or operations of the divine will.

Apollos.—I do not understand how you apply these terms or names; but my brother—can there be passion in God?

Aquila.—Properly speaking there cannot. But affections are attributed to a God, infinitely perfect, on the ground of some analogy to human passions, and the imperfection of our language to express them aright.

An exposition then of these divine affections, may be simply those acts of the will, which are agreeable to the operations of men who are similarly acted on; yet they produce in Deity no disturbance, and are without the least perturbation or excitement.[1] We have only then to find out some analogy between the actions of the divine will, and those of men, in order to see the meaning of those names as applied to its attributes.

Apollos.—Well—you named out of the three to be considered this evening, first in order, love; and love ought ever to be first, I think; for 'God is love,' and 'love is of God.' What is love as an attribute of Deity?

Aquila.—Love is an affection of complacency, whereby God is delighted with that which is good. It is an emanation of the goodness of God, from whence all other affections spring. Its objects are all the creatures of God, especially man, the most excellent of his works in this visible world. This truth is proved by a thousand delightful sentences in his word. There he represents himself as so attached to our race, that 'he took not on him the form of angels, but the seed of Abraham,' and while he spared not the angels, he gave his Son to die for men, that they may be redeemed from the bondage of sin.[2]

Apollos.—Are there degrees of this love?

Aquila.—There are. While it is the same in nature, there is a division of it according to its degrees, that seems to me the most natural, viz: The love of benevolence and the love of friendship.[3]

Apollos.—What do you mean by the love of benevolence?

Aquila.—It is that degree of the divine love whereby the Lord is drawn out towards his creatures, simply considered as such, without respect to the fact of

[1] Clarke, Watson, Saurin, Dick, and Limborch. [2] Schmucker, Watson, and Wesley.
[3] Buck's division is into love of esteem, love of benevolence, and love of complacency.

their deserving it or not; and in this sense God loves all the world, and does good temporal and spiritual to all, even to the froward and rebellious, of whom the Scriptures say he loved them, though his 'enemies,' and gave his Son to die for them. This love of benevolence has been again divided into 'grace,' which is a sincere desire in God, of doing well to all men, even the most unworthy, and it is ever opposed to merit; and also into 'mercy,' which is that affection, whereby our heavenly father is drawn out, and desires to succour the afflicted and penitent. It is always attended with tenderness and compassion.[1]

Apollos.—What are we to understand by that, which in Deity, is called the 'love of friendship?'

Aquila.—This is not a single affection, according to the opinions of the wisest and best theologians; but is joined with a benevolent will, whereby God is drawn out toward his creature who discharges his duty; and as such, the very foundation thereof is the love of justice. For Deity delights in the good, that is so agreeable to his nature, and hates all iniquity. The difference between this and the love of benevolence, we have already said, is not in nature, but in degree. The love of friendship is more intense and ardent, than that of benevolence; and of it we are to understand those parts of the Sacred Writings, where it is said, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him;' and again, 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Moreover, in various parts of this holy book, God is represented as loving the righteous, or those that do good.

Apollos.—Yes, the Bible saith, 'the Lord loveth the righteous.' I suppose, then, hatred is just the opposite of love.

Aquila.—Exactly. It is an affection of displacency or dislike, whereby God abhors and drives far from himself, that which is evil and sinful.

Apollos.—Now, my friend, you are on the very point concerning which I have often thought. Do tell me, what is the object of the divine hatred?

Aquila.—Strictly speaking, the object of the divine displacency is sin, and that in the abstract; it being repugnant to the divine nature, he must abominate it. Hence he is said 'to hate iniquity.' When he speaks of the evil intentions of man's heart, he says, 'all these things I hate:' and Solomon observes, 'These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination to him;' and idols are styled an 'abomination which the Lord hateth.' But again, as a consequence of this aversion or hatred in God to sin, the person of the sinner, considered as such, is also the object of the divine hatred, and thus becomes obnoxious to the purity of God's law. Then it is said that God 'hateth all the workers of iniquity.' 'The soul of the Lord hateth the wicked, and him that loveth violence;' he is said especially to 'hate idolaters,' and 'the lovers of the world,' who are 'enemies of God.'

Apollos.—What do you suppose to be the effects of the divine hatred; are they eternal?

Aquila.—A separation from Deity, from the participation of his favour, and the good things of his bounty, is certainly a part of its effects. The sinner might, on the condition of not having sinned, I speak of man as a whole, have been a partaker of benefits now forfeited. This separation is ever proportionate to the obstinacy and impenitency of the sinner. The severest effects of the divine hatred, however, is an exclusion from eternal life, the best benefit, and the suffering of everlasting death, the severest ill.[2]

Apollos.—But my friend—does God exert his hatred toward all sinners?

Aquila.—He does not. It is only manifested, we have said, in its utmost

[1] Limborch, Watson, and Schmucker. [2] Watson, Schmucker, Wesley, and Fletcher.

degree, to the finally impenitent. The returning penitent meets with a free and full pardon, notwithstanding the hatred of God to his sin in the abstract. Thus he declares: 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust;' and again, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.' To the penitent he saith, 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins.' Hence he also says, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him:' and also, 'repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. The object, therefore, I naturally conclude, cannot be man, as such, but the sinner, in the consideration of the fact that he is a sinner. Sin alone my friend—is the proper and legitimate object of the divine hatred; and man, viewed as the creature of God, which we have already proved from God's word, is an object of his love.[1]

Apollos.—Then you do not agree with those who say that man considered as man, though not in a state of sin, is an object of the divine reprobation.

Aquila.—I certainly do not. It does not signify whether it be said that God predestinated the reprobate to eternal death, or only passed them by in his election; the doctrine is the same, express it as you may. This preterition, as it has been called, does necessarily imply actual reprobation and damnation. To the reverse of this, man, even in his fallen state, is in Christ, an heir of eternal life, if he choose to accept it.[2]

Apollos.—But is it not written, 'the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,' 'Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.'

Aquila.—Never was a passage more improperly applied to support a bad cause than this has been, a thousand times. Consider—this part of divine writ was not spoken until after the birth of the children, many years, and by the last prophet, namely, Malachi. This portion, then, of the prophecy, was only foretold previous to his day, viz. 'The elder shall serve the younger.'[3] But again, Jacob and Esau here do not certainly mean those men, but the nations descending from them, and the prophecy was founded on the conduct of those nations, as foreseen by God. And moreover, my friend, we are not to understand the hatred mentioned here, as extending to an eternal rejection of Esau and his posterity from all hope of salvation, and an assurance of their damnation; for then, by parity of reason, Jacob and his posterity must be saved, in eternal life, the fallacy of which will appear, as many of them were the most notorious offenders, and some of them crucified the Lord of life and glory.[4] The hatred here named is only a less degree of love; and this is not the only place in the Bible where hatred is used in the same way. In the law concerning marriage, laid down in Deuteronomy, it is said, 'If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated,' i. e. loved in a less degree, 'and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the first born son be hers that was hated, then it shall be, &c.' Solomon saith, 'he that spareth his rod, hateth his son.' Our Lord says, 'No man can serve two masters; either he will hate the one and love the other,' i. e. love one

[1] Watson, Schmucker, and Limborch.

[2] The words of Calvin are, when accounting for the condition of the reprobate, 'That he (God) is the principal *author* of his own righteous *vengeance*, and Satan is only the dispenser of it.' And again, as the will of God is said to be the cause of all things, it exerts its power, (as he, Calvin, says,) through God's providence, not only in the elect, 'but also compels the compliance of the reprobate.'—Calvin's In. book 1, ch. 18, fol. 248.

[3] 1 ch. Mal.

[4] Clarke on Romans, Fletcher's Checks, and Wesley on Predestination; also, Whitby.

less than the other. That I am right in this exposition is evident, from a collation of a passage in Luke with one in Matthew. By the former our Lord is represented as suspending reception into his favour, on a disposition to love him in preference to every thing else, and says, 'If any man come to me, and hate not father, mother,' &c. Now St. Matthew gives the words of Christ on another occasion, which explain the word hate, used here: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Surely we are to honour and love our parents, but less than we love God. The application of *loved* and *hated*, as terms in the case before us, is just this: Jacob have I *preferred* before Esau. He shall be the progenitor of the Saviour, and among his posterity, in preference to that of Esau, shall the Son of God first make his appearance.

Apollos.—I am truly obliged to you for this comment on a text which is so often lugged into argument, by those who never consider or understand its true meaning. Tell me now what is meant by the divine anger?

Aquila.—The consequence of divine hatred, or rejection, is divine anger, or a desire to punish the obstinate and the rebellious offender. That I am correct in connecting it with obstinacy and rebellion, is evident from the remark of the Lord to Moses. 'I have seen,' says he, 'this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation.' So of the unbeliever, who, notwithstanding the offers of mercy, rejects Christ, it is said, 'The wrath of God abideth on him.' So also, 'the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness;' and this anger of the Lord, or his wrath, is sometimes put for the punishment itself. 'But,' says Paul to them that obey not the truth, 'indignation and wrath;' that is, punishment; and again, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord;' that is, I will punish; it belongs to me. You will, however, my friend, remember that its only object among men, as is most clear, is the offender, or he that resists his laws and rejects his salvation. We have proved that man, viewed abstract from his offences, is not an object of the divine hatred, and consequently cannot be of the divine wrath or anger. This was most certainly true of man before the fall, and even now, though fallen and depraved, and deeply dyed by the corruption of his nature and the depravity of his heart; yet is he alive in Christ, until he becomes an actual, voluntary offender, by rejecting him and his salvation. Until personally guilty, for personal and avoidable offence, he is not only in a state of possible salvation, but is also in a state of acceptance, through the death and merit of Christ. The reasoning of the apostle in the fifth chapter of Romans is certainly to this effect. If this be not admitted, we must allow that children are damned, for they are corrupt and depraved; but Christ tells us, they are not the objects of divine anger. 'Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Is not this evidence that, however involuntary depravity may bring with it the punishment of privation, it does not make man an object of eternal wrath, or hell torments, only so far as he becomes personally guilty, by voluntary offence.[1]

Apollos.—O, I remember it is written, 'the soul that sinneth, it shall die; 'every man shall die,' i. e. eternally, 'for his own sin;' and though infants are depraved and unclean, yet in virtue of Christ's death, 'the second Adam,' they are accepted, and a most gracious change of their nature accomplished, in virtue of his sacrifice, in the event of their death. But in Romans it is said that there are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; I cannot believe that these are children, as some say, in their pure naturals; for these are, as you have proved, in a state of initial salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ.[2]

[1] Fletcher, Schmucher, and Limborch. [2] Ibid.

Aquila.—Man in his pure *naturals* is a subject we may have to notice at another time, and also vessels fitted for destruction. At present let me say, that so far from this remark having an application to children, it was made of incredulous Jews, who resisted the salvation through Jesus Christ. These are said to be made up 'for destruction;' not that God created them for that purpose. Would this be a display of divine goodness? They are represented as bringing destruction on themselves; and the parable of the potter sets forth the fact. The sum of this parable is, that of the whole lump of *mature sinners,* capable of voluntary action, God selected, on his own terms, both Jew and Gentile, and to these terms neither had a right to object. Again—though simply repentance toward God, and faith in Christ, those who rejected these terms '*fitted themselves* for destruction. I am convinced that this is the meaning of the passage in Romans; for the argument of the apostle is against the idea that either Jew or Gentile could be saved by the law; and to show that God, who made such a benevolent provision for men, had the right to select the means and conditions of their salvation, when he determined out of this corrupt mass, the whole world, to form his church. Whether this be the meaning or not, one thing is certain, viz. that a God who is supremely good, never could create man for the express purpose of being damned.[1]

Apollos.—But in Ephesians it is said, 'we were by nature children of wrath.'

Aquila.—Dear brother, do you not see that the text does not read 'are,' but 'were children.' I am not sure that *nature,* here, does not mean simply, that before these sinners were converted to God, they were all living in what he says elsewhere of others, in the 'lusts of concupiscence,' and in 'the desires of the flesh;' and the words 'we were' have a manifest allusion to that state. Again: if the argument be that we are fallen, and liable, by the propensities of our nature, which are deeply depraved, to wander from God, and finally perish, then I agree to it; but if it be to prove that infants, because fallen and depraved, must, or even can be damned, I deny it, Christ having died and placed them in a state of initial salvation.

Apollos.—I do think I am now fully fixed in my mind, that the unbelieving and obstinately rebellious sinner, who dies in a state of final impenitence, is the only object among men of that anger that is eternal; and that his final impenitence is the cause of his destruction. Pray tell me something about its effects before you close.

Aquila.—Punishments, both temporal and eternal, are the effects of the divine wrath. Temporal punishments transpire here. They are either corporeal, as is set forth in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus and the twenty-eighth of Deuteronomy, which you will read, there is the list: or they are spiritual, which are blindness of understanding, hardness of heart, and the being given over to a reprobate mind. The eternal are banishment from God, and hell torments in interminable woe among devils.

Apollos.—I know, my friend—you are weary, but I must trespass on your goodness for the application of these intricate subjects.

Aquila.—I will certainly try to do so. From a combination of the divine affections, we learn, that as God is good and supremely so, we ought to love him with all our hearts; and as a good God, we may ever trust him for all we need. Being good and tenderly loving us, he can never reject a prayer that he has

[1] Fletcher, Wesley, and Watson; also Schmucker, who has some most excellent remarks on the fact that man is the author of his own ruin. The reader may consult also Calvin. His words are 'Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he hath determined in himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind.' For they are not all created with a similar destiny; eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal damnation for others.' Calvin's In. b. iii. c 21, p. 420, edit. 1816. And in c. 22, same book, it is said 'neither shall we find any other cause but his will for the reprobation of others.'

encouraged us to make. Under all our crosses and sorrows in life, we should be resigned; knowing that our Father, who loves us and who is pre-eminently good, is ready to help and alleviate all our woes. Moreover as he loves us, though offenders against his laws, and is willing graciously to receive us, we ought to love our neighbours, though they be our enemies; and as his love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost through faith, is the method of intercourse and communion with him, we ought to shun sin as a deadly poison, lest we experience his hatred, and in his anger or wrath be cut off from communion and finally damned. Let us, my friend—retire, study, and digest well these interesting and solemn truths, for our own advancement in the divine life.

COLLOQUY X.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE WILL CONTINUED—DESIRE, HOPE, JOY, WITH THEIR CONTRARIES, AS ATTRIBUTED TO DEITY IN THE SACRED WRITINGS—THEIR PRACTICAL USE.

Aquila.—Well brother Apollos—we must still be at the attributes of the divine will. This is an intricate subject; but I hope we shall yet be able to see it as presented in the Holy Bible, and manifested in the operations of divine grace.

Apollos.—I anticipated many difficulties. I have not met with more than I expected. At every interview I learn something. I have been studying the subjects discussed at our last meeting, and am happy to say, I think you have presented the truth as it is in Jesus. You must, my friend—prosecute your own plan. Let me offer my objections, and if worthy an answer, you will certainly give it. I am sure I only desire to know what is God's method of saving sinners.

Aquila.—I have already found out that you will not offer an objection unworthy an answer; I assure you I shall take pleasure in removing any that you may offer, if I be able to do so. I do most assuredly feel my incompetency to this great work, but will do the best I can.

Apollos.—Well, my friend—I know this, and pray you to proceed in your usual way.

Aquila.—We are this evening to discuss Desire, Hope, Joy, and their opposites as affections of the divine mind. From the Love of God arises *Desire* and *Hope*. Desire is an affection that grasps some absent good. That good is simply the creature's happiness and the means of accomplishing it. These means are the obedience of man in his repentance and return, as a sinner, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Desire therefore, with regard to Deity, is his wish to bestow on man eternal life, as a free gift in Christ. Throughout the Scripture, I may venture to say, there are the strongest demonstrations and expressions of this desire; in prayers, reproofs, and entreaties, for the conversion of the sinner and his ultimate salvation. May I not ask how can God thus desire man's salvation, whilst either by an absolute decree he has reprobated him, or by that decree or determination, actually withholds the grace, necessary for his repentance, faith, and salvation. For, my friend, who can truly desire that, which, by his own voluntary act, he has rendered impossible?[1]

Apollos.—I confess that there is an apparent inconsistency in this. However, take your theory—that all were lost in Adam, all made alive in Christ, that all actual offenders, i. e. voluntarily so, have offered to them pardon, through faith in Christ; which pardon all may have, on the ground that divine justice is satisfied in the atonement of Jesus, and the whole appears reasonable and plain.

[1] Fletcher and Watson.

That the Deity should desire and exhort all to accept forgiveness, under such circumstances, seems also reasonable.

Aquila.—Aversion in God is opposed to desire. This is simply his *abhorrence* of *sin*, and his rejection of the obstinately impenitent offender. God can have no aversion to man's change of heart and salvation, for he says directly the reverse, that 'he would have all men to be saved;' and this he desires as long as there is any just ground to hope for recovery. Aversion only differs from hatred in the manner of considering it.[1] He manifests this in his opposition on occasions where insult is offered him. Hence he saith, 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination.' Such then, 'ask and receive not.' Hear the Lord himself, on this subject, to Jeremiah, 'Therefore, pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them;' 'neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee.' This was the result of their idolatry, and a most signal display of the divine aversion. Thus, in the case of Saul, the Lord having rejected him, and being averse to that rash and ungodly prince, says to Samuel, 'How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel.' So that this is ever exercised toward sinners, while obstinately rejecting the councils of the Almighty. But when they repent, and are ready to yield submission to that plan prescribed of God, in other words, when they begin to do God's will; for the penitent is doing the will of God in repenting, then the divine aversion is turned from him; the object is not a suitable one, and the language of encouragement is heard, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God and he will abundantly pardon.' 'I came,' says Christ, 'not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'

Apollos.—I am deeply impressed with the importance of attending to God's word. I love for you to introduce and give short expositions of it. I hope you will do it whenever you can.

Aquila.—Hope in God may be defined an affection that adds persuasion to desire of the probability, though with much difficulty of obtaining the end; and this end is man's repentance and obedience in faith.

You must remember, however, that this cannot be considered an end, which Deity hopes for on account of his own good, but as that which he claims from rebellious man, that he may do him good. Thus he expected his 'vineyard to have brought forth grapes, and it brought forth sour grapes.' Hence it is said that the Lord waiteth that he may be gracious, 'and therefore,' saith Isaiah, 'will the Lord wait that he may be gracious.' And the 'long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,' says St. Peter.

Apollos.—But, my friend—is Hope, an attribute of the divine will, and one of the affections of the Deity, consistent with his certain prescience of future events?

Aquila.—Most certainly—for prescience makes no change in the nature of the thing; and though the divine prescience be admitted, yet the object to be hoped for remains such that ought, under all the circumstances considered, to be looked upon as probable and likely to come to pass. Nay—God, by a figurative way of speaking, may rightly be said to hope for that which ought to be answerable in its own nature to his design; though by his omniscience he knew it would not come to pass. He designed man's happiness, through faith in Christ, and provided the means for its accomplishment. But an intelligence, capable of voluntary action, rejects those means and thwarts the design of heaven as to his happiness; and the Deity, to be consistent with himself, will not constrain the actions of a free agent.[2] I may also add, my friend, that what is impossible to

[1] Fletcher, Watson, and Limborch. [2] Ibid.

be done, cannot be an object of hope in God, for this would argue imperfection. And if by a decree of reprobation, apart from any contingency founded in man's agency, his reprobation is certain and damnation sure, God cannot desire or hope for the salvation of 'all men.' This would flatly contradict the Scripture, which says, that he would, i. e. *desires* 'that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.' Now, if it be possible through Christ, that all men may be saved, though Deity knows that many will reject that salvation, yet may it be an object of hope, because it would be answerable to the design of a being of illimitable goodness.[1]

Apollos.—Two things are opposite to desire and hope. They are fear and despair. Can these exist in the Deity?

Aquila.—Fear is attributed to God in explicit terms, but once in the holy Scriptures. In the book of Deuteronomy, xxxii. ch. 26th and 27th verses, these words are used: 'I said I would scatter them into corners,—I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: were it not that I *feared* the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this.' In this text we have fear, but despair is no where to be found. There is however, something analogous to these terms, which, figuratively, may be applied to God. The object of divine fear appears to be any evil, as the guilt of sin, punishment, and indeed, what, though not evil of itself, is yet opposed to the positive will of God.[1]

Apollos.—What is despair as applied to the Almighty?

Aquila.—Simply the abrupt prevention of that which might be considered the reasonable expectation of God; as the reformation of men, which all things considered, it is likely will never come to pass. It arises from the continued rebellion of man, who, obstinately opposes himself to all the operations of divine grace. Several instances of this are recorded in the Sacred Writings. In the book of Chronicles, the Lord states the means, which, greatly multiplied by divine goodness, notwithstanding the rebellion of the Jews, had been used for their recovery. 'They mocked,' says he, 'the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.'

This is what we denominate despair as applied to Deity. Again, in Isaiah, 'I have spread out my hands all the day, unto a rebellious people,' equalled only by that inimitable description of Jerusalem set forth in the 5th of the same prophet, where the Lord says, 'when I looked for it to bring forth grapes, it brought forth sour grapes.' You will also, Apollos, remember the parable of our Lord, 'I came seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none;' and his own lamentation, over the rebellious city, wherein he sets forth not only in language the most pathetic, but with a flood of tears, that affection of the divine mind, or attribute of the divine will, of which we speak. 'O Jerusalem,—how often would I have gathered thy children, but ye would not; therefore your house is left unto you desolate.'

Apollos.—I assure you I never could before see to what perfection or attribute of Deity, such expressions as these belonged. I had usually conceived of them only as a declaration of the willingness in God to save man.

Aquila.—Apollos, God is sincere in all he says or does. He cannot mock man. To say this, is to charge a blemish on his spotless character. Veracity, faithfulness, and immutability in goodness, are the guardians of his throne.

Apollos.—What then of joy in God?

Aquila—As absent good excites our desires and hopes, so that which is present

[1] Fletcher, Whitby, and Limborch. [2] Limborch.

affords us joy. Joy in the Deity, is that affection whereby he is carried out to the good, that is present and in possession.

Apollos.—Toward what good?

Aquila.—The devout actions of men, whether ceremonial or moral, if founded on the divine authority, are well pleasing to God. Also, the actions of the Deity himself, which he exercises towards men, whether of mercy to those who do his will, repenting and serving him, or of justice to the rebellious. In both there is a display of his perfections, on the great principle of immutable goodness, and therefore he must be well pleased therewith. The opposite of joy is grief, or sorrow, which as an affection of Deity, is that whereby he abhors the present evil. It is but once expressly attributed to him in Scripture. In Genesis, after man's fall, it is said that 'it repented the Lord' that he made man on the earth, and that it '*grieved* him at his heart.' It must however be remembered, that this term 'grief,' in application to God, is only used figuratively, as was said of others, otherwise it would argue an imperfection, that is inconsistent with the immense perfection of the divine nature. By way of analogy, it is applied to him. Grief in the Divinity, denotes his aversion to, and departure from the sinner, from whence proceeds all the evils that befal him, whether temporal or spiritual. Aversion to those who are the cause of sorrow, is natural to man, and is here most beautifully, but figuratively used, in application to the Deity.

Apollos.—What then is repentance in God?

Aquila.—Repentance is a sort of grief, which properly, is an internal sorrow in the mind, whereby a man abhors what he has done, and wishes it undone; which, if it be sincere, produces a change of that action, which he thus detests. We have shown by the quotation from Genesis, that repentance is ascribed to God, for it is there said, 'it repented' the Lord, &c. Again, saith the Lord, 'It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king;' and while Samuel is said to mourn, it is also said, 'the Lord repented that he had made Saul king.' In Jeremiah, the Lord says, 'If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will *repent* of the evil that I thought to do unto them;' but if it 'obey not my voice, I will repent of the good, wherewith I said, that I would benefit them.'

Apollos.—But this is not repentance, properly so called.

Aquila.—No, it is not, for several reasons. Among the most material is this: that repentance is internal grief of the mind, which as I before said, is an imperfection that cannot belong to God, and is wholly inconsistent with the supreme happiness and perfection of his nature. Again, repentance in man arises from the consideration of having done that which is evil, something that might have been otherwise; the cause of which was ignorance, impotency, or inconstancy of purpose; all of which are wholly unbecoming that notion we have of God, and are derogatory to his character.

Besides, the Scripture affirms that God cannot repent. Thus, 'God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should *repent*,' hath he said,—and 'shall he not do it, or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?' And 'the strength of Israel, will not lie nor repent,' 'for he is not a man that he should repent.' 'The gifts of God are without repentance,' says St. Paul, in application, doubtless, to the benevolence of the Deity. And in regard to his immutability, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. I am the Lord,—I change not.'

Apollos.—If so, how can it be said that 'it repented the Lord that he made man?' &c.

Aquila.—As God cannot be said properly to repent, some analogy to repentance must be found. In other words, there must be some action in the Divine Being,

answerable to the actions of men, when they are said to repent. Now, Apollos—when men repent of that which they may have done, they seek to undo it; so God, when he is said to repent, alters what he had done. Thus he destroys what he had before created, and builds up and supports what he had purposed to destroy. But again, this difference must be observed between the repentance of men and that of God: that the former proceeds from an internal cause, or is at least united with it, whilst the latter proceeds only from some external cause—the change owing its origin to something without, and not to any thing within the nature of the Deity.[1] To illustrate this, take the case of the Ninevites. Here is a notable instance of the divine repentance. For wickedness God had threatened to cut them off in forty days. If we seek the origin of this threatening, we find it in the general purpose or decree of God to destroy the wicked. The Ninevites, on hearing this denunciation, repented, and the Deity is said to have *repented* of the evil that he had threatened. Upon the conversion of these people, which was powerful and general, God could not, according to his decree against sin, punish them; but according to another decree, whereby he offered pardon and remission of sin to the penitent, he, perfectly consistent with his general decree, spared them. Now what is said here of the Ninevites, is also applicable to those other instances, wherein God is said *to have repented.*[2]

Apollos.—But does not this argue mutability in God?

Aquila.—No—but the most perfect constancy. It is the fixed and immutable purpose of God, to receive into favour and pardon, the penitent believer; but to punish with everlasting destruction, those who continue in a state of impenitence, and die in unbelief. Any particular decree is only an application of one or the other of these general decrees, to this or that person, according to his peculiar character. To the believing pious is applied the decree of grace and salvation, and to the impenitent infidel, that of indignation and wrath.[3] Thus it is apparent, that as often as men change with sincerity, so often does the purpose of God, or his decree, change its application to their particular circumstances. If the 'righteous man turn away from his righteousness and commit iniquity,' or in other words, if a believer become an infidel, then the decree for the salvation of the believer has no application, and 'vice versa.' Of this we have innumerable instances in the Holy Scriptures, all of which are but an exposition of God's plan of saving, as in the case of Nineveh, the penitent believer, who, though he had been 'wicked, has turned from his wickedness, and is now doing right.' In this there is no display of mutability in God, but a most signal and blessed display of his stability and faithfulness, in adhering to his purposes, which are manifest in all his word.[4] The change is in man, who is mutable, and not in God, who is immutable. As therefore the character of men become changed, so also will the application of the general decrees of God, consequently be to that character.

Apollos.—But does not God sometimes particularly threaten, what he does not execute?

Aquila—This does not argue a change in God; for though the threatening be absolutely denounced, yet is there a tacit *condition* included in it. The intention of God must ever be taken into the account. If it be asked what this is, I answer, to pardon the penitent believer, and condemn the unbeliever. Thus though he threatened Nineveh, as he does every ungodly man, yet upon its repentance, he was bound by the immutability of his nature, and his veracity too, to pardon and accept. Hence it is the action of the creature that changes the application of the decrees.

Apollos.—But is this repentance of God consistent with his prescience?

[1] Fletcher, Whitby, and Limborch.
[2] Fletcher, Watson, and Schmucker
[3] Fletcher and Limborch.
[4] Whitby and Fletcher.

Aquila.—Assuredly: because the divine threatenings, though absolutely denounced, are nevertheless evidently conditional.[1]

Apollos.—But if God, as is said, did threaten the Ninevites, and did decree to destroy them, unless they repented, how could this his resolution be consistent with his *prescience* of their conversion?

Aquila.—Very easily indeed: for this their repentance, we have no reason to suppose, would have been effected, but for the threatening here named. Now God could not have known that the Ninevites would repent, on hearing his denunciation against them, unless he had decreed to make use of this threatening. By virtue, therefore, of the divine prescience, it is necessary that the threatening of God should precede his foreknowledge of that repentance and reformation wrought by it.[2]

Apollos.—Well, my friend, might the inspired penman exclaim, in astonishment at the wisdom and majesty of the Almighty, 'high as heaven, deeper than hell.' 'He is past finding out.' The more I hear, the more I consider, the more I know, the more also am I convinced, that in the Deity and his works there is wisdom infinite. Do tell me, what use would you make of all these affections of the divine mind?

Aquila.—You will recollect that those of desire, hope, joy, and their contraries, are derived from love and hatred; and the very same inferences which we drew from them, we may likewise deduce from these. The application therefore is virtually the same. At our next meeting we may consider some of those moral virtues or perfections, which are supposed to moderate these affections, of the divine mind.

COLLOQUY XI.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE WILL CONTINUED—MORAL VIRTUES SUPPOSED TO EXIST IN THE DIVINE MIND—UNIVERSAL JUSTICE OF DEITY—ITS APPLICATION.

Aquila.—It was remarked when we parted last evening, that we would next consider those perfections of the Deity which had been called Moral Virtues; because they were supposed to restrain and moderate or govern the divine affections. These have, my friend—been thus named, because some analogy is supposed to exist between them and those actions in men, though there certainly is a wide difference. The perfection of holiness in man, is his conformity to the law of his maker; but God, as the supreme legislator, is subject to no law. He is the model and fountain of all good, and the source from whence emanates the law itself, which is but a transcript of the divine mind.[3] The agument is simply this, that holiness and virtue in man are conformity to God's law, but in the Almighty are his very nature.

Apollos.—You say that the second class of attributes in the will are those which have been called moral virtues, and which are supposed to restrain and govern the affections, please name them, my friend.

Aquila.—They have been divided into two sorts, such as moderate the affections in general, and those that restrain or moderate anger in particular. To the former belongs the purity of the divine nature. It is that rectitude, sanctity, or holiness by which he only wills that which is good, and consequently is averse to all iniquity.[4] The evidence in Scripture of this attribute is abundant. 'I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.' Again, 'speak thou unto all the congregations

[1] Whitby, Fletcher, and Limborch.
[2] Whitby and Limborch.
[3] Watson, Schmucker, and Limborch.
[4] Stackhouse and Dwight.

of the children of Israel, and say unto them, ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.' St. Peter says, but 'as he which called you is holy, so be ye holy,' for it is written 'be ye holy, for I am holy.' In the vision of Isaiah, among other things heard, was one crying 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:' and in that of John, in the Revelations, we hear of those who 'rest not day and night,' saying 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty:' He is 'pure' and in him is 'no darkness,' saith the same witness.

Apollos.—Does the justice of God differ from his holiness?

Aquila.—In reality it does not. It is that perfection in Deity by which he does whatever is right, and of course agreeable to the divine purity. Hence, says the inspired penman, 'He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.' David says, 'the righteous Lord loveth righteousness;' and 'good and upright is the Lord,' 'he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him,' and 'he is upright in his judgments.' 'Hear now, Oh, house of Israel!' saith the Lord, 'is not my way equal?' And another, 'the just Lord is in the midst,' 'He will not do iniquity.' From these quotations it may be seen that the difference between holiness and justice lies chiefly in the manner of considering them.[1] Divine justice has been divided into universal and particular.

Apollos.—What is the universal justice of the Deity?

Aquila.—It is that rectitude, as we have already said, whereby he, who is infinitely righteous, does that which is agreeable to his nature, and nothing repugnant to the same. However, for a more distinct explication of this perfection, it will be proper to consider the *right* of the divine Being in his creatures; in order to demonstrate the fact, that all his actions toward them are in accordance with his infinite purity and perfect holiness.[2]

Apollos.—What do you mean by right?

Aquila.—It is that supreme and universal dominion, which Deity has over his creatures, by virtue of which he may dispose of them as he thinks best. And this right may be considered either with respect to things that are not or things that are already created.

Apollos.—How so?

Aquila.—Thus—As to the former he most certainly has the right to create or let it alone, as he pleases. And no creature can complain that he has not made it more perfect.[3] But as to the latter or created beings, God has the sovereign right over them, and may order concerning them whatever is most agreeable to his will; but the degrees of this right are evidently various according to the benefits bestowed in creation. For instance: to some he has only given a being, as to metals and stones; to others life, but without sense, as to plants and herbs. Now these things are incapable of injury, and consequently over them it would appear that the Creator has, on every principle of reason, an unlimited right, so that he may change their natures, and[4] so turn them to any use he may devise or please. But again, there are creatures on whom the Creator has bestowed not only life but sense, as animals; and others again to whom he has granted life, sense, and reason, as to men. Now of the two last named, it would seem that the right of the Creator is limited in this way. Take animals without reason. These though they are incapable of reason, are nevertheless capable of suffering; and although it be admitted that there is the right to afflict them in some degree, yet the purity of his nature would not allow us to suppose that their afflictions should exceed the benefits of creation. Thus, I think right is limited by the goodness of his own nature. And indeed some go farther, and quote Paul to prove that an eternity of

[1] Saurin and Limborch.
[2] Dick, Dwight, and Limborch.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Ibid.

ease is the portion of all animated nature. 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' We also read of a 'new heaven and earth,' which would seem to admit at least the possibility, that all creatures blessed with sense but devoid of reason, may enjoy untold benefits in another state of being.[1] However, Apollos—to waive every thing concerning irrational animals, I may proceed to notice the unerring foundation of this claim upon creation.

Apollos.—What is its foundation?

Aquila.—It is predicated on two principles. The first is, that whatever good any one enjoys, by grace or favour, is only so far his as the donor voluntarily bestows it on him; and secondly, no creature is injured in not having bestowed on him the best benefit, or in being deprived of that which is simply of grace. It would then appear that creation is the proper foundation of this authority or claim, and not the excellency, as some suppose, of God's nature.[2] Previous to creation, there being no other intelligence in existence but Deity, no comparison could possibly be instituted, to show the superior excellence of that nature. If therefore, we consider the right with regard to creatures, in a state of innocence or favour, it is most certainly founded in creation. It is evident from the Scriptures that he who bestows all benefits may remove all; and his authority over them is indisputable. Thus David, in the thirty-third Psalm, 'Let all the earth fear the Lord, Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.' Wherefore? 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;' 'his works are done in truth,' &c. 'He hath made of one blood,' saith the apostle in Acts, 'all nations of men;' 'he giveth to all life and breath, and all things.' Why? 'that they should seek the Lord.' Hence says another, 'Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' To trace this right, as some do, to the transcendent excellency of the divine nature, and say that God has an unlimited right to afflict, even innocent creatures, and to any extent, is not certainly to set forth the holiness of God or defend the justice of his conduct.[3]

Apollos.—Are the benefits of creation the only foundation of this right?

Aquila.—By no means. There is the great benefit of eternal life, or our redemption by Christ, which we will notice at another time. A good man, even the most pious, may suffer much and long, and his sovereign may wisely permit all his afflictions, on the ground that an ample reward shall be granted him in eternity.[4] For the same reason, the innocent, those that are such properly speaking, may be afflicted. You will however recollect I do not mean, when I say that the innocent may be afflicted, that hell torments can be inflicted on the innocent *ad infinitum,* or without end, as some suppose, on the ground of God's sovereignty.[5]

Apollos.—Although I think you are right, still there are several objections which have been offered against your theory. Some have contended that if God cannot afflict an innocent creature with hell torments, it is either because he will not, or because he has no absolute right to do so. This, it has been supposed, would leave God without any covenant with his creatures, whereby he is bound to them, which is absurd.[6]

Aquila.—I deny the absurdity of it. The Deity, in forming creatures capable of pain, did tacitly bind himself to proportion their sufferings to their ability to endure, and at the same time by that act, covenants with them in such a way,

[1] Wesley. [2] Calvin, Dick, Watson, and Limborch, for both sides of this question.
[3] Fletcher & Watson. [4] Limborch.
[5] The reader is requested to consult Calvin, Watson, Dwight, Schmucker, and Dick, for elaborate discussions and information on God's sovereignty. [6] Limborch.

that his holiness is manifested in acting with them agreeably to their nature, and according to the equity and rectitude of his own.

Apollos.—But again, it is supposed by some, that God can by an absolute act, as the Creator and Sovereign of the universe, consistently with his justice, and on the ground of his infallible right, punish his creatures with hell torments, without respect to ability granted them for obedience. Thus, he may denounce the transgressor, and set forth eternal punishment as the consequence of sin; but at the same time, withhold the grace necessary to obedience, and leave his creature, on the ground of absolute right, under the necessity of sinning.[1]

Aquila.—The unreasonableness of this is apparent. What can be supposed more unjust, than for God by withholding restraining grace, to lay his creatures under the necessity of sinning, and then to punish them for what could not be avoided? If this be not making God the author of sin, and at the same time charging him with injustice, under the notion of sovereignty and absolute right, then I do not understand the meaning of words. The world will certainly judge of the fitness there is in such a doctrine, for every grade in society.

Apollos.—But, brother, it is argued that if, as you grant, God may afflict in some degree, an innocent being, for some length of time, he may do it in all degrees, and to all eternity. Thus, if God may, consistent with divine justice, afflict an innocent being one or two hours, and with one or two degrees of punishment, why not for ten hours and with ten degrees; and if ten, why not forever?

Aquila.—This is most certainly, sophistry. I would not prescribe the limits of the divine justice, yet I may venture to affirm, that an eternity of affliction in hell torments, poured on one incapable of voluntary action, is a most manifest reproach upon God's supreme justice. If a being incapable of transgression, be afflicted for one or ten days, and then enter into a state of ease and rest, there is ample time to be amply rewarded for all suffering. But if such suffer forever, there can be no alleviation, much less reward.[2]

Apollos.—Well! but you said that God might of right deprive creatures of their being. To cease to be, is said to be a less evil than eternal woe. If God can inflict the greater, why not the less punishment? Annihilation deprives man, not only of his well being, but his very existence.

Aquila.—But it has not yet been proved, that to annihilate is a sorer evil, or greater punishment, than to suffer hell torments.

Our Lord denies the position, for he says, 'Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.' To all this I may add, that we have no reasons to believe, that Adam, previous to a voluntary transgression, could have been doomed to eternal torments, on the ground of God's sovereignty, without leaving a blot on the divine justice. Nor do I believe that any intelligence incapable of volition, can, consistently with God's purity, be subjected to an eternity of torment. What would annihilation be, if there be no pain? In the torments of hell, there is not only a destruction of our well being, but a state of everlasting suffering, which justice assigns, only to the obstinate, voluntary offender.

Apollos.—But, my friend, I want you to set forth the right of God over reasonable creatures, considered either as in or out of covenant with him.

Aquila.—Well, suppose them out of covenant, i. e. acting under no specific pledge from the divine Being, and brought into existence at his will. The question now is, what would be the course of the divine justice, and what a display of God's holiness? I think the answer both plain and easy. As sovereign, he could certainly prescribe any law, but as a sovereign of infinite purity and goodness, he will only be expected to prescribe a law, adapted to the condition of the creature. Moreover, one thing is certain, he could only require an obedience,

[1] Limborch.

[2] Fletcher and Whitby.

proportionate to the ability of that creature. To do otherwise, would be a blot on the divine purity, and by no means a display of God's holiness. This cannot be denied under any pretence. Some of these laws have been called natural, and command or forbid, what in their own nature are good or evil. Others are called positive, and appear to depend wholly on the good will of the legislator, and are a display of his purity.[1] Some have rashly gone so far as to say, that Deity could, on the ground of sovereignty, command any act contrary to the decalogue.

Apollos.—Well, my friend, and did not God command Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, and the Israelites to rob the Egyptians,—and are not these things contrary to the decalogue?

Aquila.—The law was designed, it seems to me, chiefly for the conduct of man towards man. Doubtless, for weighty reasons, God might change this order, especially when, as in the case of Abraham, it was for the trial of faith; and although it may seem contrary to us, unacquainted with all the circumstances; yet it might be right, and we would no doubt think so, if we could exactly see and know the whole. And admit that the term borrow, as used in the text, means in the case you named, to take on loan, it might be intended by him who owned all, as remuneration for services. But I believe that, at this distance of time, with the poverty as well as loss of language, we are only able to judge of a particular command, in a very imperfect manner, especially unacquainted as we are, with all the circumstances.[2] Thus also, God may appoint what rewards or punishments he pleases, only while rewards may be *ad infinitum*, or without end,—punishments, to display divine purity, must be proportionate to the offence, and the ability for obedience.

Apollos.—But how is it when men are in covenant?

Aquila.—Man is supposed to be in covenant with God, and God with him, when laws are enacted by the Deity for his government. Then the Almighty seems to prescribe bounds for himself, and the exercise of his power. Now the course of justice and holiness, in this event, appears to be thus: That the law shall not go beyond the ability or strength of man; in other words, that he is not required to perform an impossibility. Again, the Deity cannot preserve that covenant inviolate, and secure his purity, if he deny the promised reward, on the obedience of men. Lastly, he may inflict the punishment annexed to a violation of that law, when there was ability in man to perform it.[3]

Apollos.—But tell me,—is that justice, which has been called vindictive, essential to the nature of the Deity, so that he cannot pardon an offence?

Aquila.—I think not. Because the acts of mercy as indicative, more particularly of his goodness, far exceed those of punishment; and again, it is certainly the right of any man to pardon what he pleases, when the offence is only against himself; and shall we deny to the Deity, that which is granted as the right of man? If God cannot pass by any offence, then he punishes by absolute necessity; but as the offence is against him alone, he may inflict a milder punishment, as the psalmist says, 'he hath not dealt with us after our sins.' Besides all this, repentance by the 'forbearance' of God may be induced, and the sinner reformed, which could not be done, if the Almighty were constrained to punish, with the utmost rigor, every offence.[4]

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend, is it not natural to the Deity, to be just?

Aquila.—Certainly,—but the exertions of that perfection are most surely free; as also are those of mercy. When God punishes, he only exercises an act agreeable to his justice.

Apollos.—But see brother,—is it not the property of justice to give every man his due? Now, punishments are most certainly due to sinners.

[1] Limborch. [3] Watson and Fletcher. [4] Limborch.

[2] See Dr. Clarke on these texts, where the reader will find some excellent remarks.

Aquila.—If benefits due were withheld, it would be injustice; but to withhold punishment is a benefit, and therefore not unjust; besides, properly, no man can be said to have a right to punishment.[1]

Apollos.—But is it not the *duty* of a just judge to punish?

Aquila.—This is true of a *substituted* judge, who is dependent on the will of his superior, or legislator, but in this case God is both lawgiver and judge, and it is mercy in him to pardon an offence, committed against himself; which can injure, if I may so speak, none but himself.[2]

Apollos.—Still it seems to me that God does *necessarily* hate sin, and not to punish, is to wink at it.

Aquila.—It will be hard to prove that the Deity does any thing 'necessarily,' that is without himself, i. e. of an external character, for there is a wide difference between what is external, and an internal aversion. While God is averse to sin, he most certainly regards the well being of the sinner, and there is mercy with him that he may be feared. The truth is, God is ready to extend mercy to all,—he never punishes until it is unavoidable, and the case of the sinner is incorrigible and hopeless. You must also remember, I before said, that holiness, goodness, and justice, are synonymous. Deity is only just, as he is good, and his acts enforcing the claims of justice, display his goodness.

Apollos.—I confess I begin to see the light, through this dark and intricate subject. You must bear in mind, I offer all my objections for improvement. I want to understand every subject.

Aquila.—This is right; and this subject, the divine justice, though mysterious, will afford a most excellent application for practical piety. We learn from it, that as God is holy and just, we ought also to be holy 'in all manner of conversation,' having our hearts sanctified by divine grace. As God is our sovereign, who loves us, whose wisdom and goodness are united for our salvation, we ought ever to acquiesce in his will, remembering the Lord says, 'wo to him that strives with his Maker.' Shall the clay say, 'what makest thou?' or man 'unto his Father, what begettest thou?' or 'the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?' 'Who art thou, that repliest against God?' We should therefore 'be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,' 'make our requests to God.' Doing all to his glory, we should be patient, like Job, under all our afflictions, and ever recollect, the 'Judge of all the earth shall do right.' Let us never, my friend, for the sake of any man, do what God forbids, or neglect our duty, but as Peter and his brethren said, 'we ought to obey God rather than men.' Let us quietly and thankfully use every benefit, with a clear conscience and devout heart.

Priscilla.—Oh! I seem to be descending into a vast labyrinth. The 'ways of the Lord are past finding out.'

COLLOQUY XII.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE WILL CONTINUED—THE PARTICULAR JUSTICE OF THE DEITY CONSIDERED—THE APPLICATION THEREOF FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PIETY.

Aquila.—According to our division of divine justice into universal and particular, we shall have this evening to consider the latter, my friend Apollos.

Apollos.—What are we to understand by the particular justice of the Deity?

Aquila.—It may be defined that act of the divine goodness, whereby it imparts or grants to every man his desert. This does not relate to men considered as in a state of innocence, and out of special covenant with God; that is, without a law. Such an hypothesis, as heretofore suggested, might be taken up and argued as an

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

object of universal justice. The particular justice of the Deity recognizes man as the subject of divine law, and therefore as in covenant with the divine Being; and it does actually grant to each one of our race the reward of his deeds, according to that law.

Apollos.—But can a creature lay claim to any thing, as due from his Creator?

Aquila.—Only so far as the Deity has made it his privilege to do so, by promise. This claim may be considered, first, according to the strictness of that rule which renders a proportionable reward to the obedient, and suitable punishment to the disobedient; and secondly, this reward of evil or good is according to the equity of the legislator. True there is an immense disparity between our act of obedient faith and eternal life, the promised reward; and yet God is said to give it as a reward, in justice, because he has promised it in that covenant which he has made with man. So that although the promise was of grace, yet the equity of the Divine Being is pledged for granting that reward, though it also be of grace.[1] Thus saith an apostle—'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' And the same apostle saith—'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them, also, that love his appearing.' Again—'For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered unto the saints, and do minister:' and it is said that 'Moses had respect unto the recompense of reward.

Apollos.—But how is it with punishment?

Aquila.—It has been already shown, that punishment is a right of the Deity, and that he, as the offence is a personal one, others not being injured thereby, may pardon sin, or remit the punishment, as he in his wisdom sees best; and although man may deserve it all, yet may the Almighty do it *justly:* provided, nevertheless, that he extend this pardon, according to his covenant, to the penitent believer, as his veracity is pledged for preserving inviolable this law of faith.[2] Thus you see, Apollos, that the particular justice of Deity is naturally divided into remunerative and punitive. The former is a distribution of rewards, not according to the rule of merit, properly so called, but the promises of him who enters into covenant with man. The latter, or punitive justice, is the infliction of punishment for sin committed, according to the rules also laid down in God's word, for the exercise of what is called the vindictive justice of the Deity. Take it, then, as a whole, it is the ardent inclination of the divine will to prescribe equal laws, as the Supreme Governor, and to dispense equal rewards and punishments, as the Supreme Judge.[3]

Apollos.—The day of judgment, then, is to display this justice in an eminent degree?

Aquila.—Certainly. God shall try every man by that standard which he has appointed. Then shall his ways be justified to men. 'For the Son of Man,' said Jesus, 'shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he reward every man, according to his works.' 'Who,' says Paul, 'will render to every man according to his works,' for 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' Then 'every man' shall bear his own burden, and then they are judged, says St. John, 'every man according to his deeds.'

[1] Watson and Buck. [2] Limborch and Schmucker. [3] Ryland and Dr. Gill.

Apollos.—What a solemn reflection—'every man!'

Aquila.—Yes, 'every man:' Jews, Gentiles, Greeks, and barbarians, bond and free, all must appear at the tribunal of heaven. 'For there is no respect of persons with God.' He is 'our Master who is in heaven,' and shall become our judge. 'The dead, small and great,' shall 'stand before God, and the books shall be opened,' and they shall be 'judged out of those things written' in them, 'according to their works.' Then 'shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' saith our Lord.

Apollos.—These, my brother, are awful truths.

Aquila.—They are, and should produce a salutary effect on every man. In this particular justice of the Deity are comprehended, truth, fidelity, and sincerity.[1] Indeed they are sometimes used to set forth the divine equity, or rather the justice of God, is designated by one of these names. Truth, when used with regard to God, represents that conformity of words with the divine mind and actions. Sometimes it denotes his rectitude, and by it we are to understand, that whatever Deity affirms, is actually true. By fidelity or faithfulness we are to understand the adherence of the Divine Being to his promises, viz. that he will perform what he has affirmed, and that 'although the heavens and earth pass away, one jot or tittle of his word shall not pass, till all be fulfilled.' By sincerity I mean, Apollos, that God never declared any thing that is contrary to that which he has decreed in himself. To suppose a secret *purpose, will,* or *decree,* all used as synonymous terms by many, which in some instances may be opposed to the revealed will of the Almighty, is a direct attack on this perfection of the Divinity, and is most certainly derogatory to the divine character. Some have gone so far as to declare that God has not a revealed will, by which he calls all to flee from the wrath to come, and proclaims life and salvation for all, but a secret will, by which he determines that a part shall not accept the offer, and lay hold on eternal life. This is to make God not only insincere, but hypocritical. The declarations of Deity are to this effect, 'that he would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. He is sincere in this. He calls all, and promises life to all that seek it. His truth and his faithfulness are alike pledged for the accomplishment of all that he has promised. To say that God threatens death to the elect, when there is no danger, and offers life to the reprobate, who must by his decree perish, is a most direct aspersion not only of the wisdom, justice, and goodness, but especially the *sincerity* of God.

Priscilla—One would think, that the Scripture is so plain and emphatic on this subject, that men would never suffer such contradictions to enter their minds.

Apollos. Every step I proceed, in the great and good work, in which we are engaged, shows me the value and infinite importance of a revelation; and I am more and more convinced, that the Bible is the test to which we should bring all our opinions. 'Let God be true,' though every man should prove faithless and false.

Aquila.—Before we retire, we ought to improve the subject selected for this evening's discussion. The great object in view, is our advancement in piety; and there is perhaps no subject, that will better allow of a profitable improvement, than this perfection of the living God.

Is he so scrupulously just, holy and pure? How undefiled then, and how devoted, ought we to be; lest we should be found wanting when tried by his law. But if, as we have argued, he be sincere, true and faithful, he is ready to pardon, when we repent and believe. His promises of aid cannot fail, though the 'heavens be removed.' In deep adversity, under all our sorrows, when 'friends all fail, and foes all unite,' we may still trust him for the accomplishment of all that

[1] Limborch.

he has promised. In life, in death, his promise is, 'my grace shall be sufficient for thee;' and my friend, when 'nature shall sink in the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds,' his faithfulness and goodness shall provide us a home, in that 'house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The same particular justice that pledges itself for an ample reward to the righteous, thunders it from Sinai's blazing mount, that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God;' for 'the wages of sin is death,' spiritual, temporal, and eternal. From such an end heaven save us! 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' 'For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it; for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.'

COLLOQUY XIII.

CLEMENCY, PATIENCE, AND SEVERITY, ATTRIBUTES OF THE DIVINE WILL, EXPLAINED AND APPLIED.

Aquila.—In a former conversation, my friend—we took an opportunity to consider what has been called the anger, or wrath, of the Almighty. In the arrangement of the divine perfections, we remarked, that there were three of those called attributes of the will, which are supposed to moderate and restrain the divine anger. We proceed now to investigate these. They are clemency, patience, and severity. The two first are exercised in remitting, mitigating, or deferring punishment, and the last in inflicting it.[1]

Apollos.—What is clemency?

Aquila.—Clemency and goodness are terms synonymously used in the Scriptures. By it I understand that God is only angry with sinners on causes the most weighty, and then with the utmost moderation. It is conspicuous in several things: that Deity is rather inclined to pardon than punish, 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should turn from his ways and live?' 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' 'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men,' says Jeremiah, and Isaiah represents the execution of judgment as a strange work. Another striking evidence of the divine clemency, is, that punishment is only inflicted here, with a view to the reformation of the sinner, and to induce repentance; and even this is much milder than our deserts, which would be the torments of hell. 'He hath not dealt with us, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.' He is therefore inclined to pardon, the very moment in which there are signs of a genuine repentance, in an offender; of which, the pardon of Menassah and the prodigal son, are striking instances.

Priscilla.—Yes, and what a display we have of this clemency, in the history of Abraham's posterity. As often as they repent, God forgives.

Apollos.—Well, what of the patience of Deity?

Aquila.—In the Holy Writings, our heavenly Father is represented, as 'long suffering, slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, abundant in compassion.' Such expressions are designed to set forth what we call the patience of God. This differs from clemency only in duration. In the exercise of this attribute of the will, Deity waits for the repentance of men, until his patience is so wearied, that he decrees expressions of severity toward them.[2] Thus we find it clearly set forth

[1] Tillotson and Limborch. [2] Tillotson and Saurin.

by St. Paul, 'despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' and again, 'God endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.' So also St. Peter, 'But the Lord is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;' and so also, my friend, in many other places that I might name.

Apollos.—O! what matchless forbearance.

Priscilla.—And what a display of it was that, Apollos—in the forbearance of God toward the antediluvians? For one hundred and twenty years, the Lord waited with that wicked world, while Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was warning them of danger.

Aquila.—How the apostle Peter presses this example, as proof of divine goodness; 'the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing.' In another place it is said of the Jews, that the 'Lord God of their fathers, sent unto them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place.' The fact too, that the day of judgment, notwithstanding the wickedness of man, is now postponed, and space for repentance afforded, is another display of the divine patience.

Apollos.—This, my dear brother, is a most delightful subject, and will you just permit me to submit my thoughts on it? Were I capable of preaching, and had selected one of those texts as the subject for discussion, I think I would try first to explain it, as you have done. I would then show, how the forbearance of God has been, and now is manifested towards the world; and then apply it, after this manner: If the clemency and patience of the Deity be so great, then, though sinners, we need not despair and perish, but repent; for God is willing to pardon and ready to save. Again, this repentance we should indubitably hasten, for his clemency and forbearance are exercised only in this life toward us, and on every hand we behold its uncertainty. Besides, if God be so patient and kind to us, poor sinners, how kind should we be to our fellows, even our enemies, ever imitating his blessed example, who gave his life a ransom even for his enemies.

Aquila.—I hope, my dear young friend, we shall all profit by your excellent application. How appropriate to this, is that part of the most inimitable prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.'

Apollos.—Do, my friends, pardon this interruption! I hope you will proceed, Aquila, with your subject. What is severity in God?

Aquila.—You must not suppose that divine severity is opposed to clemency and patience. No, it is never exercised until these fail, through the impenitence and obstinacy of sinners. They go before severity. This attribute of the divine will is called in Scripture Αποτομια, Apotomia, *a cutting off.*[1] It is a perfection that consists in punishing the sinner, though God may have borne long with him. On account of this ultimate act of divine justice, the Almighty is styled a jealous God, when, in his word, he denounces an idolatrous worship—'I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God.' On this account, too, it is said that he is not only a 'jealous God,' but 'a consuming fire.' For 'our God is a consuming fire,' says St. Paul. The prophet Nahum, in reference to the same, says, he is not only jealous, but 'revengeth,' yea, 'is furious;' and though 'slow to anger, will not acquit the wicked;' therefore David prayed to the Lord 'to whom vengeance belongeth;' and a concluding remark of St. Paul, you well recollect, in his epistle to the Romans, 'vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.'

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend Aquila—in what is this severity conspicuous?

Aquila.—When the measure of man's iniquity is filled up, and his sins cry for vengeance, the divine severity is exercised in their punishment, as in the case of

[1] Parkhurst and Limborch.

the antediluvians, that of Sodom and Gomorah, and the rejection of the Jews, as his peculiar people. This also shall be more conspicuous, my friend, after the day of judgment, in that world of reality, whither we are all bound. There God shall pour out his displeasure, forever and ever, on those who shall have abused his forbearance and clemency.

Apollos.—But severity is sometimes exercised in the very act of committing crime. From this it would seem that it is not the same, at least in its operations.

Aquila.—I confess it appears so; but upon an examination, it will be seen that it is the same.[1] Suppose then, a sinner cut off at once, in the act of sinning. It is evident that he may have committed many other sins, but God is pleased to exercise his wrath at last, on this. For instance, God smote Herod for his pride; but it was also a punishment for his cruelties to James, Peter, and others.

Again, Apollos—a man thus punished, may have had a share in the divine favour, that others, towards whom patience is still exercised, may not have had. In addition to this, the sin might have been easily avoided, and unless immediately punished, might be dreadful in its consequences. But above all, we should remember that time, circumstances, manifestations and displays of divine power, may demonstrate God's grace, in a signal manner. Sin under these, must be enormous, as in the case of Annanias and Saphira. Let it however, be also borne in mind, that these are rare cases, and we should be thankful that the Scriptures do not abound in them.

Apollos.—No,—it is evident that 'he loveth mercy,' and is 'slow to anger.'

Aquila.—The application of such a subject, must of course be important. An appeal should be made to the fears of our hearers. Is the Almighty thus inexorable in his severity, when once mercy's calls have utterly failed? Is he a consuming fire, and will he burn up the ungodly with the 'breath of his nostrils?' Then, with what religious fear should we continually serve him, and how great our solicitude to be found in his ways? Moreover, we should never indulge in any sin; howsoever small it may seem to us, it may not be thus accounted by the Almighty, and like the haughty Herod, by one fell stroke of heaven's arm, we may 'be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.'

COLLOQUY XIV.

POWER, GLORY, HAPPINESS, CONSIDERED AS ATTRIBUTES OF DEITY—THEIR PRACTICAL USE.

Aquila.—The Sacred Scriptures every where, my friend Apollos—speak of the Deity as the Almighty, that is the all-powerful God. This attribute or perfection we are to consider as next in order, according to our plan. Power in God may be defined, as the ability of the Deity to execute the decrees of his will, and because this ability or power is infinite, and its operations can be hindered by no cause, it is called omnipotence.[2] All the miracles that have ever been wrought evince it to the world; but the most striking display of it is beheld in the creation of the universe from nothing, and the continual support of the same, by 'the word of his power.'

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend—what are the legitimate objects of this divine ability?

Aquila.—Any thing that does not imply a contradiction. God can do all things which in their nature are capable of being done, provided they do not derogate from his infinite purity or are not opposed to his decrees and laws. That he cannot do what would imply a contradiction is evident. Some things are repugnant to the Deity naturally, and therefore cannot be. As if I should say, that

[1] Tillotson and Saurin. [2] Watson and Dwight.

God can sleep or die; this would be to say that he is not God. Others morally, as that God could lie, deceive, or punish with everlasting torments one who was not a voluntary offender. The former would argue imperfection; the last are directly opposed to both his perfections and laws.

Apollos.—I think this is very plain.

Aquila.—To induce our reliance on God, the Scripture sets forth three things: That he can bestow on us life and all things necessary to worship him aright. Hence, said Paul to the men of Athens,' God, that made the world and all things that are therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.' Who also is the great fountain of all spiritual benefits, as saith St. Peter, 'according to his divine power he hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.'

That he is able to prevent any violence on those who worship him, although that violence may be offered by enemies potent and diabolical. And moreover, that he has ability to bestow on such all that he has promised, and to punish those who despise him eternally.

Apollos.—I have indeed often thought with pleasure on the many sublime expressions in the Holy Scriptures, in which is proclaimed the divine omnipotence.

Aquila.—The doctrine of divine power suggests to us the propriety of noticing here, what has been called the glory and happiness or blessedness of the Deity. A being thus perfect in all the attributes heretofore noticed, who also exercises illimitable power, must of necessity concentrate in himself all that is excellent and blessed.

The divine glory may be considered as that excellency and splendour by which God is distinguished from all creatures.[1] The Psalms of David are filled with it, and the angelic hymn, on the morning of the Redeemer's birth-day, was, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good will toward men.' This glory is manifested in all his works, in which are displayed all the perfections of Deity. It is true that God, as a being infinitely perfect, must ever be in possession of this excellency, and can manifest his glory as to him seemeth best; yet he could not be glorious, with respect to man, but for his works, in which as signs he displays his attributes and makes them visible in a manner not to be misunderstood.[2] On this account the sacred writers ascribe to God so much glory on account of creation, redemption, and the punishment of offenders; as these manifest and proclaim the attributes of Mercy, Justice, Fidelity, Wisdom, and especially Power.

Apollos.—Now I see why Deity is called the blessed God, and why he is pronounced so. His happiness proceeds from the excellency of his own nature. Its superiority over that of every other intelligence is a display of his glory, and the contemplation of his own infinite perfections, not only in themselves but in their glorious manifestations, is a fountain from whence flows supreme and infinite delight. So that the happiness of Deity must ever accompany his glory.

Aquila.—It is just so. He is in the possession of all good. He is goodness itself, and is therefore happy, supremely happy, in the fruition of himself; and as immutability is inseparable from the eternity of his existence, his bliss is subject to no alteration. You will also bear in mind, that when the sacred writers call him blessed, they mean happy; for blessedness and happiness are synonymous terms, when used in application to the Almighty. You will see then, my friend—the sacred and indissoluble connection that exists between all the perfections of this Being, who is thus infinitely perfect. His omnipotence is most

[1] Limborch and Calmet. [2] Addison and Watson.

signally displayed, while in the harmonious and lively exercise, his every perfection is revealed; and by that Almighty power, essential to his divinity, he forms and upholds universal creation. Here then, both in the existence and action of all his attributes, he is supremely glorious; and in the contemplation of himself and all that he does, he also is superlatively happy. We are now done with the investigation of the divine perfections, and must proceed to another point of equal importance.

Priscilla.—But do not forget your application. I have heard that many a good sermon *is lost* for the want of an appropriate application.

Aquila.—Indeed this it too true. I had well nigh forgot it.

Apollos.—We must not lose the application. This to me is a profitable part of our work.

Aquila.—Take then the attribute of Omnipotence first. Is God a being of illimitable power? Then we ought to fear him, for he has ability to punish all who offend him. 'Fear him,' said Jesus, 'which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' 'Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? will ye not tremble at my presence, which hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar yet can they not pass over it?' If he be the Almighty, we may also confidently pray to him. He is able to do all that we can either ask or think. Thus says St. Paul, 'Now to him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.'

But, my friend—while we serve God, we must never dread our enemies, however potent. No—not Satan himself, for no power can ever counteract the power of God, or be able to destroy him, that constantly obeys him. 'Yea,' saith the psalmist, 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' 'My sheep,' saith Jesus, 'hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.' 'I am persuaded,' says Paul, 'that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' And the Redeemer says of his church, founded on himself, the rock of ages, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Indeed, even against hope as well as appearances, we should rely on God for the fulfilment of his every promise. It is said that Abraham 'staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.' I may say we are to obey God, though his command may seem to be directly against his promise, as did Abraham, 'the father of the faithful,' all shall work for the best.

Apollos.—And will you let me add, as an application of the divine glory, that we ought to refer all our conduct to the glory of God. We ought to glorify him in our bodies and our souls, which are his, and our thoughts, words, and deeds should be to promote the glory of his name.

Priscilla.—Yes, my friend—and if our glorious God be as infinitely happy, as he has been represented to-night, and most certainly is, ought we not constantly to aspire after its participation and all that may conduce to this blessed end. And may we not patiently endure all the adversities of this life for 'righteousness sake,' since our afflictions here bear no comparison with the happiness of heaven.

Apollos.—St. Paul says, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be *compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' 'For our

light afflictions, which are but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.'

Priscilla.—O! glorious hope—there our afflictions shall be ended, and in the participation of his bliss our reward shall be complete.

Aquila.—We now close our remarks on the divine attributes as already announced. This is a vast subject, delightful for meditation, and one that can never be considered in a practical manner by a good man without profit.

COLLOQUY XV.

OF FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST, THE EVER BLESSED AND UNDIVIDED TRINITY—ONE IN THREE AND THREE IN ONE—THE DEITY WHOM MEN ARE REQUIRED TO WORSHIP IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

Apollos.—My dear friend—since our last meeting, I have been reviewing the minutes of our different conversations. I assure you I have been edified and benefitted too, in perusing your expositions of the nature and character of God, as set forth in the Sacred Writings. There is however, on my mind, a very serious difficulty. You speak of God our Father, and sometimes mention the Redeemer as the Son of God, and often speak of the Holy Spirit. I want to understand how the attributes of the Deity can be used in reference to these three, as alike operating in the hearts of men, and exercising these absolute perfections of the most holy God.

Aquila.—In those several conversations, I have been considering the divine nature or essence of the Divinity in the abstract. I intend to notice at once the God, to whom, in Scripture, this nature is attributed, viz: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for of these three the Sacred Writings make frequent mention. So when the Son was baptized, as is related in the third chapter of Matthew, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the likeness of a dove, while the Father, with an audible voice, bore testimony to the Son, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Here are all three, not only named, but engaged at one and the same time. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded his apostles to go 'and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' In another place, Christ tells his disciples, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth.'

Apollos.—Are these the only texts, in the Sacred Writings, where the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are set forth or mentioned?

Aquila.—By no means. The Scriptures, especially the New Testament, abound with them. I will just quote a few. Our Lord says, that 'Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.' 'And no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.' 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are differences of administration but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh in all.' 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all,' was St. Paul's prayer for the Corinthian church. 'Elect,' says St. Peter, 'according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' Here all three are again mentioned, as operating at one and the same time. And again, to crown the whole, St. John says, 'For there are THREE that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three *are* ONE.'

Apollos.—When I read these texts, I am forced, my friend, to come to the conclusion that the Scriptures do teach, when speaking of God, that there is a Trinity, but the difficulty is a *Trinity* in *Unity*. I plainly see that the doctrine, as a scriptural one, is put beyond all dispute; and I moreover know that the christian church has, from its origin, received it, with a very few exceptions, by unanimous consent; still, some intricate and perplexing questions are started by many in opposition to it. You know that Sabellius maintained the Unity but denied the Trinity; whilst others, in contending for it, have run into *Tritheism*. Arius,[1] in trying to prove the Son inferior to the Father, has made him a mere creature; and Macedonius, in not distinguishing the Holy Ghost from his gifts, has actually denied his divinity. Indeed, my friend, I have been disgusted with the trifling metaphors, which have been used by many in explaining a Trinity in Unity; they have been not only vain and idle; but wholly unbecoming the nature of God.

Aquila.—Whilst men were content with simplicity and humility, such as are commanded in the gospel, and received the word of God, and his testimony in honest hearts, there was no difficulty. Afterwards, when nice subtleties and metaphysical distinctions took the place of Scripture, the church became embarrassed, and its progress in the conquest of the world to the faith of Christ, was impeded by the denial of a doctrine plainly affirmed in the word of God.[2] Yes—rash men undertook, by the powers of human intellect, and by reason acknowledged to be finite, to comprehend the infinite Deity, and to humble their pride, he has suffered them to be brought very low.

Apollos.—This is too true. I pray that it may deter others from an attempt so rash and vain.

Aquila.—Shall we, my friend—attempt to comprehend a mystery that is infinite, incomprehensible, and above the reach of human reason? I trust not. Vanity of vanities! We will waive all nice, intricate, and dangerous speculations. What we have to say on this subject we should say, as nearly as possible, in the language of the Bible. It is a sublime and divine mystery, acknowledged such by the wisest and the best; let us therefore abstain from all expressions of mere human invention.

Apollos.—Well, my friend—proceed in your own way, if any thing occurs to my mind I will name it.

Aquila.—You will please then bear in mind, first, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are represented in the Scriptures as individual subsistencies or real beings, endued with *life, understanding, will,* and *power,* and as doing such *works* as are suitable to such individuals.[3] Hence they are commonly styled by divines, three *persons,* a word, it is thought by some, not taken exactly from the Scripture; but of long and early use in the church. Others think differently.[4]

Apollos.—There is no necessity for proving the personality of the Father, for all are agreed about it. You may adduce the evidence to substantiate this, in regard to the Son and Holy Ghost.

Aquila.—Well, in the Scripture there is attributed to the Son an individual subsistence or real being. Hear it, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' Here is an absolute existence, and that as God. Again, it represents him as existing, absolutely *living*. 'As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me,' 'for I am the bread of life,' &c. Understanding and will are ascribed to him. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared HIM.' 'All things are

[1] Dick and Limborch.
[2] Mosheim and Milner.
[3] Calvin, Watson, and Dick.
[4] Limborch, Doctor Gill, and Buck.

delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son *will* reveal him.' That Christ exercises power and performs works is also proved in a moment. Paul says, we look for the Lord Jesus Christ, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' Again, 'Jesus saith, my father worketh hitherto, and I work;' and yet again, 'I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day.'

Apollos.—I must frankly confess that this is establishing most indubitably, by scriptural evidence, your position in regard to the Son. What have you to say concerning the Holy Ghost?

Aquila.—The very same things are attributed to him in the Bible, with all those operations which are agreeable to his person. In the first Epistle of John, that apostle, after telling us that 'there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one,' represents its individual subsistence or personality, by saying, 'there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.' Mind, he does not say are one. Also, in the context, he says, 'It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth;' and are all nations to be baptized in the name of that which had no subsistence? That there is also ascribed to him *life* and understanding we see most plainly. 'The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.' 'Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.' In Isaiah's remarkable prophecy of Jesus, we have these words, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. 'For the law of the Spirit of life hath made me free,' saith Paul, 'from the law of sin and death.'

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, is a passage proclaiming the absolute freedom of will, in the adorable Spirit, 'all these worketh that one and the self same spirit,' saith St. Paul, 'dividing to every man severally as he *will*.' The power of the Holy Ghost is often mentioned in Scripture; Paul prays that the Ephesian church might be 'strengthened with might, i. e. power, by the Spirit in the inner man;' to which I might add the quotation just made from Isaiah.

Apollos.—You said there were certain operations agreeable to his person, ascribed to him in the Scriptures. What are they?

Aquila.—Creation, preservation, justification, and sanctification, are all, in the Scripture, ascribed to him. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them, by the breath of his mouth,' i. e. the Holy Ghost. The entire psalm numbered one hundred and four, is an ascription of praise for preservation, as well as creation, by the Spirit. 'According to his mercy,' saith Paul to Titus, 'he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' 'And such were some of you,' says he to the Corinthians, 'but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the *Spirit* of our God.' Now, permit me to say, my friend Apollos—that none of these operations can be applied to any, but a person having a subsistence, or real being. I have yet also, secondly, another argument,—it is that the divine perfections are alike attributed to each of these three. That they are to the Father, all are agreed; and that they are to the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we will at another time prove: Consequently, that they, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, partake of the same divine nature, and that the Son, and Holy Spirit, are together with the Father, 'one God, Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, which ought to be worshipped.'[1]

[1] Athanasian creed.

Apollos.—My friend,—I am lost in wonder and admiration. How incomprehensible is the God that made us, the God we worship! 'Higher than heaven, deeper than hell!'

Aquila.—And what sort of a God would he be, if you could comprehend him? Can you comprehend yourself, or any of the works of nature? No! you cannot; but more of this at another time; it is now late, let us proceed cautiously, taking as our guide, the word of the living God. The Bible is our text book.

COLLOQUY XVI.

T E DIVINE PERFECTIONS, ARE ATTRIBUTED IN THE SACRED WRITINGS, TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE SECOND PERSON, WHO IS CALLED THE SON OF GOD, AND ALSO TO THE HOLY GHOST, THE THIRD PERSON IN THE UNDIVIDED AND ADORABLE TRINITY.

Aquila.—I am to show you by special promise, this evening, my friend Apollos—that the perfections of the Deity, are, in the holy Scriptures, ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called therein the Son of God, and to the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity. Before I enter fully on this subject, just let me show you that the name of God is most expressly applied to Christ, and the texts cannot by any construction be made to apply to any other being.

Apollos.—Do let us have them, my brother.

Aquila.—I will quote a part of a text that I have quoted to you once before. St. John says, 'the word was God;' St. Paul styles him 'God blessed forever;' and again, 'the throne of God is forever and ever;' 'thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity;' then 'God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.' Now this appellation of *Son*, is a manifest demonstration of his divine generation from, and of his partaking of the same nature with him who is styled 'God the Father.'[1]

Apollos.—But are not others called sons of God in the Sacred Writings?

Aquila.—They are; and for this, several very just reasons may be offered. Some are called 'sons of God,' on account of creation: thus was Adam; 'Seth, says St. Luke, 'was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.' So also of men, as the apostle taught the Athenians, 'we are his offspring;' and angels themselves on this account, are called his sons. 'There was a day,' says Job, 'when the sons of God,' i. e. angels, 'came to present themselves before the Lord.' Again, on account of some peculiar excellency, some are called sons of God. So magistrates and princes, as the administrators of law are called 'sons of the Most High.' On account of some signal favour, some are called sons of God. In this sense, *Israel* is denominated the 'son of God;' and indeed so is every christian who is adopted into the divine family and favour. 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ,' that 'we might receive the adoption of sons,' says St. Paul to the Galatians.

Apollos.—Where then is the difference?

Aquila.—It is in this, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in a more eminent and peculiar manner.[2] Hence he is named 'the only begotten,' and 'his own Son.' Besides God the Father, through the whole of the New Testament, is proclaimed 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' From whence it would follow, that our Saviour, for some singular and peculiar reason, is the Son of God, by a divine and an inexplicable generation.

Apollos.—But may not this sonship relate to his humanity, or the fact of his being, as the Bible says, conceived by the Holy Ghost?

[1] Doctor Gill, and Dick. [2] Watson, Dwight, and others.

Aquila.—It is true with respect to his human nature, he is called the Son of God; so also, as some suppose, on account of his resurrection from the dead, and his office of a mediator at the right hand of God.[1] 'We declare to you glad tidings,' said St. Paul to the Jews, 'how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again;' as it is also written in the second psalm, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.' Let any impartial man examine this passage, both here and in the first of Hebrews, and he will be forced to the conclusion that 'this day have I begotten thee,' is not referred by St. Paul, who certainly understood it, barely to the raising the body of Christ from the grave, and exalting him to be a mediator for man, at the Father's right hand. I might, I believe, my friend, adduce this text to support this eternal sonship. I am sure the second psalm may be adduced to prove his divinity.[2] There are other texts by which it may be substantiated that he is the Son of God by a secret and an ineffable generation; not only before he was made man, but before all worlds. His existence prior to all creation, is most positively affirmed, and yet is he as positively affirmed to be the Son of God, in our text book, the Bible.

Apollos.—Do, my friend—present the evidence.

Aquila.—Many texts have been brought forward by the best, and most learned divines, the force of which, by a specious explication, have been eluded by those who opposed the truth. I propose to adduce those, that cannot be understood in any other way, without wresting by force, their genuine sense. The first I adduced to prove his eternal generation, is that positive declaration of St. John, 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God,' &c.

Apollos.—But does 'the beginning' here mean before the origin of all things, before which the Word was?

Aquila.—Certainly,—I prove it. This expression agrees with that of Moses, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Now, no body questions, that 'beginning' here, means the commencement of creation. By this means, too, it is easy to see, how the Word was with God. For he could not have been before all creation, unless he had been with him; and besides, it is added, all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.' Now, all things could not have been made by him, unless he existed previous to all things.

Apollos.—But you know that Socinus and his followers, put a different construction on this passage. They understand 'the beginning,' to refer to the commencement of the gospel dispensation, and not that of the world. That as Moses, in treating of the world, began his history with its origin, so John in giving a history of the new creation, uses that phrase, but simply means by it that before John the Baptist commenced preaching, he (Christ) was appointed of the Father, or else his being with him, might mean that he was taken up into heaven to learn his Father's will, &c. And as to the other part, 'all things were made by him,' he supposes that it means, that nothing was done by his disciples, or apostles, without him.

Aquila.—What a wretched and forced interpretation of God's holy word. What man of common sense cannot see its weakness? This is full of absurdity. It is not likely that the evangelist would have vindicated the gospel from novelty, by saying 'that Christ was the word of God when John the Baptist preached,' and we have no history to prove that any preferred John to Christ, because he commenced preaching first.[3] Besides, 'and the word was God,' 'in the beginning,' cannot be consistent with itself, for he showed no signs of his divinity in

[1] Limborch. [2] Henry and Scott, in loco. [3] Limborch.

the beginning. He was esteemed a carpenter's son, until he went forth preaching and doing mighty works. And above all, the absurdity is still more apparent, if we bring up 'all things were made by him, which would be wholly inconsistent with the context. You will also find, Apollos, as absurd an exposition of this text, as that of Socinus, in the works of the late Mr. Jefferson, of Virginia, who, though a powerful statesman, a learned and great man, his very enemies being judges, to whom my native state owes so much, for the stability of its institutions, yet candour constrains me to say, was a very lame divine, if not a very poor christian.[1]

Apollos.—O, I see that such an exposition would be, of all absurdities the most absurd.

Aquila.—If Jesus Christ was before all creation, he must be God, of course, as already proved immutable, and if the son of God at any time previous to creation, he must have been so forever, and that generation eternal. To prove this, hear again what he says to the Jews: 'Verily, verily, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.' This appellation, attributed by Christ to himself, was so well understood by the Jews being always looked upon by them as the proper and peculiar name of the Deity, that upon this declaration of Jesus, 'I AM,' esteeming him guilty of blasphemy, they took up stones to stone him. Why? Because they thought him a man? No—but by this very expression he proclaimed himself God. All that has ever been adduced against this is not worth our notice. It is answered by the fact that the Jews said, that he, Christ, in so saying, had made himself 'equal with God.'

Apollos.—I confess that the mind cannot conceive of a being in every sense equal with God, who is not God. This is very evident.

Aquila.—But this is positively asserted. 'Who, says St. Paul, 'is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Again, when Paul speaks of Christ, by whom the last and clearest manifestation of the divine will was made to man, says—'Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.' In Revelations it is said, 'these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.' From all these texts it will appear that Jesus Christ had an existence before all creation; and they cannot be construed in any other way.

Apollos.—Yes, it would seem that he who was 'in the beginning,' 'with God,' 'who was God,' 'he who made all things, and without whom nothing was made, that is made,' and he who had an existence before Abraham, and was the first begotten of all creatures, must have been the Son of God, in a manner far more wonderful and inexplicable than that of his miraculous conception and birth, of the Virgin Mary.

Aquila.—The divinity of Christ is also proved by another fact, that you perhaps have not considered. In the Scriptures are ascribed to him all the attributes of the divinity. These could never be applied to a mere man.

Apollos.—Do give me the texts to prove this.

Aquila.—A being who is omnipresent, that is, every where, must be God. But the Scripture makes Christ say, 'where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;' and where 'they ask any thing in my name, I will do it;' and in his last blessed promise to his disciples, he says,

[1] Jefferson's works, 1st edition.

Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. None of which promises could be worth any thing, if he were not omnipresent.

Apollos.—Indeed this is very plain, I assure you.

Aquila.—Eternity and immutability are ascribed to him. 'They shall perish,' says Paul of the world and its appendages; 'they shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou (Christ) art the same, and thy years shall not fail.' Omniscience is also attributed to him. 'Lord, thou knowest,' says St. Peter, 'all things; thou knowest that I love thee.' 'Jesus,' says St. John, 'did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.' 'I am he,' saith Jesus, 'that searcheth the reins and hearts,' in his address to one of the churches of Asia. 'The Lord Jesus,' Paul says, 'shall change our vile body according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.' Here is his omnipotence. It will further be seen, that honour and glory are to be given him; and *that*, the honour and glory of God. 'All judgment is committed unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent him.' If these be not proofs of the divine nature of the Son, then I am wholly at a loss to understand what is scriptural proof.

Apollos.—And the divine perfections, you say, are also attributed to the Holy Ghost, in the Sacred Writings?

Aquila.—Most certainly. Omnipresence is a perfection that belongs alone to God. No finite being can be omnipresent, or in every place, at one and the same time. But says the psalmist, 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me.' Permit me to ask, can this be said of any but God?

Apollos.—This surely is powerful testimony in favour of the absolute divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Aquila.—I will give you a passage of Scripture equally strong, and as much to the point. 'Know you not,' says an apostle, 'that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.' What! Could this be true of the various members of the church, unless the Holy Spirit was omnipresent? and if so, he must be God. Eternity is also attributed to him, because he is the spirit which is in God, and proceedeth from him, without which it is impossible that there should be any God. Omniscience is also ascribed to him. 'The Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God.' 'No man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God. Again, omnipotence is proclaimed as one of his perfections, when he is said to be 'the finger of God,' 'the power of the Most High,' 'who disposes of his gifts to every man according as he will.' Lastly, Apollos, majesty and glory are ascribed to him, since we are commanded to be baptized in his name, as well as in that of the Father and Son; and blasphemy committed against him is said not to be forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come; both of which bespeak the majesty and glory of the Holy Spirit.

Apollos.—But does there not appear to be a subordination in the three persons?

Aquila.—It seems to me inferable, if we may allow ourselves to infer any thing on this very mysterious subject, that the divine essence is communicated to the Son, and the Holy Ghost; there being some sort of subordination, as you say, the Father being mentioned first, as having the divine nature in and of himself, while the Son and the Holy Ghost proceed from the Father; so as while there

are distinct persons, there is the same nature, three in one common and undivided essence, one God, from everlasting to everlasting.[1] Not only the Scriptures, but the common consent of the church, in all ages, has established this order in the persons of the Godhead. First the Father, then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost.

Apollos.—Although this union, acknowledged a mysterious one, cannot be comprehended, yet it must exist, for we are certainly allowed to pay adoration to the Son and Holy Ghost; and if they were not God, would not this be wrong?

Aquila.—It surely would; and from this very source I deduce an argument in favour of their divinity. God has denounced idolatry, but he saith when he bringeth in the Son, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' We are commanded to 'honour him as the Father;' to worship and obey him; to pray in the name of Jesus, and to the Holy Ghost, as well as to be baptized in those names. These are acts of worship, wholly inadmissible, if they were not God.

Apollos.—But the great objection seems to be the use of the word person, and the idea of one nature but three persons.

Aquila.—But this, my dear friend—can afford no solid ground for objection, for as Calvin has justly remarked, it 'is not a distinction of essence, which it is unlawful to represent as any other than simple and undivided.' It follows therefore, if the testimony of the apostle be credited, that there are in God three hypostases. And as the Latins have expressed the same thing, by the word *persona,* or person, it is too fastidious to contend about such a plain matter. If we wish to translate word for word, we may call it subsistence. Some have called it substance.[2]

Apollos.—Has the word person been used by the Latins only?

Aquila.—No. The Greeks, for the sake of testifying their consent to this doctrine, taught the existence of three προσωπα, prosopa, or persons in God, and both Greeks and Latins, notwithstanding any verbal difference, are in perfect harmony respecting this doctrine. Bear then in mind, the essence of Deity is simple and undivided. God is one. But in union with this Deity are three substances, HYPOSTASES, or *persons,* purely spiritual, eternal, and every where present; one in essence or nature: as the Scripture says, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I have purposely, Apollos, avoided all nice and metaphysical arguments on this subject, and have offered for your consideration those only which present themselves to me in the Sacred Writings. This doctrine we are required to believe, not to comprehend.[3]

Priscilla.—I never hear the subject of a Trinity in Unity discussed that I do not think of the apostle's remark, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh.' Indeed the merit of Christ's passion seems to originate here. For although he suffered in his own proper person as very man, yet when we remember that the Son of God, who was ever with the Father, was united to the human nature, to sanctify and make the offering acceptable, I see I think the value of every pang. I am sure as one said, 'truly this was the Son of God;' or as another, 'the God of nature was in agony' to save our world, and none but a God could save such a sinner as I.

Aquila.—This is practice. From the moment the promise was given, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, Christ's death took effect and saved all that have been saved. And could a creature, a mortal man, have done this? No! His name is called Emanuel, which is 'God with us.'

Apollos.—How many foolish questions have been raised in regard to this matter.

[1] Limborch, Calvin, Watson, Dick, and Dwight.
[2] Calvin, Watson, and Dwight.
[3] Kidd, Watson, and Dick.

Aquila.—Yes, and how unprofitable too. From this doctrine of the Trinity, we may learn to acknowledge the transcendent love of our God, who is represented as giving his Son, his only begotten Son, to make a propitiation for sin. This love of God, it seems to me, Apollos—is greatly enhanced, if this Son of God was not only born of the Virgin Mary, as it regards his humanity, but was the Son of God by an incomprehensible and eternal generation. Again, from the same consideration, we may learn the dignity and merits of a Saviour's passion. For though our Lord properly did suffer, and could suffer only in his human nature, yet does it enhance the excellency thereof, that the Son of God, who was manifested in the flesh, and made these sufferings acceptable, was united with God before all ages. And whatever the man Jesus did and suffered, the Son of God may be said to have suffered in his human nature.[1]

COLLOQUY XVII.

WORKS OF THE DEITY—THEIR DIVISION INTO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL—AND FIRST, HIS INTERNAL WORKS, COMMONLY CALLED DECREES—THE VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS BY WHICH THE SAME THING IS SIGNIFIED—THE DIVISION, ORDER, AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE DECREES—ERRORS CONCERNING THEIR EXTENT AND ETERNITY.

Aquila.—Well, my friend Apollos—we now enter upon a most delightful subject, the works of our God, which display the perfection of his nature, and manifest his glory in all the universe. These have been divided by divines into *internal* and *external.*

Apollos.—What is meant by the internal works of the Deity?

Aquila.—I mean what God does in himself, or rather what have been called the decrees of God.

Priscilla.—Indeed you must both take care and do not speculate, cleave to the word of God; as sure as you get into scholastic speculations, you will involve yourselves in some error.

Aquila.—We will try not to do this. The decree of God has been styled the *purpose* of the Diety. Without this purpose or counsel, as it has been argued, he does nothing.[2] This decree in Scripture is expressed sometimes by the word 'counsel.' Hence says the Lord in Isaiah, 'My *counsel* shall stand, and I will do my pleasure.' So it is said, 'The pharisees and lawyers rejected the *counsel* of God.' And in Ephesians, 'Who worketh all things according to the *counsel* of his will.' But sometimes this decree of God is styled his purpose. Hence, in Romans, Paul speaks of them 'who are called according to his *purpose*;' and to Timothy, 'who hath saved us,' &c. 'according to his own *purpose* and grace.'

Again, this decree of God is called 'foreordaining,' or predestinating. As by St. Paul, 'Whom he did foreknow did he also *predestinate*.' The same is sometimes expressed by 'foreknowledge,' or foreknowing: as in Acts, it is said Christ was delivered 'by the determinate counsel and *foreknowledge* of God.' And lastly, this decree of God is represented by the words *good pleasure* of God, as in St. Matthew, 'Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' According says St. Paul, 'to the good pleasure of his will;' and again, 'according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself.'

Apollos.—I have often noticed these Scriptures, and am now struck with the fact that they all allude to the same thing, viz: the *design, purpose, intention,* or as it is said, the *internal* work of God.[3]

[1] Limborch, Calvin, Watson, Dick, and Dwight.
[2] Calvin, Dick, and Limborch.
[3] Limborch and Schmucker.

Aquila.—They certainly do. The decree is the fixed and immutable purpose in the mind of Deity, concerning whatever he is about to do, to command, or suffer to be done by his free will.

Apollos.—But you know some have taught that the decrees of God are God himself.

Aquila.—This has been done indirectly if not positively. Thus most Calvinistic divines contend that God's decrees are eternal, and it must be evident that nothing but God can be eternal. It is certain that schoolmen have, on no solid reason, maintained this. But I oppose to it several things. 1. That the divine decrees are the free effects of God's will, as we see in the use of the word 'counsel;' which according to the original cannot certainly be an attribute, and at the same time a free action that might have been otherwise if God pleased.[1] 2. There are also decrees contrary to each other as well as different, I mean with regard to their effects, not their nature. For God decrees to create and then to destroy the world. Now, while his *purpose* is goodness, its effects are varied according to that variety of moral principle in the objects. 3. When these decrees or his purposes are fulfilled, they no longer exist; but God is the same. Now if they were attributes they must most surely remain.

Apollos.—The fact then is that the decrees of God are not the divine essence, but the volitions of Deity; which, as they might or might not have been, or issue freely from God, are really distinct from that essence.

Aquila.—Most certainly. You recollect what was said when we were on the divine will. We proceed now to consider, my friend—the divisions of these decrees; and 1. with regard to their objects. Some relate to what God would himself perform, as the creating man, giving his Son for the world, and raising the pious dead from the grave, &c. 2. Others relate to what he would command or forbid. To do the former he grants his grace to assist, and he permits a violation of the latter for wise reasons.[2]

Apollos.—But the assistance of grace does not oblige men to do good, and the divine permission does not force them to do ill, does it?

Aquila.—No!—Grace bestows the power of working, it is the principle of operation, but never forces man's will, much less does the permission of sin do it. The decree of God is the cause of a thing, only in the same way in which he concurs in its production.[3]

Apollos.—But is not the divine decree the origin of things, because all things that exist must have been first in the divine mind.

Aquila.—I admit all things are in the divine mind, in the order in which they occur in time, but he certainly does not decree their existence when he has never concurred in their production, and utterly detests them as unholy. We are ready to admit that God has decreed what shall be the essence of every thing, when it does exist, but he has never decreed the existence of all things. For instance, he decreed man's creation, to give him a law and grace to keep it, and these things exist according to that decree. He decreed that a violation of it should be punished with eternal death, it does not from thence follow that he ever decreed the introduction of sin, and predestinated man to eternal damnation, because he had decreed he should sin.[4] The truth is found here, he has left man at liberty to slight his grace, and does not hinder it, by the intervention of Omnipotence. Man exercises his own agency, and abuses that grace to his own destruction. God only permits sin. The decrees are sometimes divided into general and particular.

Apollos.—What do you mean by general decrees?

[1] Watson and Limborch.
[2] Watson, Fletcher, and Wesley.
[3] Whitby and Limborch.
[4] Whitby and Fletcher.

Aquila.—General decrees are those that relate to laws, for the general government of the world, and the salvation or damnation of man in general. As 'He that believeth,' &c. 'shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.'

Apollos.—What are particular decrees?

Aquila.—A particular decree is that intention or purpose by which God determines to do an act by a certain man. As to deliver Israel by Moses, have the priesthood filled by Aaron, and that David should be king instead of Saul. Again, particular decrees are simply an application of those that are general. For instance, God decrees to save the believer and damn the infidel. Here is the general decree. A believes and is saved, B is an unbeliever and is damned. This may be considered the particular decree, or the application of the general one.[1]

Apollos.—Are not all the decrees of God particular, and simply by being compared together are called general?

Aquila.—I mean by a general decree something which, though but one in itself, has not a single and a determinate object, but by a general sort of law, extends to a diversity of objects. Unless this, Apollos, be admitted, God cannot be said to give any laws to man. Thus, if by a special or particular decree, concerning the faith and unbelief, the salvation and damnation of every man, he absolutely decreed the eternal state of every man, then there are no laws that can be given him, by which he can be rendered responsible for obedience or disobedience. All is fixed of God. Nor could God, my friend—reward the pious or punish the ungodly, all would be simply an execution of divine decrees, in which man had no agency. This would certainly overthrow all the reasons for a judgment.[2]

Apollos.—But do not decrees sometimes occur in respect to particular things?

Aquila.—They do sometimes thus occur; but in the case of everlasting life or condemnation, there is no decree that is not an application simply of one that is general; unless it be as to sending Christ as the Saviour of the world. Of him it is said, that he 'was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.' As to others, the decree runs generally thus: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.' 'Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' He that believeth not, 'shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.' 'And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of Lord, shall be saved.' 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Here, my dear brother—are the general decrees, many more of which I could quote, and then leave you to see how they become particular when applied to an individual case.

Apollos.—I am satisfied of the correctness of your reasoning, but there is another division of divine decrees, I have not heard you name, I mean absolute and conditional.

Aquila.—Yes—absolute decrees are simply such as are suspended in their performance on no condition. Such are creation, Christ's mission, grace to obey God's call, and the last judgment. Conditional, are those which have some terms or condition implied or expressed, by the performance of which their execution is suspended. I prove it. Thus says the Lord, 'Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.' Again, 'The Lord is with you while ye be with him, if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.' 'If,' saith the Lord, 'ye be willing and obedient, ye

[1] Whitby and Fletcher. [2] Whitby and Limborch.

shall eat the good of the land, but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword.' 'If that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant shall I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: if it do evil in my sight that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I will benefit them.' 'If the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed,' &c. 'he shall surely live.'

Apollos.—These certainly are texts that plainly import and express a condition. But, my friend—they are all in the Old Testament.

Aquila.—Well, take a few out of many in the New. 'Ye are my friends,' saith Christ, 'if ye do whatsoever I command you.' 'For if ye live,' says Paul, after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' Again, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' To Timothy, Paul says, 'It is a faithful saying, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.' And in Hebrews, 'The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' And, my dear brother—to crown the whole, the Redeemer says, 'I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.'

Apollos.—My friend, these are very plain passages, and they do most positively set forth, in language not to be misunderstood, a condition; but I have heard it objected to such that they are not decrees, but promises and threatenings, to show the connection between faith and salvation, infidelity and eternal condemnation.[1]

Aquila.—1. I answer, this affects it not. What are promises and threatenings but a revelation of God's decrees, by which he shows the conditions on which he will save or condemn? and if one be conditional the other must. 2. Conditional promises and threatenings are inconsistent with absolute decrees, for if God offers salvation to all, and on condition of faith, when the damnation of some is decreed absolutely, such an offer is incompatible with the divine veracity and sincerity, and consequently overthrows all promises, and so of its opposite all through.

Apollos.—But according to this reprobates might believe and be saved, for there is, it is said, a necessary connection between faith and salvation.[2]

Aquila.—I admit they would be saved if they could believe; but according to the opinions of those who hold unconditional reprobation, reprobates are excluded by God's decree, from all the power and privileges of faith. To admit that God requires of them a condition they cannot perform, is still worse; for it presents the Deity in the attitude of one mocking and making a sport of his creatures. This is certainly not consistent with his being holy, just, merciful and good.[3]

Apollos.—But again, it is said that by this doctrine of conditional decrees, you place God in suspense, waiting for man's action. Now is not this, it is asked, absurd?

Aquila.—When God prescribes a law under the sanction of rewards and punishments, he does place himself in suspense, waiting for man's action, before that he decrees rewards or punishments.[4] Indeed, I think God intimates thus much in the Sacred Writings. I 'looked for it to bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.' Here is suspense, and a waiting for man's action. 'The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' 'Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in.' Now, although these texts do not mean that the divine Being waits, in a state of uncertainty for the event; yet they do evince that there is in God, as we

[1] Calvin, and Doctor Gill. [2] Ibid. [3] Whitby. [4] Limborch.

have elsewhere proved, something analogous to expectation, which never could be, unless God did suspend his irrevocable decree concerning man, for whose obedience he waited.

Apollos.—Indeed brother—my heavenly Father's conduct toward me, proves incontestibly his forbearance, and long did he wait before my return.

Aquila.—Yes,—and the uniform experience of every christian, indeed of the world, and the suspension of a judgment, all prove it.

Apollos.—Convinced of the truth of your views concerning the divine decrees, I next want their order.

Aquila.—This is a nice and difficult subject, and on it I have but little to say. It however appears to me, that this order depends chiefly on the execution of the decrees themselves. It is to be considered with regard to their priority or posteriority; and this is only in our way of conceiving of it.[1] This order is not to be taken from the natural connection of things, but from that order of causality that one thing bears to another,—the one being to be looked upon as the cause, and the other as the effect; and in this sense, God decrees the former, before he does the latter.[2]

Apollos.—Then, you do not think, with some, that Deity, by one single act of his will, decreed at once all things; and that there is no *prius* or *posterius*, that is first or last, in his purposes or decrees.

Aquila.—I surely do not; for then there would be no order, but downright confusion, as I could easily show.

Apollos.—But it is said by some, that the Almighty first decreed the end, and then the means by which that end was to be effected; and that the decree for the end may be looked on as the cause, and the means as the effect of that cause, when viewed with regard to the end.[3]

Aquila.—When Deity has absolutely decreed, or purposed an end, it will follow of course that he has also decreed the means of accomplishing it; and here the decree for the end precedes that for the means, as to order.[4]

Apollos.—But would it not from thence follow, that the decree of God, by which he wills the salvation of men, is prior to his foreseeing their faith and obedience? Now, as this decree cannot be prior, unless it be on account of its being the cause, must not the granting faith, and obedience, and the foresight thereof, be the effect of that cause?

Aquila.—I think the end may admit of a two-fold meaning. 1. As an end absolutely intended; which I have already admitted in the divine decrees, does precede the choice of means; and is indeed the cause why such and such means are chosen to accomplish this absolute end. But 2. An end, as a reward, which in the divine volition, does not precede the decree for the means, which are required beforehand, as the condition of that reward.[5]

Apollos.—Now, I see the order of the divine purposes; and I also see, I think, its application to all other objects. If God absolutely decrees an end, the means of accomplishing it, also follow. But if he decree it conditionally, and as a reward, then the decree for the means is prior to that, for the end. Thus God decrees that all believers shall be saved. Here faith, as the means, precedes the end, and the decree is conditional; but if salvation were absolutely and unconditionally decreed, the means would follow after that decree for the end, as to order.

Aquila.—Let me now turn your attention to the perfections, or attributes, as they are termed, of these decrees. The first I notice, is their *wisdom*. You will recollect, that whatever is opposed to wisdom, ought not to be attributed to the Deity. The apostle says, 'Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and

[1] Limborch and Whitby. [2] Ibid. [3] Calvin. [4] Whitby and Limborch. [5] Ibid.

knowledge of God;' 'how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out: For who hath known the mind of the Lord? And who hath been his counsellor.' Another attribute is *liberty*, or freedom, and from this the decree of the Deity is styled 'good pleasure,' in the original. Thus, 'according,' says St. Paul, 'to the good pleasure of his will;' and again, 'according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself.' Another is then, *immutability*,—'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure, saith the Lord.' 'So shall my word be, it shall not return unto me void,' 'it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.' 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'

Apollos.—How is this 'immutability' applied?

Aquila.—It is chiefly applicable to the general decrees of the divine Being, which never can be altered or annulled; but particular decrees being only an application of those that are universal, are changed, as those to whom they are applicable, change. This alteration is not on God's part, but on the part of man. The purpose of the Deity standeth sure. These three then, my friend—*wisdom, freedom*, and *immutability*, are all the perfections, or attributes, as they are called, of these decrees.[1]

Apollos.—I have generally understood that divines placed among the attributes of the divine decrees, their extent or amplitude, and their eternity. Of their extent they say, that nothing happens in the world but what Deity has decreed, and moreover, that all his decrees are eternal.

Aquila.—If by amplitude or extent you mean, that whatever is, Jehovah knows, and permits, for some wise reason, I agree with you; but if by it you mean, that God has absolutely determined whatsoever cometh to pass, without reference to contingency, then I demur, for it would make him the author of all sin and iniquity.[2]

Apollos.—But how is it as to their eternity?

Aquila.—This I deny wholly, and for several reasons. 1. Nothing is eternal but God. We have already proved this. His decrees or intentions are not essential to him, or a part of the divine nature, and therefore they are not absolutely *eternal*. 2. The divine decrees have been proved to be simply the effects of the divine will, or the intentions of Deity. They must therefore be posterior to his will, since the determination of a free will is necessary to their existence, and therefore they are not eternal. 3. Whatever is absolutely eternal, is also absolutely necessary: if then the decree be absolutely necessary, God, who does all things according to the counsel of his will, would be a necessary agent, which would be to destroy all religion; and from such a necessary agent there could be no just reward expected, as the result of goodness or vice, for God could not act otherwise than he does.[3]

Apollos.—But, my brother, it is said that in Acts it is written, 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.' And again, that the wisdom of the Gospel was 'ordained before the foundation of the world.' And further, that God hath 'saved us' 'according to his purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.'

Aquila.—I admit all these, and yet deny the eternity of the decree. 1. The first of these texts relates to calling the Gentiles, which James, by a recurrence to an ancient prophecy of Amos, recorded in the last chapter, proves to have been decreed by Jehovah several ages before. But 2. As to all of these texts which you have quoted, I admit that these things might have been before the creation of the world, and yet not therefore absolutely eternal. For instance: we

[1] Limborch.

[2] Schmucker, whose observations on the decrees are an able defence of the truth.

[3] Limborch and Whitby.

have the united opinions of the whole world that angels were created before our world was in being; yet we will not admit their eternity. Indeed the objections to this opinion are so futile that they are not worth naming. You must recollect that all these declarations in the divine word, while they evince the purpose of God to provide a Saviour, and open up the way to eternal life for man, will not allow of our attaching eternity to them, and thus making them one with God;[1] and the immutability of the divine purposes is founded on the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, not their eternity.

Apollos.—I have, my dear brother, detained you long, by asking so many questions. I was seeking information on this most difficult subject. You must pardon me. The arguments with which you have furnished me give the most exalted views of that purity and justice which are so conspicuous in all the dealings of our heavenly Father. As I learn, my desire for knowledge increases; the further you proceed, the more I am interested in this delightful science. Oh! I can but admire his character. I am lost, when I think of it, in amazement the most profound. Above, beneath, around me, all—all is filled with the glory of him, who filleth immensity.

Aquila.—Having finished our remarks on what are called the internal works of the Deity, by which are meant more particularly his decrees or intentions, called the purpose, pleasure, and counsel of God, we shall, at our next meeting, consider the creation of man. You may prepare yourself, my friend, to contemplate a being far inferior to that God you thus admire; but a being who is the workmanship of his hand, and destined, in his purposes, to abide with him, in an eternity of glory, beyond the bounds of this transitory world. Forget not that God is your Father.

Priscilla.—I rejoice to see you both so deeply interested. O how sweetly these evening hours pass away. The more I hear, the more I am convinced, our hearts may be mended by meditating constantly on God and his ways. I really am sorry when the time arrives for retirement; but then again I think, when we get where he is, in that eternal world of joy, our every hour shall find an employment that shall fill the minds and hearts of all his saints.

Apollos.—Yes! forever; even forever and ever.

COLLOQUY XVIII.

EXTERNAL WORKS OF THE DEITY—CREATION IN GENERAL—OF ANGELS—THEIR ATTRIBUTES, NUMBER, AND OFFICE—SATAN, AND HIS POWER TO TEMPT—THE SIX DAYS WORK.

Aquila.—In our last confere..ce we discussed the divine purposes or intentions, commonly called God's decrees, as the internal works of the Deity. We are now, my friend, to consider his *external* works. These are simply creation and providence. A just apprehension of them will point out his right to claim of us a reasonable service. We will consider creation first, and contemplate it in general, as the production, from nothing, of all that does exist, and then consider it as particular, or rather as that act of the Deity, by which he has brought into being our race.

Apollos.—I will remember this arrangement, and am ready to attend to the first branch of the subject, creation in general.

Aquila.—This is that act of the Divine Being, by which he has originated something from nothing.

Apollos.—Dear brother, I am afraid you will sometimes think me sceptical; but I want arguments for every emergency. I must inquire if something and nothing are not extremes, and how can they be brought together?

[1] Limborch and Whitby.

Aquila.—It is true they are extremes, and this never can be effected by natural causes, for such causes must have something on which to act. But an Almighty agent, of infinite perfections, can bring together those extremes, and by the production of material from nothing, as was the case, cause that something shall exist out of nothing. To affirm the one of any subject, is to destroy absolutely the other, since nothing cannot at the same time be something; and so of the converse. If by extremes be meant an infinite distance, that cannot be counteracted by an infinite power, I deny the position altogether, that nothing cannot become something, a position affirmed by materialists, for God can do all things that do not imply a contradiction in their nature.[1] It appears from the Sacred Writings, that the first mass was created out of nothing, and this was 'without form.' That this account of Moses is a reasonable one, is very easy to be proved. 1. Nothing can be co-eternal with the Deity, or in other words, it is easy for the mind to grasp the idea that there was a period when but one eternal being existed, and he was God. But 2. If the material out of which the world was made was eternal, and with the Deity, he could have no right over it, to change its form, or alter its modes of existence at his pleasure. And again: 3. Although a thing suspended in its existence and operation, as we have proved in our remarks concerning the divine decrees, on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, including the divine veracity, may be immutable or unalterable; yet am I certain that eternity would render any thing unchangeable. Now if the material of the universe existed forever, it is immutable, because eternal, and therefore God himself could have no power over it.[2]

Apollos.—How inconsistent is poor short-sighted man, who would, with his materialism, run headlong into atheism, or what is its equivalent. Those arguments are just what I wanted. Do proceed now with your account of creation.

Aquila.—Moses, in Genesis, gives an exact account of it; such as is to be met with no where else. The original word translated created, in the first chapter of Genesis, signifies not only a production from nothing, but also a formation out of pre-existing material, but by a miraculous energy, producing new qualities. Thus it is said in Numbers, 'if the Lord make (that is create) a new thing, and the earth open her mouth,' &c. Again, 'I form the light and create darkness.' 'Behold I create a new heavens and earth.' And says David, 'create in me a clean heart.' From this account of Moses we gather then that the Deity first created the material, and not this only but that by the energy and power of his word, he assigned to it all its varied qualities, and then arranged the whole in their proper order, placing each one in that sphere in which it should act.[3] At first the material was congregated, a rude and indigested mass, from a dark chaotic state, and we are struck with what I suppose, my friend—a fact, easy to be collected from the Mosaic account.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—That the Deity spoke into being, at the time he created the materials from which our earth was formed, the highest heavens and all its inhabitants. It is said, 'in the beginning God created.' Now this beginning seems to point out the time when God began to form something without himself, or to perform, as I have said, an external work. Some have supposed that at this the first operation of the Deity, barely the formless material of the earth was brought into being, out of which, at a subsequent period, he commanded things to assume their prescribed forms, and thence is dated the first day of the world's existence.[4] It is thought easy by some to conceive that, out of material previously created, the Almighty might form a world, which would date the era of its commencement

[1] Whitby, Limborch, and Clarke.
[2] Dick, Watson, and Limborch.
[3] Doctor Clarke.
[4] Limborch.

from the time of that formation, though the matter thereof had long before been ordered into existence.

Priscilla.—These are all speculations and of little profit.

Apollos.—Well, it is at least granted that Deity first formed the material, and then out of that material the universe.

Aquila.—Yes—matter was formed first from nothing, and out of that, by the word of God, this visible world came into being.

Apollos.—Deity then was the efficient cause of this creation.

Aquila.—To him and to him alone the Sacred Writings, which we have proved to be true, attribute the production of all that does exist. And his power is manifested in that it was not done mediately, or by the hands of another; but directly, by a word, saying, 'Let there be light and there was light.' 'Let there be a firmament,' and there was a firmament. Just hear the account. 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said let there be light and there was light.' 'Bless the Lord,' says David, 'that made the heavens and the earth.' The company of disciples, as related in Acts, lifted up their voices and said, 'Lord thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.' 'He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion,' saith Jeremiah, and 'this is the true God.' Indeed, Apollos, the first chapter of Genesis is but an account of creation, in which is set forth, in terms not to be misunderstood, the mighty power of him who formed the universe and all its inhabitants. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.' 'He spake and they were made, he commanded and they were created.' 'Through faith,' we understand, that 'the worlds were framed by the word of God.'

Apollos.—The worlds, not our world only, but all other worlds, my friend?

Aquila.—Yes—all others. We are taught by that revelation he has given of himself, that he not only formed this world, with all its lovely appendages, the sun, the moon, the stars, those vast worlds; but also the highest heavens and all their beatified millions. The heavens are not as some suppose, uncreated and eternal; but God formed the throne of his glory, and the shining retinue that surrounds the same.

Apollos.—I thought, my brother—you were about to enter upon the creation of poor abject man. You have carried me from this little creature and the speck of earth that he inhabits, to his majestic Maker; in thought, I find myself before his throne, in a place created for his own immediate presence, surrounded by an innumerable and shining retinue, who incessantly praise the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And were the angels created too?

Aquila.—They were. 'Praise ye the Lord,' says David, 'all his angels, all his hosts,' for he commanded, and they were created.' 'There was a day,' it is said in Job, 'when the sons of God,' angels because created by him, 'came to present themselves before him.' Do you not also remember that inimitable appeal of the Almighty to Job? When he sets before him a glorious display of his creative energy, in the production of the world and its appurtenances, on that day, when the 'morning stars sang together, and the sons of God,' angels, 'shouted for joy.' The Scripture then proclaims him their maker. If you will reflect a moment, you will also find that reason unites with revelation on this subject. If God did not create angels, then are they self-existent, consequently independent of and equal with God. Moreover, if so, he never could have rendered them subject to him or his power; but says the Bible, 'they are ministering spirits, sent forth of God,'

They are created by him and are his servants, and an opinion the reverse of this, is inconsistent with the divine government.[1]

Apollos.—But, my friend—what evidence have you that there are such beings? They are certainly invisible to us.

Aquila.—1. The word of God says so. 2. They appeared to holy men of old. And 3. to deny their existence, because they are invisible, is to become a Sadducee, indeed Apollos—an atheist, for God himself is invisible, and is there, therefore, no God?

Apollos.—But when were they created?

Aquila.—I cannot tell. The Scripture is silent as to this matter, doubtless they were created before this world was brought into being.

Apollos.—On what do you ground such a supposition?

Aquila.—On these things: 1. Immediately after the creation, the devil is said to have deceived our first parents. Now it is plain that there were evil angels, who had then revolted against God, who were cast out of heaven and were destined for torment. 2. It is possible that there was added to this rebellion a perseverance in sin, which would require some time, at least we are sure there were many engaged in that resistance to the divine authority, which would induce the opinion, that they existed sometime at least before man.

I presume that Deity first created the heavens, the glorious abode of beatified spirits. He then filled it with that superior order of intelligences, that inhabit those magnificent regions. A part retained their innocence; but some, as has been supposed, by *pride*, fell from their first estate, of purity and glory, and persevered therein, to their eternal confusion.[2]

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend,—why do you call them angels?

Aquila.—This is their name, not on account of their nature, but their office, as being the messengers of the Almighty. Thus, in the Apocalypse, the exhortations are to the angels, that is, the ministers, or messengers, of the seven churches of Asia. An angel is a messenger of God.

Apollos.—Can you tell me any thing about their nature?

Aquila.—It is spiritual and immaterial. They are styled spirits, in the word of God, and this is their substance. They are, in other words, without corporiety or composition. They can penetrate solid bodies, and many of them can enter and inhabit the same body; you remember the man possessed by 'a legion.'

Priscilla.—I had no idea that this subject would be so interesting. Do tell us their perfections or attributes, as they are solely made up of spirit, or mind.

Aquila.—These indeed are various, I should suppose: the first is *immortality.* Our Lord, speaking of man in a beatified state, says, 'neither can they die any more, for they are as the angels of God.' They have then no internal principle of corruption in them. True, they may be destroyed by him who made them, and their immortality must therefore be inferior to his. But he who made them, formed them to exist parallel with himself.

Apollos.—Of course they have understandings also.

Aquila.—Yes; and this is a second attribute. But, as I before said, their understandings, however superior to ours, are greatly inferior to that of the Almighty. This is easily proved, by the fact, that they are altogether ignorant of the last day, or time of the judgment. 'Of that day,' saith our Lord, 'knoweth no man, no! not the angels which are in heaven.' But we cannot well think of a spirit, without attaching to it the idea of understanding. A third attribute, is, freedom of will, without which, understanding would be of no avail; and their adoration of the Deity, so much commended in the Bible, would be involuntary, and by no means in accordance with our ideas of a rational and an acceptable worship.

[1] Limborch and Stackhouse.

[2] Limborch, Watson, and Wesley.

Apollos.—Well, I suppose you will let me add one, which you may call a fourth attribute, if you choose,—I mean their power. I remember some of their mighty deeds, recorded in the Bible. In one night they slew all the 'first born of Egypt.'

Aquila.—Yes,—and in one night also, the army of Sennacherib. And these very things demonstrate also their *agility*, which may be considered as a fifth. They can fly from place to place, from heaven to earth, appearing by sudden apparitions, as is the peculiar property of spirit, delivering in a moment the messages of their God.

Apollos.—But what is their number?

Aquila.—Turn to Daniel's prophecy, and read 'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit,' &c. 'thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.' St. John says, 'I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.' St. Paul says, 'Ye are come to Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.' Even old David speaks of the angels as 'many thousands.'

Apollos.—What a display of wisdom and power in him who made them! But there are good and bad angels, are there not?

Aquila.—Thus they are classed in the Sacred Writings. Good angels are those who have preserved their innocence, persevering in righteousness, and are thence called 'angels of light,' 'holy' and 'elect.' Those that are bad, revolted from God, and deserted his service, under the Devil, and are called 'his angels,' and are therefore 'evil spirits.'

Apollos.—The Scripture, I know, does not set forth any order or degrees, though it is natural to suppose there are degrees even among bad spirits. I want you now, my friend—to point out to me the offices of those angels that are called good.

Aquila.—Their great work is to praise the Lord, before whom they continually appear. 1. Their office is that of 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation.' Hence they are called angels, or messengers. And sometimes when God performs any signal work for the world, they celebrate his praises, even before men. Thus when the Redeemer made his appearance in the world, the shepherds of Judah, seated on the plains of Palestine, heard the angelic choir sing, a multitude being engaged in praising the Deity, 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men.' But secondly, they were appointed to several offices for Christ; thus, when the Devil left Jesus, the 'angels came and ministered unto him.' So when suffering on the cross, 'an angel appeared to and strengthened him;' and 'hereafter shall ye see,' said Jesus to Nathaniel, 'the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man,' i. e. *about, near* the Son of Man: they, in other words, accompany him. A third office of the angelic hosts, is, to announce the commands of God to men, and this either to a whole people, as the publication of the law among the Israelites. 'They received the law,' said St. Stephen, 'by the disposition of angels.' 'The law,' says St. Paul, 'was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,' i. e. was promulgated by angels. Hence the same apostle says, 'if the words spoken by angels was steadfast.' That is, if the word preached, 'the law, was steadfast,' they being the appointed ministers of the same.

Apollos.—But sometimes they were appointed to one, or a few persons, were they not?

Aquila.—Yes, and this is also a part of their holy and blessed work. Do you

not remember how many instances there are of this in the Bible? They appeared to Abraham, and Lot,—to Samson's parents, to Gideon, and Daniel; to Zachariah, to the Virgin Mary and Joseph, to the shepherds, as already shown; to the women who visited our Lord's tomb, and also to his apostles after his ascension into heaven.

Apollos.—My dear friend—I had no idea, that there were so many passages, that recorded the appearance of angels among men.

Aquila.—It is so. And a fourth office of theirs is to execute with unerring certainty and power, the commands of the Almighty, and this in several ways. Sometimes they preserve the pious from falling into dangers. Thus, says David, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Sometimes they deliver them from those dangers. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them.' You remember how the angel of the Lord delivered Lot and his family, from Sodom. The protection and assistance afforded Jacob, Elijah, Elisha, the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, and Peter in prison.

Priscilla.—Indeed, I am all amazement; what an interesting subject this is. The very angels may be around us at this moment. I never thought of these blessed messengers before after this way—messengers from heaven to bring about man's salvation!

Aquila.—Well—again, Sometimes, also, they are sent to correct by affliction, some fault or unbelief in God's children. Do you bear in mind the case of Zachariah, 'And the angel answering, said, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, because thou believest not my words.' Sometimes they are sent to punish us, for actual departure from God. Thus, an angel was sent to punish the ambition of David: after he had destroyed 'seventy thousand,' he 'stretched out his hand over Jerusalem,' but 'the Lord repented him of the evil.' Sometimes they are sent to execute judgments on the wicked. You remember how they executed the wrath of God on the men of Sodom; and 'the angel of the Lord slew in one night, the first born of the Egyptians. In one night the angel of the Lord smote upwards of one hundred and four score thousand of the Assyrians,' and 'in a moment the haughty Herod, on account of his pride.'

Priscilla.—Oh! this is enough to make one tremble. The hand of an angel might smite us in a moment.

Apollos.—How often have I read my Bible, and overlooked these things?

Aquila.—Good angels ever have a noble care for God's children. Sometimes they visit the earth, to convey from thence the souls of God's faithful children, to a place of bliss and rest. 'The rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment;' but Lazarus, the pious beggar, on his decease, was 'carried by angels to Abraham's bosom;' and at the last morning, they shall be sent to summon the saints, and gather them from the one end of heaven to the other. 'He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel.'

Priscilla.—What a precious thought is this. In death's dark hour, angelic bands shall wait around to bring God's children home; and when Old Time shall fail, they shall be present, and gather the redeemed from every land.

Aquila.—Better than all, Priscilla—Jesus will be there, and cheer the loneliness of death's dark hour.

Apollos.—Romanists think every man has a guardian angel to attend him from his birth, and that in every exigency he may pray to him in full assurance of being heard.

Aquila.—I object to this, as do all enlightened protestants, for two reasons. 1. Though the Scripture speaks of angels taking care of particular persons on some occasions, it does not assign a guardian angel to any person, especially every individual.[1] 2. I object, because we are taught to ask of God all we need, through the merit of Christ, and worship him alone, who is able to supply all our wants.

To call on a created intelligence, is to distrust the divine goodness, reject his aid, and limit his ability; and it is, moreover, superstitious and idolatrous. Remember, my friend—God is ever present, and he is a sure help in time of need.

Apollos.—Well, tell me now in regard to the bad angels,—are their wills so determined to evil, that they cannot do good?

Aquila.—The Scripture affirms nothing positively in regard to this. Whether they are deprived of all power to do good, I am not able to say. One thing, however, is certain, that they are so hardened, that they meditate on nothing but that which is evil. They seduced men, and it seems will not perform any good. They are doubtless hardened in iniquity, despairing of pardon, being by a just and an irreversible decree, doomed to endless torment. This will also be the case of the damned of men, in the other world. They will have no glimpse of hope; all will be despair.

Apollos.—What is their employment?

Aquila.—They set themselves to oppose the glory of God, and prevent the salvation of men. They have a prince; he is called Satan, the Devil, our adversary, and the accuser of the brethren.

Apollos.—He has a kingdom; but is it not subject to the divine power?

Aquila.—He has a kingdom called the 'kingdom of darkness,' and has a powerful dominion over all the ungodly, who are led captive at his will. Yet is his authority restrained within certain bounds by God's power,—over which, he cannot pass, and within which he cannot rule, but by the permission of the divine providence.

Apollos.—But does not God give these wicked spirits greater liberty at some one time than another?

Aquila.—Yes, indeed; sometimes to punish the wicked, as was the case with Saul. 'But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him.' Thus was it also with Ahab. 'And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And a Spirit came and said, I will go forth and be a lying Spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so.' But again: sometimes they are permitted to punish some in the flesh for spiritual good. Thus says St. Paul: 'deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' And it would appear that they are permitted to assail some in different ways, for their reformation. Of Hymenius and Alexander the same apostle says—'whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they learn not to blaspheme.' I am sure that he is permitted to assail and tempt God's children, however perfect, for the 'trial of their faith, which is more precious than gold tried in the fire.' See, my friend—the case of good old Job, as mentioned in the two first chapters of the book by his name, how sorely did Satan afflict him in his property, in his family, and in his person? Yet in all this, 'Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' The Lord says of the church at Smyrna, 'the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Strange as it may appear, Deity permits him to buffet the saints, and thus makes him a messenger,

[1] Limborch.

against his will, to preserve them from sin, as was the case with St. Paul: 'Lest,' says he, 'I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.'

Apollos.—But is not their chief power exercised in tempting and inciting men to sin?

Aquila.—Yes,—this is the work in which, by divine permission, they are engaged. Hence he is called the tempter, and goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But you must remember, that the whole of their temptation consists in seducing men,—they cannot force man's will to what is evil. They lay before him motives to sin; but blessed be God! my dear friend, man may resist him successfully, especially in the strength of divine grace.

Apollos.—You say they seduce men,—pray, how?

Aquila.—Bear one thing in mind; spirit can act on spirit, as matter acts on matter. This admitted, you may see how they can offer to man, and doubtless do, whatever is most likely to prevail, and what they esteem most efficacious in seducing him. Sometimes they use instruments to persuade him. Thus Eve was tempted under the form or shape of a creature, that resided in the same lovely garden in which she dwelt, and the instrument of seducing her husband. His chief instruments are wicked men, the accomplices of his malicious designs. These he rules and sways as the prince of darkness, and thus manifests his enmity to God, whose works he seeks to destroy. Through them he sometimes acts as an angel or messenger of light, having his false prophets, showing lying wonders, to deceive if it were possible, the very elect.'

Sometimes he infuses loose ideas into our minds, in dreams of the night; and when awake, suggests those wicked thoughts that move upon the imagination, and affect the animal spirits of man. Yet with all his accomplices, and all his art, he cannot constrain. We may, as said before, resist in the divine strength; and to this end, are called by the Almighty, to 'put on the whole armour of God,' that we may withstand his wiles. We are commanded to resist him, with the promise that he will flee from us. Though he comes sometimes with all the violence of a roaring lion, yet are we still to resist him 'strong in faith,' expecting the grace of our heavenly Father to assist us.

Apollos.—Do not the devils sometimes possess men's bodies, and greatly afflict them?

Aquila.—A man must be the veriest sceptic, to doubt that devils in the time of Christ, were permitted to possess men's bodies, and indeed sometimes their minds. Mention is made of the persons, their names, their families, their residence; the time, the place, and all the circumstances of their cure. They were not then denied, and have never since been disproved. Christ cured them. They affected some with distempers or diseases, and tormented them continually; others at certain periods. But recollect, all the power they possess, is natural, and they can only hurt man by natural means.

Apollos.—I suppose you recollect, that Romanists suppose there are demoniacs still in the world, and among christians?

Aquila—I do,—and popish priests declare that those possessed with them are cured too, by their exorcisms and pretended miracles. I could name many of their famous cheats.

In the days of Christ, demons were permitted to possess individuals, by a wise providence, that, by the miracles necessary to cast them out, and cure the possessed, the glory of Christ might be manifest, and the authority of his doctrine, and the divinity of his gospel be made known to all. There is no doctrine now, to be confirmed. Those that are essential are abundantly proved, and all the idle tales of demoniacs in India, China, and among the aborigines of America, have

been asserted for a purpose, and are no better authenticated than are the miracles of the church of Rome.

Apollos.—You say they were permitted to possess men, by a wise providence?

Aquila.—You must remember, that devils are the executioners of God's judgments. They do not possess men at their pleasure, nor depart from him but by divine power. 'Satan cannot cast out Satan,' if he would. To admit this, would be to adopt the idea of the Jews, who said, 'He casteth out Satan by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.'

Apollos.—I am more than ever convinced of the magnificence, justice, power, and goodness of God. I now see man, as I have ever considered him, an agent, blessed with freedom of will, and abundance of grace for moral action; Satan, the adversary of God and man, cannot constrain to sin. Man is the author of his own woes. If he consent and yield to the devil, he often dashes in one fatal moment, from his own lips, the cup of salvation, and all the means of everlasting life.

Priscilla.—O! that the mother of our afflicted race, had never consented to taste the forbidden fruit. By that one act, she entailed on all her daughters, woes beyond description, and on our partners, toil and pain; and on all our offspring, but for Jesus, the loss of heaven.

Aquila.—True,—but what a delightful thought is it, that as sin abounded, grace did much more abound. In Christ all are made alive. Let us depend on him not only for a deliverance from the power of our adversary, but also a salvation from all the dire effects of that act to which he seduced our first parents. Before we part for the night, Apollos—let us consider the creation of the world, that at our next meeting, our undivided attention may be turned to the creation of man, the lord and master of this lower world.

Apollos.—Moses says, in the first chapter of Genesis, that God was engaged six days in creating the heavens, earth, and all in them. From the description we have had of his wisdom, and ability, could he not have done the whole in one day?

Aquila.—Yes, my friend—in less time than an hour, with one word only; but Deity chose to introduce them into being with order, each day having its peculiar work, and all things created at intervals of time. Suppose him the first day to have created the material, that is, something from nothing, out of which he then created or formed light, that all his subsequent works might be visible; by which I understand the principal caloric, and all the means of light and heat. On the second day, the firmament, the Hebrew means expansion: I suppose this to be the vast space, if I may so speak, in which birds fly, called atmosphere—through which the sun, and all its dependent planets, are now visible. I have already supposed the material for creation, formed in the 'beginning,' at least on the first day; and we find on the third, when the earth was to be created, this material all ready, and that day's work was simply to separate the dry land from the waters; the former was called earth, the place proper for the habitation of man and beast. The sea was parted from it,—and on the same day, it brought forth grass, and trees, with their seed, and fruit preparatory for man's use, and their own propagation.

On the fourth day, he created the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars. By which I understand, he arranged the planetary system, and threw the light created in the first day, into its own proper orbs; the sun to rule the day, and the moon the night; and these to be for signs and for seasons, for days marking or measuring time, as days and nights, spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

On the fifth day, God created fish and fowl, the one for the sea, and the other for the atmosphere,—the one to swim, the other to fly.

Apollos.—Just look at this, brother. This is the first time in which God is said to bless his works.

Aquila.—Yes; here was the commencement of animal life. God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply; and there are no parts of animated nature, that have the power to propagate their species to such a vast amount, as the inhabitants of the sea, and the fowls of the air.

On the sixth and last day, God created the animals of the earth. Moses says, 1. Beasts: I suppose these to be lions, bears, tigers, &c. now wild and savage creatures. 2. Cattle, properly domestic animals, which love to abide about the dwelling of man, their master. 3. Creeping things, serpents, worms, insects, &c. and lastly man, whose creation we will discuss at another time: these were all assembled together, and laid down in peace, in Eden's lovely bowers; the lion with the lamb, and the wolf and the kid—all uniting to obey man, the favourite of heaven, and appointed by it to be their common lord. On the seventh day, God rested from all his works, and he sanctified, i. e. set it apart, for the sabbath, or day of rest.

COLLOQUY XIX.

THE CREATION OF MAN IN THE IMAGE OF DEITY—THE IMMORTALITY OF HIS SOUL—HIS UNDERSTANDING AND WILL.

Aquila.—After God had created the world, and the various animals that inhabit the same, he produced man as the masterpiece and lord of creation. He did not say as he had done before, 'let there be light,' 'let the earth bring forth,' &c. but when about to make man, he seems to have set forth the excellency of this work, as if he demanded the attention of all heaven, to witness the creation of an Intelligence made in his own image, and so far surpassing all his other works.

Apollos.—Man is called a compound being,—is he not?

Aquila.—He is. A combination of matter and spirit. I notice, 1. The formation of his body; Gen. 2, 7. This was created out of the dust of the earth, from whence the first man is said to be of the earth, earthy,—but woman, his lovely companion, he formed out of one of his ribs, that, being 'flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone,' she might accompany man in all his course,—share with him the sorrows and joys of life, and ever be esteemed by him as 'his own body.' The excellency of this body consists, 1. In its being erect, or upright, designed to look toward and admire its Creator, and the shining heavens, his works; while those of other animals are prone to look downwards, on earth, as the fountain of all their good.[1] 2. In its beauty and symmetry, as a habitation for an immortal soul, and a tabernacle for a holy God. This is so contrived, that to deprive it of a member, is to diminish its beauty, and make it imperfect. But, 3. This excellency is still more apparent, in that this body is possessed of organs of sense, by which the soul receives notices, and passes judgment on external objects. By these, it is rendered capable of pleasure or pain; and they also render him a proper subject of laws prescribed of God, to which the Deity demands the obedience of mortals.

Apollos.—Well, into this body, Moses says, 'God breathed the breath of lives, and man became a living soul.' Do explain what is this breathing, and what is a soul?

Aquila.—I am not able to explain this divine breathing. One thing, however, is certain, that it denotes an immediate production, whereby God created a soul, and placed it in that body which he had made. This remarkable passage shows,

[1] Ovid's Met.

that man's soul is not the product of his body. It was not made at the same time with it, or of matter. It is immaterial,—it is, if I may so speak, the breath of God, or rather the product of the breathing of the 'Lord God.' It will not perish with the body; it cannot be committed to the grave. It must live forever.

Apollos.—Give me the evidence of this immortality.

Aquila.—By the passage just quoted, this immortality is sufficiently proved. It is there called the 'breath of lives,' emphatically a living soul; but in the New Testament it is said, 'men may kill the body,' but not the 'soul;' and in Ecclesiastes 'the spirits of men' are said to 'return to God who gave them.' These, and scores of others, may be adduced, to prove his immortality a scriptural truth; and reason unites its evidence, to show that from the immateriality and independency of the soul on the body, it must most certainly be immortal.[1]

Apollos.—Yes; and it does perform its own operations independent of the body. This I have often observed.

Aquila.—Do you know that the Scriptures prove this? Read the memorable passage where St. Paul says of himself, 'I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth, such an one caught up to the third heavens.' Now, the conclusion is inevitable, that if Paul did not believe that the soul could carry on its operations without the body, and that a revelation might be made to it otherwise, than through bodily organs, and wholly independent of matter, he never would have said, 'whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.' And again, how could a dialogue be carried on between father Abraham, and the rich man, his body being in the grave, unless the soul, when the body is dead, can perform all its vital functions?

Apollos.—Well, all this admitted, proves its immortality and its existence, beyond the Jordan of death,—but what, brother, is its nature?

Aquila.—The most I can say on this, is, that it is that immortal principle in man, whose essential act is to think, and without which it cannot be supposed to exist at all.[2] In proof of this, remember that the soul does not even in this world, make use of the body as an instrument to promote thought; on the contrary, when it is disposed to think seriously, it does of its own accord, abstract itself from the body, and all things belonging thereto, and at such times is capable of attending to nothing that is without itself. The conclusion is also irresistible, that if the soul can, here, free itself from external objects, and their influence, so as not to feel or regard them, it can exercise thought, which is its peculiar property,—when all external objects of a sensual nature shall be far removed from it.[3]

Apollos.—These answers are very satisfactory to my mind. I want now a view of the faculties of man's soul.

Aquila.—There are two essential acts, called faculties of the soul: Understanding and Will.

Apollos.—Are these distinct from the soul, and from one another?

Aquila.—It has been supposed by some that they are, but the fallacy of such an opinion is obvious. Suppose two such powers distinct and separate in their operations. Then one of these faculties can only understand and judge; but the other is only capable of willing or not willing. Admit this to be so, and the will is capable of being carried out to every object by a brutal impulse, without the least advice or choice; or it may be necessarily forced to *will* or *not will*, by the determination of the understanding: both which are absurd. The former destroys the nature of virtue and vice, which consists in choosing or refusing what is agreeable or repugnant to reason; and the latter renders the action of the will

[1] Drew. [2] Locke. [3] Drew.

necessary, as it cannot but be determined to what the understanding dictates. This would preclude the necessity of all law, destroy the reason of all virtue and vice; and remove forever the foundation, consequently, of all rewards and punishments.

Apollos.—Give us then your own views of these faculties.

Aquila.—The soul, I think, does by itself, without any intervening powers, flowing from, or distinct from it, both understand and will. Now, because it acts after different ways, about one and the same thing; according to our way of conceiving of things, it has attributed to it several powers. When the soul understands and judges of a thing, it is called *understanding;* when it is inclined to an object, it is called *will.* And although the understanding and will, be different acts of the soul, yet because the soul does not always actually will or understand, and sometimes applies its understanding or will, to this or that object, and indeed has the power of suspending its action, and directing it elsewhere,—from hence it is supposed to have two powers or faculties, separate and distinct from each other.

Apollos.—What then, do you suppose to be the human understanding?

Aquila.—It is that act of the soul, which apprehends and judges of an object, under the notion of a being that is true or good; and this act as one of pure intellect, is evidently natural and necessary, and apprehends more or less clearly any object, as it bears more or less proportion to it. Indeed, this is evident in all the actions that are observable in the understanding. As 1. Simple apprehension: when once an object is proposed to the understanding, that is adequate to it, it necessarily apprehends it clearly and distinctly, and cannot do otherwise. On the contrary, the apprehension is obscure and confused of any object that is disproportionable, unless by education and practice, the understanding be raised so as to acquire a proper proportion to its object; and then it will duly apprehend. 2. In judging of a proposition true or false, the understanding must assent to that proposition that is plain, and suspend its judgment concerning one that is obscure. 3. In making deductions there is the same necessity. When a syllogism is proposed, in which there is a fair conclusion from the premises, the understanding ever acknowledges that conclusion to be just, provided it apprehends it rightly; and indeed, in comparing objects together, it ever prefers that which appears most eligible, and rejects what seems less so.

Apollos.—What then do you define the will to be?

Aquila.—That act of the soul which is inclined to an object under the notion of good; and the property of the will is liberty: by this it has authority over its own actions so far as to determine to do, or to let it alone; and indeed this is so essential, that without it there can be no will. It is the foundation of all virtue or vice, and of all that religion which God requires.

Apollos.—I can easily see this; for if the will be not free, there is no virtue in obedience, and no vice in disobedience—all divine laws are a mere mockery, and are unjust. Promises and threatening, exhortations and dehortations, would be to no purpose; moreover, rewards or punishments would alike be unequal.

Aquila.—This is certainly so. Indeed the word of God, natural conscience, and the almost unanimous consent of all mankind plead for this liberty of will. These say to every man that he has a principle of action lodged in his own soul, a power of committing or omitting an action; and if it be begun, of continuance or forbearance; and in proportion as he volunteers in doing, or not doing, he is guilty or innocent.

Apollos.—I really believe, no man can dare openly deny this. It is a self evident truth, and even those who plead for the fatal necessity of events, do indeed also talk of the freedom of will, and man's guilt.

Aquila.—Yes; they endeavour to reconcile the necessity of events with liberty

of will. In order to this, new definitions are invented, suited to their own opinions, which though different in words, can never make any alteration in the nature of things, or reconcile contradictions. These always mutually destroy each other.

Apollos.—Some maintain a notion that the will is free from all constraint; and that liberty is consistent with necessity, since it wills without force.

Aquila.—But in the same way, all spontaneous actions, even the most necessary, would be free, and *liberty* will not then be the property of the *will*, but common to all spontaneous powers whatsoever: nay, that thirst in man, for the chief or greatest good, will be free, and not necessary ; and the greatest necessity will be liberty, or freedom, which is absurd.[1]

Apollos.—But, brother—some who perceive that something farther is requisite to a formal notion of liberty, add to this immunity from constraint the ultimate and practical judgment of the understanding, which sweetly attracts the will, and so determines it to one part of a contradiction, that it cannot be inclined to the opposite side, but necessarily submits to that determination of the understanding.

Aquila.—The unreasonableness of this will appear as well as its absurdity, if you consider,

1. That this in itself is downright fatality, and the highest necessity of all human actions. The notion of liberty is to be sought for either in the will or in the understanding. In the former, it cannot according to this opinion be expected, as it is necessarily determined by the ultimate judgment of the understanding; nor in the latter, for we have proved its action already necessary, and that of necessity we apprehend an object more or less clear, according as it is adequate to the understanding.

2. But, secondly, if the will be necessarily determined by the practical judgment of the understanding, then there can be no sin that deserves punishment; because it will depend either on the judgment of reason or on the will. But as proved, it is owing to neither; not to judgment, for its act is purely natural and necessary, error is the greatest crime the judgment can be guilty of, and as this is involuntary, it is not punishable; nor can it be according to their notions of the will, for it is as they say obliged to follow the erroneous decision of the understanding, and therefore deserves not punishment.

3. I cannot moreover see how there can be any sin against conscience, for to act against it, is to act against the dictates of the understanding; but if the will necessarily acts in accordance with the decisions of the understanding, then it cannot certainly be against conscience. From these premises, the conclusion is inevitable, that the understanding has no such dominion over the will, as properly or expressly to command this or that; and the last or highest act of it is that of judgment, whereby it suggests to the will what is eligible, and among those things eligible, that this is good, that better, and another the best of all; and that it is meet to do one thing and proper to avoid another. Yet, nevertheless, the will may or may not, as it chooses, run in accordance with the decisions of the understanding.

Apollos.—True liberty, then, of the will is an active indifference, whereby having all things requisite for action, it may or may not act; it may choose either of two things according to its own pleasure.

Aquila.—Yes—and this liberty or ability of choice is so essential to will, that man had it not only in his innocent state, but in every condition not excepting a state of sin. Sin is an act of free power, it does not destroy the power to will, and though contrary to virtue, it is not contrary to liberty of will. Its debilitating effects extend to all the principles of the understanding, and as the foundation of

[1] Limborch.

the fall so debilitates or paralizes the will that it needs the influence of grace to renovate and restore to its *primeval* state, yet that grace, while ready to strengthen and assist, does not force.

Apollos.—With my mind thus satisfied in regard to the powers, or as they are called, faculties of the human soul, I approach in my mind 'a subject which I want you to explain.' In Genesis i. 26, 27 verses, it is said that God created man in his own image. Pray tell me, in what did this peculiarity consist, for it is not said thus of any other creature?

Aquila.—This likeness did not consist in any outward form, for as we have proved, this would be repugnant to the spirituality of the divine nature. And an upright form can be no more like God, than one that is bending or declining. This image then must have consisted in some similarity between the qualities and attributes of man's soul and something in the Deity. Some great men, in order to carry out their views, in regard to the fall of man, struggle hard to prove that this image of God simply consisted in his dominion over the world of creatures God had made. It is evident that this is only an 'accident;' and although a limited dominion may be an imitation of one that is absolute and vast, yet it is not said that man was created in the image of God's dominion, but in the image of God himself; and again he was formed in God's image, according to the history, that he might be capable of and have dominion over his creatures, and this dominion was a consequence on his formation in that image.

Apollos.—Well, you do not think that this image ought to be considered as placed in some one essential quality of the soul only?

Aquila.—By no means. It appears to me, after a close investigation of the arguments on both sides, that it consisted in a resemblance to the natural and moral image of Deity.

1. In spirituality. God is the Father of Spirits. He breathed into man the breath of lives, and he became a living soul, a spiritual being, capable of being acted on by Spirit, and of serving his spiritual author in 'spirit and truth.' Man then is an immaterial being, as we have already proved.

2. The Jews always considered a part of this image at least to consist in immortality, 'For God created man,' say they, 'to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity;' and the laws of God against murder are founded on the fact of this immortality. He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in 'the image of God made he man.' The crime this law forbids consists not in putting to death a mere animal, but in this that it terminates the probationary state of an immortal intelligence, and places him in that changeless condition, where he will be deprived of those means of preparation, that man is here blessed with, the space for repentance and the privilege of faith.

Apollos.—I suppose you add to these the intellectual powers of man?

Aquila.—Certainly; and these properly are called the natural image of God in man, an image that cannot be effaced. Man, as we have proved, possesses and exercises understanding and will. He is formed to know, and is capable of choosing to do the will of God, or of refusing the same. My candid opinion is that next to his original purity, the most striking feature in this image of God in man is that he is a 'free agent.' He has the fearful power of determining his own actions. He may decide for happiness or misery, for heaven or hell, he has done this a thousand times in his generations.

3. This natural image of God in man is the foundation of his moral image which was also a distinguishing feature in the creation of man. 'Lo!' says one, 'this only have I found, that God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions.' And there is an allusion to this image of God in man, where Paul says, 'And have put on the new man, which was renewed in knowledge,

after the image of him that created him.' And again, 'Put on the new man, which after God is renewed in righteousness and true holiness.' Here the change introduced is set forth as simply the restoration of the divine image, which had been lost; and he says that image consisted in 'knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.' In proof, moreover, Apollos, of this, I adduce the fact that the sacred historian has said, that God pronounced his creature man 'very good.' God was then speaking of a creature capable of moral action; he saw him, he pronounced him good, pre-eminently so, and had there been about him any imperfection in his natural powers, as understanding and will, or moral qualities, of which he could not have been capable, if he had not have been a spiritual intelligence, capable of knowing and willing, Deity could not have been so rash as to pass a judgment of this kind.[1]

Apollos.—Man was ignorant of sin, but you somewhere proved that a knowledge of it was not a perfection. Indeed sin, ignorance, misery, and death are all intimately connected.

Aquila.—Let not your views extend to an improper height in regard to man's primeval perfection. Many have erred on both sides. Some have supposed him almost equal to angels in knowledge, others as hardly acquainted with the rudiments of knowledge. The truth is, he was created lower than the angels, but with a stronger and more vigorous intellect doubtless, than any of his fallen sons. This may be gathered from his ability to name the beasts of the earth, according to their natures.

Apollos.—All, however, agree in the moral excellence and purity of the first man.

Aquila.—Indeed they do not; for some fix his excellence at such an elevation, that it will be hard for us to see how he could fall from it; while others grant him but little superiority over his descendants, and make his fall a matter comparatively of small moment.[2]

Apollos.—Give me now your own views.

Aquila.—It is not necessary to suppose man in his primeval state acquainted with all the principles of natural, moral, and mental philosophy. In regard to his knowledge, I suppose he had that faculty of the soul, if it be a faculty, in its right and proper exercise; so that he willingly received, firmly retained, and heartily approved of religious truth. In this knowledge, as spoken of in Scripture, is supposed to consist; and there is no evidence of knowledge by intuition, but by revelation. Angels themselves, however quick and certain in procuring, obtain their knowledge, it is possible, by observation and study. While a part of man's likeness to Deity consisted in knowledge, he exercised this in acts of goodness and in obedience to him who gave him all. His understanding was capacious, being created in his maturity, his reason was clear, his judgment uncorrupted, his conscience upright and sensible. And on the whole, he knew his duty. He willed most cheerfully to do it. He loved his creator supremely. His image—purity, was stamped upon his soul—'even righteousness and true holiness,' as Paul says; so that he was not only free from all sin, but there was the presence of every positive virtue.

Apollos.—My dear brother—although I can hardly conceive of such an exalted state as this, partaking as I do of the dire effects of sin, yet I cannot see how man's primeval state could fall below this standard. His fall, exalted as he now is in creation, as to intellect, will, and capacity for moral action, from his paridisacal state, must suppose a glory, dignity, and a moral greatness of a very exalted kind. This must be apparent, if from nothing else, from the degree of guilt charged on him who fell, and the aggravating circumstances of his offence, is deducible from the tremendous consequences which followed.

[1] Doctor Clarke on the Primeval state of Man. [2] Limborch.

Priscilla.—My mind has been, all this evening, on Adam and his fair partner, in the garden of Eden. I have been considering him as the lord of creation, and my practical inference, from the subject is, how well was such a man qualified to represent his Lord on earth. The psalmist says, 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep, yea, and the beast of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.'

Apollos.—But when we look at him as he now is, we are constrained to say, oh! how are the mighty fallen. What is man now? Who that views him can doubt his fall? Who that contemplates him, that does not feel the keenness of that remark, 'In Adam all have died.'

Aquila.—But blessed be God. There is a second Adam who has brought life and immortality to light, 'who by the grace of God tasted death for every man;' 'and gave himself a ransom for all.' And we, may not only be restored to a state of purity, but enter our sacred master's joy and gather the fair fruit of immortality from the tree of life, and eat, and be happy for ever and ever.

Apollos.—O! pray for me that I may be there.

COLLOQUY XX.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE—ITS NATURE AND DIVISION INTO GENERAL AND PARTICULAR—PROVIDENCE WITH RESPECT TO MEN—THEIR PRESERVATION AND GOVERNMENT—ITS USE.

Aquila.—We now proceed to consider another external work of Deity. It is his Providence, which is simply that omnipotent and constant government of God by which he rules the world and the minutest creatures therein, especially man. This he does in a manner becoming his wisdom, suitable to the nature and condition of the creature, and tending to its benefit, and his own glory.

Apollos.—Some have denied the doctrine of Providence altogether.

Aquila.—They have; but in so doing they have denied God, for he is to be known by his works principally; and if we attribute them to chance or to a law of fate, there would be no argument by which to prove the existence of Deity. Indeed to deny this is virtually to embrace atheism.

Apollos.—The difficulty in my mind is not in admitting the thing itself, but in comprehending its mode of operation. For instance, what is the object, what are the actions, and what is the manner of the divine providence.

Aquila —These questions I will try to answer. 1. The object is the universe of God, or more properly, all things therein, the meanest not excepted;—and it is not sufficient to suppose that God takes care of the species of things only, but of every individual under each species; for God cannot be said to take care of the whole, without also preserving the parts that compose that whole. Now to show how it is exercised about all things, 2. we have only to consider its actions.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—They are preservation, and government. 1. Preservation is that act of divine Providence by which he maintains all his creatures, in that state as it regards their essence, and in the exercise of those faculties with which they were originally created, during that space of time that may appear best to infinite wisdom. And this is true either of individuals or species. For instance, God preserves some individuals unto the end of the world—as the sun and moon; others only for a short space of time, when they die and perish. The species he preserves, through the medium of a constant propagation of individuals, and hence there is a regular succession of them; and although they are individually

of short duration, yet are they perpetuated by one succeeding the other—as men and animals.[1]

Apollos.—There is however, a difference of opinion in regard to the fact of this action of Deity being *positive* or *negative*. By positive, I mean that act of the Divinity whereby he immediately influences the essences of all things, and continually creates them anew, and in this sense, preservation is a continued act of creation. But if this action of Deity be negative, then preservation is that act whereby he will not destroy the essences of things; and although a sovereign of all, he can take away the being of all; yet while he does not cease from action, there is no immediate necessity for an exercise of creative power, the powers and faculties of his creatures being in the same state of vigour as at creation, and will be so to the termination of the world.[2]

Aquila.—I see no necessity of deciding this question. I contend for the fact, not the manner. I would not insist on any nice inquiries in regard to it; the advocates of either of these opinions, desire to promote God's glory, and ascribe preservation to him. He knows the manner by which it is accomplished; we know the fact; look also at his word, 'He giveth to all life, breath, and all things; for in him we live, move, and have our being.' Again, 'Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, &c. and thou preservest them all.' 'Thou, oh Lord, preservest man and beast:' 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' And in the New Testament he is said to feed the 'fowls of the air who neither sow nor reap,' and to preserve the very lillies of the field, and without his knowledge, 'not a sparrow falls to the ground,' two of which were sold for a farthing.

Apollos.—Dear brother—how consoling are these truths. What do you understand by the government of Providence?

Aquila.—It is that powerful act of God, whereby he administers and disposes all things in wisdom, so as to promote his glory, and the endless bliss of man. It extends itself to all things, and there is nothing in all the universe, that is not under the guidance of Providence. The Scripture, after an enumeration of them, subjects all creatures to God's providence. The heavens are under his government,—the sun runs his appointed course, according to his direction, diffusing light and heat to every part of the earth, and producing spring and summer, autumn and winter. Hence, in Scripture it is said, 'the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work.' What a lively description of the divine providence is there in the 104th and 136th psalms? Job, David, Isaiah, all agree in this, that he hath created and does uphold all. 'Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number. He calleth all by names, by the greatness of his might; for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.' Indeed the air, and all suspended therein, are under his government. The very stars are under the direction of his providence; the waters and the earth, are formed to bring forth food for man and beast, as is said in the 65th psalm; and he provides the necessaries for all the living on the face of the earth, to preserve their lives. 'The eyes of all wait on thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'

Apollos.—But are all these governed by the divine care?

Aquila—That they are especially so, is proved by the facts that God often preserves them, as a reward to those that obey him, giving them rain from heaven, and crops from the earth, with a liberal hand. Indeed, he sometimes makes other creatures subservient to them. On the contrary, God often withholds his blessings from the wicked, or causes them to become poisonous and hurtful, and

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

seems to make the whole creation fight against them. In Scripture he is named the Lord of Hosts, because that he employs all nature, animate and inanimate, as his army in executing his judgments in favour of the good, and for the punishment of the wicked.

Apollos.—But is it not said, 'Thou makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no rule over them.' Does not the prophet mean that fishes are not under the providence of God?

Aquila.—Certainly not. It is not said that they are not subject to his government; but that there was no ruler to protect them from the violence of the stronger, the less being devoured without protection by the greater. The prophet simply alludes to the sad state of his people, who, abandoned by God, were delivered into the hands of their enemies, and there was none to rescue.

Apollos.—In Scripture it is asked, 'Doth God care for oxen?'

Aquila.—This passage does not mean that God does not care for oxen. For there is a manifest allusion to the passage in the law, where he proclaims that care. The meaning of Paul is, that the primary intention of the passage was, that ministers of the church, should be supplied with necessaries, as is the ox, that treadeth out the corn.

Apollos.—There is a third act of Providence, which you have not noticed; it has been called by some *concurrence:* I should like an exposition of it.

Aquila.—I purposely avoided this, because I intended to notice it hereafter; but as you have named it, I will just say: That concurrence is said to be that act of Providence, whereby God is said to concur or unite with all his creatures, so that all their operations depend on him in particular. as the first cause.[1] Some have divided it into simultaneous and previous. The former, say they, is that whereby God, together with his creatures, has an influence over their actions; which concurrence is determined by the creature, to some particular action. The latter, or as it is named 'previous' concurrence, is that whereby God influences all his creatures, and determines them beforehand, to every act. The former possibly may be admissible, but the latter is most monstrously absurd; as the powers of acting seem in vain to be granted to creatures, if they be incapable of action, unless excited thereto by a previous concurrence of God.[1]

Apollos.—What are the methods of divine Providence?

Aquila.—These are various, according to the objects about which it is associated. 1. The providence of God takes the greatest care of that which is the most valuable,—that is, more care of man than beast; and of beasts than plants. Beasts and herbs being made for man's use, of course have a less share in the protection of Providence than man, a more valuable creature. 2. It must be accommodated to the distinct nature of creatures. God deals differently with animate and inanimate creation; and the dealings of Providence towards creatures only capable of life and sense, are essentially different from his dealings with those endued with both these, and reason. 3. But divine Providence is most free, according to that absolute dominion which God has over his creatures. He uses sometimes one, and then another; each in different ways, as he pleases. And 4. It must also be recollected, that in what God wills, it is absolutely irresistible.

Apollos.—I see the propriety and reason of all your positions and arguments, on a 'general providence.' But as God made all things, according to your own showing, for man, I want you to lay down and apply its rules to man, as the creature of God, under his peculiar care. I take the two actions of Providence, preservation and government. I ask their application to man?

Aquila.—We will notice preservation first, and consider it as it relates to mankind in general, and then to the several individuals of the human species.

[1] Opinions of Schoolmen.

In regard to mankind in general, it is very plain from Genesis, 1st chap. that God has granted to man the power to propagate his species, and has preserved that power to this day. Sometimes he has restored it when lost, as in the cases related in the Bible, viz: the parents of Samson, Hannah the mother of Samuel and Zachariah and Elizabeth. Hence, bearing of children is accounted among the blessings of the law; and they are said to be a heritage, and a gift of the Lord. Sometimes, on the other hand, barrenness is inflicted as a punishment for sin. Thus the family of Abimelech was afflicted for Sarah's sake; and on account of this act of Providence, with respect to generation, to God is ascribed the formation of man 'in the womb;' and indeed his generation and birth.

Apollos.—From these Scriptures, it is plain that God's providence has to do with us, before, and at our very birth.

Aquila.—Much more then, my friend,—are its actions manifest afterward, in all our course. In infancy, he provides for us milk in the breast of our mothers, a fluid found there only during the nursing months, and adapts the tongues of infants to a work so difficult that few can perform it afterwards; I mean sucking. And through life, for our race he provides abundantly: 'he gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'

Apollos.—I must ask here a question, that may seem strange to you. Is not the number of men determined by the eternal decree of God, and in process of time are not his generations so directed by Providence, that neither more nor less men could be born, than are actually born?

Aquila.—By no means, I think. For if there be such an absolute decree, it ought to be performed by absolute means. For instance, if God has by an absolute decree, determined the number, it will follow that he has by the same decree, determined, and by Providence has procured from time to time, and does still procure, all those copulations necessary to the fulfilment of the decree. But many of these are unlawful, dishonest, incestuous; and will you make God the author of the adultery, fornication, and incest, by which men are born? And beside all this, by law, God has left man at liberty to live married or single.

Apollos.—Then the notion of those who maintain the fatality of marriages, as if they were all decreed of God, is groundless?

Aquila.—Certainly. God instituted marriage in the time of man's innocency, and his direction when it is sought after, as in the case of Isaac, and that also of Jacob, has great influence; but God has not by an absolute decree, determined all the marriages which have been contracted, since many have been contrary to his express command, as the marriages of the Israelites with Canaanitish women, and believers with infidels.

Apollos.—You say that Deity preserves the lives of men. Do you mean of every individual man in the world?

Aquila.—I do. And the preservation of individuals is that act of divine Providence, by which Deity preserves every man in life, until a certain period; when that has elapsed, he dies.

Apollos.—Do you think this period alterable, or is it fatal? In other words, is it so fixed that the time of life, and all the circumstances attendant on it, are determined by an absolute decree, and must man necessarily arrive at that period; and is it impossible for him to exceed it by any means.

Aquila.—God has evidently appointed the period of human life, as is most agreeable to his wisdom and justice. This I readily admit. And I also admit, 1. That God has subjected man and all his posterity, to a necessary death, by reason of sin. And the life of man is so circumscribed, that he cannot pass beyond certain bounds. I also, 2. Admit that God by his absolute will and pleasure, does not give to every man the same strength of constitution; and this may depend greatly upon the parents' healths, from whom they are descended;

and may be a natural effect of a good or bad constitution. Nevertheless, God is not so bound by it that he may not for wise reasons, when he pleases, recede from this usual method. But, 3. I must also say that God as a just judge, observing from on high the conduct of men, may lengthen out the cord of a righteous man's life, for the same wise reasons, as in the case of Hezekiah; or cut off the wicked, so that he live not out 'half his days.' And for the same reasons, 4. God in thus prolonging life, may have respect to the constitution, as the Lord of man: he may preserve it in its vigour, strengthen it when infirm, or miraculously as a reward of piety, extend it to a date, even beyond that to which the force of nature, could possibly carry it. And also the sturdiest sinner, may be brought down in the meridian of his days, as a punishment for impiety. I therefore must deliberately conclude, that reason and Scripture are against the notion, that the termination of man's life is unalterable.

Apollos.—You say, reason is against it?

Aquila.—Yes. Reason, I think, informs me, if it does not others, that by the proper use, or supine neglect of means, a man may prolong, or shorten his days. For instance, by temperance he may preserve: by intemperance, break his constitution. By prudence, he may avoid—by imprudence, throw himself in the way of various dangers. If he be sick, he may send for a skilful physician, or he may neglect to do so. The neglect of means may add force to his disorder, and hasten death. Moreover, to say that all these things are fixed by God's decree, so that our temperance, prudence, and care, proceed from that decree, and 'vice versa' is not only to discourage and prevent men from a due and proper attention to themselves, and their health, but it is to charge on God, all the neglect of means, the imprudence of man, and the intemperance of the world. And yet, again, as I have proved, as the birth of a man is not determined by an absolute decree, so neither is his death.

Apollos.—I confess, these are conclusions very natural from the premises.

Aquila.—It may be substantiated by the testimony of Scripture. 1. Promises of long life, are in several places, made to the righteous and obedient. Thus the fifth commandment, of honouring our parents, is backed with 'that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee;' repeated by St. Paul, to the Ephesians. And to this agrees also these words, 'Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee; there shall nothing cast their young, or be barren, in the land; the number of thy days will I fulfil.' And God promised Solomon length of days on his obedience to the divine commands; which doubtless made that wise man say, 'the fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.'

Apollos.—But will you not freely admit that our heavenly Father has not given these and the like promises to be taken in an unlimited sense, and without exception? Has not God for wise reasons, receded from this general rule?

Aquila.—He has. Particularly when by an untimely death, he has taken the righteous from some general calamity or from the evil to come, as the destruction which he intended to bring on a rebellious people. But let it be recollected that this removal from wrath to come is so far from being an injury, that it is a great blessing. Secondly, God in Scripture threatens to shorten the days of the wicked for their wickedness. Thus he threatens the transgressors of his law with 'plagues of long continuance.' And that none may pretend indeed that a man may fall sick and yet not die before his appointed time; it is said that 'bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.' And David prays that he may not be taken off 'in the midst of his days.'

Apollos.—It just occurs that there are many examples in Scripture of human life being shortened by wickedness, that I would add as a third argument to those

already offered and so conclusive. You recollect the famous instances of Judah's sons, whom 'the Lord slew' because they 'did evil in his sight.' Also the case of the youthful but rebellious Absalom, cut off for sin in the morning of his days. And it is very manifest that the untimely destruction of the antideluvians, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, was the natural result of enormity in crime.

Aquila.—On the other hand we have incontestible evidence that a genuine repentance has averted death, or rather delayed it to a more distant period. The denunciation against Nineveh was destruction in forty days, but that destruction was averted by repentance. And notwithstanding the message to king Hezekiah, 'Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live,' fifteen years, on his praying, are added to his life. I think these arguments sufficient to establish the point.

Apollos.—But I recollect a passage in Job that seems opposed to our opinions. 'His (i. e. man's) days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.'

Aquila.—And yet the text does not say that the period of every man's life is so determined by absolute decree that it cannot be altered. It only tells us that the term of human life is included in a short space, beyond which man cannot pass, and this I admit. This period is between seventy and eighty years, as in the ninetieth Psalm. Hence human life is represented as 'a vapour vanishing swiftly away.'

Apollos.—All my difficulties vanish too in regard to that act of Providence, by which man is preserved. I now want an exposition of the government of Providence in respect to man.

Aquila.—The government of Providence is that act of the same, by which Deity observes, permits, and overrules the actions of men, and also passes upon them a righteous judgment. The first act of this government is legislation, or the making a law by which God prescribes bounds to the will of man,[1] otherwise he would be his own master. This law was prescribed on the creation of man. A revelation of this was also made to Abraham, and after him to his descendants by Moses; its enactments being founded on promises and threatenings. And the rest of mankind had the law of nature written in their hearts, that they might know the difference between good and evil. However the most perfect law which God has ever prescribed to men, is that delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—I suppose it is also admitted, on the ground of God's justice, that in the government of the world he ever grants grace to assist, when human nature is incompetent to obey of itself a given law?

Aquila.—Certainly. And he, in answer to prayer, bestows supernatural aid or grace not only in an ordinary but sometimes in an extraordinary degree.

Apollos.—At this point then originates that variety in the condition or state of man. Some men improve the grace and obey the precept, whilst others slight the grace and omit their duties and often live in the commission of sin?

Aquila.—Yes; and according to this variety the acts of divine Providence vary. 1. As it regards obedience, God takes notice of, approves, promises, and finally grants it an ample reward. 2. As to disobedience or sin, God abhors it, frowns on, threatens, and finally punishes with eternal torment.

Apollos.—But why does he not exercise his omnipotence in preventing it?

Aquila.—Because he requires a free and not a constrained obedience. Nor is it agreeable to his wisdom to prevent by almighty power, sin in a rational creature endued with grace more than sufficient for obedience, especially when he has threatened the severest punishment. It would moreover be a reflection on the

[1] Limborch.

divine glory, if his service were not voluntary and free, while Satan has his *slaves* such of their own free will. And it remains yet to be proved that God accepts any service as such that is not voluntary.

Apollos.—But I recur to the third act of divine Providence, the doctrine of concurrence, and I ask does not God concur or agree with all the actions of men, and does not this determine them?

Aquila.—When on this subject before I remarked that we acknowledged a simultaneous concurrence, whereby Deity applies his efficacious power to man, by whom as by a free agent it is determined to such or such an action. Now we admit this and this only. Others wish us to admit a concurrence in the providence of God, which is immediate, previous, and predetermining, and some go further, and plead for the very operation of God in every action, that he 'may be all and in all.' Now these opinions cannot be admitted without the grossest absurdity.

Apollos.—What are your reasons for supposing so?

Aquila.—1. Because God has in vain granted to man the ability of action, and endued him with free will, if divine creation be necessary to each one of his actions; for to what purpose are will and ability granted if neither are to be brought into exercise, i. e. if man can do nothing, no not even conceive a thing nor omit an action, without the whole being predetermined by the divine concurrence. But, 2. If every action does wholly depend on God, then every evil one must, and of consequence God is the author of sin, man is acquitted of all guilt, as he only does what the concurrence of God has predetermined him to do.[1]

Apollos.—Some say this is not a legitimate consequence, because in sin, we must distinguish between the physical goodness of an action and the moral turpitude thereof. God is the author, it is said, of the former; but as to the action, it being sin and contrary to the divine precepts, proceeds from man alone.[2]

Aquila.—This may be admitted in such sins wherein the action itself is not forbidden, but the manner of it which vitiates that action however good in itself. Thus a man may pray, fast, &c. to be seen of men, here the spiritual pride vitiates the action, and that pride is the act of the man, while the action as a command of God is good. But take another case and one more in point, when not only the circumstance or manner, but the action itself is forbidden of God; 'adultery, theft, murder,' there this distinction can have no place, for there is no goodness in them, and in their very nature they are evil.'

Apollos.—I have heard it argued that God is the author of every being, but the actions of men are beings, and therefore God is their author.

Aquila.—The fallacy of such an argument is apparent. God is the author of beings properly so called, but actions are only modes of beings, and are not real substances. He may be said to be their author so far as he preserves the essence of man, and his power of action granted in creation. Again, as to good actions, in view of the fall and our dependence on preventing as well as assisting grace, we freely own him the author; as first he commands, secondly bestows ability, and thirdly promotes all our pious deeds in a special manner. But as it regards bad actions, God forbids them; they are contrary to his nature and it is impossible he should be their author. If so, his concurrence would encounter his precepts, and you would have the anomaly of a Deity ordering to be done what he uniformly forbids to be performed.

Apollos.—Well, but it is said, if this predetermining concurrence be denied, men's actions will not depend on God but themselves, are they not therefore independent of him?

Aquila.—This is still more futile. Man cannot conceive, much less perform without the divine knowledge and permission, and when Deity pleases he can

[1] Whitby and Limborch. [2] Limborch.

prevent his actions. He does not direct them often to another end than man designed, and ultimately punishes those deeds that are evil and voluntary. The question is here and here alone. Does man determine as an agent on the performance of an action? If he does and if this act of the will be his own, and be founded on true liberty so that he might have determined otherwise, then is the guilt his own and the punishment merited. As to the ability, I have long since admitted that God gives, in the act of creation, to a rational intelligence endued with liberty of will, power to choose, and that intelligence is alone responsible as an agent for the misapplication of that power.

Apollos.—But does not one say in Acts, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being?'

Aquila.—'In him,' is simply 'by him,' i. e. it is God who bestows upon us all ability for action. Yet he does not so immediately concur with us, as thereby to pre-determine our actions, and create our volitions anew.

Apollos.—Some texts, however, are adduced, where God is said to do all things. How can you explain these, to have otherwise a consistent meaning? For instance, 'my Father worketh hitherto, and I work;' 'thou also hast wrought all our works in us,' and 'God worketh all in all.'

Aquila.—The first of these passages treats of God's concurrence in working miracles. Our Lord tells us here that the miracle which he wrought on the sabbath day, and for which the Jews would have killed him, was wrought by him, only so far as there was granted power of the Father. But from this it would certainly be erroneous to infer, that therefore the concurrence of God must be necessary for all the actions of men, even those that are prohibited by the Deity. As to the second passage you quote, the words immediately preceding, show that it refers to benefits conferred on the Israelites; and therefore the works here named, are not theirs, but those of Deity. The last passage, is a bare allusion to the miraculous operations of the Holy Ghost, from which no consequences are to be drawn for all our actions, and especially those that are vicious.

Apollos.—It is said, 'of him and through him, and to him, are all things;' and 'he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.'

Aquila.—Certainly both these passages allude to the works of grace, which God communicates to men, that they may be saved. Nothing, therefore, can be concluded of a previous concurrence of God to every act, sin not excepted.

Apollos.—Brother,—it is thought by some, that this concurrence is actually ascribed to God in Scripture. 'A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.' The parallels are, 'the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth it whithersoever he will.' And also, 'Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps.'

Aquila.—Nothing can be concluded from these texts, in favour of a previous concurrence in all actions. They set forth the fact, that God often directs men's actions to a different end than the one intended by them. This at another time, I will prove, I think, to a demonstration. Only let me, Apollos, now say, that God does not excite and predetermine men, to the performance of all their actions, even those that are evil. None that you have quoted, go to prove this: nor will any other in the Sacred Writings allow of such an inconsistent exposition.

Apollos.—I assure you, my dear friend,—I have pressed this subject thus far, only for information. I seek arguments incontrovertible, to establish the doctrine not only of a general, but a particular providence: a providence that extends to all the actions of men. That superintending care of the divine Being, is manifest in preserving our species, and in ruling the world for the benefit of man. By his grace he assists all our good actions, and in the exercise of wisdom and

power, thwarts the designs of those that are bad. The hairs of our heads are all numbered; and he causes that all things work together for good, to them that love and serve him. He at last grants them an ample reward, where the wicked cease to trouble, and the weary be at rest; a home in everlasting life.

Aquila.—He does, my brother—and the wicked whose actions originate in their own volitions, are here hedged in by the government of Providence. They are observed by an eye that never sleeps, in all their course. They are not suffered, in many instances, to 'live out half their days.' God often brings them to an untimely death, and beyond the grave he inflicts a punishment proportioned to the number and magnitude of their voluntary offences. In all the ways of Deity, my dear friend,—both his mercy and justice, are truly conspicuous. At our next meeting, we will consider the providence of God, with respect to sin.

COLLOQUY XXI.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE, WITH RESPECT TO SIN—BEFORE, AT, AND AFTER ITS COMMISSION—METHODS OF PROVIDENCE—SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED—THE USE OF THIS DOCTRINE.

Apollos.—In our last conference, you gave me a view of Providence in respect to men. I have reflected much on this subject. The hints concerning its nature, as it respects sin, were truly interesting to me: I am however, not satisfied. I want the operation of divine Providence, in regard to sin, *before, at,* and *after,* its commission.

Aquila.—Let us consider it with regard to sin, before committed. Before then, the act be performed, God may be said to permit it. This permission is not an idle contemplation of sin, but a resolution to suffer man to use that liberty, with which he is endowed, for its performance; and a determination not to stop the act by omnipotent power—joined also with a purpose to punish it, as voluntary and avoidable.

Apollos.—But does God ever hinder sin?

Aquila.—Yes; in two ways. 1. By his justice in enacting laws which forbid it, on promises and threatenings; and, 2. By his almighty power, preventing its commission: accordingly, the permission of it is two-fold.

Apollos.—I do not well understand this. Explain yourself.

Aquila.—Sin is either an internal act of the will, or an external one, performed by some member of the body, and proceeding directly from the will. Deity does not hinder sin in the will, or internal sins, omnipotently, or by constraint; for to do this, would be to destroy the freedom of the will. External sins, or those accomplished by the members of our bodies, are prevented by almighty power in several ways. 1. By taking away the life of the sinner; as was the case with Pharoah, Sennacherib and his army, and the soldiers of Ahaziah, who were sent to apprehend Elijah. Or, 2. By taking away the power to sin, as is set forth in the blindness of the Sodomites, the case of Balaam, that of Jeroboam, and the soldiers of the king of Syria. 3. God prevents it sometimes by opposing a greater power; of which we have an instance in Abraham and Adonijah, who confessed that it was of the Lord. But lastly, God does it by removing the occasions of sin; that is, the object against which it was designed to commit the act. Thus, Saul was hindered from killing David, Ahab and Jezabel from destroying the prophets, Herod from destroying the child Jesus, another Herod from killing Peter, and the forty conspirators from murdering Paul.

Apollos.—Well, these are simply acts of divine Providence to prevent sin. I want to know when, and how, he permits it.

Aquila.—God may be said to permit sin when he acts contrary to these methods of preventing it.

First then, if God relaxed a law or abolished it, and granted to men the power or liberty of sinning without punishment, then it will be readily admitted that he performed an act contrary to his nature and holiness. The moral law is an epitome of the divine mind, and must be unalterable, therefore there can be no license to sin, by its abolishment.

Apollos.—Is there not an instance in the Israelites robbing the Egyptians by divine command?

Aquila.—This circumstance is no proof that God abolished the law against theft, which, as founded on the great principle of justice, must be immutable. It was an extraordinary case, in which the absolute Lord of all the earth, who disposes of all things in this world, by express command transferred his property from one dependant to another. This also was an act of justice. The Egyptians had oppressed Israel and made no remuneration. Israel had served them under the severest task-masters, and a just judge delivered to them the gold of Egypt, as a reward for their toil. And the whole proceeding, so far from being a theft, was certainly the execution of a most righteous sentence. So then there was no relaxation of moral law.[1]

Apollos.—But you admit that God allows man to commit sin? You have granted this.

Aquila.—I have. God permits sin when he does not prevent its commission, which he might do. He allows men to exercise their liberty and actually perpetrate the designs of their wicked hearts. I will go farther and say, that Deity not only allows men the free use of their faculties, and his permission is not an idle contemplation of sin, it is the preservation of those faculties granted to man, without an interposition of power to prevent their improper exercise or use. This is not all, Apollos. When men by voluntary acts have become habitual sinners, God does sometimes suffer to be laid before them those occasions of sin, by which they are hardened therein, and this also is involved in this permission. True this last is to be understood of those offenders whose continued and enormous iniquities have incurred the divine displeasure to such a degree, that as an act of justice they are delivered up to judicial blindness to 'believe a lie that they may be damned.'

Apollos.—Does not God also sometimes permit these opportunities of sinning, to manifest the frailty, sometimes the insincerity of men, and often as a trial of the faith of the christian.

Aquila.—He does. But remember by this permission of opportunities of sinning to men, whether pious or otherwise, God does not tempt any man. St. James says, God is not tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man. But 'every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his *own* lusts and enticed.' 'Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.'

Apollos.—I see then that *before* sin is committed, you allow that Deity simply grants to man, as an agent, the permission to exercise powers with which he is endued, if he chooses so to do, in violating his law, whose promises and threatenings are dehortations against the act, and whose grace is ready to strengthen his resistance.

Aquila.—This is about the amount of the permission granted to man *before* sin is committed.

Apollos.—But opinions have existed and have been advanced concerning God's efficacious providence, with respect to sin, that attribute to him a government,

[1] Doctor Clarke proves my exposition most certainly correct, by a masterly criticism on the passage.

besides the operations you have set forth, by which man's will is so disposed as necessarily to will sin.

Aquila.—But I have proved that to admit this is to make God the author of sin, it is to destroy the freedom of the will, and consequently to sap the foundation of a judgment to come, and overturn the doctrine of rewards and punishments, as without liberty in the will there can be neither virtue nor vice, nor indeed any guilt for sin.[1]

Apollos.—But I have heard such say, that God does allow of sin by an 'appointing permission.'

Aquila.—Permission here is only used to avoid the odium of necessary transgression, or of an active predetermining permission of which sin is the necessary consequence. This, on the part of the Deity, is not the preventing but the positively willing the act. And pray what difference is there between such a permission and a direct appointment? Do they not both make sin necessary and God its author?[2]

Apollos.—But it is said, 'that sin is not the product of God's permission, but consequent thereto. The refusal of grace, with regard to God, is a bare negation, it violates no obligation. But sin in man is a failure of duty.'[3]

Aquila.—But if God imposes a duty and refuses to grant the grace necessary to discharge it, then man must necessarily neglect it, and thus commit a sin; and although he may not be the efficient cause, yet as some say he is the deficient cause, that is he refuses what man lacks to render him competent to a duty that he has enjoined. The result is the same.

Apollos.—But God is not obliged to man, and may or may not grant him grace as he thinks fit.

Aquila.—1. I admit that God is not obliged to man, but he certainly is obliged to the justice and equity of his own nature. And when he requires obedience, under the penalty of an eternal punishment, to a law which man cannot obey without grace, he is bound, on every principle of justice, to grant that grace necessary for its performance. And, 2. Whether there be obligation on him or not, that is whether or not bound by law to do so, it does not change the law of *causality*. He will still be the author of sin. 3. Moreover, although not to do good be an imperfection in man, yet he could never be guilty for his failure, since a defect in ability rendered it impossible.[4]

Apollos.—Brother, it is said and it seems feasible, 'that men for their sins, deserve to be abandoned of God.

Aquila.—Well, admit it. 1. Take Adam. Before his first transgression, he did not deserve to be abandoned of God, and yet he fell. According to your arguments, his fall is attributable either to the withdrawal or non-continuance of divine grace. But, 2. God enters into a new covenant and promises not to remember the first transgression, for Christ's sake; and although we suppose that men did deserve this desertion, yet it will follow that it would be the cause of all future sin. Now the fact is, that Christ is offered as a restorer from the fall, and what man lost in Adam, may be more than regained in him.

Apollos.—Then we are all placed in a state of moral accountability, as capable of those actions that are voluntary and unconstrained.

Aquila.—There is no permission from God for sin, that renders it in any way necessary, or that imposes the necessity of transgression. Divine permission not only allows a free will to man, but the free use of it. For there can be no liberty in the will, when it is constrained to the performance of any act. To make a man, therefore, truly the cause of sin, and justly punishable, it is necessary that Deity should by no act render sin inevitable, or impossible to be avoided. More-

[1] Whitby and Fletcher. [2] Ibid. [3] Calvin. [4] Whitby and Limborch.

over, there is no dependence on God, that can be admitted, which renders sin unavoidable and necessary.

Apollos.—But are not all positive things, of God; and sin is certainly a positive thing, and must therefore be of him.

Aquila.—That is, God, in plain English, is its author. Let us examine this. It is true, that all positive things are of God. This is true of all substances, and it is also true, of all good actions; for these also are attributed to him as their author: and they are only attributed, so far as he grants ability for their performance: he excites and exhorts thereto, but does not force the will of man; for he may resist the divine impulse, and refuse to do the will of God. No antecedent decree, therefore, brought these actions into a state of positive existence; they are determined on in the will of an agent, who uses as such the grace granted for their accomplishment. Sin, at least of commission, is also a positive act; it originates also in the will of man, or rather its action; it is rebellion against the command of God,—and this is a good exposition of it. But God cannot forbid it, and yet be its author; and although admitted to be a positive act, if it originated in God, as its author, it would imply not only an imperfection, but a contradiction in the Divine nature, which we have already disproved.[1]

Apollos.—I plainly see, my dear friend—that although these men profess to differ in regard to an expression of opinion on the divine permission, yet they make sin necessary,—referring it to some action of God, to an actual pre-determining and efficacious permission, to the withholding of divine grace, or the creation of a certain order of secondary causes, rendering sin absolutely necessary and inevitable. Now, according to these various opinions, men quote and apply the word of the Lord for the establishment of an efficacious action of God, through which sin exists and is committed. I will propose these, and procure on them your opinions and expositions. In the first place, they offer texts wherein the efficiency of sin seems to be attributed to God; see Prov. 'The Lord hath made all things, even the wicked for the day of evil.' 'Thou Lord, hast wrought all our works in us.' 'God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' In 2d Samuel, is foretold the incest that Absalom should commit with his father's concubines, which we read was fulfilled. David likewise attributes Shemei's cursing him to God, 'the Lord hath said, curse David; who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so?' And again, 'the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, go, number Israel and Judah.' God is said to 'send forth a lying spirit,' to be in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, to persuade him to go up to Ramoth Gilead to battle, with a promise of success, though they deceived him, and he miscarried in that enterprise.

Aquila.—And pray, brother—what can be inferred from these places? Certainly not that God was the author, or efficient cause, of sin. This, no man dare assert. Another, and a more consistent construction, must therefore be placed thereon. And I will venture, if you take them up and consider them, in connection with the context, on analyzing them, you will find that the efficiency of sin is not therein ascribed to God, Let us consider them. Two have been already explained: we take up the third. Now that all things do not mean sins, appears, 1. Because God must be made then, the author, of not only all good things, but also all evil, and indeed those the most flagitious and vile. 2. Because God is said to have made all things for himself, for his own glory; but the procuring of sin is not for the glory of God, but rather a reproach, especially if he be its author. 3. The original of the word עשה POL, *made*, evidently means a

[1] Mr. Fletcher's checks on all these passages, and Dr. A. Clarke's exposition of the same.

thing done with affection and delight;[1] and this would be irreconcilable with the succeeding verses. 'Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord,' The word 'all things,' then, must be restrained to such only, as can be the effects of the divine operation; and this can never be made to include sin, and thus imply a contradiction in the divine nature.

Apollos.—Well, take 2d Samuel, xxiv. 1. Does not this say so?

Aquila.—It does not; for it is not said in the original that God moved David. An impersonal verb is used, and in a marginal note in our common English Bible, instead of *he*, we read *Satan* moved David against them; and this is expressly affirmed in the text, 1st Chron. xxi. 1. It is apparent that the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel: David, either by his own ambition, or by the excitement of the devil, was moved to number the people. This act provoked the Lord to such a degree, that his anger, already kindled against this ungodly nation, bursted into a flame.

Apollos.—But do not these words, 'I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes,' &c. fully establish this efficacious action of Deity in sin—though I admit the others quoted, evidently do not.

Aquila.—We have admitted, that God permits a snare to be laid before man, but he cannot be entrapped by constraint. When the temptation is presented, the wickedness of the heart is too often apparent. Now, see this case: God foretold to David that he would give his wives to his neighbour, &c. In his flight, they fell into the hands of Absalom, who forthwith committed incest with them. This delivery was by divine permission; but the commission of this diabolical act was the effect of his own dark and wicked purpose. So of Shemei's cursing David. God permitted, that in the flight of David, an opportunity of resentment should be offered that wicked man Shemei. Long had it rankled in his bosom; the devil presents his temptation for it to burst forth now; God permitted him to do so; Shemei volunteers in the act, and curses David; and moreover, he could not have done it before. David was in power: now he is stripped of his regal authority; and he (i. e. David) seeing his own condition, as an honest man humbles himself before the Lord, and ascribes his afflictions to the divine Providence, which had directed these events at least for his spiritual benefit. God, says he, (in effect) permits this wicked man to volunteer in my punishment, and he is using him as an instrument for my cure; therefore let him alone.

Apollos.—Take now, 1st Kings, xxii. 22; where, it seems, an evil spirit was sent forth by God, to place a lie in the mouths of all Ahab's prophets.

Aquila.—This was most certainly, a bare permission; it included no necessity of sinning, and it might have been easily resisted. For, 1. The action to which God permitted Ahab to be excited, was certainly no sin. It was only the going up to battle, to recover from the king of Syria, Ramoth Gilead, a place which belonged to the kingdom of Israel, and contrary to an existing treaty, was retained by that king. But, 2. There was no irresistible force, in the means used, to excite to war. There was only what some call 'a moral prevalency of persuasion;' in other words, there were the false predictions which Ahab's prophets presented; but God opposed to it the prediction of Micaiah, which ought to have prevailed a hundred fold with Ahab, who had been taught the knowledge of the true God from his childhood. It was with him, in the action of his free will, to decide the matter, and he did so to his hurt.

Apollos.—I will now adduce those passages, where God is said to blind and harden men. As to the former, take this, 'Go and tell this people, hear ye

[1] Parkhurst, Doctor Clarke, and Sam. Pike on this word.

indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not: make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.' As to the hardening men, God says expressly, 'I will harden Pharoah's heart.' So it is said by Isaiah, that 'the Lord hardened the Israelites' hearts in their error.' He is said to 'give men over to a reprobate mind,' to 'give them up to a strong delusion to believe a lie.' Is not here the efficacy of Deity?

Aquila.—Without entering into a detailed exposition of these texts, I offer this general solution of every difficulty in them. 1. All these and such places in Scripture, have respect to sinful men, who by a long course of impenitence, deserved the divine wrath, and also to those penal laws bearing directly on all such cases; and no inference can be therefore adduced, concerning the providence of God, with respect to sin in general.[1] But, 2. When blinding, hardening, and such like passages, are named, they do not imply any real pre-determining efficiency of blindness, but a penal act exercised by a just judge for the offences committed by such. This is evident, from the fact, of the action not only being ascribed to God, but likewise to the instrument of accomplishing it. Nothing else, therefore, is attributed to God, but a penal act, involving judicial blindness, or hardness of heart—taken hold of by the offender, and turned into an occasion of sinning. Now, brother—who questions but that God may do this justly, as a punishment for past sins, without being a partaker in, or an efficient cause of sin.

Apollos.—While I am constrained to yield the fact, that this solution has reason and justice on its side, I am however thrown on those texts, wherein God is said to decree some things, that seem to involve the necessity of sinning. The first of these is, where God is said to have sent Joseph into Egypt to 'provide food for his brethren' and their families, in time of famine. Now, is it not inferrible, that the sale by Joseph's brethren, and his departure into Egypt, were by divine appointment, to preserve Jacob's posterity in the earth, as Joseph said himself, 'It was not you that sent me hither, but God.'

Aquila.—That which is here attributed to God, is evidently the disposing things, by his providence, in such a way, that what they intended for his destruction, eventuated in his advancement, and the preservation of his father's family. There is an evident difference between selling Joseph, and this advancement; the first was the sin of his brothers; in this, God had no hand; but as it regarded the latter, he effected it by means the least expected; and, Apollos, it is said 'they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.' כי KA, the Hebrew particle here translated *because*, every scholar knows, means *therefore*; this solves the whole difficulty. 'They did not hearken to the voice of their father, *therefore* the Lord was determined to slay them.[2]

Apollos.—I am astonished that I did not see this. But take Acts, where, in their prayer to God, the apostles say, 'Of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.'

Aquila.—My dear brother—I most surely think, 1. That this place does not treat of the death of Christ, and the wicked counsel of Pilot, Herod and the Jews, as to the killing of him, as if all these things were predestinated by the divine decree. Our Lord was evidently crucified long before this. It certainly treats only of that which happened at that time to the apostles, and the christian church; who being the disciples of Jesus, whatever attempts were made upon them, might be reasonably said to be made against Christ as their head. But,

[1] Whitby, and Fletcher.

[2] Limborch.

2. It is not said that God decreed that Herod, Pilate, &c. should do what they did; but at most, that they did what God had decreed to be done. However, 3. With a small transposition of words, very common in the Holy Writings, this text may be so read as to present quite a different meaning from that commonly attributed to it; and in sincerity, brother—I must say, I believe it the true and real meaning. It is this: 'Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, against the holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed to do what thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' If this reading of the passage be allowed, all is plain. God the Father anointed his Son to do what he had before determined to be done, viz: that an offering should be made for sin. Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and Jews, volunteered to immolate that Sacrifice; and so did Judas volunteer to betray him into their hands: these acts were theirs. Indeed, my brother—if you were to try all night, you could not find a passage where such an action can be, or is imputed to God, from which sin is a necessary consequence.

Apollos.—I am now fully convinced, that the efficiency of sin must never be ascribed to God. The accordance between sound reason, God's word, and his perfections, leave me on a rock, in regard to the doctrine of Providence, and the agency of man. I want, however, a concise explanation of the providence of God with respect to sin, at and after its commission.

Aquila.—From what I have already said, I think we may explain this with little difficulty. It appears to me, that the acts of divine Providence with regard to sin at its commission, are two, direction and determination. The first of these, is that act of the divine providence, whereby God disposes sinners, contrary to their intention, to do what they never intended to do. This is done by directing their actions to some other object or end, than they designed. There are some very striking instances of this in the Scriptures. You recollect, the king of Assyria was uncertain whether he would fall on the Ammonites or the Jews, at last was directed to turn his arms on the Jews; this proves at once, direction to some object. Now, as it regards direction to an end, remember the case mentioned awhile ago, of Joseph. His brethren thought to prevent his advancement, by making him a slave, but God directed his bondage to that very end. Thus with Herod, he murdered all the infants under two years, with an intention to slay the child Jesus. He never intended to render thereby the birth of the Saviour notorious, but God directed it to this end. So many tyrants and individuals have raised their persecutions against the church of God, but he has ever thwarted their designs, and the very blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church. The trial of their faith, and their patience in suffering, are examples for our piety, and tend towards the destruction of infidelity.

Apollos.—But what do you mean by the determination of divine Providence, with respect to sin, at its commission?

Aquila.—It is that act whereby God does in some measure, set bounds to his permission, so that sinners may not execute all they intend to do: God restrains them in certain limits, so that they cannot go beyond them, or immerse themselves in sin longer or deeper, than he is pleased to permit. Of this we have a striking instance in the conduct of that old sinner, the devil. So far, and no farther, was he permitted to tempt and try Job, that perfect and upright man: 1. His estate, and children, not his body. 2. His body, not his life; beyond the limits permitted, he dare not go. But God determined it to a most glorious end: Perhaps the spiritual cure of Job's friends, and a prosperity for the good man beyond what he had ever enjoyed, as well as everlasting gain.

Apollos.—I begin now to see, that the acts of divine Providence, after the commission of sin, must of course be various.

Aquila.—They are so. For, 1. There is, as I before stated, the directing it to an end not intended: as in the case of Joseph, twice named in this conversation, who was sent to preserve his father's family. Thus also, the incests of Absalom; to punish the adultery of his father, Absalom volunteered, and Providence permitted, directing it to an end to him unexpected. Thus also, the crucifixion of Christ; the end intended by the Jews, was the destruction of him and his disciples, but God directed his death for the life of the world, and the redemption of man. 2. Another act of divine Providence, after the commission of sin, is that of punishing it. This is by a punishment temporal, or eternal, according to its demerit, and as he sees just and right. But another, and a glorious act, is, that after sin is committed, of pardoning it, and remitting its guilt. This God does *graciously*, not inflicting punishment on a poor penitent sinner, when he comes as a beggar for mercy, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God for Christ's sake, ultimately rewards, as though he had never sinned.

Apollos.—From the view you have given us of this interesting subject, I perceive that the methods of divine Providence, must also be various.

Aquila.—They are, my friend,—I have already touched on them. They respect the *quantity* of its objects, and their *quality*. With respect to the quantity of its objects, its methods are various. 1. Divine Providence varies according to the worth of things,—thus, God takes more care of men than beasts. 2. It also varies as to the degree of light imparted to man, in virtue of his free will. He reveals himself to some, by creation and providence only; to others he is pleased to make a gracious display of mercy, and a declaration of his will by Jesus Christ. 3. God has a greater love for actions morally good, than for persons,—actions are not grateful for the person's sake, but the person for the sake of his actions. 4. So also, God has a greater kindness for the pious, than the impious; hence he hears and answers the prayers of his children, but the impenitent, obstinate sinner, is an abomination; and hence the righteous possess larger gifts, and more grace. Lastly, God is more averse to the man who sins against the light of Scripture, and the convictions of conscience, than that man who falls, through ignorance, or infirmity.

Apollos.—And do these methods vary also, in regard to quality?

Aquila.—They do. 1. For producing, preventing, or directing of some objects, God is pleased sometimes, to make use of his omnipotency; and sometimes he applies such assistance, as is agreeable to things, and suited to our nature. 2. It differs with respect to the difference of time; thus it was different under the law, from what it was under the gospel dispensation. 3. The divine providence is either immediate, whereby God acts in the government of the world, without intervening instruments; or mediate, when, in any of his operations, he makes use of second causes, as instruments of action. But, lastly, the providence of God is either ordinary, as when the Deity governs all things according to their natures, and the powers granted at their creation; or extraordinary, when he does not observe that order, but to punish sin stops short; or when he works a miracle which is above the power of nature.

Apollos.—From what we have heard this evening, brother,—it is so plain to my mind that all created beings, are under the government of the most wise providence of God; and nothing happens fortuitously, or by chance, but by the *efficiency*, *permission*, or *direction* of God, who inspects and knows all things, in order to render to every man according to his works, and to make all things subservient to his glory, whether he does good, or permits evil to be done; whether he rewards the godly, or punishes the ungodly.

I am confident that you must be weary, and yet I must trouble you still further. Before you leave this subject altogether, I must present the objections of some to Providence: I know they are erroneous, but I desire the means of refuting those

errors. 1. It is said that good men are often afflicted in this world. 2. That the wicked are often successful and prosperous. And lastly, that the innocent are often involved with the guilty. Some think that these argue, that God's providence is not concerned about human affairs.

Aquila.—My reply to these objections, shall be first general, and then particular. As a general answer, I say first, we are not infallible judges of true piety. A man may appear good to us, but God may see great impiety in his heart: he only, knows it. 2. Many evils which happen to the pious, are only physical evils, which affect the body, not the mind; and are therefore not real evils, since their contraries are not real benefits, but often prove a snare, and an occasion of *ruin*.

Apollos.—These are certainly true; but your particular answer to each objection.

Aquila.—With what has been premised, I say, 1. That the misfortunes, as they are called, which befal the good man, happen by the wise counsel of God. They are not real evils; as they are designed, and tend often to his progression in the divine life—especially as they try his faith and patience, prove his virtues, and render them more conspicuous. Add to this, that 'our light afflictions (chastisements) which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' and that they are not to be compared to the glory that shall be hereafter revealed *in them*. 2. But what the wicked call good things that fall to them in this life, are not really such; they are no farther marks of the divine favour, than as they lead men to repentance. Indeed it often happens, that *temporal* good hardens in *impiety*; and after all their enjoyments here, they are doomed to a punishment that is eternal; which most certainly justifies the ways of Providence.

Apollos.—But, my last objection, you have not yet touched. The innocent suffer with the guilty.

Aquila.—You must bear in mind, two things, in order to understand our answer to your objection. 1. Death and punishment, are two different things. To kill, or to cause to die, is an act of sovereignty, exercised by Deity, in whose hands are lodged the issues of life and death; but punishment is an act of divine justice, being always proportionate to the degree of guilt. But, 2. There is a difference between a man's being punished for the sin of another, in which he had no hand, and his being punished as an innocent being. Now, I assert, and have elsewhere proved, that God never punishes the innocent. I admit that they may be cut off with the wicked, but this is no evidence of divine displeasure against the guiltless; it is rather an aggravation of the punishment of the wicked. In all the instances mentioned in Scripture, this is apparent. And we are constrained to say, 'righteous art thou, oh Lord, and just are thy judgments!' But again; Deity is so far from punishing the innocent on account of the guilty, that he has been ready to spare the vilest offenders, for the sake of the righteous: as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, where ten would have saved those cities. So also, when God has determined to cut off the wicked, he sometimes delivered the righteous, either by admonishing them as the Jews, by Jeremiah, or by directing them to the means of escape, as he did Noah. Sometimes he sent an angel to save them, and thus showed his providential care, as he did Lot. Sometimes he granted them favour in the sight of their enemies,—as in the case of Jeremiah. But in the last place, God often deprives the righteous of life, and inflicts what I am willing to admit, is a physical evil, in order to remove them from a general calamity, and the sorrows of the world, that they may rest in peace in the bosom of God, and in an eternity of delight; and a less evil may well be endured on the authority of a wise and good Sovereign, when it introduces to a state of everlasting life. Now read, 'the righteous are taken from the evil to

come.' See the case of Jeroboam's son, and that of king Josiah, both of which, I think, are in point.[1]

Apollos.—I am truly glad I mentioned those objections; they have opened the way, unexpectedly, for a most pleasing application of the doctrine of providence. I ask my heart—and does the Lord thus care for me? Oh! what cheering truths these are.

Priscilla.—I have had my mind deeply impressed during this discussion, with that remark of the Saviour, when setting forth the doctrine of providence, 'And shall he not much more care for you, oh ye of little faith?'

Aquila.—We are now done with the second subject selected for your consideration, God and his works, which are his decrees, creation and providence. Our next shall be, redemption by Christ. Good night.

[1] Henry and Limborch.

REDEMPTION.

COLLOQUY I.

THE NATURE OF REDEMPTION—THE MISERY OF MAN, ITS OCCASION—THE ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF THAT MISERY, AS SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

Aquila.—We commence this evening, the third subject, to which, brother Apollos—I promised to call your attention. It is not, properly, distinct from divine providence, but has been called a dispensation thereof, according to which, Deity in these last times, governs the world.

Apollos.—Why then should it not have been considered during our discussion of providence?

Aquila.—For the plain reason, that it is a subject too ample. We are to treat of the christian religion, and redemption is that extraordinary work of Providence, on which it is based. In this dispensation, God has laid upon man greater obligations to love and serve him, than were ever imposed by the acts of creation and providence, from which I would not derogate.

Apollos.—But tell me, what is redemption? I want to understand this interesting subject fully.

Aquila.—It is that work of divine grace, whereby God, taking compassion on men as subjects of wrath and death, by reason of sin, sent his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be their Redeemer, and by his death and blood, to reconcile them to his Father, govern them by his word, as with a spiritual sceptre; and by his almighty power, bring them to everlasting life. Its excellency must be apparent, from several things. That God foreordained it before the foundation of the world, 'according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began;' 'who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you.' It also appears that he foretold it at various times. At first, it was obscurely, and then more clearly revealed; for the whole economy of God under the Old Testament, shadowed it out to us. Another remarkable circumstance respecting Christ's redemption, is, that the predictions of him are extremely particular, pointing out the most minute circumstances of his advent, the family from which he should descend, according to the flesh; the time, the place, the birth; his life, and the manner of his death.

Apollos.—The types and shadows, prefigure, and set forth Christ; do they not?

Aquila.—They do. All these represent him, and cannot be forced to agree to any other than their great antitype, the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world, in whom alone they were all fulfilled. For when the fulness of time was come; that is, when the prophecies and types were all ready to be fulfilled, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Apollos.—I am fully convinced of these truths; but when I asked an explanation of redemption, it was my wish to elicit an exposition of the subject, in all its bearings. I wanted the occasion of it, the impulsive or moving cause to it, the Redeemer, by whose offering it is effected; and the work itself.

Aquila.—Well then, let this be our arrangement; and in the several conversations on this interesting subject, let us keep in mind this plan; and consider them just as you have named them; beginning first, with the occasion of man's redemption. And what, my dear friend—do you think, was its occasion? What caused the Lord of life and glory, to descend to earth and die for us?

Apollos.—Dear brother—I ought to have known this myself: It was man's extreme misery. He was ruined and undone.

Aquila.—Yes; this was the reason why the Son of God, undertook so great a work: man's misery is the occasion. Now, I propose to consider this, his lost estate; and we will converse of the nature and extent thereof.

Apollos.—Give us the nature, first.

Aquila.—This is two-fold, consisting of sin, and death. In considering this, you must recollect, that the woes of Adam, appertain also to his posterity, for he entailed them all, on those descended from his loins. He, then, and all his, were fallen from a state of primeval purity and innocency, into a condition in which there was the constant propensity to sin, a continual subjection to its bondage, a slavery to the devil,—in which man acquires a habit of transgression, and becomes so matured therein, being dyed, as it were, in the very wool, that from it he could not by any means emancipate himself. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to evil.' By the fall, the image of God, which consisted in 'righteousness and true holiness,' was effaced in man. The foul stain of sin, polluted his soul, and debilitated all its faculties. The understanding was darkened, his will corrupted, his affections depraved, and the whole man subjugated by the devil.

Apollos.—What greater misery could there be?

Aquila.—This will be still more apparent, if you will observe man a slave to his sins, and to all those corrupt and debasing tempers that predominate in, debilitate and overwhelm the powers of the human soul, leading man forth a slave, a condemned malefactor, dragging along his chains of guilt and shame, of horror and despair. But his misery does not stop here: he is doomed on account of sin, to the fatal necessity of dying; and if he dies impenitent, he is condemned to an eternal separation from God, and will be cast into hell fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Apollos.—How great! how unspeakably great! is this misery?

Aquila.—Look, for one moment, at the extent of it. The Scripture tells us, that this disease pervades the whole human family; it is universal—it extends to all mankind. Both Jews and Gentiles have been involved in it; and all the world is guilty before God. The most holy that have ever lived among men, have thus laboured under the depravity, the guilt, the dominion, the slavery of sin, and have been subject to its penalties, and exposed to its consequences. And although Christ has died for man, and infants are in a state of initial salvation through him—yet with all the care of pious parents, and all the authority of christian discipline,—however innocently educated, their first acts, as well as subsequent ones, when the mind is more matured, and reason and the dictates of God's word, are brought to bear on them, prove, that the whole head is sick, and the heart is faint,—that all the man is corrupt and unclean.

Lastly; all are subject to death,—under the power of which, they must dwell forever, unless delivered from it by Christ. Apply it to Adam: he was separated from the divine favour, doomed to a temporal death; and as there is an eternal

distance between sin and holiness, he must in hell have been separated forever from God, without the redemption of Christ. Had he died, all would have died in him; and all who are guilty of voluntary sin, dying without the application of the atonement, must likewise perish forever on the same principle. Although we cannot believe that God could punish with hell torments, an intelligence incapable of voluntary offence, yet we can see plainly how infants must remain forever under the power of death, though not in torment, but for redemption in Christ. To this death they are subject, as derived from their first parent Adam; and all are under sentence of death—all depraved, guilty, and condemned.

Apollos.—This then, is an outline of the condition of man considered before the promise was given, 'the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.'

Aquila.—My dear friend—their state was then at least as bad as it is now. Now the promise has not only been given, but has been fulfilled,—Christ has died. Grace, from the giving of the Promise till now, has poured its operations on the human heart; and yet, brother—(for all I have said, applies to the world as it now is,) the world is clean gone away from God. All by nature are in unbelief—all in sin, all lost, and all condemned forever, without Christ and the direct influence of this grace, as the result of his death.

Apollos.—All my observations, evince the truth of your arguments, for man's misery. But my mind, you know, cannot be satisfied without understanding the true source, or *origin* of this misery.

Aquila.—I have long since proved, that it was not to be found in any one of God's works, as his decrees, or providence; and that Satan was incompetent to force man from his position, as a child of God, and the favourite of heaven. The origin then, of this misery, is not in God, nor in the constraining power, if I may so speak, of the devil. It is to be found nearer home, my friend.

Apollos.—I understand you, in man's own act.

Aquila.—Yes; the origin of this two-fold misery of man—a state of sin, guilt, suffering and death, here, and of eternal separation from God, and hell torments hereafter, is to be found in the acts of his own free will, whereby he casts himself wilfully, into misery and death.

Apollos.—But I wish to understand, how it came into this world, and how this moral disease is propagated, as you say, and as I believe, even to all the human race.

Aquila.—I will then show first, how it entered the world; this will be an illustration of the fact, that it was introduced by an act of man's free will, or moral agency.

1. You recollect, when man was first created, God prescribed to him a positive law, viz: Not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Scripture assigns no reason for this prohibition. One thing is certain: this command, or law, was imperative; and whether designed, simply as a trial of Adam's obedience or not, the event has proved that an infringement of it, carried in its train tremendous consequences.

2. The equity of this precept, is manifest from the facts, that God gave man the use of all the trees of the garden, except this one. So that he could not be charged with envying man's happiness, as the devil suggested to our first parents. The equity of the divine Being, is still more apparent, in that he backed this precept by a threatening,—'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'

Apollos.—What do you think was implied in this threatening, and what did God understand by this death?

Aquila.—Many disputes have arisen on this subject; but I confess to you, I never could see the necessity for them. I think that the result or event of Adam's

offence sets forth, amply, what was implied in the threatening; and this is apparent from the fact, that a God of justice would inflict no greater punishment than was embraced or implied in that threatening. Look then to the result of this offence,—you have had it in man's misery; to compress the whole of what we then said, into as small a compass as possible, let me say, 1. God's favour, is the life of an immortal soul; when man sinned, the Deity withdrew his favour; he fell under the divine displeasure, and was cut off from communion with God. A spiritual death, or an incapacity to do good, naturally ensued; and this was the first consequence of sin, and must have been therefore, implied in the threatening as already argued. Hence the Scripture represents man as dead, spiritually dead; dead in trespasses and sins,—i. e. 'without God,' out of the divine favour, while in sin, and the wages of sin is death; and I see how, in this sense, man might die, the day, yea the moment he sinned. When he violated the command, he was deprived of his primeval holiness; he was separated from that communion with God, and that spiritual life which was imparted from the Deity, while man continued in the divine favour, on the loss of which, a total moral depravation of his soul was the result; and he fell into a state of guilt, condemnation and death: spiritual death.[1] 2. But a second consequence was, a necessary death, as it has been called, or a separation of the soul from the body. I do not understand the original, as importing that man should expire certainly, on the day in which his offence was committed; a correct translation is, 'dying, thou shalt die;'[2] by which I understand, that from the day in which the offence was committed, Adam and his fair partner, should be 'dying,' tending towards death, until the soul and body should be separated: and here again, the event shows the correctness of this exposition. Adam lived hundreds of years, was tending constantly to death, and at last died. If the threatening imported an immediate execution of the penalty, then we can only admit, that it was suspended for a while, by the merit involved in the subsequent promise, 'the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' 3. The last thing involved in the threatening is, death eternal—or the casting soul and body into hell fire forever. Now it is admitted that Adam sinned: sin is eternally opposed to the nature of God, and the law of holiness. Then, as there is an eternal separation between sin and holiness, or as these extremes can never by any power, be united; it will follow that the result of Adam's offence, unless it was subsequently pardoned through faith in Christ, must of necessity have been eternal damnation; this offence on his part, being voluntary and avoidable. Scripture and fact, show, that all these things were involved in the threatening.

Apollos.—I am truly glad that my questions have led to such an elaborate exposition of this passage; and the evidence adduced from the result, to fix the meaning of the penalty, is to me, I assure you, conclusive. When you represented the precept, as enacted on a threatening of death, it occurred to my mind to ask you, if it was likewise enacted, on a promise of an everlasting and heavenly life.

Aquila.—I believe, if Adam never had sinned, he never would have died; for 'death is the wages of sin;' 'by sin, death entered into the world.' It is moreover possible, that after a sufficient trial, God might have translated Adam to a place of more intimate communion,—though the one he occupied was certainly exalted; and had he done this, it would have been merely an act of free grace. However, in the history, it is plain that he made no such promise to man,—there is no mention made of it in the Scripture; we only read of the threatening.

Apollos.—Many have strenuously plead for a promise, involving 'eternal life in the first law.' Some say, this is tacitly given, on the condition of innocency;

[1] Watson. [2] Dr. Clarke, in loco.

others say, that because no mention is made of it in Scripture, it does not follow that it was not given. Some say that Christ came to restore what was lost in Adam; some plead the translation of Enoch and Elijah; and lastly, many think that from the promises of eternal life, so often made in Scripture to the fulfilling of the law, that therefore it is said, 'the commandment is ordained to life,' which they say, chiefly holds good before the fall, and when man was placed under the law.

Aquila.—I shall not pretend to notice any of those opinions, except the last. Here are several things, which, to say the least, in my estimation are uncertain. As, 1. That God made a covenant at first with man, wherein he prescribed him a law of works, which required the observation of all the moral precepts, and all manner of perfection, both of human nature and its actions. Whereas, I have before observed, that no other than a positive law, of not eating the forbidden fruit, was given to man, whose sin evidently consisted in the sole transgression thereof: or, 2. That God annexed eternal life to that law, no mention is made in Scripture; and it cannot be inferred from any subsequent promises. 3. I may add, that in man's innocent state, I cannot even conceive the necessity for a law setting forth the obligation of moral precepts; though that law ever had an existence in the divine mind, it being an epitome of the same.

Apollos.—I agree with you, but I thought I would suggest the opinions of others on this subject. We admit, that man, seduced by the devil, transgressed a positive law, and thus fell from his state of innocence.

Aquila.—It is said that the serpent (nachash) *beguiled* Eve, and she did eat of the forbidden fruit; but that it was Satan, under the appearance, or, in the shape of that creature, appears from Revelations, where he is named the 'great dragon,' that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; doubtless alluding to man's fall. He, prompted, it is probable, by envy, at the happiness of man, then in a paradisical state, and excited to opposition against *Deity and all his works, by his enmity,* made his attack on Eve, and through her, on Adam, that he might render them as miserable as himself. He succeeded in his diabolical purpose, by falsehood, and on this account is called 'a liar from the beginning' Hath God said, &c. 'ye shall not surely die; in the day ye eat thereof ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' By the promise and hope of future good, he enticed her. They were now happy, but might be more so, if they knew more: the hope then, of enjoying a good that they had never experienced, and the charming aspect of the forbidden fruit, which was fair to look upon, were the reasons why she was so easily caught in the snare thus artfully laid.

Apollos.—In this account, I am struck with one remarkable fact that I had not noticed so particularly. It is this: that no force or constraint was used; the power of the devil was limited: he could only succeed, as he ever does, through deception. He appeared in the shape of a creature, with whose presence, and ability of speech, Eve was perfectly familiar. He offered a plan for the augmentation of knowledge: the fruit of the tree was pleasant for the sight; he worked upon the imagination,—at last, she, the woman, 'took:' it was her act,—she gave to her husband, (i. e.) voluntarily presented it, becoming thus a willing instrument, in the hands of the devil, to ruin him. But she could not constrain Adam; 'he took,' the act was his, and they both eat, and ruined their posterity.

Aquila.—You have anticipated me: I intended to show, that by nothing internal, or external, were the first unhappy pair constrained to sin. 1. The allurements of the devil were not irresistible; and a most excellent argument was at hand, to counterbalance it. God had said, 'in the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die.' The desire of knowledge, and the beauty of the fruit, were more than counterbalanced by surrounding benefits, and unalloyed delights, all flowing

from the munificence of their kind benefactor, who allowed them the use of every thing else, not excepting, I think, the tree of life, that also grew in Eden's garden. These were considerations sufficiently weighty, to counteract all temptations to concupiscence; but man decided for the tempter, and against God; and by one fell stroke, shut out himself and his, from all the delights of that blessed habitation. Now, I argue, that as this act robbed man of all his primitive happiness, and subjected him to a necessary death, and banishment from God, it must have been free in its commission; for had it been otherwise, the fall would not have been his fault; and the deed itself could not have rendered him liable to punishment. It is also remarkable, that all divines agree in this: that man's first offence was voluntary, and wilful.

Apollos.—But their notions of human liberty in many instances, are so preposterous and confused, as you have shown, that it is no liberty at all—if their views be fairly represented; for if the first man was in any way necessitated to sin, I see plainly, and am constrained to admit, that the act is not punishable, whether that constraint proceed from a decree, or from the divine prescience.

Aquila.—I am, as ever, ready to admit all that is said about prescience, if it be granted that God foreknows future contingencies, which are really such, being dependent on man's free will; but when it is said that God foreknew Adam's offence as a contingency, because he decreed it, all concessions about the will of man being free, in its own nature, while it is annexed to a decree that determines it to one side, causes a conclusion that is inevitable, as to the exculpation of man from all guilt, and consequent punishment

Apollos.—I have heard it said, that Adam had grace given him to remain in a state of innocence, if he would, but not to persevere therein; and because he had not the grace of perseverance, therefore he fell.

Aquila.—This argument is worse than those founded on the decrees—or the foreknowledge of God; for it is said that Adam had grace. Now, upon the supposition of this grace, either he could or could not maintain his integrity. If he could not, how could it be said that he had grace given him? But if he could stand, then he might have continued innocent—and to fall, was his own act; and the same argument may be used with regard to the grace of perseverance, which was not granted; either it was or was not needful. If not, though the one were not granted, he might have maintained the other—which, they will admit, is absurd. If it were needful, then it was so for his continuance in innocency; but it was withheld, and by whom? Deity. If this is not making out the same conclusion, Apollos—that is made out on the supposition of a positive decree, viz: that God is the author of our fall, and all our woe, I confess I do not understand how to deduce a conclusion from any premises.

Apollos.—Convinced that this was the act of a free agent, who suffered himself to be seduced, by neglecting to improve the grace afforded to assist him,—I ask an exposition of his punishment.

Aquila.—The Lord God pronounced sentence first on Eve. 1. She was doomed to suffer as all her daughters, and the females of all creation do, pain, in the production of her offspring; to this painful and afflictive decision, was added, subjection to her husband. 2. On man—the earth was to bring forth thorns and briers; and instead of the sweets and repose of Paradise, he was condemned to procure his bread, as all his descendants do, by the sweat of his own brow.

Apollos.—Now let me understand you. These were not all the punishments that were inflicted on Adam and Eve, but only parts of their punishment in which they differed. That is, this part of woman's punishment was peculiar to herself, and that part addressed to man, was to be peculiarly felt by him?

Aquila.—That is my idea of it. But then, there were other parts of their punishment, in which they were united. 1. They both forfeited divine favour,

were cut off from communion with God, were spiritually dead, were under the sentence of a necessary death: soul and body must be separated, and as voluntary offenders, they were both liable to be separated from God, and be damned forever. In this situation, they were about to be turned out of the garden of Eden, as a direct evidence of the justice of that God, who would execute the sentence of death temporal, and death eternal.

Apollos.—A question here, if you please. Tell me—did this sin of Adam and his partner, incapacitate them for the performance of any good?

Aquila.—I have already said that it did: I will answer this question, however, more fully. But, my dear brother—you must remember exactly where we are, in the history of this tragedy, that brought on death and all our woes. Recollect, Adam was still in the garden,—a part of his punishment, expulsion from Paradise, was not yet inflicted. Here he is a culprit before God; in fact dead, separated from divine favour, dead in law, because under sentence of death, and ready to be damned. Take him as he now is,—he can do nothing to propitiate divine wrath, or merit divine favour. What can he do, to atone for an offence so flagrant, and fraught with so many consequences? If he could do good henceforward, he would but do his duty, and leave unpaid an immense debt, due the holiness and justice of that God, whose command he had voluntarily violated. At this moment, and at this point, I believe, the merit of Christ and his atonement prevailed; the promise had just been given to the woman, 'that her seed should bruise the head of the serpent;' it meant something, or nothing: if the former, what was it? I answer, that from that hour, the blood of the 'Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world,' should prevail in man's behalf. For his sake, I believe, grace here began its sacred operations. The culprit is before God: divine favour is forfeited; he is cut off from communion—he waits to be executed; when I seem to hear the Saviour say: 'on me be his offence'—I die in his stead. In proof of the direct effect of this merit, his life is prolonged, doubtless that he might have space for repentance. *He could not remain in that holy place, to preserve it, thus fallen and polluted,* The Lord God made him 'coats of skins,' and then sent him forth to cultivate the soil. As far now as grace, for the sake of a Saviour influenced his heart, and he believed on him who was to come and atone for sin, so far, and no further, could he do good; but as he was fallen, until sanctified by that grace, and made meet for heaven, he was constantly inclined toward, and subject to sin.

Apollos.—But do you make the seed of the woman, here mentioned, mean the Son of God as manifested in flesh?

Aquila.—St. Paul to the Galatians, says so; and certainly applies the word 'seed' to Christ. 'He saith not and to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.'

Apollos.—My dear brother; in this conference, while considering man's misery, you have had to glance at the origin of it: his voluntary violation of a positive command—the insidious attack, and the direct effects of sin. It has been argued, that the 'act of sinning does not incapacitate an individual from doing good;' this is the reason why I asked you if Adam could do good after his fall. Before the promise, I see him wholly incapable of any good—to think, to speak, to act, on a principle of pure holiness. My own experience and observations on the conduct of others, show, that sin does incapacitate for the performance of good actions; but when the promise was given, 'that gracious promise made of Christ, as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan,' I see how, by faith in this promise, our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified and saved; and to this promise, and the benefit of it, 'instantly serving God day and night, they hoped to come.'[1] God might justly, my friend—have chased man, as

[1] Benson, in loco.

Job says, out of the world; but he only chased him out of the garden—he might have justly cast him down to hell, as the angels that sinned were, when they were shut out from the heavenly paradise; but man was only sent to till the ground, from whence he was taken. He was only sent to a place of toil, not torment; he was sent to the ground, not to the grave; to a work-house, not to a 'dungeon in the prison-house of hell,' there to undergo an eternity of torment, as the result of his crime.'[1] Here was grace, free, unmerited grace.

Priscilla.—I marked an expression, used just now, that at the giving of the promise, the merits of Christ's death commenced. Though the first pair were excluded from the privileges of a state of innocency, they were not abandoned to despair. God's thoughts of love designed them for a second state of probation, upon terms entirely new; and these were, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a perseverance therein to the termination of life.

Aquila.—All these are true, and even more; but I have yet many things connected with this important doctrine, to lay before you. We will however, defer them until another evening.

COLLOQUY II.

REDEMPTION CONTINUED—EFFECTS OF ADAM'S SIN ON HIS POSTERITY—IN WHAT SENSE IT IS IMPUTED TO THEM.

Apollos.—At our last interview, you set forth the fall of Adam and Eve, and the misery of their state. I wish now, to know the effects of their transgression, on their posterity, and first what is implied in its being imputed to them.

Aquila.—It is most evident, from a variety of passages in the sacred Scriptures, that Adam is set forth as the federal head and representative of all mankind. On this account, he is uniformly put in opposition to Christ, who, as the Saviour of men, represents them before the Father's throne. That he thus represents his posterity, is evident from the 5th chapter of Romans. Now, as their representative, when he fell, he entailed on them all the miseries to which, by that fall, he subjected himself. It is not to be supposed, that this sin had an effect on himself alone—which, some say, was the error of Pelagius; but each and every consequence of sin, as endured by him, is also endured by his descendants. Adam and Eve were excluded from an earthly paradise—so are their posterity. Women bring forth their children in pain, and are subject to their husbands, even those that are unfeeling and morose. Men eat their bread with the sweat of their brows, and all are alike subject to the natural necessity of dying. This is but half: we have represented the origin of our misery as involved in a voluntary separation from God. Adam lost the favour of God; his image was no longer on him: spiritual death ensued—and had soul and body been separated that day, he must have been damned; but had he then died, all his posterity would have died in him, and with him.

Apollos.—But as you have shown already, in our last conference, that for the sake of Christ he was spared, and it is presumable that space was granted for repentance and recovery; but turned out from the garden as an evidence of his guilt, and God's justice, the image of Deity was effaced from his soul. I ask now, what would be the condition of his sons when born in the world?

Aquila.—Reason says,—he could only beget a son in his own image; and you have admitted, or rather I have proved, that God's image was effaced from his soul: as a proof that I am right, look at Cain, Adam's first born—the slave of anger, despondency, and sin; a murderer in heart, and in practice. Who that

[1] Benson's com.

reads the account, does not see how Adam's nature, sinful and polluted, was imparted to his son; and his descendants, by Seth, were but little better than those by Cain. The life of this fratricide, proves the corruption of our nature, and consequent separation from God: we are aliens from him, and a spiritual death is the consequence of the fall.

Apollos.—I see that one of the effects of man's fall, is that hereditary corruption of our nature, and that total depravation of soul, whereby we are dead to God, cut off from his favour, and, as the Scripture saith, 'without God;' but the point of difficulty with me, is just here: Do the effects of Adam's transgression extend to eternal punishment? Take, for instance, babes: Is Adam's sin so imputed to them, that they can be punished for it forever?

Aquila.—To this question, I must give such an answer, as God's perfections and word will justify. You will recollect, that punishment is of two kinds: that which implies loss, and that of sense, or the enduring torment. Now, we said elsewhere, that Adam was our federal, or common head; and if he had died on the day of his offence, we had died in him. But he did not die: he begat sons in his own image, corrupt, unclean, spiritually dead. Now, although I cannot see how one of these, that was not guilty of voluntary offence, could, as I have said more than once, be doomed by a just God, to endure hell torments, or the punishment of sense, forever, for Adam's sin; yet I can see how, as fallen in their federal head, children and idiots, incapable of voluntary offence, may not, on account of the impurity of their nature, be permitted to enter eternal life, and abide in the presence of God, who is holy, without a change of that nature? The effect, then, of Adam's sin, as the federal head, and representative of all, was, to shut us all out of life eternal.

Apollos.—But, dear brother,—what will you do with little children, and idiots, then? I admit, a voluntary offender may be, and must be justly damned, or sent into hell torments; but where will you assign to infants a place—considered, as you say they are, 'children of wrath,'—that is, under sentence; as dead in their federal head, and subjects of the punishment, at least of loss?

Aquila.—I am happy to say, that I will assign to these children, and persons of *non compos mentis*, or unsound mind, born and raised so, a seat in glory, at God's right hand. 'Suffer,' saith Christ, the little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;' and 'their angels ever abide in the presence of my Father, which is in heaven.'

Apollos.—But, you have just cut them off from heaven, and all its joy, in Adam.

Aquila.—Yes I did, in Adam; but as in Adam all die; or, as 'by the offence of one, (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, (Christ) the free Gift, came upon all men to justification of life.'

Apollos.—Well, I am glad that you have got all the little infants out of hell torments

Aquila —Brother,—I never put them there.

Apollos.—But you said that Adam's sin was imputed to them, he being their federal head; and that as such, his transgression became the sin of all,—and all are liable to its penalties.

Aquila.—I say still, that it is imputed to them; and not only so, but they do die, and actually endure, in part at least, the penalty of his offence.

Apollos.—But can sin be imputed to an innocent creature?

Aquila.—Were not the sins of Dathan, and Abiram, of Achan, of Ham and Gehazi, and of all the Canaanitish tribes, imputed to their children, who endured the consequences of them; and were not those of the tribes of Israel, imputed to the 'scape goat,' who typified Christ—to whom was imputed, and on whom was

laid the iniquities of us all. 'He bore our iniquity,' 'the sins of many;' and we mean by our sins being imputed to him, he was punished for them.[1] This then, is the reason, why infants, who must otherwise be shut out of heaven, or suffer at least the punishment of loss, are admitted therein; Christ, to whom sin was imputed, had their guilt transferred to him; and, as the 'Lamb of God, taketh away the sin of the world.'

Apollos.—But God, who is just, cannot punish him who is innocent.

Aquila.—No; he cannot,—but therefore he punishes infants who are involved in Adam's sin, by way of consequence, if in no other; otherwise they would not be subjects of death,—and if the children have, in any instance, suffered for the sins of their parents, then they were punished for them, their acts being imputed to them. The fact is plain, that God did, in all ages, give blessings to children on account of their parents' good deeds; and so guilt is imputed to the children of wicked parents, and also to our Lord, though no personal offender; and this is a sound Scriptural doctrine.[2]

Apollos.—A Scriptural doctrine?

Aquila.—Yes; as 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men, in whom, (not 'for that,' or because, as our English version,) all have sinned.' And the whole chapter is to prove that, as in Adam all died, or as Adam's sin is so imputed to all his posterity, as to cut off all from heaven, so the merit of Christ extends to all,—absolutely saving those who die while incapable of voluntary offence; and placing all in a state of possible salvation, who are capable of wilful sin.

Apollos.—Having answered my inquiries as to the imputation of the sin of our first parents to us, their posterity, I want you to give me an explanation of original corruption, called original sin.

Aquila.—Original sin is a phrase not in use until the fourth century: it is that whereby our whole nature is corrupted, and rendered contrary to the law of God; it is that whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature, inclined to evil. This is sometimes called indwelling sin, as in the seventh chapter of Romans; and the imputation of Adam's sin, with some latitude of expression, is what divines generally call original sin: this imputation we have been discussing.[3]

Apollos.—But what is this corruption?

Aquila.—You have already said, that it is the entire depravation of all the faculties and powers of the human soul.[4]

Apollos.—I mean, that Adam's sin produced those effects on him.

Aquila.—Whatever was true of Adam, our federal head, after the fall, is also true of us; our nature became corrupted, and this corruption is, 1. Universal, as to its subjects; 'for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' 'all we like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' 'from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it.' 'How much more abominable and filthy is man, that drinketh in iniquity like water.' But, 2. It is general, as to all the powers of man. It is, 3. Awful, filling the mind with constant rebellion against God, and his law. It is, 4. Hateful to God; and lastly, punishable, as we have already proved; and, as is further seen, 'the wicked shall be silent in darkness; the adversaries of' the 'Lord shall be broken in pieces: out of heaven shall he thunder upon them;' 'tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil—of the Jew first, and also of the Greek.'

Apollos.—But how is it communicated from one to another; (i. e.) how is it conveyed from parents to children?

[1] Wesley's works. [2] Ibid. [3] Wesley, Buck, and Watson.
[4] Boston's fourfold state; also, Wesley's works, and Fletcher's appeal.

Aquila.—That, I am not able to say. It is, however, sufficient for me, that although I cannot comprehend the mysterious mode by which this dire and infectious disease pervades all our race, I have incontestible evidence that every soul of man alike, in every clime, is impregnated with sin. Yea, 'I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' 'Who,' says Job, 'can bring a clean out of an unclean thing? not one.' 'We were by nature children of wrath, even as others.' Here, Paul declares that he, and his Ephesian brethren, were by nature as born in the earth, children of wrath, even as others—Jews, Gentiles, all; for all are aliens from God: and as was the root, Adam, so were the branches, his descendants; and he could never transmit that of which he himself was deprived; I mean the image of God. This moral pravity is manifest in the tempers of children, and the pollution of sin, and in the fact of their death; it being a consequence thereof. Though they are thus polluted, and subject to death, Christ is their Saviour, cleansing them by his atoning blood, from all their defilements, and ultimately raising the body from the grave, and exalting them to a seat at God's right hand. They are therefore, not only delivered from all punishment in hell torments, if these could be inflicted, but they are delivered from all the punishment of loss, by our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the sins of Adam, and the sins of the world are imputed, and on whom they are placed: 'on him were laid the iniquities of us all.'

Apollos.—Do you think, that men who were thus corrupt in their nature, could have in those early ages, any correct ideas of the operations of the divine grace and mercy; and could their minds be in any degree enlightened in regard to the character of God, and especially his justice?

Aquila.—I certainly think that they had; and although they might not, at least after the lapse of years, as was the case, feel the strength of their obligations; yet we are struck with some facts that must have duly impressed their minds. It is true, it was not long before men began an open hostility against God. Cain slew his brother, yet this brother Abel, was a holy man—saved, as St. Paul says, xi. chap. Hebrews, 'by faith.' The family of Seth were doubtless, many of them, worshippers of the living God; while Adam lived, he certainly informed them of the fatal step by which they were involved in ruin, and the justice of that God, whom he had offended.

Apollos.—But they did not retain the fear, much less the love of God long.

Aquila.—No; for in the days of Noah, we read that 'all flesh had corrupted its way before the Lord.' They had the instructions of Adam, and the holy examples of such men as Abel and Enoch, and the punishment of Cain. They had doubtless, the visitations of God, as to the two first brothers; they had the law of nature, and the light of reason; and above all, for at least one hundred years, Noah was to them a preacher of righteousness, by which I understand the medium of restoration to the divine favour; but matters grew worse, until all are overwhelmed in a deluge, as a punishment for their crimes. So that from the very beginning, God did show signs of grace, and manifested his opposition to sin: and, by general precepts, by promises, and by threatenings, by rewarding the good, as in the cases of Abel and Enoch, and by punishing the wicked, as in Cain, and the Antediluvians, God has, from the beginning, taught man 'to love and serve him.'

Apollos.—But all these methods had not the desired effect. See the wickedness of Ham, and his posterity, and the early idolatry of the world,—in which, part worshipped God under the representation of an image; and a part paid adoration to inanimate things, as the sun, moon, and stars, instead of God,—'the creature, more than the Creator, who is God, blessed forever more.'

Aquila.—Such, my dear friend—was the progress of sin in the world. Let us before we close this evening's conference, review our subject, and gather up the

fragments. We find, the first pair, originally created in God's image, placed in a garden, in God's favour, blessed with ability to stand, though free to fall. The tempter comes in, and from the succinct, yet comprehensive account of Moses, we behold them, 1. Guilty, conscious alike of their nakedness and crime. 2. Immediately cut off from communion with God, and struck with a dread of his approach, which could not originate in true love; when questioned of God, how do they prevaricate? instead of confessing their sin, and imploring mercy—which proves not only their having sinned, but their being as yet wholly impenitent. Their original righteousness is gone; God pronounces them guilty,—they are turned out into a vast world, to labour and toil for daily bread. Hardly had they commenced, before an elder son, born in the image of his corrupt father, murders his younger brother, and pollutes the earth with his blood. Other crimes in succession, prove sin deeply rooted in man's heart, until the whole world, except one family, is found ripe for destruction, and is swallowed up in the avenging waters. Noah and his family start again, but they could not leave their hearts in the old world: they came off safe through the flood, a small remnant of that same polluted race, that brought down wrath from heaven to earth. Ham and his posterity, and that of Shem and Japheth, were nearly in the same polluted state as the Antediluvians, when God called Abraham to go forth from his father's house, and selected him and his family as the progenitors of him, according to the flesh, who should be for the recovery of the world. Here we are; and here we may well stop and pause a while, to contemplate that vast wreck, that must be apparent to all. At our next meeting, we shall take up the covenant with Abraham, the giving of the law, as preparatory to the consideration of that cause, that moved the Deity to provide a Redeemer.

Apollos.—I will retire, and digest what I have heard, and try to improve it for my spiritual benefit.

COLLOQUY III.

REDEMPTION CONTINUED—THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM—THE LAW OF MOSES—OF THIS LAW AS A COVENANT—THE INSUFFICIENCY OF IT FOR JUSTIFICATION—CHRIST THE ONLY FOUNDATION OF HOPE, EVIDENTLY SET FORTH IN BOTH THESE COVENANTS.

Aquila.—In our last, I promised this evening to notice the covenant with Abrabam and the giving of the law. You must, my friend—remember that man is now under the new covenant. After the fall, the ground of probation was evidently changed, and the eye of man's faith was turned toward him whom the Lord had promised as the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head. The rejection of Cain's sacrifice, and the acceptance of Abel's, turned on the belief of this truth. The one presented an offering of the field, and the other a sacrifice typical of that, which in after time, should be offered for the redemption of man.[1]

Apollos.—You do not think that Abel and Cain differed on that point, do you? and that Abel in those early times exercised faith in Christ.

Aquila.—I certainly do. Paul says so. 'By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh,' I think, of Christ.

Apollos.—This is very explicit indeed.

Aquila.—Bear also in mind, brother—this was the covenant with man, and each subsequent revelation of the will of God toward him, was only to render more plain and confirm and establish, the promise of redemption by Christ. The

[1] Doctor Clarke.

general precepts of Noah, his preaching, and the different manifestations of the Deity, only rendered this offering the more necessary. We do not read of idolatry before the flood. The divine Shekinah doubtless often appeared to man, and the 'sons of God,' who lived to a great age, kept the world right, it is presumable, as to this doctrine, however wicked in other respects. After the flood, men soon became idolatrous, and almost the whole earth appeared again to have corrupted its way before the Lord. There however, was one family that retained the worship of the true God. To the head of this, God revealed himself, and called him to go forth in another land, to the end that he might preserve it, and the nation proceeding from it, distinct from all other people, and pure from the idolatry of the world, that it might appear that the Redeemer, promised as the seed of the woman, proceeded from them. And for this purpose, God entered into a covenant with this Abraham, its head, which covenant we are to consider.

Apollos.—You think the covenant then with Abraham was virtually the renewal of the promise that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.'

Aquila.—I think it was. This promise was to be fulfilled, the veracity and justice of Deity and the happiness of man were involved in it. But from what daughter of Eve should he descend after the flesh? To what family should this daughter belong, in what nation or among what people should this family be found? These were all interesting questions. God condescends to answer them, and in the covenant with Abraham to arrange the whole.

Apollos.—Please tell me the parts of this covenant.

Aquila.—They were two. The first contains the conditions prescribed by God to Abraham, and the second Abraham's ready obedience in performing those conditions. The conditions set forth, first, the duties to be performed by this good man, and these are contained in several precepts. 1. That he should depart from his own land and kindred, from his father's house, and go into a land which God would show him. By this, Deity not only intended to try his obedience, but to cut off every occasion of idolatry, and with it his servant readily complied.

2. It was required that he should 'walk before God and be perfect,' by which I understand that he should ever act, at home and abroad, in private and before men, as in the immediate presence of God; and be perfect, love God with all his heart, mind, soul, strength, and his neighbour as himself; neglecting no duty, but ever growing better. The life and conduct of Abram proved his obedience to this precept. Such was his devotion to God, such his faith, such his self denial, that he is set up in God's word as an example, and is called the father of the faithful.[1]

3. The last precept was, that he and his household and their posterity should be circumcised the eighth day. This was to be the sign of the covenant between God and him, that Christ should come from among his descendants, and that in his seed, viz. in Christ, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And so imperative was this sign, that it was to be observed as strictly as the covenant itself, it being the sign or seal of it. Moreover, he that was not circumcised was to be cut off from them, by which I understand, should not enjoy the civil privileges and immunities of Jewish citizens, should be dead in law: no citizen of that nation and no member of the Jewish church, much less of Abraham's family. These were the precepts.[2]

Apollos.—You said that there were promises which God made that were to be fulfilled on condition of Abraham's obedience to these precepts.

Aquila.—Yes. This is the second part of the covenant. There were four promises. 1. That God would give the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed for a

[1] Doctor Clarke. [2] Limborch.

possession. 2. That God would 'multiply his seed, as the stars of heaven and the sand on the sea shore for multitude.' 3. That in his 'seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed and he would be their God.' 4. To which is added, 'I am (not only now but will be) thy shield and exceeding great reward.'

Apollos.—I observe that this last promise differs somewhat from the other three. They are particular and point to some good that is promised, but this last seems to be general.

Aquila.—It is so, and involves in it all temporal and spiritual blessings. 1. All temporal. God lets Abraham know that he will defend him here from all harm, provide for him, as he did, all temporal favours and protect him in their enjoyment. 2. Spiritual. That he would *defend him from his adversaries, pardon all his sins,* save him from all corruption, and at last give him eternal life beyond the grave. That this was involved in the promise is evident from what Christ says, 'I am the God of Abraham.' St. Paul says as much in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where the faith of this father of the faithful is spoken of thus, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.' And again, to the Romans, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.' And almost the same words to the Galatians, 'Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness; which commendation of the faith of this patriarch was but a quotation from Genesis, where it is said that Abraham 'believed in the Lord, and he,' i. e. the Lord, 'counted it to him for righteousness.' Those admitted into heaven are said to 'sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' 'He being the friend of God,' and as the 'father of the faithful,' he has the chief place in heaven itself, for 'angels carried Lazarus' to his 'bosom.'

Apollos.—I anticipate you as to Abraham's obedience. He departed from his father's house and from his country evidently without reluctance. He walked before God in acts of piety toward him; justice, mercy, and hospitality toward his neighbour; and lastly, submitted to circumcision, the sign and seal of the covenant, as did all the males of his house.

Aquila.—Faith was the foundation of Abraham's obedience, as already quoted. Faith in what, you ask? In the original promise, 'the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' And also in this now made, that the Messiah should come from one descended from his own loins. This faith was remarkable for several things. 1. It was without precedent, none admitted so much and trusted though severely tried, so firmly as Abraham, hence he is called the 'father of the faithful.' 2. It was still more remarkable, because it was against all expectation of accomplishment by human means. It was reliance wholly on God. Powerful kings and the nations they governed then possessed Canaan, his family was small, his possessions few, and he had comparatively no power. This was not all, he and his wife were both very old. Nature recoiled at the idea that children from their loins should possess a land, now the property of such mighty lords. But he staggered not at the promise through unbelief. Again we notice, 3. The constancy of this faith. God gave the promise, but he delayed its fulfilment thirteen years, until Abraham was one hundred and Sarah ninety years old; still he believed God. Hence Paul magnifies his faith, 'That against hope he believed in hope.' 4. The faith of Abraham is still more conspicuous, in the severe trial he had, when called to offer up Isaac the promised seed. Natural affection, the affecting circumstances attending the trial, the prospect of having God's promises blasted for ever, all seemed to encourage unbelief. But, 'He believed that God would raise up his son from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.'

Apollos.—Oh, what firm unshaken faith. Well might Christ say, 'Abraham saw my day and was glad,'—felt the virtue of my expiation, depended on my

goodness, experienced my power, and rejoiced in my favour. If I understand you, these promises regarded the temporal condition of the Israelites, and the spiritual condition of the world. Abraham's posterity, descended from his own loins, were to inhabit the land of Canaan; and from among them the Messiah was to come, who should save sinners and in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. This was an election of Abraham's family as the progenitors of Christ, *after the flesh however bad they might be*, among the Jews he was certainly to come. There was no election of them unconditionally to eternal life.

Aquila.—Certainly not. Most of the world were in idolatry. Abraham's covenant embraced the serving or walking perfectly before the true God, in order to eternal life; circumcision was the seal as to civil privileges and church membership, but many of his posterity were irreligious. Ishmael was a scoffer, Esau sensual and licentious, Jacob himself in early life a supplanter of his brother's rights and an arch hypocrite; Reuben defiled his father's bed, Simeon and Levi were brethren in iniquity, Judah committed whoredom with Tamar, and most of them conspired the death of Joseph. Upon the increase of this family, crimes the most enormous were committed by some, and many of them were the grossest idolators. Yet were they the progenitors of Christ, and as such the elect for that specific purpose, in preference to all other nations on earth. But they were not God's elect unconditionally to everlasting life.[1]

Apollos.—But do you think that all, not comprehended in this covenant, were cut off from all the means of salvation?

Aquila.—My dear friend—all were included in this covenant. For it is said, 'and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' I believe all were excluded but Abraham and his posterity from being Christ's progenitors, but there were in Abraham's day some, and afterwards many others, who served the true God, notwithstanding the idolatry of the world. Look at Melchisedec, priest of the most high God, king of Salem, a most eminent type of Christ, who is a priest after his order, and as a pious king he doubtless had some pious subjects. Think of Job, Jethro, and others, not of the elect family, as progenitors of Christ, yet 'perfect and upright men, that feared God and eschewed evil.' A part, moreover of Abraham's family were not elected as progenitors, Esau was excluded and Jacob taken, Judah accepted and the other patriarchs rejected, and so on until Mary is chosen in preference to all the descendants of David and daughters of Judah. But therefore Esau and others were not cut off from salvation, far from it. The covenant was with Abraham, for the benefit of all the world, 'in thy seed shall all,' &c. 'be blessed.'

Apollos.—I see then that this election, 1. of Abraham in preference to others; 2. of Isaac in preference to Ishmael; 3. of Jacob in preference to Esau; 4. of Judah before his brethren, and so on, is Paul's election in Romans. And while a revelation from God gave them a more certain rule of living, and also gave them greater light as to the designs of heaven toward man, yet it did not exclude others from previous light, or from the prospect of salvation, in living according to and improving the little light granted of God, for 'God is no respecter of persons.'

Aquila.—You now have the covenant with Abraham. It was, if I may so speak, an amplification and confirmation of the promise made in the garden. We proceed to consider the law given to the descendants of Abraham, in after time. Upon the multiplication of the posterity of Abraham, into a mighty and powerful nation, when Deity was about to grant them the land of Canaan, which he had promised to Abraham when as yet he was childless, he condescended to grant to this his chosen nation, a law containing a variety of precepts for their government individually and collectively. You must recollect that

[1] Fletcher, Whitby, Clarke, and Watson.

while this law was a barrier against the commission of sin, it was also an enlargement of the original promise, and a more palpable exposure of the plan of the Almighty for the redemption of man. As we shall see in the sequel, it not only set forth the moral duties of the Israelites and guarded them against the idolatry of the surrounding nations, but it hedged them in by political precepts in a very peculiar manner. In addition to all this, by a variety of types and shadows is set forth the Redeemer, who had been promised at first to Adam, then to Abraham, in a manner so certain, that every attentive and honest man, on his advent and propitiation might know and acknowledge him.[1]

Apollos.—Has not the law been termed a covenant?

Aquila.—Yes. In the Epistle to the Galatians and in Hebrews, where the old and new covenants are treated of by Paul, it is evident that the apostle alludes to the dispensation of Moses as given by him to the children of Israel; and by the new covenant, the dispensation of the Gospel, as published by our Lord Jesus Christ. The object of the apostle is simply to illustrate and set forth the superior excellence of that Gospel. It must be remembered there are two lights in which the law or dispensation of Moses may be viewed. First, as a directory for the conduct of man, requiring in its very nature personal obedience. In this light, it was simply a covenant of works, it left the sinner condemned and undone, cursed and ruined. Thus guilty, he was thrown on Christ as the only Saviour. Against such the law denounced judgments, and left to him no way of escape. It did hold forth in various ways the Saviour, and thus enlarged upon the promise to Adam, and the covenant with Abraham.[2] The law then, as a code of moral precepts, might be considered as a dispensation of works. When the dispensation of Christ came in the place of this, it was called the new covenant, the other as a law of works being abrogated. And again, the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation being all accomplished in Christ and now completed fully, his dispensation just ushered in, was evidently new. The promise to Adam was one of grace, the covenant with Abraham was also of grace, and the law of Moses or his dispensation, so far as it partook of the nature of the Abrahamic covenant and set forth Christ, so far it was of grace; but all that which offered and set forth justification by the deeds of the law, was only a covenant or dispensation of works. This covenant of works, made with the first man, intimated by the constitution of human nature, to all his posterity, having for its terms 'do this and live,' and that of grace, commenced in the promise to Adam, which was the substance of the Abrahamic covenant, which entered into the constitution of the covenant on Sinai and was more perfectly revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ in his Gospel, were essentially different. The first was the old and of works. The last is the one of grace. Moreover, as a dispensation abrogating former precepts, rites, and ceremonies delivered by Moses, it was in respect to the Jews new; but as it was not the first delivered to and made with man, it is in regard to us the new or second covenant, (i. e.) testament. I think this the correct view of the law as a covenant. Again, the very end for which the Jews had been bound together by political laws being now accomplished, the sceptre was to depart from Judah, and the Jewish economy be done away for ever as old and of no use.

Apollos.—Please proceed with the law as a covenant with the Israelites, the descendants from Abraham.

Aquila.—In it are several things to be observed. 1. God did not deliver it immediately to the people, but appointed a mediator, Moses, and through him dispensed to them the law. He was remarkable for his familiarity with God, and performed miracles exceeded only by those of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] McEwen on the types, and Newton. [2] Watson.

2. That law was written by the finger of God on tables of stone, and is properly the decalogue, or a summary of the moral law. The other precepts designed for the government of the Jews, being explanatory of the moral law, and a directory for their external worship, were by divine command written in five books, commonly called the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses.

Apollos.—Do not the Jews contend for another law, called the oral, which they say was given also of God to Moses, but was never committed by him to writing; that it was communicated to Aaron and his sons, and by them to their elders, who ultimately handed it to their Rabbies through tradition, which is now called the Talmud?

Aquila.—This is all a fiction, manufactured by the Jews. 1. There is no mention of it in Scripture. 2. Had this oral law been there, Moses would not have asked counsel as often as he did of God on sundry subjects. 3. The priests did not preserve the written law, and will any one believe them to be more particular in regard to one that was oral? 4. Who will believe that modern Rabbies were more careful than Deity in committing to writing what was of so much importance, and thus manifesting more regard for the truth than God himself?[1]

Apollos.—How would you divide the written law for a proper understanding of the same?

Aquila.—Two things therein demand an examination. First, the precepts, and secondly, the promises and threatenings.

1. As to the precepts, they are moral, ceremonial, and political. Moses himself says, 'These are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you.

Apollos.—How are the precepts (moral) arranged?

Aquila.—These prescribe our duty toward God and our neighbour, quoted by Christ, who saith, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, thy mind, thy soul, and thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.' This is the fufilling the whole 'moral law,' which simply embraces our duty to God and our neighbour, and is contained in the two tables thereof. These precepts are in perfect accordance with reason.

Apollos.—What are the ceremonial precepts?

Aquila.—They are those positive commands that relate to the external worship of God, and depend solely on the will of our Creator. Of these there are four sorts. 1. Such as relate to the persons dedicated to the divine service, of whom there were at first Priests and Levites, and afterward Nazarines, who were bound by a particular vow to the service of the Lord. 2. The ceremonial precepts related also to things sacred, as sacrifices and oblations, the tithes, and the first born of both man and beast, as well as the first fruits of the year. 3. The places dedicated to this service; first the tabernacle and afterward the temple, both erected by the direction and crowned with the blessing of God. 4. The times set apart for this service; these were the Sabbaths, the new moons, and three solemn festivals, the Passover, Pentecost, and feast of Tabernacles; to which are added the memorial of blowing the trumpets, the feast of dedication, the Sabbatical or every seventh year, and the Jubilee or forty-ninth year.[2]

Apollos.—What were the political precepts?

Aquila.—These were such precepts or civil laws as simply regarded the Jewish commonwealth, and were designed to govern them in the land of Canaan. Judges and magistrates were to be appointed in every gate and through every tribe, for the administration of justice. Of these tribunals there were three. 1. A supreme one, consisting of seventy elders, called the Sanhedrim, set up first at Shiloh, and then at Jerusalem. To this council all appeals were made from lower courts,

[1] Limborch. [2] Limborch and Doctor Clarke.

and by it were adjudicated the crimes of false prophecy and rebellion, the faults of a tribe and those of the high priests. In Jerusalem and in all the other cities, was a tribunal of twenty-three men, who passed sentence upon the lives and fortunes of citizens in all other cases except in the four just mentioned, and appeals lay from them to the Sanhedrim. 2. The last and most inferior were the tribunals established in small towns and villages, to determine civil contests.[1] Punishments inflicted on delinquents were either corporeal, such as whipping, not exceeding forty stripes; or capital, as strangling, beheading, burning, and stoning to death. These are a synopsis of the Jewish laws, moral, ceremonial, and political.

Apollos.—Do give me an exposition of the promises and threatenings as they are said to be contained in this law.

Aquila.—The promises annexed to this covenant are chiefly of two kinds, either such as relate to the happiness of the Jews, or the person of the Messiah, who was to proceed from that people. Of the former, some related to temporal good, which in Canaan should be enjoyed by them as a nation. The privileges and blessings are set forth in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, and the twenty-eighth of Deuteronomy, to which I refer you. General promises were made without reference to any particular blessing, as 'I will be thy God,' 'I will bless you,' and the like. And these may include all the benefits of protection in a national point of view, and indeed eternal life to all that loved and faithfully served the true God. 'Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them.' And while it is true that the special promises contained only special blessings, the general ones embraced all the benefits of protection here, on obedience, and eternal life beyond the grave.

To these promises are opposed the threatenings of the law, that are likewise particular and general. The general, threatening a violent death by the magistrate, or an untimely and miserable one by the hand of God, involving banishment from him and of course 'death eternal.' Particular threatenings regard only the present life, and touch simply the person of the offender, as by plagues and diseases, or in his outward estate depriving him of the blessings of life and inflicting calamities, as barrenness, famine, captivity, &c. a catalogue of which are in the chapters already named.

Apollos.—But you said there were other promises of the law.

Aquila.—There are. These relate to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who was promised as the seed of the woman to Adam, and to Abraham, as his 'seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.' Which promise Paul tells us in Galatians certainly referred to Christ. Of him in the law it is said, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things.' And St. Peter tells us in Acts, 'this prophet was the Lord Jesus Christ.' I would also inform you that he was foretold and described in terms not to be misunderstood, by the prophets, the time and place of his birth, his parentage and the office he was to perform in the world. But whereas most of these things were shadowed out under the law, by types and figures, it is not to be supposed that a perfect knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ could be given in it. It remained for the Gospel, the new dispensation, to reveal this in its meridian splendour, as promised by the Almighty to poor apostate man. Thus I have passed through the covenant with Abraham and the giving the law; both of which you must plainly see, look, in a good degree, to the fulfilment of the original promise of a gracious Redeemer.

Apollos.—Brother—I am forcibly struck with this: I see that the whole course of revelation has looked, from first to last, to our Lord Jesus Christ. But could

[1] Josephus, Clarke, and Limborch.

not the law give the remission of sins, or justify the sinner? I presume you understand my meaning: I mean, could the law render men truly spiritual, and bring them to everlasting life, as justified and saved from their sins?

Aquila.—And this too, is what I mean. I will then, answer you in the language of Paul: 'If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness, (i. e. justification,) had been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe.' And again, 'there is verily a disannulling of the law going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which, we draw nigh unto God.' And by a reference to the law itself, in all its parts, political, ceremonial, and moral, we plainly see the propriety of our apostle's reasoning.

Apollos.—As to political law, it contributed nothing toward a spiritual and eternal life. It prescribed no rules to the mind or soul of man, and only respected his external actions, and was intended to keep the Jews regular and orderly in their lives, as members of a civil polity. I am confident, there could be no hope of justification from the ceremonial law; for at best, it was only the shadow of good things to come, which could never make the comers thereunto perfect, nor purge away sins; and hence they are called by St. Paul, not only 'elements,' but 'weak and beggarly elements:' in the observance of which, there was no internal efficacy for the promoting of true and solid piety; for a hypocrite might be a more punctual observer of them, than the truly pious, whose purity of heart, and contrite spirit, are such sacrifices, as God has declared, 'he will not despise.'

Aquila.—The ceremonial law was founded chiefly on the divine will. It was adopted as the means of cutting off the Jews from the idolatry of the surrounding nations; and at the same time, many things contained therein, were types and figures, which shadowed out spiritual blessings of the gospel dispensation.

Apollos.—But, I ask, could not the moral law justify the sinner?

Aquila.—If we consider it a part of the old covenant, it cannot free man from sin. The business of the law was only to prescribe duties to men, and to threaten the transgressors with punishment; but to remit a fault, and absolve from this punishment, was not the part of the law, but 'grace.' The law knows not to pardon; it exhibits no promise of the remission of sin, or the removal of guilt, and it only appoints an expiation for sins of ignorance, infirmity, and fleshly pollutions. It had no means of suppressing the dominion of sin in the heart, and was far from freeing man from it. As Paul says, 'for when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.' Moreover, the law made not only no offer of pardon to the guilty, but it gave no promise of eternal life; it could not bring men to a spiritual life, and upon that account was imperfect. While in itself it was holy, just, and good; it had no power by which to counteract the deep depravity of man's heart, and subdue in him the force of those evil habits which sway and lead men into the vortex of destruction.[1]

Apollos.—But, brother—was no man justified by the law?

Aquila.—Paul says, that there were none,—he determines this question for us. All through the epistles to the Romans, and Galatians, he informs us, that no man living 'is justified by the deeds of the law,' and that 'if righteousness' (i. e. justification,) 'be by the law, then had Christ died in vain.'

Apollos.—But, my dear friend,—will you say that none of those who lived under the law, attained to justification and eternal life?

Aquila.—I most cheerfully answer in the affirmative. They did; many thousands doubtless did. But there is a great deal of difference between obtaining

[1] Watson, Limborch, and Whitby.

justification under the law, and the attaining it by the force and virtue of the law, I moreover, believe, that all those who sought after eternal life, by depending on God with all the heart, are partakers of that life, not by virtue of the law, but by the grace promised in Christ, and shadowed forth in the types and figures of the Old Testament. Some of these had a clearer view of this grace than others, and could see through the type, to the thing signified, beholding the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, though at a distance. The law then, without Christ, availed nothing for justification.

Apollos.—But have you not admitted that 'the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;' was it not needful, and ought it not to be preached?

Aquila.—I did say, that it was our 'school-master:' take this in regard to the whole ceremonial law, Christ was typified in it; take it in regard to the political law, it prepared the Jews by cutting them off from idolatry, and restraining them in due bounds to receive Christ; take it in regard to the moral law pressing its demands on the guilty, it threw them on Christ as their sure and only hope, to rescue from its penalties. As to the question, whether it ought to be preached, we say, the political and ceremonial, of course ought not; but how will you convict a sinner, unless you preach the moral law, which is unchangeable in its nature, and is ever pressing its demands on men? No man can be, or is emancipated from its penalties, but by that atonement which Christ has made; and I should like to know whether any man can be a christian, that is accustomed to violate the ten commandments. The fact is, Christ must be preached as the deliverer from the penalties of a violated law. But he that has grace, must remember, we are not to 'sin because grace abounds;' the gospel does not contain promises only.

Apollos.—On reviewing the whole then, it is plain that no method made use of by the Deity, before the coming of Christ, was of itself sufficient to deliver man from his misery; and all the efficacy that was in any, was derived simply from the grace that was offered in Christ.

Aquila.—This is the true state of the case, and from it I infer the necessity of that work of redemption of which we speak. Thus I have shewn, that the extreme misery of man, is the reason of it; and I have considered this misery in its nature, greatness, its original—and that no means short of Christ, have ever yet been appointed of heaven to deliver our race.

Apollos.—What motives could have induced such a promise?

Aquila.—The grace and the mercy of God, were the impulsive or moving causes, as we are abundantly informed in Scripture, of man's redemption. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' 'for God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved.' 'According to his mercy he saved us;' 'according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Hence, says St. John, 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.' This grace proceeded from the good will of God, and this will wholly free, formed by the counsel of no one, excited by no good deeds in man, or by a love in men towards him, nor with any hopes of reaping any advantage from them. Hence this grace is said to be manifested toward us 'according to the good pleasure of his will,' 'according to the good pleasure which he had purposed in himself;' 'after the counsel of his own will,' and 'according to his own purpose;' 'for who,' saith the apostle, 'hath been his counsellor, or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?' From these and other Scriptures, it is plain that God's love for man, was not founded on such

motives, as love generally is, but it was undeserved, voluntary,—and on that account, is love in the highest degree.

Apollos.—But had not the divine love some mixture of justice in it,—did God thus love man as an offender?

Aquila.—He did not. God perceiving that man was lapsed or fallen in sin, and was ready to perish, was pleased to be reconciled to him by the means of an expiatory sacrifice, without which he would not receive sinners into his grace and favour. Well, to this end, he sent forth a Redeemer, who should not only by his doctrine, convert men from their sins to God, but likewise by the sacrifice of himself, should expiate their sins and reconcile them to God. Thus there was an evident mixture of divine grace and justice.

Apollos.—In what did the grace appear?

Aquila.—In this, 1. That he gave to men a Priest, or a Redeemer, who could not depute one for themselves, and by this means he showed himself reconcileable, and acted graciously with man. 2. He admitted the sacrifice of this Redeemer for men, as a full expiation of, and satisfaction for all their sins. Here was grace.

Apollos.—And how was his justice manifested?

Aquila.—In that he would have this sacrifice performed by the cruel and accursed death of his only, well-beloved, and innocent Son, Jesus Christ, as an expiatory sacrifice for sin—by which method, he gave us the highest demonstration of his hatred to sin, since 'he spared not his own Son;' when he stood in the place of and interceded for sinners. 2. In that he required the submission of man by repentance, and the renunciation of sin, as preparatory to an application of the expiation of Jesus, through the medium of faith, the sole and only condition of man's salvation: thus by his justice, defending that holiness which is characteristic of his nature, and manifesting to every man the danger of sin.

Apollos.—But how can these things be consistent, to offer grace, and to give a propitiatory sacrifice? For he who gives a sacrifice, that he may exert grace, gives it to himself, which would seem to be superfluous.

Aquila.—God is not said to give the sacrifice, but the priest—by giving of whom, he shows himself reconcileable, though by this means he was not as yet pacified. It was therefore, further requisite, that the priest should offer up some sacrifice, and that by the suffering of a cruel and ignominious death. Here, therefore, the priest gives something of his own, since he not only dies, and returns to God the life which he had received of him, but does it with the greatest pain of body, and anguish of mind, which he freely and voluntarily took on himself. This voluntary suffering of death enhances the dignity of it, so as to render it a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, in the sight of God.[1]

Apollos.—But how can God be said to be pacified, who already, when he sent his Son into the world, loved men, and had an intention of saving them?

Aquila.—That intention of saving men, was a bare affection, and an unaccomplished will. But, on the death of Christ, there followed an effectual reconciliation on God's part, whereby he is prepared to bestow the pardon of sin, and eternal life on men, upon condition that they believe in his Son. So that God, who showed himself reconcileable, by sending Christ into the world, was truly reconciled by the death of his Son.

[1] Limborch and Watson.

COLLOQUY IV.

REDEMPTION CONTINUED—CHRIST'S HERALD OR FORERUNNER, JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE INSTRUMENT OR REDEEMER, THROUGH WHOSE MEDIATION THE REDEMPTION OF MANKIND WAS WROUGHT OUT BY GOD.

Apollos.—At our last interview, you mentioned that God was reconciled to man by the death of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; now, I want the character of the Saviour. Who is Jesus Christ the Son of God, who before, at, and after his birth, is styled Jesus, or the Saviour?

Aquila.—This question, I will try to answer. In order, however, to understand the subject, let us first consider the character of his herald, John the Baptist, called Christ's forerunner. Then, the person of the Redeemer, his humiliation and exaltation. When the time had nearly arrived for prophecy to be fulfilled, and that most divine and excellent work to be accomplished which God had decreed, and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, was about to make his appearance, for our redemption, God saw proper to raise in the minds of men an expectation of his advent, by the mission of a forerunner, called his 'herald'—the dignity of whose 'person and office,' we are to consider.

Apollos.—Do you allude to the dignity of his person, to his being of the sacerdotal family, (i. e.) descended from Aaron; and that, after the sceptre had departed from Judah, and the descendants of David?

Aquila.—No; I allude to some special privileges attending his birth, &c. 1. His birth was foretold several ages before it happened: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.' 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.' 2. His birth was miraculous, being born of an aged father, and a barren mother. Moreover, 3. He was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb. This man was not prepared for his office, by the working of miracles; for we do not read of any that he ever did. His austerity, however, was truly remarkable: he drank no wine, nor strong drink, fed only on such coarse diet, as was found in the wilderness, being clothed in camel's hair. On account of this austerity, he was called a second 'ELIAS.' John the Baptist, thus prepared, was sent forth to prepare the way of the Lord; as is said in Isaiah, 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'

Apollos.—In what did the dignity of his office consist?

Aquila.—First, in declaring the doctrine, which prepared the way of the Lord Jesus, and in bearing testimony of him as the true Messiah.

Apollos.—In what way was this done?

Aquila.—In the doctrine, two things are to be considered. 1. A precept, viz: Repentance; and, 2. A promise: the remission of sins,—according to that of St. Mark, 'John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach repentance for the remission of sins.' This doctrine he typified by baptism, a rite which, although it had been long before received by the Jews, was never till then, applied to shadow out a change manifested in the repentance of the sinner, and the remission of sins. Any thing connected with this baptism, we may consider when, in regular order, we enter on that subject.

Apollos.—You say, the second part of John's office, was, to bear testimony to Christ; in what way?

Aquila.—A testimony in favour of his Messiahship; and this testimony ought to have had the greater weight with the Jews, as they looked on John as a

prophet. That he might attest this truth with more confidence, it was revealed to him after an especial manner: 'I saw,' says he, 'the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove.' The faithfulness of John, in delivering this testimony, is manifest from hence: that he testified to the Jews, who fixed their minds on him, 'I am not he,—but he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, he it is;' and this testimony he bore unto his death.

Apollos.—But we read, that when John was in prison, he sent some to Jesus, with this question, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' Is it not inferrible, that toward the end of life, John doubted the truth of his testimony?

Aquila.—This cannot be concluded from the message itself, which ought to be understood as a confession, 'thou art he that should come,'—and this is the more probable, as Christ says that John was not 'like a reed shaken by the wind;' but if the message be put in the form of a question, it was doubtless for the information and confirmation of his disciples, and those about Christ, *the multitude* following him, that it was propounded.

Apollos.—Much is to be inferred from the dignity of this herald, concerning the dignity of his Master. Please give me a distinct account of the person, who is our Redeemer.

Aquila.—The Saviour is styled Jesus Christ. Jesus, means Saviour,—and Christ, anointed. The Redeemer was designed to fill the offices of prophet, priest, and king. As was usual sometimes among the Jews, kings and prophets were anointed with oil by express command. For the due performance of his offices, he was the Anointed, or Christ, from whom we take the name of christian; this anointing was with the Holy Ghost.

Apollos.—But, in treating of the person of the Saviour, is it not necessary to take notice of the dignity of that person?

Aquila.—It is. We have proved him to be the eternal God, by a secret and an effable generation from the Father, and on this account, he is styled the only begotten Son of God. He is likewise in the same person, by the hypostetical union, perfect man, or the Son of Man. As we have proved his absolute divinity and Godhead, it is only necessary now, to attend to that which relates to his humanity. His flesh and blood were produced from that of the Virgin Mary, only that he was not born in the usual manner, by the conjunction of man and woman, but by the Holy Ghost overshadowing that holy woman,—on which account, he is called the angel, (messenger) and Son of God, with regard to his humanity, as well as divinity.

Apollos.—Was not this the Eutychian heresy: that the human nature of Christ was not produced of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, but that the divine essence, or eternal Word, was transubstantiated into flesh,—that it was derived from some celestial or uncreated matter, and thus transmitted into the womb of Mary?

Aquila.—It was; but the Scripture is emphatic in regard to the fact, that he partook of human nature in common with other men; there, he is called 'the man Christ Jesus,' the 'seed of the woman;' and certainly the woman's progeny must be human: 'the seed of Abraham,' 'made of the seed of David according to the flesh;' and lastly, 'made of a woman.' Hence, he calls himself the Son of Man, denoting thereby his humanity; and to this we may add, that his mother bore him in the womb,—at her full time brought him forth as other women; and another strong argument to all this, is the fact of his being subject to the same infirmities of body, passions of mind, and in all points like us, sin only excepted.[1]

Apollos.—The Scripture is certainly unequivocal on this point.

[1] Watson and Limborch.

Aquila.—Reason confirms the declaration of Scripture. 1. Now, it is a manifest contradiction, for a thing to remain what it is, and to be changed into what it is not. It is absurd to say that a material essence was made of one purely immaterial; and mortal, of one immortal; flesh and bones, of spirit. But, 2. Again, according to this, man being composed of body and soul, it would be requisite that the divine essence should be changed partly into an immortal soul, and partly into mortal flesh. Or if they would have it changed only into flesh, because it is said 'the Word was made flesh,' then it would follow that it is flesh without soul, and Spirit, which alone was God, and a soul diffused in it. But lastly, it will then follow, that the essence of the Son, and that of the Father, is essentially different; or if the same, when the essence of the Son was changed into flesh, which flesh was crucified, dead, and buried, the divinity dying too, for three days the world would be without a God. All these absurdities must follow, from the adoption of such inconsistent principles. His being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and being made flesh, only set forth the absolute humanity of the Redeemer; he was very man. Hence, he died for us, and by his death, procured our reconciliation with the Father, and saved us from our sins. God set him forth as an example. If he had not been man, he could not have acted as such; hence the opinions of the ancient Marcionites, Cerdonians, Manichees, and others who denied that the Saviour actually died, but only seemed so to do, would have subverted the very foundation of salvation—that being grounded in the death and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.[1]

Apollos.—Then this is the author of eternal life, and his propitiation is for the deliverance of man: he is our prophet, priest, and king?

Aquila.—He is; but before we consider him in his offices, we must attend to this work of redemption, and consider the different states in which he performed this glorious end. Of these there are two; 1. His humiliation; and, 2. His exaltation: both of these are described in the Scripture. His condition in this world was mean and despicable from his very birth. Born of a virgin in a stable, laid in a manger, he afterwards lived in poverty, and was exposed to the reproaches and the affronts of the world.

Apollos.—Does not the Scripture chiefly place his humiliation in his passion and death,—in that he emptied himself, 'took on him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross?'

Aquila.—There are three degrees of this state of humiliation to be considered. 1. His death, with the passion that preceded it. 2. His burial; and, 3. His descent into Hades, the place of departed spirits. In his death and passion, two things deserve attention: its grievousness,—this was founded in his sufferings of both body and mind. In his body, he suffered the most exquisite torments, betrayed, apprehended, bound as a malefactor, buffeted, scourged, spit upon, derided, and mocked by the people, the soldiers, and priests,—after all, nailed to the cross, on which he hung several hours, and then 'he gave up the ghost.' Moreover, this death was not only violent, and cruel, but ignominious, reproachful, and accursed. His mental sufferings appeared in those grievous agonies he felt, first in the garden of Gethsemane, when he said, 'my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;' then 'he, as it were, sweat great drops of blood,' and with vehemence prayed, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass.' When he hung upon the cross, he cried, being in an agony, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

Apollos.—Some have said that Christ suffered the torments of the damned. That as surety for the elect he endured the torments of hell, (being devoid of the comforts of faith and the presence of God,) as a sponsor for others and not on his own account.

[1] Limborch, and Stackhouse.

Aquila.—By a simple reference to what constitutes the torments of the damned it will be easy to see how fallacious this opinion is. In the torments of hell are involved at least four things. That they are eternal and infinite; that there is a sense of divine wrath and an unutterable despair.

1. That he did not suffer eternal death is evident from the fact that he rose the third day, and how trifling does it appear to distinguish between the extent and intenseness of this death, since eternity denotes the former and not the latter.[1] 2. Nor did he endure infinite torments as those that are eternal are called, because of their extent he was not thrown into unquenchable fire. 3. Much less did he feel the wrath of God when he suffered, since by that act he manifested his obedience and was beloved of the Father. Hence he says, 'Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.' And, 'he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, a sweet smelling savour,' and therefore was 'highly exalted.' And all that is said about his suffering, as surety for the elect, hell torments, and about his complaints, are no evidence of the truth of such an opinion. He is declared on account of his death, (i. e. its manner), to be a curse, and to be tempted or even forsaken in the sense used there, is not that forsaking, spoken of concerning the wicked, God withdraws comfort sometimes from the faithful for holy purposes, but this is no token of wrath. 4. But despair and eternal punishment are inseparable. Christ suffered no despair, see his resignation in the garden—in his severest agony, his confidence failed not. How he calls on God on the cross. Mark his discourse with the thief and his promise to him; and lastly hear him, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' There is no trepidation, much less despair.[2]

Apollos.—But how did he free us from eternal death and the punishments of the damned, if he did not himself suffer them?

Aquila.—1. By this objection you seem to presuppose that God could not deliver us from any punishments, unless by suffering them himself in our stead, he obtained this deliverance for us. Assuming this, I ask whether despair be not one of the punishments due to the sins of the very elect? Either then Jesus has not delivered his elect from desperation, or he has himself suffered it in their stead. The former will not be admitted; and the latter cannot be, because manifestly false. But, 2. It has been proved that Christ did not suffer the punishments of the damned. It was not necessary. His death was simply a sacrifice for sin, infinite in its merits and of course sufficient for all. Now it was not necessary that he should suffer exactly what we might have done in all things. This is apparent by those sacrifices of the Old Testament. It was only requisite that an oblation and intercession, acceptable to the offended, should be made, as a satisfaction for all sin, that so a gratuitous remission of it might be obtained, as we shall show more largely hereafter.[3]

Apollos.—I am then to understand that the Redeemer 'gave himself;' the act was a voluntary one, he delivered up himself to devils and men to be tempted and persecuted of them, and was afflicted also of God, making a humiliating offering of himself on the cross, and suffering death for us as a ransom, a sacrifice for all; which sacrifice God accepts as a sufficient satisfaction to justice, and offers man pardon for his sake. His affliction in such a conflict was truly grievous.

Aquila.—So much then for its grievousness; let us consider the manner of it. Here are three particulars. 1. That he suffered according to the will of God. Because God the Father is said not only to have sent him into the world, but also that he so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, 'that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'He delivered him up for us all.' 'Herein,' therefore says St. John, 'is love, not that

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Watson, Limborch, and Whitby.

we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 2. Because he willed his death. 'Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.' Jesus says he has 'power to lay down his life,' &c. 'and this commandment have I received of my Father.' 3. Hence the Son is said by his death to have been obedient to the Father. Why God willed it has been in part already shown, we may hereafter explain it more clearly. But as to the manner,

2. He suffered all those things freely and with a voluntary obedience, as appears from all the circumstances of his death. He foretold to his disciples, at Jerusalem that he should be betrayed, seized, and put to death on the cross, yet with this knowledge he goes there. When apprehended, though twelve legions of angels were at his command, with one of whom he might have cast down his foes, yet he voluntarily delivers up himself, and confesses that he is Jesus whom they sought. He would not suffer his disciples to rescue him, and reproved one who drew a sword in his defence.

3. He suffered innocently, as the whole process against him shows. Having nothing of which to accuse him, they suborned false witnesses, these disagreed. Finding nothing worthy of death, he is adjured by the high-priest to confess if he were the Christ, and for an ingenuous confession of that fact, he is publicly condemned. Pilate perceived the innocence of Jesus and the envy of the Jews. He protested to those who clamored for his blood, that he would wash his hands of it and be innocent. And at the hour of his crucifixion, the centurion commanding on the occasion, attests that innocence by saying, 'truly this was the Son of God.'

Apollos.—You spoke of his burial as part of his humiliation. I have supposed his burial an act by which God was pleased to give the world an undeniable argument of Jesus' real death, and consequently create in us an indubitable belief in his resurrection, both necessary for the establishment of the faith.

Aquila.—I admit these things, and yet what humiliation on the part of the Son of God? The certainty of his death is evinced by the various circumstances of his burial. 1. Before he was buried, it so happened that a strict inquiry was made by the soldiers, who perceiving that he was dead, did not break his limbs, but pierced his side and out came blood and water. Moreover, Pilate would not deliver his body to Joseph of Arimathea, until he was assured that Christ was dead, after strict inquiry of the centurion. 2. All the Evangelists agree and state that this Joseph and Nicodemus embalmed his body after the manner of the Jews: wrapping it in linen they decently buried it. 3. He was interred in a new sepulchre. Had he been buried with another it might have been supposed a cheat, or that by the bones of some Elisha he arose from the dead. 4. The Jews desired and Pilate granted a seal to be put on this sepulchre and a guard set, lest by fraud or violence his disciples should take away the body, and God directed their care to another end. All this produced irresistible evidence of his resurrection, as we shall see in the sequel.

Apollos.—This detention then of Christ in the grave for three days was another part of his humiliation.

Aquila.—It was. But you must remember that this third part was not as you say for three entire days. It was a part of the first day, the whole of the second, and on the morning of the third day or first day of the week, now our Sabbath, he arose. And during the time that he was in the grave, he was under the power of death and in the state of the dead.

Apollos.—But he was, during that time, as the Apostles' Creed, that 'ancient apostolic instrument' says, in hell.

Aquila.—That part of the Apostles' Creed, as it is called, was not anciently there. And there is no evidence, however the apostles might have believed what is contained in that creed, that they ever wrote it or authorized it. But HADES, translated *hell*, means place of departed spirits—here Christ was. There his soul was present, and to the thief he said, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.[1]

Apollos.—I suppose you remember that our Roman Catholic brethren insist on a literal translation of the latin word INFERNUM, hell, and say that Christ certainly descended there, and that many souls go there first.

Aquila.—Yes! their notions are more like the fictions of heathens, about their gods and hell, than articles of christian faith. They say the centre of the earth is the place for hell torments to those who commit mortal or unpardonable sins, and there they are punished forever. Around this is purgatory, a place for the expurgation of those who have died without temporal penances for venial sins, and after purging them away they enter heaven. Next to this is limbo, where the souls of infants who have died unbaptized remain forever, but are not tormented. And outside of all is the limbus patrum, where all Old Testament saints remained till Christ's death, when he and his companion, the thief, entered the residence of these good people, and took them in triumph to heaven. Of all this the Scripture makes no mention,—and admit it, the descent of Christ thither would be a glorious and triumphant action, not one of the *greatest humiliation.*[2] Instead of all this fiction, in Ecclesiastes it is said, that on our death 'the spirit shall return to God who gave it.'

Apollos—I have wondered that Bellarmin, the champion of popery, should trifle so in regard to God's word—'for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometimes were disobedient; when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water.' This *he quotes* to prove his *limbus patrum*—a text that is used to show the similarity in the condition of the Gentile world and that of the Antideluvians, the multitude rejecting Christ, and only a few being saved, as was the case in the days of Noah. Such are condemned, in a state of subjection, in prison, hedged in by divine power.

Aquila.—This is not the only passage that is by him most shamefully perverted, made to mean what, by the most forced construction, it never can convey to the mind of a man of common sense.[3] Having considered in all its parts Christ's humiliation, let us now turn to his glorious exaltation. This consists of three parts, his *resurrection,* his *ascension,* and his *setting down* at the right hand of God.

Apollos.—This is an all-important subject. It is the foundation of the christian religion. 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.' I therefore desire that you will set forth all the arguments to establish its truth, consider all the circumstances attending it, and give me that use that ought to be made of this doctrine.

Aquila.—We suppose then, according to the testimony of both Jews and christians, which has also been demonstrated, that Christ did actually die, I prove his resurrection by this invincible argument. It is certain that the new sepulchre in which he was buried was found empty by both his friends and enemies. If his enemies had not found it empty they would, most certainly, have produced the body, and thus have proved all the preaching concerning the resurrection false. His friends say that he arose from the dead. It follows now, as the body was

[1] Limborch and Wesley. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

gone, either that it was removed by men, or it was raised by the power of God. If removed, either his friends or enemies must have done it. The latter would not do it through interest, the former could not, for the want of power and an opportunity so to do. The conclusion is inevitable, that Christ was raised from the dead by God the Father. What therefore the Jews say, of his disciples stealing the corpse while the watch was asleep, is a subterfuge to cover their infidelity.

Apollos.—No one can believe that his disciples, who when he was apprehended fled through fear, would rush through an armed guard, to carry off his body, at the hazard of their own lives. And no man is so devoid of reason as to believe that the soldiers could, all at the same time, fall into a sleep so deep as to let his disciples not only unwrap the linen clothes, but lay them in order in the sepulchre, and then remove the body without awaking them.

Aquila.—Beside his disciples were never accused of such a theft, before the Sanhedrim, or the soldiers charged with neglect of duty before Pilate; and if the guard were asleep, how did they know that his disciples stole the body. This is not all: the angels testified it to the women who came to anoint his body; the apostles, witnesses beyond exception in this matter, since they could not be deceived, and would not as we have elsewhere proved deceive others, saw, conversed and eat with him.

Apollos.—Could not they be deceived?

Aquila.—No not in this matter, since the Saviour showed himself to them several times after his resurrection, and by the many appearances he made, eating and talking with them, they could not be deceived. That they would not deceive others, in addition to the testimony elsewhere mentioned, consider, they sealed the truth of this statement with their blood, and no threatenings or punishments could deter them from testifying to his resurrection. Is it reasonable to suppose that they would constantly persist in a falsehood from which they were to receive nothing but death. Had this been so they would not only have been the worst, but the most foolish of men.

Apollos.—In the Sacred Writings, Jesus is said to be raised up by the Father. 'Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities;' and again, 'God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again.' 'To serve,' says St. Paul, 'the living and true God, and wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead.' In these texts it is expressly said that God raised up his Son Jesus from the dead.

Aquila.—Yes—God is said to be the efficient cause of the resurrection. There are many other passages of Scripture where it is attributed to him alone. 'Whom God hath raised up,' says St. Peter, 'having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.' and so in sundry other places. Sometimes God the Father is spoken of as he who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead. Not that Christ had not the power to raise himself, for it is said by him, 'destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up;' and again, 'therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it up again,' 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again—this commandment have I received of my Father.' From an inspection of these texts, we gather that the Father was the primary cause of the resurrection; that the Lord Jesus had a power of raising himself from the dead by virtue of the Divine Spirit resting on him, and so likewise was the cause of his own resurrection, but subordinate to the Father.

Apollos.—The circumstances of his resurrection were astonishingly magnificent and powerful.

Aquila.—They were; and although various, there was a combination and an agreement of the utmost importance, for the confirmation of the truth. 1. He rose on the third day, by a most wise counsel, on the first day of the week, now called 'the Lord's day,' and on the first hour of that day, or about our six o'clock. Had he risen before, his resurrection might have been questioned; had he remained longer, his already desponding disciples would have suffered their faith, now wavering, to be overthrown. 2. An earthquake attended his resurrection; while angels not only appeared, but rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and there testified to the women of his victory over death, and to the guard who became as 'dead men' with fear.

Apollos.—With what sort of a body did Christ rise, was it an immortal or a glorified one?

Aquila.—Evidently with the same body, with which he died. There were, the prints of the nails and the wounds made at his death. It was endued with the same qualities. St. Luke represents him as saying to his astonished disciples, 'Why are ye troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts, behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have; and when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.' He eat, and talked, and travelled with them, proving by incontestable evidence that he was the same Jesus that was crucified on Calvary. His body doubtless was so far immortal as never again to die; but it was not yet glorified, for he had not ascended. But if he had changed his body in any way, his disciples might not have been able to recognize him, and might justly have doubted the truth of his resurrection; but there he is, the same personage seen and known by hundreds. There are the same wounds and scars; he comes forth from the sepulchre. He talks with and makes himself known on the way to Emmaus. He enters the door without its being opened in the ordinary way and reveals himself. He eats with them on the sea-shore. They know him well.

Apollos.—There are some circumstances connected with this whole affair, that has forcibly, while reflecting on it, occurred to my mind. Christ's resurrection manifestly sets forth God's glory. Therein was displayed the divine power, and on this account he is called 'Christ, the power of God.' It was a demonstration, I recollect, of the divinity of Christ's doctrine. Being asked a proof of his mission, he gave the Jews none other than this. Indeed, my friend—I never could believe that the holiness of God could be so far forgotten and laid aside, as for Deity to attest by such a miraculous display the acts of an impostor, that falsely appealed to his resurrection. The Jews felt the force in anticipation of such an argument as this, and said that we remember this impostor said, 'destroy this body,' &c. His resurrection, I think, was an attestation of the truth of his doctrine on this, and by consequence, on other subjects. Indeed it proved the truth of the whole of what he taught. And it moreover evinced that death was overcome, and therefore that sin is fully expiated, and by him should come a spiritual resurrection from a death of sin to a new and spiritual life. And, O! brother—I think in all this there is a most powerful motive to holiness, as the resurrection of Christ gives abundant assurance that there shall be to his people a joyful resurrection to eternal life.

Aquila.—And lo! my friend—this is but a part of the glory and exaltation of our exalted Saviour. To rise from the dead was to become a victor and subdue death. I turn to the second part of his exaltation. He is to ascend on high, far above all principalities and powers. Come, for a moment consider his ascension.

Apollos.—How long was it after Christ arose from the dead before he ascended?

Aquila.—He remained on earth, eating and drinking with and instructing his disciples, concerning the establishment of his spiritual kingdom. He renewed

the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He ordained his disciples and sent them forth *apostles* of his, to preach him and the power of *his resurrection*, and at the expiration of forty days, he took them out and ascended from earth to heaven, to the throne of God. He left the earth, he set down in heaven. Now mark, he selected mount Olivet, that his disciples might have a fair view of him, and that there might be no deception: in full day he mounted a chariot of flame and ascended on high, leading captivity captive.

Apollos.—It had not occurred to my mind that Christ was forty days on earth after his resurrection, and I had really forgot the circumstance of his ascending from mount Olivet, so that there might be no deception in the case. He remained here long enough to attest his resurrection, and then ascended in a manner so visible and apparent that all present might be able to attest this act.

Aquila.—It was even so. Let us look for a moment at this all important subject. Jesus did not ascend as did Elijah in a tempest suddenly, but by degrees. He was taken up from them when all were present, and all together saw him and looked on him. 'Whilst they beheld he was taken up.' They were therefore unexceptionable witnesses of his ascension. When Jesus arose, he manifested himself to witnesses, chosen from the beginning for that purpose; as were the three chosen to behold his transfiguration. The pouring out of the Holy Ghost was on the apostles, when assembled, not on all, at Jerusalem, nor were they permitted to behold his ascension; several reasons can be assigned for this. 1. Salvation is by faith not sight, for sight is inconsistent with the obedience of faith. 2. Had the Jews seen him ascend they might have acknowledged him as lord and king, and yet might not have relied on him by faith for salvation. 3. And indeed it is not even apparent that they would have gone so far as this, the soldiers had seen his resurrection, but the Jews had bribed them; they, had seen the miracles of Christ and had attributed them to the devil. Had they seen his ascension, they perhaps would have denied the whole. We have at least the testimony of Abraham, 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one were to rise from the dead.' As the whole is on the ground of faith, as Christ said to Thomas, 'Blessed are they that believe, though they have not seen.' I am sometimes led to consider how very strong the evidence of Christ's ascension is. He ascended in the presence of his disciples. He had died certainly. He as certainly arose. Now he ascends, all see him taken up. 1. Two angels immediately appear and testify to his being received into heaven. 2. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost, according to his promise, by which he proved his possession of the eternal kingdom. 3. Stephen saw him there, and he was seen of Paul while travelling to Damascus. 4. All the apostles testify that the astonishing miracles they performed, were 'done by the name of Christ risen from the dead and reigning in heaven, from whence God is said to bear them witness,' 'with signs following,' (that is) seal the truth of their preaching.

Apollos.—The idea then, of a corporeal omnipresence on the ground of the hypostatic union, is evidently fallacious. The Scripture assigns to Christ an ascension from earth to heaven, where he, in his glorious body, is ever visible, while every where present, as a pure Spirit, influencing all after a spiritual manner.

Aquila.—This, my dear brother,—is like such persons saying, heaven is every where; but remember, heaven is not in hell: heaven is a place; thither Christ ascended, and there he is gloriously present, beheld by all; and although it be said, 'I am with you always,' 'where two or three are gathered together, there am I;' this presence is not a corporeal, but a spiritual presence, invisible, and known only by his action and operation on the soul. There is a spiritual impletion, if I

may so speak, by which he fills the church with all the gifts of his holy Spirit, though corporeally invisible.

Apollos.—Thus omnipresent, he sees, knows, and hears the prayers of all; he was present corporeally a while on earth, for the establishment of his truth, and then ascended on high, quick as light, which he has made, and set down in the presence of all his holy angels.

Aquila.—Again; God the Father is presented as the efficient cause of this ascension: 'This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.' Again, 'the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree.' In the epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul speaks of the exceeding greatness of God's power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in heavenly places, 'far above all principality and power,' &c. and, 'wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.' In Ephesians, we learn, not only that God the Father carried him in triumph to heaven, but that as the result of the victory obtained over sin, death, and hell, he is placed on the throne of his Majesty, and has all power, and dominion, forever and ever.

Apollos.—It appears to me, that there must be an important end accomplished by the ascension, and that we are particularly interested in it—he by it, securing to us a title to eternal bliss.

Aquila.—The ends of his ascension were various: some respected him only; some, him, for man's sake; and others have a more immediate respect to us. Christ had acted as the Father's ambassador, to save the world; and as a reward of obedience, he is introduced with majesty into his palace and glory forever. This, however, regards Christ only; but those ends which refer to him for our sake, are simply these. 1. That he might be our Mediator: sin has put us at an immense moral distance from God; he is holy: angels look not on him, but cover their faces with their wings; how could sinful man approach such an awful Majesty? but Christ having entered into heaven, carrying thither our nature, which he assumed, as flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone—our priest, our intercessor, he enters within, and makes accessible forever, to poor apostate man, a throne of grace. 2. That he might send down the Holy Ghost, which he could not have done, unless he had ascended; for it is said, 'the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'

Apollos.—I see the end of his ascension, as it regards us wholly. He ascended to confirm to us the truth of our ascension, and the happiness beyond the grave. 'I go,' said he, 'to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you to myself.' Paul considers it as present, and certain, 'quickened together with Christ.' Here, on earth, our hopes are not to be fixed; heaven, whither Christ has entered, is to be our home,—and following him, who has gone to possess our inheritance for us, we shall at last be united with him, in an eternity of delight, where the 'wicked cease to trouble, and the weary be at rest.'

Aquila.—The third degree, if I may call it such, of Christ's exaltation, is his setting down at the right hand of the Father, which has ever been considered the most honourable seat about a king. Of this state of exaltation, the Psalmist says, in that inimitable psalm concerning Christ's victory over the heathen, 'Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' The right hand, among men, is considered the most honourable side, and whoever sets at the right hand of a king, is considered not only next to him in glory and honour, but a partaker with him in regal power, and authority. So, by Christ's setting at the right hand of the Father, is not only meant an exaltation to the highest place next to the Father, but his sharing with him in the supreme authority, and

dominion of all things. 'Sit thou,' reign thou with me over the people; and that this is the meaning, is evident from the second verse of the same psalm, where it is said, 'rule thou in the midst of thine enemies;' and the whole we understand as prophetic of his regal authority and power. That I am correct in this, Apollos—you may ascertain by a reference to the exposition of Paul, on this very passage, 'God,' says he, 'has set Christ at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion.' And St. Peter says, 'Christ is gone up into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him;' and also, remember the quotation in another place, of the glorious vision of the expiring Stephen, who, looking steadfastly up into heaven, saw 'the glory of God,' and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, prepared and armed with power to assist him.

Apollos.—My dear friend,—the last part of this conversation, has been truly profitable to me. I have said to my heart, could a mere creature be thus exalted to share the omnipotence of Deity? If Jesus were a created being, could he take a seat so lofty, and exercise all the prerogatives of the Divinity? No! he is equal with God; and during your discourse, this blessed passage in God's word, has been running through my mind, 'He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that he is Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father.'

Aquila.—Then, as our supreme and glorious advocate, we may ever depend on him, as present, and attending to our *interests* at his FATHER'S COURT.

COLLOQUY V.

REDEMPTION CONTINUED—CHRIST ITS INSTRUMENT—HIS OFFICES CONSIDERED; AND FIRST THAT OF A PROPHET—HIS INSTALLATION INTO, AND HIS EXECUTION OF THAT OFFICE.

Aquila.—In our last, we mentioned Christ, not only as the instrument of man's salvation, but particularly as the *mediator* between an offended God, and guilty men. In the character of mediator, we shall be led to notice several things. When we consider the manifold misery of man, we perceive this mediatorial office divided in such a way as to adapt itself to man's peculiar condition. In Scripture, Christ is presented as prophet, priest, and king: as a prophet, or teacher, he was manifested to enlighten the world, and instruct the ignorant, 'I am the light of the world.' 2. As a priest, he offered himself a sacrifice for sin; and, 3. As a king, he brings in the laws of righteousness and true holiness, affording power for the subjection of the heart to God, and a successful resistance of the allurements of sin, and the temptations of the devil.[1]

Apollos.—I can only acquire a correct understanding of any subject, by taking all its parts separately. You will oblige me by considering each one of Christ's offices separate from the other, that so I may understand his true character as mediator.

Aquila.—Well, we will first consider his office as a prophet, in which there are two things that are to be particularly observed. The first, is his installation into, and the second, his execution of it. In the installation of Christ, into the prophetic office, we consider the preparation of his person for that mission he was about to undertake, and then the mission itself. I do not mean by this, that Christ, according to some, was taken up into heaven, and there prepared, descending again to earth. Those texts quoted for this purpose, only refer to the

[1] Benson.

fact of his eternal sonship, and his 'being ever with the Father;' his coming forth, being united to humanity, for our redemption, and then visibly ascending on high, to plead our cause.[1]

Apollos.—Then, by this preparation, you mean the manner in which he was informed, and qualified for the duties of this office?

Aquila.—I do. From the Scripture, we learn that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and from the womb, he was filled with it; residing continually in him, he was instructed 'in all wisdom and knowledge.' This was not imparted by dreams or visions, as to the old prophets, or by the intervention of an angel, as in the case of Moses, but by an immediate and most glorious revelation from the Father. At his baptism, this revelation was manifest in a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, which 'descended and lighted on him like a dove.' Hence it is said, that 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him;' and again, 'of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.' When a plenary communication of the Divinity, qualified the man Christ Jesus for his work, a course of temptation the most afflictive, also conspired to prepare him to exercise that ability, which the divine Spirit afforded; and after an experience of the same, execute with alacrity his holy mission. Consider for a moment, the fourth chapter of Matthew; there is the Saviour, 'led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil;' he fasts forty days and nights; Satan now approaches and assails him. 1. He tempts him to distrust the divine Providence—'If thou be,' &c. 'command.' 2. To murder himself,—'cast thyself down,' &c. 'for it is written, he will give his angels charge concerning thee,' &c. 3. To worship the devil, being allured by the promised glory and good of earth,—'All these will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me,' &c. Christ's commanding rebuke shows the presence of Deity, and that in the mighty contest with flesh, being hungry, with the world, in regard to its glory, and with Satan, who sorely tempted, he came off more than conqueror; and thus showed his qualification for the holy and glorious mission, on which he was about to enter.

Apollos.—I suppose you mean to set forth the divinity of that mission under the prophetic office.

Aquila.—I do. There are several passages wherein our Lord speaks as does the apostle Paul of him, as sent of the Father, hence he is called 'the sent of God,' 'the apostle and high-priest of our profession.' The divinity of this mission was manifest on the day of his baptism, when solemnly inaugurated into this office of a prophet, the Holy Spirit descending, that which was typified by the holy anointing for office, and we hear 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' And at his transfiguration, 'Hear ye him.' John's testimony ought on account of its disinterestedness to have prevailed. He testified of his mission, 'Ye sent to John and he bare witness unto the truth.' Lastly, the innumerable miracles of which we will talk at another time, evince the divinity of his mission. To them the Saviour himself appealed, and on no account can I, my friend—admit that a holy God would subvert the laws and order of nature, in order to establish a mission that is founded on an imposture. You have the Saviour now installed, and now commissioned to teach the world.

Apollos.—We then turn naturally, I see, to the execution of that office or important work. I presume this consists chiefly in the promulgation of his doctrine.

Aquila.—It does. But there are other things connected therewith necessary to be explained. I will consider, first, the annunciation of this doctrine and the things relating to it, and then the confirmation of the doctrine itself.

[1] Limborch and Watson.

First, let us consider the doctrine itself, and then how it was proposed to the world. Although the doctrines of Christ, as taught by his apostles and himself, might be considered separately, inasmuch as they do not come under the same office exactly, yet as this is the most suitable time, and as true apostles could never teach what he had not authorized, we may here consider the doctrines of Christ, as those taught by him before, and by his apostles after, his ascension.

Apollos.—Give me a concise exposition, my friend—of what you understand by the gospel.

Aquila.—It is simply that last and most perfect revelation, that Deity has made of his will, concerning the everlasting salvation of man, and the means of obtaining it. It is therefore evident that this and all other covenants, into which God has entered with man, consist of two parts: precepts to be obeyed, and promises proposing privileges to be enjoyed.[1]

Apollos.—But, brother—has Christ, under the new covenant, proposed any precepts to be obeyed as a condition of salvation? While I am not of opinion that obedience is wholly unnecessary, I am not sure it is as necessary as some suppose. I have heard it suggested that the precepts of the gospel are only repeated out of the law, and that obedience to these is not necessary, as Christ fulfilled and obeyed them all; and that when he commands any thing, he really promises what he himself will work in the elect.

Aquila.—For a general answer, let me premise, that while obedience to precepts is not the condition of salvation, yet is that obedience the evidence we are required to give of evangelical *faith,* which is the condition of salvation. 'Faith without works is dead,' i. e. is not faith at all. Again, such an opinion would subvert all holiness and stop all true endeavour to honour and glorify God. If Christ has done or will absolutely and unconditionally perform this, where is the necessity of our working at all, as God will necessarily work in us? But, Apollos—for a particular answer to this error notice, 1. That our Lord, when about to commence his sermon on the mount, and deliver his precepts, obedience to which is the test of true faith, he ushers them in after this manner. 'But I say to you,' which proves precepts properly so called to have been dispensed by him, under the new dispensation, as also appears from other parts of his word. Thus, 'a new commandment,' saith Jesus, 'I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' 'If,' saith he, 'ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;' and 'this is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you;' and yet again, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' 2. Christ is a king; when about to ascend to his kingdom, he commanded his apostles not only to disciple and baptize all nations, but 'to teach them to observe whatsoever he had commanded them.' It is certainly not right to divide and separate what God has united, I mean precepts and promises. The gospel has its promises, but they are not absolute and unconditional. They are suspended generally on obedience to precepts, as the evidence of an evangelical and living faith. Hear, my friend Apollos—Christ himself. 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' St. Paul says, 'If ye live after the spirit ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.' And, 'Be not deceived God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.' 'Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' And St. John says, 'Little children, let no

[1] Doctor Clarke and Benson.

man deceive you: He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.'

Apollos.—But this would be making Christ a legislator, and his gospel a law.

Aquila.—The Scripture saith that the gospel is the 'law of faith.' Hence it is said, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' St. James, speaking of the gospel says, 'Whoso looketh into the perfect *law* of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.' Christ has always been considered as a legislator. He has been denominated such by the church, if on no other ground, on that of his office as king.

Apollos.—But it is said, 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—In every law two things are to be considered. The precepts themselves and the manner in which they are enforced. Precepts are certainly suitable to every law; but yet the manner of exacting them may vary. For instance, the observance of precepts may be rigidly required, not remitting any offence in any way, and thus the law of works is strictly and properly called a *law*. But when the observance of them is required according to equity, or as a father deals with his son, as in the gospel dispensation, which admits of remission of sin to the penitent, on condition of faith, and grants the divine Spirit to aid obedience: then, the gospel is called grace in opposition to the covenant of works called the 'law.' Not that it acquits us from moral obligation, or from obedience to the precepts of the law, as far as it can bind us, and requires a holy walk as the evidence of faith; but as it takes away the rigour of the law, admits repentance and remission, and grants grace to support us in all our attempts at obedience.

Apollos.—You must excuse my bringing up this subject at this time and in this way. I want to understand all things appertaining to the plan of salvation. I wish to know the ground of my faith, and if assured that I am in error, I am ready to abandon my opinions at any time for the true light, after which I seek. I want unequivocal arguments, which I may offer as a reason of the hope that is in me. Does not God declare that he would make a new covenant with the faithful, not like the one contained in the law of Moses, saying, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.'

Aquila.—This is certainly not a promise that the Deity will immediately work obedience according to the ideas of some, in the hearts of his *elect* to his precepts, but that he will pour on his people the favours which should induce the love and practice in heart of his law. This is evident from what follows, 'I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.'

Apollos.—But did not our Saviour fulfil the law by the addition of new precepts, or did he only rescue it from the false *glosses* of the Pharisees?

Aquila.—Socinus and his followers have maintained the former, and say that Christ added several precepts to the law of Moses, as those against adultery, against swearing, about loving our enemies and not loving the world, those concerning humility, the abstinence from things lawful, and several others. On the contrary, some Calvinistic divines have taught that Christ only explained the law and rescued it from the corruptions and false expositions of the Pharisees. It has been said, that the decalogue is a summary of all the precepts of the christian religion, to which they may all may be referred. You will remember we are ever to distinguish between the literal and mystical meaning, as it is called, of the law. If we consider the law according to the letter, the gospel most certainly excels it both in the perfection of its precepts and the greatness of its promises.[1]

Apollos.—How is this?

[1] Limborch, Clarke, Schmucker, and Watson.

Aquila.—The precepts of the law are for the most part ceremonial; whereas, the gospel prescribes but a few ceremonies, its chief intention being to purge the conscience.[1]

Apollos.—Well. But I speak of moral precepts.

Aquila.—As to moral precepts, it is certain that on account of the 'hardness' of man's 'heart,' the law allowed things that the gospel does most positively forbid. In view of this, some have supposed that there are no precepts in the law, which in express terms set forth a rule to our conduct.[2]

Apollos.—But was it not written in the law, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might,' what greater love could the gospel teach?

Aquila.—But, brother—can a general precept admit of an inference, when that precept is but a summary of more particular ones, that would include the same commands as are set forth in the gospel? I admit that the manner of requiring obedience to them was the same under both dispensations.

Apollos.—It is said in the Old Testament, 'If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back again.' Is not this the perfect law of charity?

Aquila.—This it has been said was an enemy of their own people, or of the tribes, as to others, they were not only allowed to hate, but were commanded to destroy them; hence it is inferred that a love to all, without exception, was not enjoined under the law. And although they were not allowed to cherish hatred in the heart against a brother, they certainly were no where commanded to return blessings and prayers for revilings and curses. Also the revenging an affront was lawful, and any man that should meet a murderer might slay him without any formal process.[3]

Apollos.—Are not the precepts proper for human life contained in the tenth commandment?

Aquila—I really think not. This does not speak of an adulterous desire, which our Lord pronounces adultery of the heart, but that act by which one man coveted, and sought to possess as his own, another man's wife.

Apollos.—Does not St. Paul say that he 'taught but Moses and the prophets?' He informs us that he taught nothing but what Moses and the prophets foretold should come to pass. For he preached that Jesus was the Christ, that he rose from the dead and now reigns in heaven, according to the predictions of the prophets. From this it does not surely follow that what Christ commanded was formerly also commanded by Moses and them.

Apollos.—If the precepts of the gospel be so much more perfect than those of the law, is not our yoke more grievous than the one imposed by that law, since the gospel has added many new precepts?

Aquila.—I may answer that the law was burdensome on account of its ceremonies, from which the gospel frees us. It was called a yoke because it imposed a rigid obligation to a sinless obedience, without remission for a capital offence, as I have elsewhere shown. Whereas the gospel offers forgiveness on our repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, while the gospel proposes grace to discharge duty, the law is a yoke on account of the little assistance it affords to bear it.

Apollos.—I am obliged to you for premising these things concerning the superiority of the gospel over the law. Will you now, as promised, give me a more particular explication of the precepts of Christ's gospel?

Aquila.—These, my friend, relate either to points of doctrine, or to our lives and manners.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Stackhouse and Limborch.

Apollos.—What relates to doctrine ?

Aquila.—Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is required as the necessary condition of salvation: that we should believe him to be the true Messiah, promised by God to be sent into the world. As to precepts relating to our lives, they regard the deportment not only of the outward, but also the temper of the inward man. These commence with repentance and prayer, as preparatory means for the exercising an evangelical faith in Christ, and extend to all the christian and relative duties enjoined in the gospel.

Apollos.—This doctrine of the Saviour appertained especially to the Jews ?

Aquila.—It was not suited to the Jews only, but to all mankind, and was designed alike for the benefit of all. You remember that after the resurrection he commanded his apostles to go into 'all the world' and preach it to 'all nations,' whom they were to receive into church-fellowship and communion, on condition of faith, without any respect to the legal ceremonies of the Mosaic economy.

Apollos.—You mentioned that the promises of the gospel were intimately connected with the precepts. What are the promises of the gospel ?

Aquila.—Chiefly, 1. Remission of sins, without exception, to every believer in our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. The gift of the Holy Ghost, promised not only to the apostles, but to every believer in all the world, not only for his spiritual comfort, but to aid and strengthen him in every duty. 3. The resurrection of the dead and eternal life, expressed not in dark and obscure, but in clear and unequivocal terms. Here then, my friend, you have a comprehensive view of the precepts of Christ, as they regard both our doctrines and lives, and the gracious promises of pardon, comfort, and eternal life after death, as directly connected with obedience to them.

Apollos.—But I thought that Christ's prophetic office respected chiefly his course as a divine teacher and as a prophet.

Aquila.—To this part of Christ's prophetic office certainly belong his foretelling future events, in which he excelled all others, and also his praying for the people, and the success of his preaching, all which belonged to his office as a divine teacher.

Apollos.—Do show me how the Saviour discharged this part of his office ?

Aquila.—You may then consider what is set forth in God's word, concerning his zeal. See how he preferred the glory of God and the salvation of men to all other things. Look at his freedom and boldness of speech. He ever taught without respect of persons. Mark how he instructed the people, not as the scribes and Pharisees, but as one having authority; not as the prophets, that used to say, 'thus saith the Lord,' but in his own character as the fountain of light—'I say unto you.' Also consider his wisdom, whereby he revealed such things as were unknown for ages, even to the chief of the ancient prophets. Do for a moment attend to the account given of his eloquence. The clearness and power of his doctrine was manifest to all. All who heard admired the 'gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth,' and 'all bare witness and wondered,' and with astonishment said 'is not this Joseph's son ?' Moreover his very enemies acknowledged 'that never man spake as he did.'

Apollos.—But did he not often teach by parables and dark sayings ?

Aquila.—He did: but he took care to explain them to his disciples; and his preaching in this way was calculated to excite attention, and afterward a desire to know the meaning of the same, which from time to time was imparted by the Redeemer.

Priscilla.—O! I have often thought I could see him preaching his own plan for eternal salvation, to thousands seated on the grass on the plains of Judea, most of whom it is likely heard for the first time, some perhaps for the last, a gospel sermon, preached by the Author of that very gospel.

COLLOQUY VI.

THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF THE REDEEMER CONTINUED—THE CONFIRMATION, DESIGN, AND EVENT OF HIS DOCTRINE—SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Apollos.—Suppose, my brother Aquila, that some one should say the doctrines taught by Christ are false. How would you prove them true? Have they ever been confirmed?

Aquila.—Thousands have denied their truth, but they have been confirmed by evidence that is incontestable. I will adduce several things by which you will see their truth. 1. The miracles of our Lord attest the divinity of his mission, and the truth of his doctrine. You remember the frankness with which Nicodemus owned this,—'Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for *no man* can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him.' To the evidence of miracles Jesus himself appealed for the truth of his doctrine and divinity of his mission. 'But I have greater witness,' i. e. stronger testimony, 'than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father has sent me.' 'If,' says he, 'I do not the works of my Father,' i. e. if I perform not the acts of a God, 'believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.' John's message to Christ was, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' Jesus replied, appealing to the evidence of miracles, 'Go and show John again those things that ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.' Moreover many who saw his miracles were moved to believe on him. Witness the case of good Nathaniel, on Jesus' giving him evidence that he saw him under the fig-tree, he said, 'Rabbi thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.' On the performance of the first miracle, turning water into wine, it is said he not only 'manifested his glory' but 'his disciples believed on him;' and also many believed for the saying of the Samaritan woman, which testified, 'He told me all that ever I did.'

Apollos.—I wonder I did not think of all this. The miracles of Christ, St. John says, are recorded that we may believe. 'These are written,' i. e. miracles, 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.'

Priscilla.—Yes—and you know Apollos—the Jews are blamed for not believing in Jesus, who wrought so profusely his miracles among them; and St. John says, that 'though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.' 'If,' says Christ himself, 'I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.'

Aquila.—Unbelief against such a flood of evidence argues great moral depravity, as well as maturity in crime, and obduracy and guilt of conscience.

Apollos.—But it has been objected that miracles are not a sufficient evidence of the divine mission of Jesus Christ, since it may happen that a miracle may be performed by some false prophet, to whom God would have no credit to be given. To substantiate this position the Jews quote a part of the 13th chap. of Deut. 'If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye loved the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,' Some also say that christians, according to their own system, cannot be fully convinced of the divinity of

his mission, as Christ himself foretold 'that false prophets should arise, who would work signs and wonders.'[1]

Aquila.—In answer to all this, I would say generally, God may have permitted some false prophets among the Jews, to perform works, which could not, by many, be accounted for, on natural principles; but we deny that an impostor can perform a miracle, properly so called, for the confirmation of the truth. Those mentioned in the text you have quoted, are not there called miracles, but a sign, or wonder, or a dream; all of which may exist without a miracle: moreover, it is allowed, as is stated in the text, to prove God's people. The object too, of such prophets, was to draw them away from the true God, and by 'these lying wonders.' This could never be said of Christ; for he did not, either by his doctrine or miracles, at any time, excite the people to depart from the true God; his miracles were true miracles: i. e. works above the power of nature, or works accomplished by a supernatural power.

Apollos.—But how will you distinguish those that are true and genuine, from those that are false?

Aquila.—Several things will place this subject in its proper light. 1. That the reputed miracle shall manifestly appear to have been done, and the effects be visible to our senses: as giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead,—all of which, were so many signs of the reality of Christ's miracles, none of them being done in secret, but openly, and in the view of all the people. The effects thereof were notoriously visible.[1] 2. Another thing to be considered, is, that it shall exceed the power of nature, either by being wrought without its assistance, such as raising the dead to life, and giving sight to one born blind, or by being wrought after a supernatural manner; and this qualification is evident in most miracles performed by our Lord.[2] It is requisite that the miracles should not tend to the subversion of any doctrine, already approved and established of heaven, by sufficient miracles. God cannot contradict himself, nor destroy any doctrine, which he had before confirmed.[3]

Apollos.—But were these the objects of Christ's miraculous deeds?

Aquila.—They were. 1. The reality of his miracles, and the object too, are manifest. If we look at their number, according to St. John, 'there were also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself, would not contain the books that should be written.' 2. This is more manifest, from the fact, that they were universal, such as extended to all creatures, even to devils. 'There was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.' You also remember the man met by Jesus coming out of the tombs, where the very devils cried out, 'art thou come hither to torment us before the time.' At another time he rebuked the devil, and he came out of the child; again, my friend—see him 'walking on the sea,' and at his command, both the 'winds and the sea' are quiet; at his command, the fishes gather around the ship of his disciples, while they, as he directs, 'cast the net on the right side.' In his hands, a 'few loaves' are sufficient to feed thousands; he speaks, and the 'water becomes wine.' See how the swine obey his voice; the fig-tree dies at his word; at that word, all sorts of distempers are cured, and even death itself is obedient to it. To one who had been dead for days, Jesus speaks; Lazarus 'comes forth,' and he re-enters upon the avocations of human life.

Apollos.—It would seem that most of these miracles were mercies.

Aquila.—Yes; and this is the third thing that Christ's miracles suggest. The object, if we except two, the killing the barren fig tree, and the commanding a herd of swine, which ran violently into the deep; of every miracle, was obviously

[1] Paley, and Chalmers. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

and directly beneficial. Moreover, their effects were not transient, but permanent; they were performed by a single word, as the act of a God. Lastly, he gave to others the power of working miracles in his name, which could not be done had there been any deception in the matter.

Apollos.—Several notable miracles were wrought, I know, by others.

Aquila.—Yes; and what is remarkable, God the Father performed miracles, by which he established the authority of his Son among men; these testify to him as the true Messiah. What a notable miracle was that at his baptism, when the holy Spirit descended as a dove, and a voice was heard, saying, 'this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' His transfiguration on the mount, is mentioned by St. Peter as an extraordinary sign of his Messiahship,—for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And at another time, another voice came down from heaven, in the hearing of a multitude of Jews.

Priscilla.—May you not add to all these, the fact, that the very events that happened at his death and resurrection, prove that his authority was from on high?

Aquila.—Indeed it does. The sun is darkened, the veil of the temple is rent in the midst, the graves are opened, and the bodies of saints arose, and were manifested to many. But above all, my friend—the raising of Christ from the dead, and the taking him into heaven, in broad day, which was witnessed by so many, are incontestible evidence of the divinity of his doctrine.

Apollos.—I have wondered why there were no signs in the heavens, such as were asked by the Pharisees, and such as were manifested in the times of Joshua and others? By this means, all pretence of incredulity would have been taken away from the Jews.

Aquila.—God works not according to the humour and vain curiosity of man, but only in such a way as in his infinite widom seems best, to create belief in man, and leave untrammelled the human will. Again, it does not appear that they would be wanting in a pretence to infidelity, since God by raising Christ from the dead, gave them such a sign as exceeded all others. This they saw, this they knew. But God did show signs in the heavens in favour of Christ, as the sending down the Holy Ghost, by opening the heavens, and by receiving therein our glorified Jesus.

Priscilla.—The conclusion is inevitable, that the obstinacy of the Jews was such, they would not receive Jesus, though they had no manner of excuse for rejecting him. Naaman the Syrian, and the woman of Sarepta believed after one single miracle, why then should the Jews be so very incredulous, notwithstanding the innumerable miracles wrought by our Lord.

Aquila.—They themselves say, 'we know that God spake unto Moses.' But how did they know it, unless it was by miracles? Now if they admit and believe the miracles of Moses, why not believe those of Christ, which so far exceed them both in number and grandeur?

Apollos.—Indeed, I perceive that the objections on this ground are surely fallacious, and I confess that I cannot see how any man can get over the miracles of Christ. You have proved the Bible to be true, and this does most positively testify to him.

Aquila.—Indeed this is a second evidence, or confirmation of his doctrine.[1] Hence he said, 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' He confirmed his doctrine by testimony adduced from the Old Testament, and with so much skill that the 'Jews marvelled

[1] Watson, Doctor Gill, and Limborch.

how he knew letters, having never learned.' You remember when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, when he went, according to his custom, into the synagogue, after having read aloud a remarkable passage in Isaiah, prophetic of himself, he said, closing the book and delivering it to the minister, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.' On another occasion, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself:' and 'he opened' the 'eyes' of his disciples to understand the same, and see that 'according to the Scriptures' he 'must thus suffer for the redemption of the world.

Priscilla.—Yes—you know how he confounded the scribes and Pharisees, and avoided the snares they laid for him, by giving such an interpretation of Scripture, as they could not controvert. Apollos—do you read the 21st and 22d chapters of Matthew, you will be forcibly struck with the manner in which Christ, by an exposition of the Old Testament, applied and enforced his doctrine. Indeed they had nothing to offer in reply to him.[1]

Aquila.—The sanctity of this doctrine, is another argument by which I would confirm its truth and the divinity of his mission. The Saviour himself alleged it in proof of the same. 'My doctrine is not mine,' says he, 'but his that sent me: if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.' Again, 'He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God.' Its great object was to secure man from all and every pollution. Now it is impossible but that the doctrine which breathes only 'holiness to the Lord,' should be true, and its author a messenger of heaven.[2]

Apollos.—May you not add to this, my friend—the holiness of Christ's own life, which was so great that he not only did not sin, but he 'knew' none. It is said that he is 'like us in all things, sin only excepted.' He made this bold challenge to his very enemies, 'which of you convinceth me of sin?' Can such an one as this be even suspected of imposture?

Aquila.—No! This is a good argument, and to it you may add that he sealed as a holy and divine teacher the truth of this his holy doctrine, by his own death. His bloody and ignominious death, for the sake of its truth, proves not only the divinity of his mission, but incontestibly the veracity of his preaching.[3] If Christ had refused to suffer or die to confirm these, then indeed, both might have been questioned; but as a true prophet, he willingly sealed both with his blood. His death was a seal and confirmation of the covenant; and his blood, as the blood of a federal victim, whereby the New Testament was signed and established.[4]

Apollos.—Then, there is a difference between the law and the gospel, as taught by Christ, the great prophet and teacher of man?

Aquila.—The gospel and law, agree in some things, and differ in others. I will show you this agreement, and difference.

Apollos.—Do, if you please—the agreement first.

Aquila.—Well, they agree in two things. 1. In their author, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alike the author of each. He is the same God, who, according to the Scriptures, 'at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past, unto the fathers, by the prophets,' is said to have spoken in these last days unto us by his Son.' 2. They agree in another point; both contain a sort of mutual compact, or covenant, between God and man, in which Deity requires obedience from them; and upon the performance of which, he promises to them a reward.[5]

Apollos.—And yet you say, my brother—that they disagree.

Aquila.—Yes; in some particulars. Thus, 1. In the mediator of each, they differ; Moses being the mediator of the law, who delivered it to the Israelites as

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke and Watson. [3] Saurin and Limborch. [4] Limborch. [5] Ibid.

he received it from angels: 'Who received the law by the disposition, i. e. preaching, or promulgation, of angels,' says St. Stephen; but our Lord Jesus Christ received his gospel immediately from God the Father, its glorious author, of which gospel he was the mediator, and is therefore styled in the Scriptures, 'the mediator of a new and better covenant.' 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' 'And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.' Here is a very striking difference; but, 2. They differ in the manner of establishing both. The law was established by the blood of beasts, offered as victims for sacrifice; thus, 'and Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.' The new covenant, was by the blood of its own mediator, which is therefore called 'the blood of the New Testament.' 'And for this cause,' says the Bible, 'he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called, might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance;' 'for where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator.' 3. There is also a difference between the law and the gospel, in doctrine. The gospel, as all who read it know, excels the law in the nature, spirituality, and perfection of its precepts; and in the greatness and immense value of its precious promises; this we have already shown.

Apollos.—O! I have noticed this a thousand times. There is a spirit and feeling in the gospel, that is to be found no where in the law.

Aquila.—But, 4. The law differs from the gospel in its efficacy, or energy. The former was made certainly against transgression; but it was comparatively weak. St. Paul says, 'for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.' The law was 'a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;' it was designed to restrain men from crime, but it could not render them truly spiritual. On the contrary, the gospel purges the conscience from dead works, that men may not live to themselves, but to Christ, who is to live in them. 'Christ liveth,' says St. Paul, 'in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Indeed, the gospel, attended by the power of God, writes its precepts on the heart, not on tables of stone.

Priscilla.—O! how true is this.

Aquila.—5. They differ in their extent. The law was given by Moses to the children of Israel, for their government; the gospel was preached by Christ, as God's plan to save all mankind. It is commanded to be preached in all the world, as 'a witness unto all people.' Its doctrines are alike suited to all, requiring repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus, and amendment of life, as the evidence of that faith. In the last place, they differ in their duration. The law is abolished; its rites, ceremonies, types and figures, which were of such a nature, as to cease, when Christ, who was signified in them, should come, are now passed away forever; but the gospel, that perfect dispensation of mercy, 'abideth;' and shall, through each successive age of the world, perpetually remain, a message of mercy to apostate man.[1]

Apollos.—How far superior, is the gospel to the law! Do tell me, before you close, what was the end of that office, of prophet or teacher, sustained by Christ?

Aquila.—This was two-fold. We are to consider it as it respects his own preaching, or as it respects that of his disciples, as authorized by him; he came

[1] Clarke and Watson.

to make a specific offer of mercy to the Jews, and to instruct a few disciples, whose duty it should be to teach all the world, after his ascension on high. He says, 'I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' and when he sent forth the twelve, he said, 'go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans, enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' So that even during his life, his apostles had a commission only to Israelites; this, by some divines, has been termed the natural end of his mission.[1] But in their obstinacy, the Jews rejected his preaching, and that of his apostles. This has been called the accidental end. It is one that often happens, such is the enmity of man to holiness. The natural end then, of his mission, as already stated, was by his apostles and ministers, who should ever be accompanied by the power and energy of the Holy Ghost, to proclaim his truth to earth's remotest bounds; and to this end, he commissioned them, 'Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'

Priscilla.—How appropriate are those precious words. O! brother Apollos—make haste—carry the gospel to all the earth.

Apollos.—But one thing more this evening, and I cease for this time, to trouble you. What are the events or effects that follow the proclamation and spread of this gospel, as taught by Christ?

Aquila.—I have already in part told you. Let me now add—under the law, the God of Israel was perhaps little known, and not worshipped by any but Israelites,—under the gospel, that God is worshipped, wherever it is regularly preached. Where it is published, idolatry ceases; the idols of the Gentiles are taken away. Where the christian faith is embraced, the oracles of demons are struck dumb; the enmity between Jew and Gentile, if they be adopted in Christ, is removed; they become one in him, and alike own the true Messiah, their only Saviour.[2]

Apollos.—Yes, my friend—for God is no respecter of persons. O! if this blessed gospel were proclaimed, and felt in its divine power every where, what would be its renovating effects on a world that lies in the 'wicked one!'

Priscilla.—The day, brother—shall yet come, when the name of Jesus shall be heard, and its power be felt by all.

Apollos.—The Lord hasten that day!

Aquila.—Jesus has taught us to pray for it,—'thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth.' Amen.

COLLOQUY VII.

THE REDEEMER, IN HIS PRIESTLY OFFICE.—HIS APPOINTMENT TO, AND HIS EXECUTION OF THAT OFFICE.

Aquila.—In the character of Mediator, we have already shown that our Lord Jesus was presented to us in the Scriptures, and that involved in it were the several offices that he filled: viz. prophet, priest, and king. We have considered him as a prophet, and propose this evening to discuss his office as our priest. In this are several things to be investigated. At this time we will notice particularly his appointment to and his execution of that office.

Apollos.—Do you say his appointment to that office? Was Jesus appointed to it? If so, by whom, my friend?

Aquila.—The Scripture positively affirms that he was appointed thereto, and according to the divine economy, he ought to have been.[3] This will appear from

[1] Stackhouse and Limborch. [2] Blair. [3] Doctor Clarke and Benson.

the remarks of St. Paul, 'No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron; so also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high-priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.' That God did put Jesus into this office is taught us at large in the epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle therefore should be closely studied by every one who wishes to understand this office of Christ; for it is more clearly explained therein than in any other book in the New Testament. Indeed, all the types and sacrifices, under the Old Testament, are proved in it, most exactly to apply to and be fulfilled in him, our great high-priest.[1]

Apollos.—But, my brother—did God call our Lord Jesus to the priesthood, out of any natural necessity for the satisfaction of his vindictive justice?

Aquila.—My friend—this question might have been spared. What God has done is apparent. What he could do there is no necessity to inquire. You recollect our remarks on vindictive justice elsewhere. I do not approve of the word necessity as thus applied to Deity. I do not think that God was under any necessity at all. Moreover, the Sacred Writings every where attribute the calling of Christ to this office of a priest, as the Redeemer of a world that was wretched and undone, to the free will and the unmerited love of God the Father. 'For God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son into the world;' and 'He commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' It was for the remission of sins that this offering was made, which proves the Deity rather inclined to pardon than punish.[2]

Apollos.—But if the Almighty without any breach of his justice, could have pardoned sin without expiation, would it not have been superfluous to have laid on his Son this burden of suffering for sinful man?

Aquila.—Every thing that is not absolutely necessary, is not therefore superfluous. God was pleased in his wisdom to make choice of this method as the most appropriate to advance his glory, to turn the sinner from the error of his way, induce a life of piety, and bring man to eternal salvation. I dare not say that infinite wisdom *could* devise no other plan, but I do say he has appointed this; and what greater display could he give of his hatred to sin, his inflexible justice, and his love of the sinner, than that given in the bloody sacrifice of his Son? What greater motive for a holy life can there be than this, that although Christ has expiated sin, suffering so much for it, yet unless we part with our sins and devote ourselves in newness of life to him, we cannot be saved.[3]

Apollos.—Tell me, did God place his Son in the office of a priest, after the manner in which Aaron was made a priest?

Aquila.—O! no—there was a material difference between the Aaronical priesthood and that of our Lord. There are some things which display the excellency and superiority of Christ's priesthood. That of Christ was made with an oath, not so with Aaron's. 'And inasmuch as not without an oath, was he made a Priest,' says St. Paul, 'for those priests were made without an oath,' i. e. under the law, 'but this,' i. e. Christ, 'with an oath by him that said unto him, the Lord swear and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.' This leads us to notice another difference. The priesthood of Aaron passed from father to son, and was confined to father and son in the tribe of Levi, of which none ever exercised the kingly power. But Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, the kingly and priestly office being lodged in the same person, having no successor to his office.[4] Under this dispensation of grace the priest, our Jesus, offers himself, not a beast, as the appointed victim, a sin offering. It was not so in the priesthood under the law. As they differ thus widely in nature so they do in efficacy. In the Mosaic ritual the priest expiated

[1] Clarke and Benson. [2] Watson and Wesley. [3] Stackhouse. [4] Clarke and Limborch.

by sacrifice small offences, but our priest offered himself an expiation for the vilest sins, future as well as past, that expiation to be applied by faith. The former was annual at least, but was required to be daily; while Christ's sacrifice was once for all. Thus, 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,' 'and hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.'

Apollos.—This certainly overturns the opinion of Romanists, and is a confutation of it, that this sacrifice is repeated every time mass is celebrated.

Aquila.—It certainly does. Christ's priesthood, though commenced here, is consummated in heaven, and is therefore materially different from that appointed under the Mosaic economy.[1]

Apollos.—You said you would consider the execution of Christ's priestly office. In what does this consist?

Aquila.—According to most divines, in oblation and intercession.

Apollos.—What do you mean by an oblation?

Aquila.—It is that expiatory sacrifice which our Lord made for sin. It has been said by some that it was commenced on earth and finished in heaven.[2] In obedience to the Father's command, he freely and voluntarily delivered up himself to a bloody and accursed death, and poured out his precious blood for us as the price of our redemption. This obedience of his to death was so acceptable to God the Father, that he received it at the hand of his Son as a propitiation, plenary and sufficient for our sins.[3] But it was perfected and completed in heaven, when arising from the grave he ascended on high and entered therein with his own blood, and presented it before the Father in the 'Holiest of holies.' Are we not taught this all along in the epistle to the Hebrews, and especially in the ninth chapter. St. Paul illustrates it by the example and similitude of the high-priest, under the Old Testament. The one entered not into the sanctuary without blood, and the other entered into heaven with his own blood: 'by his own blood he entered in, once, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the times, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Apollos.—I remember the high-priest carried the blood of the sacrifice into the sanctuary, sprinkled it before the Lord, and by that action procured the expiation of sins.

Aquila.—Thus the blood of Christ, not properly but figuratively speaking, is presented to God; inasmuch as Jesus, who entered not into heaven but by his own blood, places himself before the Father for us, and in this sense may be said to show his wounds and offer his blood to him for sinners.

Apollos.—But was the death of Christ a true sacrifice, or was it according to some a preparation only for that oblation, which he designed to make in heaven?

Aquila.—Some have virtually denied the priestly office of our Lord on earth. It is however obvious to all, that, although his priesthood is described in the epistle to the Hebrews as being exercised in heaven, yet it is affirmed that it was also used here, and that most positively. It was the part of a priest to offer a sacrifice. This was done here, in that he 'offered himself,' says the Scripture. This sacerdotal act is ascribed to him here: 'He gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour.' 'He gave his life a ransom for many.' 'He shed his blood for many for the remission of sins.' And it is often said, 'he died for us.' The sacrifice of Christ was commenced here on the cross, he offered himself, once, for all; then he ascended on high, 'his garments dyed in

[1] Clarke and Limborch.

[2] Limborch and Stackhouse.

[3] Watson and Dick.

blood,' and presented the sacrifice before his Father, an atonement acceptable and well pleasing in his sight.[1]

Apollos.—But you know that the killing the sacrifice under the Old Testament, was no part of the oblation, but only preparatory thereto.

Aquila.—I admit this; but every sacrifice has its perfection, or rather must be complete. The killing the victim was certainly a part of every perfect oblation; and it was even so with the one, by which the death of Christ was typified. Besides in the latter, the death of the victim was by constraint, but that of Christ was willingly. He 'laid down his life for the sheep.' He had 'power to lay it down and power to take it up.' In them there is a wide difference indeed.

Apollos.—If the death of Christ is the beginning as it were and the presentation of himself on high, as having suffered death, the consummation of this sacrifice, why is remission of sins commonly attributed to his death?

Aquila.—Because his death was that which gave efficacy to the presentation of himself before his Father, as the propitiation for sin. Besides there are several things in Christ's death, which render it thus efficacious. There is the promise and will of God, who appointed the death of the Saviour, for the redemption of man. 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands;' 'for he shall bear their iniquities.' Deity would be satisfied then with no other price. Again the dignity of the person offered is likewise to be considered. He was the Son of God: 'God sent his Son into the world,' and this adds greatly to the virtue and efficacy of his death. We should also consider the innocence and purity of his life. He was 'without sin.' There was 'no guile' found in his lips. Look also at his ready and willing submission to death, 'even the death of the cross;' and the immensity of his sufferings both of body and mind. 'He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.' Here then is the propitiation that the Lord Jesus made for sin, an atonement substituted by divine appointment, and acceptable as an offering and satisfactory to the justice of Deity.[2]

Apollos.—Did you say that a second act of this oblation is *intercession?*

Aquila.—I did. This is a prominent part of that gracious work which our Lord undertook for us. Hear it, my friend Apollos—'If any man sin we have an advocate,' i. e. an attorney, an intercessor 'with the Father,' Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for 'the sins of the whole world.' It is worth while to consider the difference between this *offering* or *sacrifice* and what we call advocacy or intercession. Some have referred this intercession to the prayers which the Redeemer offered for his disciples, while here on earth; but in this, they are greatly mistaken. Those rather belong to the prophetical office as already shown. That which now properly appertains to him as our advocate, is the office which he sustains as an intercessor, in his state of exaltation and grandeur, at the Father's right hand. I do not mean by this supplication and prayer, which in an humble posture he offers to the Father for man; nor yet an affection only whereby the Lord Jesus is inclined to expiate and pardon our sins, and then bestow on us eternal life. But it is the presence of Christ, and his immediate appearance before the Father, and the constant application for our pardon in order to the salvation, which he has purchased with his blood. This, by a figurative mode of speaking, is called intercession, since it bears some analogy thereto.[3]

[1] Dwight and Buck. [2] Watson. [3] Stackhouse.

Apollos.—I do not exactly understand this.

Aquila.—An advocate, by his intercession, manages the cause of his guilty client, and thereby suspends punishment, his whole effort tending to obtain pardon of the judge. So the Redeemer manages the cause of the poor sinner, before his Father, and stops the punishment merited by his crimes. An earthly advocate manages a dubious cause, and is uncertain of the event; but our high-priest, who is *always* our intercessor, is sure of success; he procures an effectual deliverance from punishment, and this is the natural result of his propitiation.[1]

Apollos.—But wherefore does he thus intercede; and against what does he supplicate the Father?

Aquila.—Against a two-fold accusation; that which the devil brings against us: for he is called the 'accuser of the brethren,' 'who accuseth them day and night before God;' and that also which our sins bring against us. These are said to 'cry unto God for vengeance;' and hence it is, that the blood of our Redeemer, which pleads our guilty cause, is said to 'speak better things than the blood of Abel,' since it puts a stop to the cry of our sins, and the punishment due them.[2]

Apollos.—But, should we not take care, lest we confound the intercession of Christ with his kingly office?

Aquila.—We most certainly ought. We should not represent it, as no more than an actual communication of those things, which are necessary to faith and repentance, in order to our attaining the remission of sins. Thereby, this sacerdotal act of Christ, would only relate to men, whereas, the Scripture informs that it is wholly employed with God the Father, in order to render him propitious to men. Thus saith St. Paul: 'it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is ever at the *right hand* of God, who also maketh *intercession* for us.' But you will also remember, Apollos—we are not to consider this intercession as repugnant to the regal office of Jesus Christ;[3] for the sacerdotal and kingly offices cannot be consistent, if the latter be conceived of as separate, independent, and subordinate to none other: for they may be consistent, if the kingdom be supposed to be bestowed by another, and subordinate to, and dependent upon that supreme power which bestowed it; and of such a nature is the kingdom granted by God the Father to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the mediator between him and polluted man.[4]

Apollos.—Has not the act of blessing, or as it has been called, *benediction,* been considered as a part of the priestly office of Christ?

Aquila.—Some have represented the power of bestowing benefits, as resulting from his sacrifice and intercession. It is comprehended in them, and in it they will receive their completion. The apostle expressly affirms this, when he says, that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation. In this, there is evidently an allusion to the action of the high-priest, who, entering into the sanctuary, expiated the sins of the people, by the blood of the sacrifice, whilst they waited for him without. The priest having done this, came forth and blessed the people, who were then purged from their sins, and prayed God to pour upon them,—all happiness. In like manner, Christ has also once entered into heaven, to expiate our sins by his oblation and intercession. He is no longer seen by the faithful, but is looked for by them, till he comes forth again, to bestow upon them his divine benediction.[5]

Apollos.—This will be at the last day, called the day of judgment—will it not?

Aquila.—It will. Then shall he appear, and all his holy angels in his train, and display in all its brightness, the happy result of his propitiation. The

[1] Schmucker and Dick. [2] Limborch. [3] Benson and Watson. [4] Ibid.
[5] Doctors Clarke and Scott.

redeemed shall flock from the four winds, 'as doves to the windows,' and the Lord Jesus, our great high-priest, shall pour on them an eternity of blessing. Then shall be manifested to all heaven, and earth, the merit of his atonement, the virtue of his death, and the glorious results of his continual intercession in our behalf, before his Father's throne.

Priscilla.—Then shall he reign, 'Lord of lords,' and 'King of saints.'

Apollos.—What a variety of thoughts press themselves on my mind, when I turn to the atonement of Jesus, and his continual intercession. All was forfeited, all lost, when he undertook our desperate cause, and said, 'on me be their offence.' In due time, he appears a man of sorrows, endures every privation and suffering, is betrayed and condemned as a malefactor; on the cross expiates our guilt, as you have said, and the Scriptures prove,—ascended up on high, and presented himself 'the Lamb for sinners slain,' before his Father, there to plead our guilty cause. Heaven hears, and grants us pardon, peace and comfort here, abundant consolation in the termination of our course, and everlasting joy beyond the limits of this probationary state.

Priscilla.—O!—matchless grace! O! unparalleled love! who—who, can fathom its vast depth?

COLLOQUY VIII.

VARIOUS AND CONFLICTING OPINIONS CONCERNING THE ATONEMENT—THOSE OF SOCINUS EXAMINED—THEIR FALLACY EVINCED BY REASON AND SCRIPTURE.

Aquila.—When we last met, I presented what was, in my estimation, the act, as set forth in the Bible, of Christ's priestly office, viz: The obtaining the remission of sins, and our redemption.

Apollos.—But, tell me—in what does this consist? Do you not remember, the opinion of Socinus was, that 'Christ entering into heaven, by his own blood, has received from the Father a power over all things; by virtue of which, he should convert men from sin to righteousness; and thus he expiates their sins and reconciles them to God.'[1] Now this opinion conflicts very much with the common one concerning the atonement. What do you think of it?

Aquila.—I think this is an account too loose altogether, concerning the priestly office of our Lord Jesus Christ. All that is here attributed to him, he may do as a prophet, or divine teacher, and as a king: where then, I would ask, Apollos, is the sacerdotal act? In all this, what oblation or sacrifice, is assigned to Christ, whereby to denominate him a priest? 'Every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore,' as St. Paul argues, 'it is of necessity that this man,' i. e. the man Christ Jesus, 'have somewhat also to offer,' that thereby he might be truly a priest.

Apollos.—We ought not then, to confound the offices one with another, but consider them as distinct?

Aquila.—Most surely. As Christ is a prophet and a king, he is the vicegerent of God, if I may thus speak, and declares his will and pleasure to men; but as he is a priest, his business as such, is with God alone, in order to render him propitious and merciful to sinful man.[2]

Apollos.—Do not the Scriptures teach different things concerning the death of Christ, from those taught in the Socinian system?

Aquila.—They do. You know, for you have read, what force and energy they attribute to the death of Christ. They declare it to be a real sacrifice, a

[1] Limborch, Calvin, and Dr. Gill. [2] Doctor Clarke, Henry and Stackhouse.

propitiation, by which the Almighty's anger was appeased; and he was pleased to pardon the sins that were the occasion of it. This will be more plainly perceived, if you will, at your leisure, take a concordance, and consult those passages where Christ is represented as an 'offering,' and a 'sacrifice,' 'for men,' or for the 'sins of men.' Let me, Apollos—give you a few: Isaiah says, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—he shall see his seed, and he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.' 'Walk in love,' says St. Paul to the Ephesians, 'as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.' He says to the Hebrews, 'how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God;' 'for where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.' Therefore, 'now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' and yet again, 'by the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.' But in other parts of the New Testament, Christ is not only represented as an offering, but, as St. Paul says, an ἱλασμος ILASMOS, i. e. a '*propitiation*' for sin. 'Whom God hath set forth,' saith he, 'to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.' 'Who,' says St. John, 'is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;' and, says that apostle, 'herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' By this propitiation, Christ is represented as procuring for us access to God, and thus by his death, making 'reconciliation for the sins of the people.' Now, Apollos—all these expressions plainly denote, that our Saviour had reconciled the Father to us, the whole force and efficacy of this propitiation, being derived from the fact of his death. This will be proved by referring to those places where his death is mentioned. I will give you a few: hear Isaiah first, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted; but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, every man, to his own way, but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

Apollos.—Even this old prophet set an immense value on the death of Christ.

Aquila.—O! yes. But hear St. Paul, 'for I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 'who,' says he, 'gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God, and our Father.' St. Peter confirms it, 'for Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,—being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' And, my friend—there are various other texts, where we are said to have redemption by him, and he is our ransom; all which, establish our view of the atonement, as the correct one, and the Socinian as fallacious. I will give you a few of them also: 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' and to the Collossians, St. Paul uses the same words, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.' Christ himself taught, that his life was to be a ransom for sinners. 'Whosoever,' says he, 'will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;' 'who gave himself a ransom for all,' St. Paul says.

Apollos.—It is very clear and plain to my mind, that by all these phrases, the blood of Christ is set forth as the price of our redemption, which price he paid down for us, that we might be delivered from the guilt of our sins, and be saved forever. But, my friend Aquila—you know that it has been objected by those holding Socinian opinions, 'that God, when he delivered up his Son to death, was not angry with us, but, out of love, sent us his Son;' for 'the Scripture,' they say, 'when it speaks of this mission of the Son into the world, never makes mention of the wrath, but always the love of God.'[1]

Aquila.—I have several reasons, by which to disprove this position. 1. That God was angry with men on account of their sins, is too notorious to be denied, and therefore needs but little effort for proof, there being so much said in Scripture to evince this fact. Take two or three texts, 'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity,' says David. Isaiah declares, 'your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' St. Paul, after enumerating some of the crimes of the world, to show how they offended God, says to the Colossians, 'for which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience;' and at that very time in which he sent his Son into the world for its redemption, the same apostle informs us, that the wrath of God was kindled against sin. 'For the wrath of God is revealed,' saith he, 'from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness,' 'among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature, the children of wrath even as others.' 2. But the wrath of God is not always taken in the same sense. Sometimes, as we have elsewhere shown, on the best authority, my friend—it denotes his inclination or affection to punish, raised by the greatness and heinousness of the offence; yet not so joined with an immutable purpose of punishing, but that it is often suspended by the interposition of his love, whereby he waits for the repentance of a sinner, and pardons the penitent.[2] Sometimes it signifies the firm and immutable purpose of God, to punish the offender; hence says St. John, 'he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Now in this latter sense, God cannot be said to have been angry with us, when out of love the purest and most benevolent, he sent his Son into the world for our deliverance. Such anger as this last mentioned, admits of no mixture of love. Wrath is only ascribed to him in the former sense, in the midst of which, he still loves the sinner, but hates his sins, and even 'in wrath remembers mercy.'[3]

Apollos.—That is, my brother—God shows himself, though offended with man's sins, reconcileable, and willing to forgive. He proves himself, even in the midst of their deserts, a lover of mankind, long suffering, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy; and therefore he delivered up his Son to die for us, that he might at the same time, manifest his love to justice, and display his willingness to be fully reconciled to men, upon the atonement made by the bloody and cruel death of his Son.[4]

Aquila.—Yes; and because in this mixture of justice and mercy, or of wrath and love, the one exceeded the other; and God, out of love to men, gave his Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice for their sins; the Scriptures seldom make mention of the wrath, but dwell on the love of God, as unmerited and unparalleled, towards a lost and ruined world.[5]

Apollos.—But it is said by Socinus, that 'the Scripture declares that Jesus Christ died for the confirmation and sanction of the new covenant, and of the divine promises contained therein, the chief of which is, remission of sins and

[1] Limborch and Buck. [2] Whitby and Clarke. [3] Ibid. [4] Clarke and Watson. [5] Limborch.

eternal life; that by this means, he might bestow upon us some sort of right of obtaining those promises, and then, that he might prevail upon all men, to lay hold on, and perform the conditions annexed to this covenant.'[1]

Aquila.—This is true; but the death of Christ considered thus, evidently belongs to his prophetic office, which accomplishes both these things, as he by his death has given an attestation to that truth which he preached. His death then, in this case, is that of a martyr, and not of a priest; and some think, that remission of sins cannot be ascribed to this act only remotely, as it is by the observation of a doctrine confirmed by Christ's death, that man obtains pardon. According to this, remission of sins might be ascribed to all that innumerable company of martyrs, who laid down their lives for the truth of the gospel; which, no Socinian, it is presumed, will ever admit.[2]

Apollos.—It is plain, that the death of Christ must be looked upon in another sense, viz: that of an offering, and a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins.

Aquila.—Yes; and in this sense, it does most certainly belong to the priestly office of our Lord Jesus, who by his death, made an atonement for sin.

Priscilla.—Is it possible, there are any so vain, as to suppose that there can be restoration to the divine favour, on any other ground than this?

Apollos.—The man that does right, is the man that does his duty; no one can do more than his duty, for it is his duty to do all the good he can. But admit that he has done wrong, how is he to be restored to the divine favour? By the Redeemer, Deity is most mercifully reconciled, and is rendered propitious to us.

Aquila.—This is certainly the Scripture doctrine, and it is likewise rational. The merit of Christ Jesus, the victim, who offered himself for sin, is evidently founded in the dignity of his person, as a priest forever, who before the Father presents the sacrifice of his own blood, as 'the Lamb for sinners slain,' and also before him continually pleads our cause, and renders thereby, the Father ready to bestow on us his pardon. But, we will consider this offering more at large, at another time. Read, my dear friend—and weigh with much consideration and prayer, the testimony adduced from the word of God; and do remember, whatever may be the notions of men, we are not to dismiss and neglect the authority of the Scriptures. For the present—adieu!

COLLOQUY IX.

DIVERSITY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING THE ATONEMENT CONTINUED—THE CALVINISTIC NOTION OF THE SAME EXAMINED.

Apollos.—I have carefully examined those texts, adduced at our last meeting, and am convinced that they do substantiate the position assumed by you, my friend. But there are other opinions just the reverse of the Socinian, concerning that satisfaction which Christ made for sin, I want you to examine it and give me your views of the same. Our Calvinistic brethren maintain that Christ has satisfied divine justice for our sins. They do not all agree in the manner of explaining this opinion it is true; some distinguish this act of Christ into two parts. The first is *merit,* which regards the perfect righteousness of the Saviour; this, it is said, he performed in our stead, and by it he merited for us the imputation thereof and eternal life. And, secondly, *satisfaction,* whereby he endured for us all the punishments due to our sins, and by the suffering of them fully satisfied the divine justice.[3] Others will not allow of any distinction in the case, but include the merit in the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, saying that this satisfaction merited salvation and eternal life.[4]

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson and Buck. [3] Calvin and Buck. [4] Hervey's Theron and Aspasio.

Aquila.—As to *merit* and *satisfaction,* they are no where to be met with in the Scriptures, when any mention is made of the obedience and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. These words are deduced from the term *price,* as ascribed to the death of Christ, whereby heaven is purchased for us.[1] As these grow chiefly out of others, it is evident that they ought to be used with that explication of them that is consistent with the texts, which are quoted as the foundation of their use, and to the illustration of which they are applied.

Apollos.—Do let me understand you. Take the word *merit* first, and let me hear your exposition of the manner in which it is used, and the propriety of that use.

Aquila.—*Merit* is usually placed in the perfect obedience of the Saviour, whereby he is said to have fulfilled the law, and by his righteousness performed it in our place, and has merited that it shall be imputed to us by God the Father. But if Jesus Christ has by this means merited righteousness, and so performed it, that we might in him be conformable in all things to the law of God, nothing can be required of us in order to be partakers of that righteousness, no not so much as that we should apprehend his merit by faith. We have already in Christ all that righteousness, and Christ has already performed all things for us, which are necessary to our salvation. On the contrary, it appears from many passages in the Scriptures, that faith and holiness of life are required as indispensible to the attainment and possession of the divine favour here and eternal life hereafter.[2]

Apollos.—You say the Scripture sets them forth as indispensable.

Aquila.—It does. Read and you will see for yourself. Shall I quote a few texts for you to establish this? I will. Hear then, my friend—for yourself. 'I say to you,' saith our Redeemer, 'except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Does this righteousness of his disciples mean nothing? 'Know ye not,' says St. Paul, 'that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?' He tells us the unrighteous characters who shall not possess it, and then says to his Corinthian brethren, 'and such were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Again, says the same apostle, 'follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' 'Little children,' says St. John, 'let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.' And St. Paul covers the whole ground by saying to the Romans, 'For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.' Now, who does not see that, notwithstanding what Christ has done, and notwithstanding his obedience to the law, which he has sanctified and made honourable, if we are not righteous, in other words, if we are not *believers,* evangelically so, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and if there be not a correspondence between our practice and the requisitions of God's word, to evince our faith, our nature being regenerated by grace, and our lives corresponding with the moral precepts of the divine law, then we need not expect eternal life?[3]

Apollos.—But, my brother—If Christ has not fulfilled the law for us and in our stead, why was it necessary that he should be holy, spotless, and undefiled? Why should he be without sin?

Aquila.—Several reasons may be assigned, but those which relate more particularly to his priestly office are these: viz. that he might be a sacrifice without blemish and a holy high-priest.[4] He who was to offer up a sacrifice for the sins of others, and as a propitiation to expiate the sins of the world, should most cer-

[1] Limborch.
[2] Clarke, Fletcher, Wesley, and Watson.
[3] Schmucker and Watson.
[4] Watson and Clarke.

tainly be without sin himself; otherwise, as St. Paul affirms, he would have needed a sacrifice for the expiation 'of his own sins.' 'For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens, who needed not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself.' Hence it is, my friend—that he is said to be without sin, and that very often. 'For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin,' i. e. a sin offering 'for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him.' 'For we have not a high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are yet *without sin.*' St. Peter says, 'who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' By the same apostle he is therefore styled 'a lamb without blemish and without spot,' by whose 'precious blood' we are redeemed.

Apollos.—But it is said in Romans, 'For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.' Is not this an imputation of his righteousness, most absolutely, to us?

Aquila.—We are not to understand by the life of Christ, here opposed to his death, the obedience which he showed to his Father, or his active righteousness as it is called; but his existence after a powerful and blessed resurrection. the life he now lives in heaven; and indeed the fact that though dead he is alive, and ever pleads for us. There he fully and faithfully discharges the office of a priest before the Father, and as such expiates the sins of men. The meaning, therefore, of the words may be considered simply as this: If God did that which was the greater, viz. gave his Son to die for us, even when we were enemies, that by his death man might be reconciled to the Deity, much more will he give eternal life to us, who are reconciled unto him by his Son, who is now raised from the dead to immortal life, and appears before him in our behalf.[1]

Apollos.—But, brother—in the very same chapter it is said, 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto the justification of life.' Tell me is not this Christ's living righteously in our stead? and is it not evidence that his righteousness is imputed to us while we are yet in sin?

Aquila.—By no means. It only means that his righteousness is the cause of our justification. In other words that God does account the faith of every one who believes in Christ and is born of him for righteousness, for the sake of what our Lord Jesus Christ did, to atone for the offences that are past.

Apollos.—Admit your exposition. But it is assuredly said, 'Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.'

Aquila.—But this is not saying that Christ Jesus lived righteously in *our stead,* or that his righteousness is ours and imputed to us, since he is said to be made 'wisdom,' as well as 'righteousness,' and what is true of the one is also true of the other. The meaning evidently is that Christ was appointed by God the Father to be to man, the author of 'wisdom, righteousness,' i. e. justification, 'and redemption.' It has been on all occasions evidently set forth by me, Apollos—that by Christ Jesus and him alone, we attain true and saving knowledge or wisdom, justification, and indeed eternal salvation.[2] 'Only Jesus can do helpless sinners good.' I am certainly favourable to the use of the word *merit,* when it is applied, as we are authorized to apply it, by those texts on which it is founded, but

[1] The reader will please consult Clarke, Henry, and Scott on this text. The last named author applies it to the final perseverance of the saints.

[2] Doctor Clarke.

we are certainly not authorized by them so to use it, so as to represent the active righteousness or obedience of Christ, as imputed to his children, commonly called his elect, while they are transferred from the obligations of obedience, and may live 'in sin' that grace may abound.[1]

Apollos.—Well—what are we to understand by *satisfaction,* as applied to what Christ has done to appease the divine wrath. It is said that he has suffered all punishments due to our sins, and by this suffering has fully satisfied divine justice.[2] What do you think of this opinion?

Aquila.—My opinion is that it has no foundation in Scripture, and for the following reasons. The death of Christ is called a sacrifice for sin. But sacrifices are no discharge nor plenary satisfaction for sins. They do not go on the ground of pound for pound, or as in Scripture an 'eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' How then? It is a *substitution* in the place of what God might in justice require. God accepts the death of his Son as an expiation for sin, to be applied by faith for salvation; and as we have elsewhere said, Christ did not suffer eternal death, neither in intenseness nor extent, and yet this was the punishment due to our sins; besides if Christ did fully and entirely suffer all the punishments due to our sins, God could not then grant any thing to us gratuitously, or of grace, for if Christ has made a full payment, even to the utmost farthing, nothing is left for the Father to bestow upon us of grace at all, as justice is already fully and perfectly satisfied. The Scripture to the contrary teaches us, that God, out of his own grace and mercy, grants us remission of sins in Christ Jesus. But if Christ has made for us such a satisfaction, I think God could not justly require of us faith and obedience as the means of obtaining eternal life. Moreover we could not be justly deprived of the benefit of Christ's death, or be punished for our sins, though this condition be rejected, for God, according to this view of satisfaction, would be unjust in exacting a double punishment for one and the same sin, first of Christ and then of us.[3] This is certainly absurd, and not only contrary to the Bible but actually destructive of a holy life.

Apollos.—You do not certainly attribute such consequences to this opinion, my friend?

Aquila.—I most certainly do. First, let me appeal to the Scriptures: from them, it is apparent, that God does require of us, notwithstanding Christ's death, faith and obedience. The former we have said, is the application and the appropriation of his death, as an expiation for sin, actually and voluntarily committed by us. The latter, obedience, is the evidence we are to give of that faith, and the honour we are expected to bring to that God, who saves us on conditions so easy, and ready; and in all this, is manifested the pure and unmerited grace, i. e. 'favour of God.' Hence says St. Paul, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' 'by grace are ye saved, through faith.' And it is said, 'God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' Here is obedience and its result. In that inimitable discourse, our Lord's sermon on the mount, he says, 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but, if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Who does not see, that enmity retained in the heart, notwithstanding Christ's death, will exclude us from the benefit thereof, because it prevents the lively exercise of that faith, by which his death is to be appropriated, as an expiation for sin, for the benefit of our souls, in the remission of all our transgressions.[4] Now, that an

[1] Fletcher and Wesley.
[2] Calvin and Scott.
[3] Limborch's excellent remarks on this point.
[4] Limborch and Dr. Clarke.

opinion contrary to this, is destructive of a holy life, I will show also from the Scriptures: 'He that despised,' says St. Paul, 'Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace.' 'But,' says St. Peter, 'there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.' These things could not happen, if Christ had purchased unconditionally, salvation for the 'elect;' and if such a satisfaction was made for sin, by his obedience to the law, as to exculpate us from any obligations of obedience to its moral injunctions.

Apollos.—How will you reconcile what you have advanced, with what is said in the epistle to the Hebrews concerning Christ as a surety? 'By so much, was Jesus made a surety,' says St. Paul, 'of a better testament.' Now, is it not the office of a surety, where the debtor is insolvent, to pay the whole debt?

Aquila.—To this I may answer, 1. That in this text, Christ is not called our surety, but the surety of the New Testament, or rather new covenant. And, 2. Though this were certain, and it was every where affirmed, that Christ is our surety, in the sanction of the new covenant, yet is he not to be considered as security betwixt debtor and creditor, but as the guarantee of the covenant or contract between God and man, who undertakes to have the conditions of that covenant fulfilled on both sides.[1] So that the true meaning of Christ's being a surety, seems to be this: not that he engages for sinners, and takes on himself all their debts, and all the punishments due to their sins, but that he is the surety or mediator of the new covenant,—he by his presence in heaven, intercedes with God for men, and promises that sinful men, being influenced by his word and Spirit, shall not only be turned from the error of their way, but in believing on him, bring forth fruit to the glory of God; so that the wrath of the Deity may not fall upon and consume them.[2]

Apollos.—This is a very specious theory; but where is the Scripture for it?

Aquila.—Did you ever read the parable of the barren fig-tree? 'Cut it down,' said the owner of the vineyard, 'why cumbereth it the ground?' 'Lord,' said the dresser, 'let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it,' &c. 'if it bear fruit, well; if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down.'

Apollos.—I had really forgot this.

Aquila.—Hear again, 'Oh Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not.' This then, is the suretyship of Jesus; his death is admitted a substituted sacrifice, as an expiation for sin, to be applied by faith; and he undertakes to invite, call, entreat, teach and lead men in the way of the obedience of faith. But if they will not walk therein, then in their unbelief they may be damned: for he has not undertook to save them in their sins and disobedience, but to save them on their believing and obeying him, from all their sins, appropriating continually his death, for their justification and salvation.[3]

Apollos.—But Christ is called the 'price' of our redemption, and this can never be so, unless he had fully satisfied divine justice, and suffered all those things which we deserved.

Aquila.—Brother Apollos—is there no error in this? Is it right to make the price of redemption, in all things, equivalent to the misery from which man is

[1] Watson on the word 'surety.' [2] Watson and Limborch. [3] Ibid.

redeemed? Is not *price* usually set according to the voluntary estimation of the conqueror, and not according to the worth of the captive, some being estimated higher, some lower? The history of the case, if I understand it, is this: Man had forfeited all, and was unable to atone for his sin,—God mercifully substituted our Lord Jesus, who by his own death, made an atonement for sin, such as God was well pleased to accept. In doing this, Christ did not suffer every thing, punishment and all, that every man might have suffered as an offender, but he suffered enough to appease the divine wrath, avert it from our race, and open up the way to eternal life for every believer. God was willing, and is willing still, to accept that offering Christ then made, as a ransom, price, or sacrifice, substituted according to his own appointment, for the sinner,—and thereby, when applied according to the terms, faith in Christ, bringing with it life and salvation.[1]

Apollos.—But it is said, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' To be made a curse for any one, is the same thing as if he should take upon himself, and suffer in his stead, all that curse which the other was to endure. Now the curse which hung over our heads for sin, was eternal death; if Christ was made a curse for us, it follows that he suffered eternal death for us, else he could not have redeemed us from the curse. I do not understand this.

Aquila.—I just said, that in redemption, it was not necessary that the price should be in all things equal to the misery and evil, from whence we are redeemed; but that it depends upon the estimation of him to whom the price is to be paid, who may be satisfied with any price that he is pleased to require. That Christ did not suffer eternal death, is too evident to need any proof; nay, the apostle himself declares, that he did not mean, that Christ took upon himself the eternal curse, but only the accursed death of the cross; for he immediately adds, 'cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' This act of our Lord Jesus Christ, was so far an equivalent in the estimation of God, that he proclaims himself reconciled to, and willing to save every voluntary offender, on condition of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus. The value then, of the redemption, is to be fixed by the estimate set on it by the offended God, and the benefits to be possessed, and the misery to be shunned, by those who, though offenders, are redeemed by his death.

Apollos.—The conclusion then is, that the Socinian and Calvinistic opinions are both extremes?

Aquila.—And you know, men are too apt to run into extremes. At our next interview, we will propose, what we believe to be the true idea that ought to be embraced concerning that satisfaction which Christ Jesus has made for sin, and on which we have already said a good deal. Never forget, my friend—that it is only for the sake of our Lord, that we have a call to seek eternal life; that because he has died, we may obtain pardon, and introduction into the divine favour; but his obedience never emancipates us from an obligation to walk worthy of our high and holy calling. Nothing can be more derogatory to the christian character, and a greater slander on the christian leader, than is Antinomianism. It paralyzes every effort for holiness and usefulness, and sets the believer down in the mire of carnal security, to say for his own comfort, Christ has done all, has 'fulfilled the law;' I am therefore emancipated from moral restraint, and indeed may 'sin that grace may abound.' The day has passed away, I trust, my brother—when those who name the name of Jesus, shall thus disgrace his sacred and his holy cause.

Priscilla.—Who that reads our Lord's sermon on the mount, could entertain such views?

[1] Watson and Limborch.

Apollos.—Certainly a hundred duties of an active character, are plainly enjoined in the Bible?

Aquila.—Yes; every christian must always be engaged in the high and holy work of loving and serving God. He is a believer; he has the true faith, and as such, he is exhorted in the word of God, 'add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity;' and even after having thus glorified God in his body and spirit, which belong to him, he will have to acknowledge himself 'an unprofitable servant.'

COLLOQUY X.

THE TRUE NOTION OF THAT ATONEMENT, OR SATISFACTION, WHICH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST, MADE FOR SIN, AS SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.—SOME OBJECTIONS TO IT ANSWERED.—THE GLORIOUS EFFECTS OF THIS ATONEMENT.

Apollos.—You remarked, brother Aquila—at our last meeting, that men were apt to run into extremes,—that the Socinian and Calvinistic notions of the atonement, and satisfaction, of our Lord Jesus Christ, are extremes, and that you receive neither as true. Pray give me your own views of that offering, and the reasons for the same.

Aquila.—I will rather give you the views of divines, neither Calvinistic nor Socinian, to which I do most sincerely subscribe; and my reasons for embracing them I will then offer. There is a medium between these two extremes just named; it is this: 'That our Saviour Jesus Christ was a sacrifice for our sins, truly and properly so called; since he suffered most grievous torments, and the accursed death of the cross, and after his resurrection entered, by his own blood, into the celestial tabernacle, and there presented himself before the Father; by which sacrifice he appeased the wrath of God, reconciled us to him, and averted from us the punishment deserved.'[1] Again, according to another, 'the atonement' is the satisfaction offered to the divine justice, by the death of Christ, for the sins of mankind; by virtue of which, all true penitents who believe in Christ, are personally reconciled to God, are freed from the penalty of their sins, and entitled to eternal life. The atonement for sin, made by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, is represented in the christian system, as the means by which mankind may be delivered from the awful catastrophe of eternal death; from judicial inflictions of the displeasure of a governor, whose authority has been contemned, and whose will has been resisted; which shall know no mitigation in their degree, nor bound to their duration. This end it professes to accomplish, by means which, with respect to the supreme Governor himself, preserve his character from mistake, and maintain the authority of his government; and with respect to man, give him the strongest possible reasons for hope, and render more favourable the condition of his earthly probation. These are considerations which so manifestly show, from its own internal constitution, the superlative importance and excellence of christianity, that it would be exceedingly criminal to overlook them.'[2] The position here assumed, is evident, my friend—from all those texts which have been already quoted on this subject; in which Christ is said to be 'an oblation,' a 'sacrifice,' to have 'died for us,' to have 'redeemed us,' to have 'reconciled us to God,' to have 'given himself a ransom for many,' &c.

Apollos.—I do not exactly understand this. Tell me what was the evil which Christ suffered; was it the punishment due to our sins?

Aquila.—We have already shown, that the Saviour did not suffer the same punishment, which we deserved for our sins; for he did not suffer eternal death.

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson, on the word 'atonement.'

But he did endure immense sorrow: 'My soul,' says he, 'is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' Moreover, he did suffer a cruel, because a bloody and an ignominious death, which was instead of that punishment, which might have been most justly inflicted on us, a guilty and a sinful race. So that, though we had deserved eternal death, God was pleased by his voluntary sacrifice, which his innocent Son offered for us, to be reconciled, and receive those of Adam's posterity, incapable of voluntary transgression, as infants and idiots, unconditionally, into his favour; and those capable of volition, on the simple condition of faith in him, who made the atonement for us.

Apollos.—He, God the Father, had the right to substitute a victim in our stead, and then accept the offering that he made voluntarily, for our emancipation from sin and death.

Aquila.—We had deserved a greater, and a severer punishment for sin; God accepted this atonement made by our Lord Jesus, and thereby displayed the greatness of his love and mercy, even whilst he required satisfaction to be made to his affronted and injured justice.[1]

Apollos.—What then, to sum all up, did Christ merit for us?

Aquila.—He obtained, as the result of his death, and in consequence of that satisfaction, oblation, or atonement, which he made for sin, a suspension of the divine wrath, an allowance of time to repent, a gracious call to faith and obedience, and he bestows on all, the grace, by which, as accountable creatures, we may improve the light, return to God, love and serve him here, and abide with him hereafter. These remarks, you notice, apply to men of mature, or accountable age. We have elsewhere shown, that all infants, and persons of unsound mind, in virtue of Christ's death, are in a condition of initial salvation.

Apollos.—But did Christ merit faith for us, and does he bestow it on us?

Aquila.—That every good and perfect gift descends from God, is evident; and the Scripture says, faith 'is the gift of God,' by which I understand, that the ability, or power, to rely on Christ, is of divine grace. By the fall, man lost all ability to do good; but by and through the atonement of Christ, he receives a *gracious ability*, that when acted on by divine grace, which in continuance as the result of Christ's death, strives with, and warns him, he is enabled to do that which, without grace, he could not do, viz: to believe on, or rely upon our Lord Jesus Christ. But as to the act of faith, or the exercise of the ability to believe, it is most certainly the part and duty of man. God does not act faith for us; that I am right in this, is evident from the fact, that God damns the unbeliever. This he could not do, if Christ had died to purchase faith for us any how, or if God had withheld it from us, or the power to exercise it. Indeed, if this had been the case; I mean that Christ died to purchase its very exercise, would it not be unjust in the Deity to withhold it from us, at least to require it under the denunciation of death eternal? Would he not, by virtue of Christ's merit, have been obliged to work it in us, by his almighty power? thus it would not have been our duty, but the act of God alone.

Apollos.—But it has been urged by some, that it seems absurd, and repugnant to the nature of God, to require a human sacrifice; nay, even that of his only begotten Son; and this, it is said by some, savours of cruelty.

Aquila.—Some infidels do say so. In this, to the christian, there is no absurdity; if there be any apparent absurdity in it, we may trace the whole to two causes, either that God willed that Jesus his Son, should die, or that he should will that he should die as a sacrifice for sins. There is, I think, no absurdity in either of these; for certainly that God who has uncontrollable power over all men, as to life and death, has also the right of suffering his Son to deliver up himself

[1] Stackhouse, Whitby, and Clarke.

to death, in order that the whole human race may be delivered from sin and hell; and there certainly is none in his delivering him a sacrifice for sin. For if God might suffer his Son to die as a prophet, that he might by his blood establish the new covenant, which Socinianism itself admits, is it less allowable that the Father should require, that his Son should die, a propitiatory sacrifice for sins, and thereby intercede for sinners as a sanctified priest? Certainly if he could put his Son to death at all, or suffer it to be done, he had also the right of directing his death to such an end, as was most suitable to his glory, and the salvation of all mankind.[1]

Apollos.—But is it not strange, that he should will this, seeing that he has by express law, forbid human sacrifices?

Aquila.—God, in prescribing a law to men against their offering human sacrifices, did not prescribe a law to himself that he should never demand, or admit, under any circumstances, such an oblation as is evident from the case mentioned in Genesis. God spake to Abraham, and said, 'take now thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' Besides, my friend—God did not command men to offer up the Lord Jesus Christ to him, as a sacrifice for sin; that thought is very far, my brother—from us. He left him to the power of wicked men; Christ freely delivered himself into their hands, and they, out of envy, killed him. In bringing him to this ignominious death, the Jews designed another end, but the Father was pleased to allow it, as an expiation for sin.[2]

Apollos.—Infidels demand, and I mention it only to obtain the proper arguments to refute what they say,—how can the death of one man expiate the offences of so many? What an innumerable number are redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus, and what a vast number of sins of different kinds, are to be washed away by his death?

Aquila.—And yet this oblation was, my dear friend—sufficient for all. This, I think, is easily proved. 1. On account of the divine will, which required nothing more for the redemption of the world, but was satisfied with this one sacrifice, once for all, to be applied by faith. Certainly it will be admitted, that God has an absolute right to say, what ransom will satisfy him, and appease his wrath. Now, if God has this right, and did consent to accept the offering, who dare cavil, and ask, 'how it can be?' Under the law, in the exercise of this right, the Deity accepted certain sacrifices, as expiatory of certain sins. You may see an account of them in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus; and why not by the same divine will and authority, the blood of our Lord Jesus, be an offering for sin, and be accepted as such by a merciful God? why may it not be sufficient to atone for the sins of all the world?[3] 2. There is however, another reason which may be offered; it is this: that God the Father accepts of it, not only on account of his will, but the dignity of the person who presented himself as the sacrifice. It was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is God over all, blessed forevermore; 'Christ came,' says St. Paul, 'who is over all, God blessed forevermore. Amen.'

Apollos.—But you will admit, the divinity could not suffer?

Aquila.—True, it could not. Christ only suffered in his human nature; yet as it was united to the divine, the very and eternal Son of God, that nature was strengthened, and enabled to endure the mighty conflict; and, on account of this union of the human and divine natures, as we have elsewhere said, the Son of God may be said to have suffered whatever the man Christ Jesus endured in the

[1] The reader will do well to consult the excellent remarks of Limborch, Watson, and Schmucker on this subject. [2] Benson. [3] Blair on the compassion of Christ.

flesh for sinners. Besides, if Christ be considered only as a man, the excellency of his person, on several accounts, was so great as to exceed in a high measure, all the rest of mankind; but apart from all but the fact of his divinity, as united to his humanity, who dare say that the dignity of the person of Christ Jesus, did not enhance to the utmost degree, the merit of his passion and death?

Apollos.—You perceive, my friend—that I press into my service all the objections I find to any truth, because I want you to give me all the arguments necessary to substantiate it. I do confess, the farther I advance, the more I am pleased with this delightful science.

Priscilla.—It really appears to me, that you may look at the christian system in any one, or all its parts, and it is ever calculated to attract and charm.

Aquila.—It most certainly is; and although innumerable objections be offered against it, so that like a fire they are ready to consume, yet does the gospel, God's plan of saving sinners, through the death and expiation of our Lord Jesus, as a lamb slain from 'the foundation of the world,' come forth as gold tried in the fire, and evinces itself to be a system of truths, not to be overturned by the ignorance and sophistry of men, or the opposition of devils. This will be still more apparent, my brother—if we consider the glorious effects resulting from the work, that our Lord undertook as priest, or rather the results of the priestly office of Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—They are divided into two classes or kinds by divines; the first respects our Lord, the priest himself, the second respects us who are benefitted thereby.

Apollos.—Some of the effects you say respect him, what do you mean by this?

Aquila.—Simply that the Redeemer, who atoned for us with the sacrifice of his own blood, did by this offering that he made in his death on the cross, obtain supreme power in heaven and earth, and thereby is able to preserve all those who put their trust in him for eternal life.[1] You remember what Christ said to his wondering disciples, as they travelled, after his resurrection, together, toward the village of Emmaus. 'O fools and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered those things and to enter into his glory?' 'Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.' St. Paul says of this our priest, 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' Hence says the same apostle, 'such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made *higher* than the heavens.' And again, 'Looking,' says he, 'unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the *right hand* of the *throne* of God.' Really, my friend—all the texts which set forth the character and glory of Jesus Christ, as the great high-priest of our profession, proclaim his power.[2]

Apollos.—Are these all the effects that directly regard or respect himself?

Aquila.—Oh no! Another blessed or glorious effect was the procuring the Holy Ghost, the third person in the ever blessed and adorable trinity, to be sent down from heaven on his apostles after his ascension, and upon all those who afterward believed on him. Hence it is said by St. John, 'This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was

[1] Clarke and Stackhouse. [2] Clarke and Henry.

not yet given, because that Christ was not yet glorified.' Who does not see that in all this is set forth the fact, that the death and propitiation of this priest, presented on his resurrection before the Father, was to procure the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon all true believers.[1]

Priscilla.—This is very plain, our all seems to hang on his sacrifice and ascension on high.

Apollos.—Indeed it does.

Aquila.—This will appear still more so, if you will read another text or two. 'But when,' says Jesus, 'the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.' 'It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you.'

Apollos.—According then to his promise, on the day of Pentecost, the 'Holy Ghost fell on his assembled disciples, as a rushing mighty wind, and filled the house where they were sitting.'

Priscilla.—O yes! And as many as are led by this 'the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.' It 'guides into all truth.'

Aquila.—Let us hasten on then and next consider the effects of this, Christ's priestly office, as they respect us, poor abject men. The very first thing that occurs to me is the confirmation of the christian religion. As God has exalted our priest to heaven, he has evidently confirmed the religion that he taught, and has shown by his acceptance of the glorious sacrifice that it shall abide for ever. Indeed the priestly office is the basis of religion and of the divine worship, which, destroy the office, must utterly fail, at least be changed.[2] This is evident by the argument of the apostle, when he asks the Hebrews, 'if perfection was by the Levitical priesthood;' where the necessity of changing it and introducing one instituted according to the 'order of Melchisedec.' The fact of its change shows that its worship was not perpetual. Another more excellent was to succeed it, and the worship thereof should be perpetual, because God has most gloriously confirmed, by his exaltation, the truth of all that he taught in regard to his worship. No priest more excellent is to succeed the Lord Jesus. Our worship through him, being acceptable to God, will not be abrogated, but will be permanent.

Apollos.—This was a very important result of Christ's atonement for sin, as the high-priest of our profession, who entered into the 'holiest of holies,' by his own blood, to redeem us as kings and priests unto himself.

Aquila.—But another blessed consequence of his sustaining this office is our reconciliation with God. You know how often the words reconciling, propitiating, and redeeming are used in the Sacred Writings. All these and many other expressions synonymous to them, are used to display the blessings resulting to us from his offering as a priest the appointed sacrifice.[3]

Apollos.—What do you understand by that reconciliation which is the result of the death of Christ?

Aquila.—It may evidently be regarded as two-fold. Thus it must be considered either as it precedes, or as it succeeds our faith and conversion to God.

The former consists in this, that God being appeased by the death of Christ, made a new covenant with man, wherein, for the sake of what Christ has done, he received into his favour all incapable of voluntary offence, and as such changes their nature which is depraved, and grants an admission into eternal blessedness and life. But again, he moreover is ready to bestow on all men the remission of all sins, and also eternal life, provided they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and live according to the rule he has prescribed. In other words, observe the

[1] Clarke and Watson. [2] Benson and Scott. [3] Watson on the Atonement.

precepts of the new covenant. While this gospel of grace is preached to them, he bears with and grants them a longer time for repentance.[1]

Apollos.—How do you understand it, as succeeding the exercise of faith, and our return to the Almighty?

Aquila.—In this sense, reconciliation consists in a full application of pardon, whereby the remission obtained for all is particularly applied to those that believe and perform their duty. Their sins however numerous are actually blotted out, and being reconciled to God and supported by his grace, they ultimately attain, in the continuance of faith, to eternal life.[2]

Apollos.—Then faith is evidently necessary to obtain the pardon of all our sins?

Aquila.—In order to be made a partaker of that reconciliation, and obtain the remission of sins, purchased by our Lord, faith as a condition is indispensable. We are to use, according to the stipulations of the new covenant, as we shall hereafter see, all the preparatory means; prayer, repentance toward God; but to feel our pardon, to know it, to be made partakers of the benefits of reconciliation, we must 'believe on our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is a condition that respects every individual, capable of voluntary action, and blessed with the light of the gospel. To suppose the contrary would be to admit an inconsistency. Christ has purchased for every offender a free, full, and glorious pardon, on condition that he accept it by faith, otherwise he must consent to perish as an unbeliever. Indeed the promises of pardon to the believer, and the threatenings against unbelief, would all be superfluous if it were not thus.[3]

Apollos.—There are some difficulties about this subject. Is it not said that 'we are healed by his stripes?'

Aquila.—This is not said because the death of Christ alone, without our faith, confers upon us a complete freedom from all sin; but because by the intervention of our Saviour's death, as an expiatory sacrifice, we do obtain it. The true meaning of the prophet is that, by the blood of Christ, grace and favour are obtained for us; and the remission of our sins is to be attributed to the efficacy of that blood. This I do most freely, my friend—own, though I am constrained to press the necessity of faith for the attainment of the pardon of sins, and the comforts of God's love.

Apollos—Is it not written 'the blood of Christ' was shed 'for the remission of sins?'

Aquila.—I grant this; and yet say 'he that believeth not shall be damned.' This certainly is the word of the Lord. Remission of sins is the end or result of Christ's death; but the condition upon which this benefit is suspended is faith, and 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'

Apollos.—But we are said to be justified by the blood and death of Christ, in opposition to his life.

Aquila.—I admit it; we are justified by it, as the cause which moved the Almighty to be willing to extend pardon and mercy to sinners, and indeed without the shedding of blood 'there is no remission of sin;' yet faith is the instrument and God himself has proposed it as a condition of our justification. Thus Paul, speaking of the death and oblation of Christ, says, 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare at this time, I say, his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' Now, since the blood of Christ is the cause why our repentance, our faith, and every act of piety are acceptable to God, and especially

[1] Fletcher and Schmucker. [2] Watson and Wesley. [3] Wesley, Watson, and Schmucker.

our faith, for the obtaining pardon, therefore it is that in mentioning justification, the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, as this great and meritorious cause, is always named.

Apollos.—Is it not said that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin? How then is it by faith?

Aquila.—Do not, my brother—separate two things that ought always to be joined together. They ought not most certainly to be separated or put asunder at any time. 'If,' says St. John, 'we confess our sins,' i. e. acknowledge our offences and guilt in the way and manner prescribed in God's word, 'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Here, Apollos—is justification. Past actual offences are pardoned, and the guilt thereof cancelled. The heart is changed, the sinner accepted, and adopted into the divine favour. But there is another state, the being cleansed from sin. In justification we are delivered from its dominion, but on being sanctified we are saved from its pollution, cleansed, thoroughly renovated, so as to love God with all the heart. Hence, says St. John, he is not only 'faithful and just to forgive us our sins,' 'but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Now for your text, the seventh verse of the same chapter, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' As justification is obtained on the condition of faith, so also is sanctification; but the latter is generally exercised in connection with a habit, if I may so speak, of obedience. 'Thus,' says St. John, 'if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' When we first believe we are pardoned, justified, born again, in continuing to believe, we walk in the light as God is in the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin.' Here is a sanctified state, a state of maturity as a christian. But more of this at another time. Let me again only say, that the vicarious offering of our Lord was an atonement not only sufficient for our pardon, but our salvation from the nature and pollution of sin, which blood or offering, is in both instances to be applied by faith. After justification, we are 'to walk in the light,' to be actively pious, not to sit still; if this be done, we may most certainly expect strength to exercise that faith, and reliance on the blood of Christ, by which we shall be sanctified, and 'made meet for our master's joy.'[1]

Apollos.—But would it not follow, my friend—for I have not done with my objections to this theory, that if by and for the blood of Christ, sins are not remitted actually and really, to those for whom he died, then no man is placed in a state of salvation by him?

Aquila.—By no means. I deny the consequence of this argument, if by actual and real remission, you mean a full pardon, to which salvation in eternal life is certainly annexed, and concerning which alone is there a dispute. Suppose this remission of sin full and complete, and salvation from its consequences were not obtained by all for whom Christ died, yet it cannot from thence be inferred, I think, that no man is saved or placed in a state of salvation by Christ, because he has procured for all, for whom he died, such a degree of remission as that the way of salvation is opened to them, and grace granted for obtaining it; and if they do not reject, they will actually and really obtain a deliverance from the consequences of sin in eternal life, by our Lord Jesus. Such have been placed in a state of salvation, not indeed in that which is called proximate and immediate, but remote.[2] You forget that all children are in a state of initial salvation, as said on another occasion; and all men, while in a probationary state, are not only under the influence of preventing grace and gracious calls, but are saved actually from present wrath, by the death and atonement of Jesus; and they may, on

[1] Wesley and Benson. [2] Limborch.

faith in Christ, be saved from the guilt, power, pollution, and consequence of sin in eternal life. Such then are now in a salvable state, accepted of God through Jesus Christ.[1]

Apollos.—But if by the death of Christ sins are not actually remitted, then our Lord is no more than a Saviour in part, since he has only prepared and opened the way for the remission of sins by his death.

Aquila.—But I must again deny the consequence of this argument. Though the death of Christ alone does not, without the exercise of faith, confer actual remission of sins, yet it does not follow from thence that Christ is only half a Saviour. For the whole work of redemption is not completed by the death of Christ alone. As a king, he likewise applies his word and spirit, by virtue of which both repentance and faith are wrought in us, and so according to the promises of God, we are placed in a state of salvation, and all that is requisite to render it complete is performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. If not accomplished, it is because of our obstinacy and unbelief.[2]

Apollos.—But again, if actual or absolute remission of sins be not procured by the blood of Christ, without the interposition or exercise of faith, then the sin of Adam is more powerful to condemn than the death of Christ is to save us. Certainly the apostle Paul proves to the contrary. 'But not as the offence so also is the free gift. 'For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift. For the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.'

Aquila.—But again, I say there is no consequence that can be deduced from all this against our position. Though the death of Christ does not immediately confer heaven upon us, without the exercise of faith as a medium or condition, yet it bestows the grace and salvation in certain degrees, for the accomplishment of this blessed end. The fault does not originate in the want of provision; but in the application of it, in God's appointed way. By the very act of dying, he procured that we might obtain a freedom from death, and be delivered from its dominion and the grave, and then by his word and spirit, which he purchased for us by that death, he has plucked us out of darkness, and grants us that light necessary to our faith; and on its exercise, saves us from eternal condemnation and death. In Adam men die, in Christ they are quickened and live; and by this his atonement is much more powerful in its consequences than is the sin of Adam. There being individual exceptions growing out of the rejection of Christ's sacrifice, in the exercise of volition, does not disprove the efficacy of the oblation.[3]

Apollos.—I then object again, if Christ did not by his death actually reconcile us to God, mark, my brother—I do not say God to us,—then he has not effected a reconciliation at all, since reconciliation is no reconciliation unless it be actual and positive.

Aquila.—I acknowledge that it is true there can be no reconciliation unless it is actual; but certainly, my friend—you will admit that there are degrees of it, the one more perfect than the other. It does not therefore follow, I think, that if Christ has not reconciled us in the most perfect manner, he has not reconciled us at all. Moreover God may be reconciled to us and our race, and account us justified from Adamic transgression, or rather freed from its guilt, for what Christ has done in

[1] Clarke and Watson. [2] Benson and Whitby. [3] Whitby, Limborch, and Wesley.

dying for us, but he may not have accepted us, nor we be reconciled to him and adopted into his family, our own voluntary and personal offences not being pardoned, for the want of that faith on which he has suspended this degree, if I may so speak, of reconciliation. By the death of Christ, God is reconciled to all men, in a more imperfect degree or manner; but upon our faith and continuance in it, he reconciles us more perfectly, and brings us to everlasting life.[1]

Apollos.—Well then, my friend—it comes to this: either we are reconciled by the death of Christ absolutely, or conditionally. If *absolutely*, then there is a plenary remission of sins; but if *conditionally*, then the efficacy of Christ's death depends on the free-will of man. Tell me—is it not so?

Aquila.—I have admitted again and yet again, that in an imperfect degree, using this mode of expression, for the want of a better: there is a previous and absolute reconciliation between us and God, since no condition was required by the Deity for Christ's dying for us. In other words, man is unconditionally saved from the direct consequences of Adamic transgression, being placed in a state as heretofore said of *initial* salvation; and thus, as in a condition of acceptance with God for Christ's sake, in favour with him. But to obtain reconciliation and pardon from voluntary offence, God does require, that the poor penitent, seeking this pardon, shall accept it as a gift, and obtain it only on the condition of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is a most merciful and comfortable economy.[2] You will not certainly say, that the efficacy of Christ's death therefore, depends on man's free will,—for he cannot by his *faith* bestow, nor by his *infidelity* take away that efficacy; he can only prevent, by the latter, its effects on himself—or embrace by the former, the provision made for reconciliation with God, and feel the virtue or efficacy of that provision.[3] A beggar, helpless and destitute, does not merit the benefit conferred, by stretching forth his hands, as directed, to receive that benefit. If God required more, it might be construed into merit in man, but he does not; prayer and repentance themselves, are only preparatory, as I have already once said, to the exercise of a living and evangelical faith. This is the sole or only condition of salvation.[4] By grace, a provision more extensive than the fall, is made for the recovery of our race from that sad catastrophe. God is reconciled to all for Christ's sake, so far as it respects Adamic transgression; and we are thus saved by him who is 'the Saviour of all men.' Moreover, God is in Christ, 'reconciling the world unto himself,' from actual or voluntary personal offences, and has sent forth 'the ministry of reconciliation,' proclaiming the willingness of Deity, to pardon and accept all, on the condition of faith in the merit of Christ's death.[5]

Apollos.—So then, it is 'by grace through faith,' that we are saved; without the grace, we could have no ability to believe, and the believing is the receiving, and having applied to our own personal cure, that remedy, the blood of Christ, which God has provided.

Aquila.—This is most certainly so; I will convince you of it in a moment. St. John says, 'he came unto his own,' i. e. Jews, 'and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' Who does not see, my brother—that receiving and believing on Christ, are here used synonymously? indeed, infidelity is simply the rejection of Jesus, as we have elsewhere said; and to believe, is just to receive Jesus, as our Saviour, and have his blood applied for our redemption from the guilt and consequences of sin.[6]

Priscilla.—How necessary is it to cleave to God's word. Did I not warn you, in the commencement of your theological discussions, not to speculate? Speculation, I tell you again, in divinity, is a dangerous thing.

[2] Watson on reconciliation.
[2] Watson.
[3] Whitby, Fletcher and Limborch.
[4] Wesley and Fletcher.
[5] Watson and Whitby.
[6] Ibid.

Apollos.—Yes; but you have admitted, that we may reason safely. I offer many an objection to the theory of my friend Aquila, the principles of which, I have never, and I trust never shall embrace; but I want all the arguments necessary, to refute those objections. I mentioned this in the beginning, and I hope this is fully understood.

Aquila.—Most certainly, my brother—I expected, yea, invited this. Still there is need to be on the watch, and hold to our text book, the holy and blessed word of the ever blessed God.

Apollos.—O! I see this. Sometimes you quote a text, when I am just ready to start another objection—the light flashes on my mind; I see the way, and at once learn not to 'lean to my own understanding.'

Aquila.—This is surely the true way to procure that wisdom that is from above. God will certainly own and bless such a course.

Apollos.—What further effects, are the result of Christ's priestly office? If any, do tell me.

Aquila.—There is this, which as yet, we have not noticed: that, by his sacrifice, men are freed from the yoke of legal ceremonies. Hence says St. Paul, Christ has 'blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.' In all this, is evidently announced the fact, that all those legal rites and ceremonies, are abolished forever. Christ has become our priest, and has placed man under a better covenant.[1] At our next interview, we will discuss the office of Jesus, as our king.

Apollos.—But, my friend—you are not going to close, without giving us the use that is to be made of those truths, which we have discussed?

Aquila.—It is late, and so many different subjects have been introduced, that it will be difficult to make any other than a general application. We may take then, simply the priestly office of our Lord Jesus; he was our priest, and was provided as such in the goodness of God, before whom he ever presents, in our behalf, the blood of sprinkling. Seeing this, we ought, 1. To acknowledge the love of God toward us, poor lost sinners, in that he gave his only begotten Son to die for us; 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Besides, we ought constantly to acknowledge the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and freely took upon himself the curse, that he might deliver us from it, and thus be the author of eternal salvation, to all them that believe; 'for though he were a Son,' says St. Paul, 'yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,—and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God, a high-priest after the order of Melchisedec.' And from these two things, united with the fact of his priesthood, to accomplish this atonement, we learn, 2. What a hatred God bears to sin. If he required nothing short of the bloody and accursed death of his well-beloved Son, as a propitiatory sacrifice, whereby he should be inclined to pardon our sin; how great must be his aversion to iniquity? Here is a signal display of his purity; and in view of the fact that sin is thus odious to God, and requires such an atonement to expiate it, we should learn to abhor it in our very souls. What ought to be our opposition to that which required such a mighty sacrifice to obtain its pardon, remove its guilt, and emancipate man from its diabolical and interminable consequences? And O! in view of this fact, how precious is the death of Jesus? 3. In thus contemplating the love of God the Father, and that of our great high-priest toward us, which was gloriously manifested in this immense offering, to

[1] Limborch.

save from sin, we likewise have abundant encouragement, to approach boldly, and ask the pardon of all past sins, and, amending our ways, prosecute continually the path of piety,—hearkening to, and obeying his commandments. Indeed we ought never to despair of the divine favour, on account of our numerous transgressions,—we have only to forsake them, and such is its goodness, we may obtain at once a free and ample remission. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.' In addition to this, as the object of all that offering, which Christ made for sin, was, that we might enter into eternal life; having obtained pardon, peace of conscience, and the love of our God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we may cheerfully go on our journey toward everlasting joy, 'looking unto Jesus, the author, until he shall become the finisher of our faith.' That God, who has so freely pardoned for his sake, will ultimately transfer us from this gloomy vale, to everlasting rest. Amen.

COLLOQUY XI.

THE REDEEMER'S OFFICE AS A KING—THE REALITY AND EXTENT OF HIS DOMINION.

Apollos.—At our last meeting, you promised to consider next, the gracious Redeemer, in his office as king. I find the offices of Christ are fruitful subjects. To me, his priestly office was truly interesting, as in it I find the foundation of all our hope—the atonement for sin.

Aquila.—But you will bear in mind, that his kingly office, as one sustained by him who is our mediator, is the most excellent of all. As a prophet, our Lord teaches us by his preaching, and thus enlightens the world. His gospel, the glorious work of this great prophet, is a system of truth, designed to accomplish this blessed end. As a priest, he obtained for us salvation, purchasing it with that price which he offered, his own blood, as of a 'lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' But as a king, our Lord Jesus bestows on us eternal life, according to those stipulations and conditions taught in his word. Several important things will demand our attention in this subject. The chief that we shall notice, are, the fact of its reality, its extent, the acts appertaining to that office, and its duration. These will evince how excellent it is, and how vast the authority of him, who is called 'Lord of lords, and King of kings.' At present, we may discuss the reality and extent of this kingdom.

Apollos.—What am I to understand by his kingdom, and the reality of it?

Aquila.—Divines usually consider this in a two-fold sense. In the first, they understand that kingdom which is essential and common, to the Father and the Son, as being the WORD of God; in the second, that which belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator between God and man; which, in order to distinguish it from the other, has been called his *mediatorial* kingdom,[1]—and in this sense, I propose to consider it.

Apollos.—The former is his, as the second person in the Trinity, very and eternal God; the latter, regards the execution of that office, which he undertook to fill, in order to effect the redemption of man, and lead him to the enjoyment of the divine favour in heaven.

Aquila.—Three things set forth in the Scriptures, are worthy of our consideration. The first is, that Jesus Christ was born a king or lord, and by right and design from his very birth, was such. Thus, when the angel appeared unto Mary, and spake of the birth of Jesus, he said, 'thou shalt bring forth a son, and

[1] Stackhouse and Limborch.

shalt call his name JESUS; he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever,—and of his kingdom, there shall be no end.' And when he was born, the angel of the Lord came upon the shepherds, the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and he said, 'I bring you good tidings of great joy,' 'unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' A second thing we notice, in regard to him, that in the execution of this office, he was endued by God the Father, with the Holy Spirit, given him without measure; and even on earth, he gave the most unequivocal demonstrations of his regal authority, and showed the dominion he had over every thing by the miracles he wrought. But even in these, the fullness of his majesty did not fully appear. Notwithstanding these signs of his being a king, by the mean and abject state wherein he lived, his glory was, as it were, eclipsed, and hid under a cloud. Hence we are led to observe, thirdly, that the highest degree of Christ's kingdom mentioned in the New Testament, and referred to in it, and of which we propose to converse, is that which he obtained after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven,—where, being exalted at the right hand of God, he hath received all power, both in heaven and earth, and reigns gloriously over all things. On the resurrection of Christ Jesus, he appeared to his disciples, and said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.' 'This Jesus,' saith St. Peter, 'hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses; therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.' 'Thou madest him,' says St. Paul, quoting from one of the psalms, 'a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands,—thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet; for in that he put all things under him, he left nothing that is not put under him; but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.' From all these things, it is manifest that there are, as some say, three degrees appertaining to this regal office of Christ; or rather three stages, that are distinctly set forth in the Sacred Writings. He was born to be a king; he exercised power over nature, life, death, men and devils, in an immense number of miracles here, to prove himself the King, or Lord of all creation, and finally ascended to reign in the exercise of all power, forever and ever.

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend—has our Saviour obtained, and does he actually administer this kingdom?

Aquila.—This is so clearly taught, that it seems superfluous to attempt to prove it; all real christians admit this, and honour him as Lord of all.[1]

Apollos.—Here then arises the question of the reality of Christ's kingdom. Some, you know, have supposed that our Lord Jesus does not reign, but sets idle at the right hand of God the Father,—and that his kingdom will not begin until after the nations of the earth have embraced the gospel—all his enemies be subdued, and especially antichrist, which sets in the temple of God, and oppresses the church by his tyranny.[2]

Aquila.—You will see, Apollos—how gross and how idle, the conceptions of such men are, concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, if you will look at, and closely consider the scriptural arguments for the reverse.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—Our Saviour himself tells us, a little before his ascension, that 'all power in heaven and in earth,' is delivered to him. These words plainly denote, that he was already invested with regal authority, and that it was not a thing to be given to him hereafter. He then possessed and exercised it.

[1] Clarke Henry, Scott. [2] Limborch.

Apollos.—I remember this well,—none but the King and Lord of all, could possibly exercise all power. What other argument have you?

Aquila.—The sovereignty of Jesus is evinced by the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, and the effects of it, were all fully accomplished, according to the express promise and prediction of our blessed Lord. If Jesus were not the king and ruler of the universe, could he with such precision tell of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, fix the time, the place, and all?

Apollos.—This indeed is a very strong argument.

Aquila.—Besides there are several places in the Scripture, which expressly declare that Christ has already obtained this kingdom. Thus, 'He must reign,' says St. Paul, 'until he shall put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy that shall be conquered, shall be death.' Now let me quote a few more texts. 'Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins.' 'And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things, to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' 'Who,' says St. Peter, 'has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.' Do you not mark one thing? These Scriptures do not tell us that Christ's kingdom was to commence, after all his enemies were put under his feet, but that it was then in exercise; he was the one filling all and in all, to whom every tongue should confess, and before whom every knee should bow, as an acknowledgment of the power of their Lord.

Apollos.—Is it not a wonder I never noticed so particularly these texts before? Indeed there is a great deal in the Scriptures, that we do not observe and remember as we should, for our improvement in piety.

Aquila.—He does now reign and shall reign until all enemies shall be put under him. The last is death, which shall be conquered by the resurrection and be forever overcome. Moreover in the Revelation of St. John, we have such evident testimony that Christ's kingdom is already begun: that no one, if he own the authority of this book, can deny this fact. In the different addresses to the seven churches of Asia, there is such a manifest care of them, as belongs wholly to the power and authority of a king.[1] Permit me to mention another thing that I have noticed. The prayers at the commencement and conclusion of the epistles, all acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the author of grace, mercy, and peace. These all style him Lord, which would be needless and trifling if he were not truly invested with regal power, whereby he is able to bestow good things on them who call upon him.[2]

Apollos.—Brother—does not St. Paul say, 'but we see not yet all things put under him.' How then can he reign and be 'the Lord of all?'

Aquila.—By these words, St. Paul does not mean that our Lord Jesus has not a dominion over all things, or that he was not invested with the power of bringing all things under him. I think we are to understand by it, that he has not as yet destroyed all his enemies; who resisted, in unbelief, his regal authority and right to reign. For the kingdom was given unto him, the Redeemer of men, by the Father, that he might destroy all enemies who opposed the divine glory and man's happiness. This the Lord Jesus does, not all at once but by degrees, and as long as this world lasts, in which he invites men to repentance, faith, and salvation; he defers punishment that they may use the means prescribed, and

[1] Henry and Scott. [2] Limborch.

attain to everlasting life.[1] But in the end, my brother—after the consummation of ages, he will destroy his enemies—even death, the last enemy, and will cast the wicked, together with the devil and his angels, into that lake that burns with eternal fire, where 'the worm' of the sinner, 'shall never die,' and the fires of hell shall never be quenched.

Apollos.—What an awful thought this suggests—that the day is advancing, when the Lord Jesus shall reveal himself, not as a lamb slain for the redemption of the world, but as the 'lion of the tribe of Judah, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.' I see that the Scripture is full of the fact, that he does, and will reign as King and Lord of all forever; but do tell me, in what does this kingly dignity consist? I wish to apprehend it in all its parts.

Aquila.—There are several things in this, worthy of our notice; among them, we may mark the eminence, and honour of it. By this, I mean that Jesus as king, is exalted above all created beings, visible or invisible, higher than the highest of them, next to the Father in authority, and owning none but him as the first to be named; hence that subordination manifest in the mention of God the Father first, the Son next, and the Holy Ghost, one God, co-equal, co-eternal and essential in their nature. We are also struck with the power, right and dominion, which he has over all things, so as to subject them to himself, and to have the full command of them; and in addition to this, he is more peculiarly appointed the king of men, that he may prescribe them rules of life, judge them according to their works, whether good or bad, and grant to them a reward according to their individual deserts.[2]

Apollos.—Of course he is possessed of, or endued with those qualifications and attributes that are requisite for the administration of such a kingdom.

Aquila.—Indeed he is. This King, as we have before said, and on another occasion proved to you, my friend—is in the exercise of all that wisdom, or rather omniscience, that would qualify for such a work; and these were ascribed to him on earth, and afterward in heaven. St. John says, Jesus did not commit himself to the Jews, because he 'knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man;' and in the Apocalypse, it is said by him, 'And all the churches shall know, that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.' But while there is omniscience, by which he fully understands the true qualities of all actions, let me also suggest, that there is that impartiality or justice, by which he renders to every man according to his works, and that too, without respect of persons. 'For,' says Jesus, 'the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works;' 'who will render,' says St. Paul, 'to every man according to his deeds,—to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality—eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace, upon every soul of man that worketh good—to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God.' And the same apostle says, 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;' 'for he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he hath done,—and there is no respect of persons.' Hence in the Revelations it is said, 'And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every

[1] Benson, and Henry.

[2] Limborch, Watson, and Benson.

bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?' And this was no new doctrine concerning our Lord Jesus; for in the 11th chapter of Isaiah, where he is evidently prophesied of, almost by name, we hear that old evangelical prophet saying, 'But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.'

Apollos.—Truly, these threatenings are tremendous, my friend.

Aquila.—They will appear more so, if you but remember that Jesus is omnipotent; and this is yet another qualification of this our Sovereign, for the exercise of his regal authority. The quotation just made from Isaiah, is positive as to his power; and St. Paul, who had seen it often displayed in miracles, and mercies, says to his afflicted Thessalonian brethren, 'You who are troubled, shall rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;' what a display of his omnipotence will that day set forth? 'Then,' says the same apostle, 'shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.'

Apollos.—My dear friend—I had not thought of all these Scriptures, until we engaged in these conversations. The Bible is indeed a treasure, from which we may constantly learn what will engage our hearts and lives in the great work of serving and loving God. But do tell me something about the extent of this, Christ's glorious kingdom.

Aquila.—Indeed, I have already said enough to let you see that it is vast. I will now add, that it is so great as to be circumscribed by no bounds; for it is universal, over all things,—nothing being exempted from his authority and dominion. The Father has put all things under him; his rule or authority, is extended over heaven and earth, over a world of spirits, both good and bad, over the greatest monarch, as well as the meanest slave,—making all creatures, one way or other, his instruments to promote his glory, and enlarge his kingdom. Indeed, this is so clearly and plainly set forth in the Scriptures, that 'he who runs may read,' and plainly discern the character, both of Christ's royalty, and the immense extent of his glorious kingdom.[1]

Apollos.—Is this dominion of the Lord Jesus absolute, and is he what is called an absolute sovereign?

Aquila.—Some intricate, and perhaps unnecessary speculations, have been entered into here; some represent, and perhaps this is done correctly, the sovereignty of Jesus, as subordinate to the Father, as first named in the Trinity: yea, some have gone farther, and say that this is a special office, delegated by God the Father, to our Lord Jesus, as he is the Redeemer of the world, and the Saviour of mankind, for the procuring salvation, with full power over all things, that he may use them at pleasure, for the obtaining that end.[2] You will I hope recollect, that however true this may be, God the Father cannot certainly divest himself of all power, nor has he delivered the care and government of the world to his Son, so as to be only an idle spectator; still, as I have elsewhere suggested, there is a manifest subordination, according to the order in which the Trinity is named,—the Father first, the Son next, and then the Holy Ghost. The office then, of the Son as king, is exercised by him with respect to this order—to us, doubtless for wise purposes, inexplicable; so that the Father, properly speaking, governs

[1] Benson and Henry.

[2] Limborch.

through the Son. He and the Holy Ghost alike unite for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, that the one true and living God, three in one, and one in three, may have all power, glory, dominion and honour, forever—even forever and ever.[1]

Priscilla.—It seems to me, as though it would take an eternity, to understand the immense wisdom and power, of such a God; a God whose ways are past finding out,—who can define the limits of his kingdom, or describe the splendour and glory of his reign?

Apollos.—Lo! these are but a part of his ways. I sometimes fear, and then again rejoice,—the more I learn, the more I admire, and find cause to adore, the christian's God.

Aquila.—How important to ask our hearts—are we his willing subjects, obedient as we are dependant; and do we earnestly pray for the advancement of his kingdom?

COLLOQUY XII.

THE REDEEMER'S OFFICE AS A KING, CONTINUED—THE ACTS AND DURATION OF HIS KINGDOM, AS SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

Apollos.—When you entered on the consideration of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, you proposed, my friend—among other things, to consider the acts of the Redeemer, in the exercise of his office as a king. What was your meaning?

Aquila.—The acts relating to this kingdom, may be considered simply as those regulations established by our Lord Jesus as a king, which regard the government of his kingdom, and which display his authority as sovereign of the same.[2] These acts, or as some call them, functions of sovereignty, whether they respect what has been done, or what remains yet to be performed, may all be reduced to, and classed under two or three heads.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is this: the inviting or calling men to become the partakers of his kingdom. You remember, that the Saviour did not meet with subjects that obeyed him at once, previous to a call, and without an invitation; far, very far from it. He found all men astray, and all disobedient. Here then, we have displayed the very first act of his kingdom, and the glorious manifestation of his goodness and grace. Out of his mere bounty, he invited them to seek his face and favour, and participate in the blessedness of his kingdom.[3] The invitation was first given by himself: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand,—repent ye, and believe the gospel.' 'Come to me, ye that labour and are heavy laden; take my yoke upon you and learn of me,' 'If any man thirst, let him come to me, and I will give him of the water of life freely.' To this purpose also, he appointed a ministry, organizing the same, before his ascension. These were solemnly set apart for this work; under the divine influence being moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, they were commanded to preach his gospel, the invitation and call of his kingdom, to poor apostate man, in every clime on earth. Some, in the commencement of this work, were endued with the gift of tongues, and the power to perform miracles, that they might offer this invitation to Jew and Gentile, to the whole world, and to confirm the divinity of their mission, and the system of truth that they proclaimed, by such miracles as should tend to display their master's power.[4]

[1] Watson and Limborch. [2] Limborch. [3] Benson. [4] Benson and Dick.

Apollos.—In this view of the subject, of what vast importance is a christian ministry. They are the messengers of Christ, sent forth by himself, moved upon by the Holy Ghost, to make an offer of salvation to sinners. Certainly, my brother—an evangelical ministry is one of the greatest blessings on earth.

Aquila.—A gospel minister, in the active discharge of his duty, is not only a 'light of the world,' and the 'salt of the earth;' but a representative, in presenting the gospel invitation to man, of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. 'Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ,' says St. Paul, 'as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' But let us proceed to the second thing to be noticed.

Apollos.—Pardon the interruption, and do proceed with the next thing that sets forth the acts of this office.

Aquila.—It is just this: that to those who accept the call into this kingdom, and are willing to become its subjects, he prescribes the laws by which they are to be governed,—thus manifesting his right to set forth the conditions, and his authority to rule and govern them, according to his own terms.[1]

Apollos.—What are the terms or laws of Christ's kingdom?

Aquila.—Repentance toward God,—implying deep contrition of heart, and fervent prayer for mercy, as preparatory to believing, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon and peace, and a life of holiness, corresponding thereto, as an evidence of that faith that is evangelical, and saving in its nature.

Apollos.—A life of holiness, my friend?

Priscilla.—O! that is the very truth itself, my brother—a life of holiness. This is the natural consequence of living faith.

Aquila.—Yes! a life of holiness; a life worthy our high and glorious vocation. When we become the subjects of this happy kingdom, we are to honour our King by a willing, sincere, active and uniform obedience. In conjunction with this, is the blessed promise of support to them, while faithful here, and a most perfect state of happiness and delight hereafter, as a reward for all the sorrows they may have to endure in that service.[2]

Apollos.—And to this, I suppose you may add, the threatenings set forth in the gospel, of condemnation to the disobedient?

Aquila.—Yes; a condemnation that is eternal in its direful consequences. The last which we notice, and indeed this is the most evident token of Christ's regal power, is the judgment which he exercises both in this world, and in that which is to come.[3]

Apollos.—Does this respect both believers and infidels?

Aquila.—It does. It alike respects both those who own, and those who deny him as their king. The believer embraces the terms of restoration to the divine favour, is received as a member of Christ's family, and is made a participant in his kingdom. Infidels rebel against, reject him and his service, prosecute a course of impiety and enmity to God, declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not. The Lord Jesus Christ, the great lawgiver, and sovereign of the universe, in his omniscience beholds them; and he has appointed a day of reckoning, when they all shall be constrained to give an account of their stewardship.[4]

Apollos.—But there is an evident difference all through, between the believer and unbeliever.

Aquila.—I have remarked before, that there is a distinction; that the divine Providence always keeps up, according to the appointment, or act, of this our King. In this world, he encourages and supports the christian who perseveres in his duty, and leaves the event with his God. Sometimes, when by unfaithfulness, such backslide and fall into sin, he chastises, in order to induce repentance,

[1] Benson. [2] Limborch and Benson. [3] Limborch, Benson, and Dick. [4] Ibid.

cure their remissness, heal their backslidings, and love them freely; but if they continue impenitent and hard, or if they persist in their sins, he often gives them up to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind. As to infidels, gross sinners, common unbelievers, as a punishment for their voluntary rebellion, and continued obstinacy, he judicially blinds their eyes, by withdrawing the light, hardens their hearts, gives them over to a reprobate sense, and a strong delusion, that they may believe a lie, and finally be damned. Sometimes indeed, while he suffers afflictions to come upon his children, to try their graces, and wean them from the world, he inflicts temporal punishment on the unbelieving sinner, even in this life, that he may apprehend his danger, and know that 'God is the Lord.'[1] We have heretofore named instances of this equitable economy.

Apollos.—In the next world, this judgment will be universal—will it not?

Aquila.—It will. Then it shall extend to all mankind, whom this mighty king, 'the Lord of life and glory,' shall raise from the dead. All men, and in the multitude you and I, my brother—shall be placed before his august tribunal; and he, the 'judge of all the earth,' as is stated in the 25th chapter of the gospel by St. Matthew, shall divide them according to their deeds. The pious good, shall enter into glory and immortality, but the impious wicked shall have apportioned to them, shame, tribulation, and anguish, infinite in their extent, and eternal in their duration.[2]

Apollos.—I now clearly perceive, that if the acts of our Lord Jesus Christ as a priest, be compared with those performed by him as a king, there is an evident difference.

Aquila.—Certainly. Those we have named, the Scripture ascribes to him as our celestial king.[3] All his acts as a priest, primarily and directly relate, I think, to God, or rather to that offering that the Redeemer presents as a priest, in his mediatorial character, to the Father, by which is obtained for us, mercy and salvation. They respect us, in that they open up and present to our view, and for our enjoyment, a system of privileges, as the price of his oblation. But those of Christ's kingly office, directly regard, and respect men. They have reference to their repentance, faith, obedience, salvation, protection, support, happiness, and punishment, whether judicial blindness and hardness of heart here, or eternal banishment from God hereafter.[4]

Apollos.—I suppose, my friend—you recollect the opinion advanced by some, in regard to this kingdom, and the regal office of our Lord Jesus Christ. It has been said that 'Jesus Christ, before the last judgment, shall descend upon earth, convert the Jews, bring them back to the land of Canaan, restore Jerusalem with the temple and Levitical worship, and cause the law of Moses to be observed by all men, even by the Gentiles who have embraced christianity; and that before this, the martyrs shall be raised from the dead, and reign with Christ a thousand years;'[5] and indeed a great deal more, that I will not trouble you by quoting at this time. What do you think of this?

Aquila.—Doubtless, all absurdity. The extravagance of such indigested, and unscriptural opinions is evident, from the very fact that they tend to subvert, not to establish the kingdom of Christ. What! Moses and the law are to be re-established, and that at Jerusalem? Christ's reign even there, would destroy that kingdom that he now holds in heaven. Look at this: either he reigns now in heaven, or else there is a two-fold kingdom of Christ—one in heaven, the other on earth,—which is directly contrary to his own word, which says, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Besides, we are told, that he will not descend from heaven corporeally, until the last day, called the day of judgment. 'Whom,' says St.

[1] Dr. Clarke and Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Benson and Dick.
[4] Whitby, Clarke and Benson.
[5] Limborch.

Peter, 'the heaven,' mark this! 'must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.' 'For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory,' says St. Paul, positively confirming the previous doctrine of Peter, in regard to this matter. And again, 'the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.' Moreover, this kingdom, concerning which you have made the quotation, will be either a kingdom of remuneration, and then the universal judgment will begin with it, or of legislation, and then his subjects may revolt and rebel against him, or as has been said by some, that God will work in their hearts by an irresistible power, that obedience that he requires; and by this means, a kingdom may be there established, composed of wicked as well as good men. Thus then, would the whole course of divine Providence be subverted; and indeed, such would make it not only insignificant, but both nugatory and useless.[1]

Apollos.—Some, my friend—do not think so. They object to all you have said, by quoting a passage in the Revelations, prophetic of this reign of Christ, as king in the earth, and the happy condition, as is said of his saints, then living in this world. 'And I saw,' says St. John, 'the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God;' 'and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.'

Aquila.—This is the only text to be found in the Sacred Writings, that inculcates an idea of the kind; and it is very probable, but for this text, no one would ever have thought of applying the prophecies of the Old Testament to any thing of the kind. You will remember, my friend—that the book of Revelation is very obscure; certainly no solid argument can be drawn from thence, by a mere conjecture, on which to establish any point of doctrine.[2] And besides, although it is there said that the martyrs shall reign with Christ a thousand years, it is not affirmed that he shall reside upon the earth, much less is the place designated by fixing on Jerusalem. No mention is here made of the restoration of the Jews, or the establishment of the Mosaic ritual. If the Jews be restored, it must be by faith in Jesus, at that time when they give up all hope of salvation by the law, and look for it only through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then they shall constitute, united with gentile believers, a component part of that kingdom, over which our Lord Jesus shall reign forever and ever.[3]

Apollos.—What a diversity of opinion there has been and perhaps still is concerning the kingdom of Christ here, during the millenial state of the church. Indeed some of them savour too much of the pleasures of sense. Do you not think so, my friend? Some have said that he will come down and reign upon the earth, and never return with his followers to heaven; that they shall enjoy all the pleasures of the flesh, besides a great many other things that seems to me incompatible with a spiritual kingdom such as he governs.[4]

Aquila.—You have well said that these things savour too much of sense and sensual delights. Indeed they do. Such opinions do not deserve an answer. They not only savour too much of the carnal mind, but are directly opposed to the Scriptures.[5] In these, our Lord says, 'In my father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there may ye be also.' 'We know that if our earthly

[1] Limborch, Watson and Benson. [2] Clarke and Scott.
[3] The reader is referred to some excellent remarks of Doctor Scott on the 20th chap. Rev.
[4] Limborch. [5] Ibid.

house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' 'The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they,' says Christ, 'which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more, but are equal unto the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' 'And God,' St. Paul says, 'hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up, by his power.' Hence he argues, that God will put an end to all sensuality and sensual delights.

Apollos.—But you admit that the opinions of those who embrace the idea of a millenial state of the church, in which they ascribe to Christ a spiritual kingdom upon earth, are most certainly correct?

Aquila.—This I am not prepared to do. There is such a diversity of opinions among most of those who believe in and contend for the millenium, I know not that the texts quoted to prove it are properly applied. I am sure however of one thing, that such a variety of opinion is a sufficient argument to evince, that nothing certain has as yet been deduced from Scripture about it.[1]

Priscilla.—What is the meaning of millenium?

Aquila.—It means a thousand years that Christ, it is supposed, shall reign personally on earth, or according to some, for one thousand years there shall be unparalleled prosperity in the church, and all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.

Priscilla.—This would be glorious indeed.

Apollos.—You do not then admit the opinions of the millenarians as true?

Aquila.—I do not deny or contradict, they may be true. I certainly am not prepared to receive all, if on no other account, on this—the diversity that exists among them as I have already said.

Apollos.—Do show me this diversity?

Aquila.—I will at once. Some for instance are of opinion that this millenial state of Christ's kingdom is already passed away, but even these are not agreed when it begun:[2] for some date its commencement at the time of Constantine the Great, and its end about the beginning of the fourteenth century, when the Ottoman empire arose. Others fix the beginning at the time when the gospel began to be preached, for they say that then Satan began to be bound.[3]

Apollos.—But, my friend—if we reflect on the history of those times, we shall find that what is said of his being 'bound,' and of his being 'cast into the bottomless pit,' and of that pit being shut up and sealed, that Satan might not deceive the nations any more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled, cannot in any tolerable sense be applied to those times.

Aquila.—I admit this, and therefore cannot embrace it any more than the first named opinion. You know that during that whole period, the power of Satan was exerted, doubtless to the very utmost extent. The severest persecutions were raised against the church of Christ, in the first four centuries of christianity, that have been at any time.[4] If you look at the succeeding six, you will find that he seduced men into a labyrinth of crime, almost unequalled in any age of the world. The few who loved and served God seemed by degrees to be involved in superstition; they fell from their sincerity, abandoned the profession of their faith, and took up with the mystery of iniquity, that worked all manner of abominations to the destruction of men's souls.[5]

[1] By a reference to Calmet, Watson, Buck, Whitby, Newton, Faber, Clarke, and indeed all the great divines, this difference will be manifest to the reader.

[2] Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Milner, Mosheim, and Jones. [5] Ibid.

Apollos.—This is too true, my dear brother—but you know that many think the thousand years are not yet fulfilled, and that Christ out of heaven shall reign as he now reigns. That is, he shall not descend from heaven to earth, but as now he is in the midst of two or three, then in a more eminent manner shall he be present, ruling and reigning in every heart, so that his ancient people, the Jews, shall be brought in, and, united with the fulness of the Gentiles, shall conspire to swell his praise, honouring and serving, because in sincerity and in true faith they acknowledge, the Lord Jesus as the Messiah. Oh! what a happy state of the church will this be.

Aquila.—Well, let us examine this. It certainly is among the most rational. Yet it behooves us most certainly to bring it and every thing else to the standard: I mean the Bible. This is our text book, you know we have said this more than once. They make this kingdom or reign of Christ a thousand years on earth, to consist in his granting to his church a rest from persecutions before the last judgment, in his affording the Jews a greater measure of grace than at any time before, and converting them to himself according to the prediction of the apostle Paul.[1] 'I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' This, such suppose to be, not only taught in the twentieth chapter of Revelations, a part of which I have quoted; but also in several parts of the Old Testament, where under the figure of calling the Jews from their dispersion, they suppose to be shadowed out their conversion to Christ, and being gathered into one body with the Gentiles, as you have said, a peace such as never has been before shall fill the earth, and the church shall have prosperity and a cessation from persecution, such as it has not known before. Some add to all this, that the martyrs shall be raised from the dead, and then shall be fulfilled the prophecy in the chapter just mentioned. This last opinion about the martyrs I do not believe or admit. I am sure, as Doctor Scott says, the vast number of dark and enigmatical sayings in the Apocalypse, will authorize at least some care in regard to any important admission.[2] But as it respects the opinion of the conversion of the world and its millenial state, I am certainly not prepared to condemn it. No! nor am I prepared to admit all that is said about it, either as to the thing itself or the time of its commencement. I cannot perceive any sufficient arguments to establish the time, and when I apply what is said to the state of the church, there is to me a manifest disagreement between all this and what is said in the Bible about bearing the cross, enduring hardness, fighting the good fight, &c. Moreover it is said, 'if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution.' Is this experience compatible with such a condition of the world, and will the world ever arrive at a state, when the carnal mind will not be enmity to God?[3]

Apollos.—As therefore there is this diversity of opinion about the matter, and all seem to look to one obscure passage in the Apocalypse, on which to found their opinions, you think it best to suspend one's judgment, and not peremptorily decide on a thing, of which we can possibly know as yet but little.

Aquila.—I do most surely. I know that this millenial state of the church, as it is called, has not yet come. So do you. I do believe that Christ's kingdom is advancing, and in the appointed and ordinary way; by the proclamation of his gospel it will advance until the inhabitants of the earth shall hear its sound, and 'this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all people, and then shall the end come.' What may yet happen I am not able

[1] Buck and Calmet on the Millenium. [2] Scott's com. 20th chap. Rev. [3] Limborch.

to say, and believing as I do that many a passage has been forced into the service of this opinion and adduced as testimony for it, I am unwilling, at least to subscribe to that, which I am not sure is a legitimate application of God's word: still this is no matter of faith. It is only an opinion, and as others, I know, will not imperiously force their views on me, I am surely not disposed to press mine, if I had formed them and they were worthy of a consideration. Of one thing I am sure, that the angel having the everlasting gospel to preach, has long since gone forth, and the very islands of the sea are hearing the glad sound of salvation. Missionaries are flocking to distant lands and are proclaiming the merciful Jesus, as the sinner's friend; and the day is not distant when all shall hear and feel its power.[1]

Apollos.—As you believe that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus is advancing and the world is approximating to a period, when all shall hear the gospel of Christ, do give me your views as to the nature of what is called the millenial state, and the blessings which shall be more particularly enjoyed during that period.

Aquila.—I will rather give you, my friend—a summary of the opinions of others, in regard to this subject, on which so much has been written, and which has been by every divine, in a greater or less degree, introduced in his discourses. As the blessedness of those who have a part in the first resurrection is said to consist at least in their holiness, we are struck with what must be the state of Christ's church. It will then doubtless be pre-eminently holy, and this will constitute its peculiar glory. In order to accomplish this most glorious work, that is to be deeply imprinted on every heart, there will be no doubt a most blessed effusion of the holy and ever blessed Spirit. Such perhaps as there was at the setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth. And to this may be no doubt referred those texts which speak of a future and most signal display of the divine operation and influence. Then shall the Lord draw the hearts of men in an especial manner, and in those hearts shall be found a corresponding disposition to return to, and seek his face.[2]

Apollos.—Oh! how cheering. 'No man can come to me except my Father draw him,' says the Redeemer.

Aquila.—There shall be also an universal spread of the gospel, sending the knowledge of God and his Christ to the ends of the earth, in a manner never before felt and seen. 'The earth,' says the Scripture, 'shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;' and this shall take place at that day when 'the Gentiles shall seek to him, who is called the branch,' 'whose rest shall be glorious.'[3]

Apollos.—If the gospel is thus to be preached in all the world, and all are to feel its divine influence, the Jews will doubtless be converted to the true faith, and turn to the living and eternal Saviour, embraced already by thousands of Gentiles.

Aquila.—Certainly; and then shall the descendants of Abraham partake of the blessings and immunities of that kingdom, established by him, who is according to the flesh, his seed.[4]

Apollos.—What, in such a state of the world, shall be the purity and beauty of the church of Christ? Like its divine master, lovely, because holy and good.

Aquila.—Yes; then shall church communion, and christian discipline, be restored to their primitive and apostolic pattern,—and to this we may add, that the Lord's special presence, shall be felt by all his children, and in their midst shall he reside, in the glorious and constant influence of his Spirit.[5] To all may be

[1] Many heathens have been converted in the last ten years in India, Africa, and among the aborigines of America.

Watson and Buck. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

added the fact, that peace, balmy blessed peace, shall fill the earth. There shall be peace in the conscience, peace in the church, peace in families, peace in society, peace in every land, or as already said, throughout the earth.[1] What, in such a state of society, will be the safety of men? 'There shall be no more war.'

Apollos.—In their persons, their property, their character, their rights, entirely secure.

Aquila.—Yes; civil rulers shall be but the maintainers of peace and righteousness, and each shall do to others as he would that others should do to him. The saints themselves shall rule.[2]

Apollos.—Daniel says, 'the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and they shall possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

Aquila.—In short, my friend—to bring our summary of the opinions of others, in regard to this matter, to a close, let me add, that it is the prevalence and triumph of the cause of Christ, in this world, over that of Satan and all his instruments. And although I do not admit all that has been contended for, by those who have written on this subject, my most potent difficulty, arising in the variety of opinion, not only in regard to the time, but the nature of that state, and the true condition of the world, still I believe the march of truth is onward. How delightful then the prospects which open upon the eye of faith in the prophetic vision! Christianity is to prevail universally, and the consequences are most blissful. Our race is to assume the appearance of one vast and peaceful family; the world becomes the seat of one great adoring assembly; at length the scene mingles with the heavens, and, rising in brightness, is blended with the glories on high. The mysteries of God on earth are finished, the times of the regeneration are fulfilled, the Son of God descends, and the scene closes with divine grandeur. 'I heard,' says St. John, 'as it were the voice of a multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.' 'And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, and I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.'

Priscilla.—What a happy, what a blessed state. O! I want all the earth to know the great things set forth, and to be enjoyed in Christ's blessed kingdom.

Aquila.—There is but one thing more to crown the whole, and this is its duration.[3] It shall abide forever; it is eternal; it was said 'of his kingdom there shall be no end,' by the angel that appeared to Mary, 'for he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.'

Apollos.—But is it not said, that 'when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, then cometh the end.' 'And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all?'

Aquila.—I readily acknowledge, it may be that there are several things in this passage which prove that, at the termination of the world, Christ's mediatorial kingdom will have an end; but they by no means contradict those other texts, where the kingdom of Messiah is said to be eternal.[4] The mediatorial kingdom, considered as an act of the Mediator, bringing us to salvation, is not, and cannot be called absolutely eternal, but either comparatively so, in opposition to the kingdoms of this world, which pass away, and devolve on successors; whereas Christ being an immortal king, crowned with power and glory over all, will not and cannot have any successor; or else it may be thus said of it, because of its

[1] Calmet, Watson and Buck. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch, Watson and Calmet. [4] Limborch.

continuance to the end of the world, or as long as the nature of that kingdom will admit.[1]

Apollos.—Then, after the last judgment, Christ will still be king?

Aquila.—Most assuredly. He shall not be divested of his kingdom and glory, but will triumph at the head of his church, and reign forever with the Father, as Lord of lords, and King of kings. Then his glory shall have its most perfect consummation; so that though his mediatorial kingdom shall cease, or he shall, on the termination of the world, cease to mediate or intercede for the sinner; yet of his kingdom and glory, there shall be no end. He reigns now, here and every where; he administers the laws of his kingdom, being every where present, beholding the evil and the good.[2]

Apollos.—If these things be so, and that they are, is abundantly proved in the Bible, it will follow that our Lord Jesus has no vicar of his kingdom, on earth, but administers all things immediately by himself from heaven.

Aquila.—Truly it is so. Being always with his church, and both able and willing to discharge the several acts of his kingdom, what need can he have of any substitute; and pray what authority can such a *pretended* viceroy have, since his sovereign is always present?

Apollos.—The doctrine of the pope's being Christ's vicar on earth, then, falls to the ground?

Aquila.—Certainly; for our Lord has not only not appointed such an officer over his church, but he did most positively forbid his disciples to exercise authority and lordship over one another. Besides, he is the only Head of his church, which is his mystical body.[3] At another time, and on a more suitable occasion, I may call your attention to this subject; I will only now say, that the assumption of such authority, over the flock of Christ, and of such an office by any man, is an insult to all piety, and all that intelligence which ought conspicuously to shine in every christian; and much more is it insulting to him whose right it is to rule over his flock, among whom he dwells, and in whom he lives.[4]

Apollos.—Before you conclude this subject, which I have caused you to lengthen out, by proposing so many questions, I hope you will make an application of the doctrine of Christ's kingly office.

Aquila.—Several very interesting thoughts will readily occur to the pious mind, in contemplating this very important subject—Christ's office as king. The first that strikes us, is, the honour and glory of God,—who, in sending his Son, this king, manifested not only the highest goodness and greatest love for mankind, but also his faithfulness, in that he fulfilled all the promises made by him through the prophets, to our lost and miserable race; and we are therefore under obligations, and should learn to acknowledge his sovereignty over us; for to this end, 'was there a name given to Christ, above every name, that every tongue should confess that he is Lord of all, to the glory of God the Father;' and we should ever adore him as our supreme Lord and King. In addition to this, we should learn to obey his commands, as those issuing from our most rightful sovereign, who in his love designed our felicity, in his wisdom laid the plan to effect it, and in his power effected what his love designed, and his wisdom planned. This he has enjoined in his word, and hence he is said to be 'the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.' This duty of obedience is so necessary, that St. John says, 'If any man saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' Finally, we ought to bear up under adversities, of whatever kind, especially those which we suffer for his name sake, being assured that our Jesus in heaven, is not only a merciful high-priest, who 'was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin, that he might have compas-

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson, Benson and Limborch. [3] Calvin and Limborch. [4] Ibid.

sion on our infirmities;' but also as a king, is invested with divine power, who will afford us help in time of need, when we flee to a throne of grace, and with faith implore that assistance we need.

Apollos.—I well remember the declaration of St. Paul in regard to this very delightful subject. 'For,' says he, 'we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; let us therefore come boldly unto a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.'

Aquila.—God grant that we may accept this wise counsel of the apostle, submit to the Lord Jesus as our rightful sovereign, and in the end, find a seat with beatified millions, in his most glorious and eternal kingdom. Amen.

COLLOQUY XIII.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, IN HIS THREE OFFICES, OF PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING, OUGHT TO BE RECEIVED AS THE ALL-SUFFICIENT AND ONLY SAVIOUR OF MEN.

Apollos.—I have been much pleased, and I know, greatly encouraged in my researches after truth, my friend—since you have been discussing the different offices sustained by our Lord Jesus Christ. You have indeed pressed this matter very zealously, and I gather from your remarks, that you consider it obligatory on christians to receive the Saviour in this three-fold capacity.

Aquila.—I most certainly do, Apollos—and I think I have sufficient reasons for it—reasons which originate in that Word, which he has himself inspired. Indeed he is our Saviour by those three offices, and well may I press the importance of his being acknowledged in each.

Apollos.—But how is he, my friend—a Saviour in them?

Aquila.—In that exposition which has been given of them, we have attempted to show, that by the administration of his offices, as prophet, priest, and king, he procures our salvation. But we are to remember, that they should be applied to this great work, and we should for practical purposes, know how, in the execution of each office, he accomplishes this; and how, in doing it, he may be seen, and felt to be our Redeemer and Saviour.

Apollos.—Do, if you please, point out this to me. You have already excited, not mere curiosity, but an ardent desire to see it in all its bearings.

Aquila.—You remember, when on the misery of man, we showed that it was not one, but manifold, consisting in the slavery of sin and death; according therefore, to this our misery, have the various offices of our Lord Jesus Christ to do, in delivering us from our sins, and bringing us into that state of eternal life, prepared for his children.

Apollos.—How is this effected, my friend?

Aquila.—Thus:—our Lord procures salvation for us by his prophetical office, as he emancipates us from the slavery of sin, calls us to the liberty of the sons of God, and places us in a state of salvation.[1] In order to this, he exercises or performs four things. He not only sends forth an evangelical ministry, to preach his holy and blessed word, but proclaims that word himself, by which is taught the pure and perfect doctrines which tend to life. In them, we learn the nature and obligation of repentance, the necessity of faith, the promise of pardon, and remission of sins, true christian obedience, and the offer of eternal life to those who were dead in sin, dead in law, and just ready to suffer that banishment from God, which is denominated eternal death. Hence we see that, as a divine

[1] Benson.

teacher, he enlightens the dark minds of blinded and sinful man, in regard to his glorious privileges, and indispensable duties.[1] Moreover, he has confirmed by many and unheard of miracles, these consolatory doctrines, in such a way as to convince men of their truth, and persuade them to believe in him as their teacher, and his truth as divine; so that by an active and evangelical faith, founded in evidence incontestible, they may obey the truth, and lay hold on eternal life. Besides, acting as our instructor or teacher, he gave us such an example of an innocent and blameless life, most exactly conformable to his divine precepts, as to point out the path in which we should walk, so conspicuously, that no honest mind could mistake concerning it.[2]

Apollos.—I had never considered this as I should have done before; by this very thing, he confirmed the divinity of his precepts, proved that all the pious might observe them, and encouraged us by his example, to walk constantly in the footsteps of our leader.

Aquila.—'Take my yoke,' 'learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' said the Redeemer; and thus by his holy example, gave a most glorious illustration of his own truth. Above all, he suffered a most bitter and afflictive death, with patience, resignation and triumph, not only sealing the doctrine proclaimed by himself as a 'faithful and true witness,' for thus he is named in the Bible—but indeed as a victim, he ratified and established the very tables of the new covenant.[3]

Apollos.—I see clearly, that our Lord, in view of the glorious results of his prophetic office, may be, and is justly styled, our Saviour.

Aquila.—The apostles of our Lord Jesus, were only his ministers, and witnesses, in the administration of their office; yet in view of their imparting the light by which men are delivered from spiritual darkness, the Scripture speaks of them as saving, i. e. illuminating others; hence says St. Paul, 'If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might *save* some of them.' And again, 'Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet ye have not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you, through the gospel;' i. e. I have so preached it, as that ye were enlightened, and emancipated from the reign of spiritual darkness. Also, he says to the same church, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak,—I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means *save* some.' And to Timothy he says, 'Take heed to thyself and doctrine,' 'that thou mayest both save thyself, and them that hear thee;' i. e. by the power and efficacy of the divine word, thou shalt enlighten and rescue from the reign of darkness, thy hearers.

Apollos.—I had not thought of the meaning of these texts before, I assure you.

Aquila.—As much is also said, even of private christians, who discharge their duty towards others, in imparting to them spiritual light; thus, 'What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?' 'Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.' Now my argument, my friend—is this: if men in proclaiming the truth, and thus enlightening the minds of others concerning it, in the way of faith, and the obligations of piety, are on divine authority, said to *save* others, in how much more eminent a manner, may the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great light of the world, be called, in reference to his office as a prophet, the Saviour of men?[4] He is the angel of the covenant, which he himself published in the name of God, and thus become as he is, 'the light of the world,' confirming his truth by unnumbered miracles, an exemplary life, and at last sealing it by his death on the cross.[5]

[1] Benson. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch and Benson. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

Priscilla.—If Jesus had never enlightened us, how far should we have been from God this hour? O! he is the light of the world, 'the true light, that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.'

Apollos.—Now I see how he saves us as a divine teacher, pouring on the mind the light of his word.

Aquila.—And we shall see hereafter, that his gospel as a system of truths, is to be traced to his office as a prophet.

Apollos.—How does the Lord Jesus save us by his priestly office?

Aquila.—Really in this, he has in a more especial manner, perfected the work of salvation.

Apollos.—In what way?

Aquila.—By the two peculiar and appropriate acts of that office, as I have already heretofore named. I mean oblation and intercession, by which he has fully satisfied the most righteous will of the Father, fulfilled all things requisite for our salvation, and by being made an expiatory sacrifice for our sins, has wiped away their guilt, and opened up a way for us to approach a throne of divine mercy and grace, that we may obtain pardon, and find acceptance with a merciful God.[1]

Apollos.—In this view of the subject, Christ, the anointed of the Father, as our high-priest, may, I perceive, in a very eminent manner, be said to be the Saviour of men.[2]

Aquila.—And this is truly an appropriate title; it justly belongs to him, as he is our Priest before God. This will be more apparent if you reflect, that he has paid down the price, and has completely performed whatever God required for the redemption of the world.[3] Thus says St. Peter, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, *received* by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.' He suffered, as we have shown, the accursed death of the cross, 'gave himself a ransom' for us, and so much does he still rely upon, and confide in the value of that 'price,' that he still intercedes for us with the Father, and does in the most effectual manner, obtain remission of sins, for every penitent, who in faith seeks it at his hand.[4] You will also remember, my brother—that because he was both the priest and the sacrifice, he paid down to the Father, not a typical but a real price for our redemption, and by his blood, has not only 'opened up the way,' but has actually thrown wide open the gates that lead to eternal life, for all the human race. In other words, heaven is a prize which all may obtain,—and its joys, through the death of Christ, may be experienced by all.

Apollos.—This method of saving men, is therefore peculiar to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Aquila.—Most assuredly. It belongs to him, and him alone, to save a world from sin. An angel's arm is too short to redeem one precious, one immortal soul. Apostles, ministers, even private christians, may be made the happy instruments, to enlighten the mind, and turn the sinner toward the true light, by setting forth the glorious truths and blessed privileges of Christ's gospel; and in this sense, it may be said that they do good to the human family; but in the great work of the atonement, Christ is alone,—none were ever associated with him; he 'trod the wine-press' of his Father's wrath '*alone*,' and none dare pretend to be partners with him in this great work.

Apollos.—I see this. The deaths of apostles, ministers, and christian martyrs, were demonstrative of the truth of those doctrines taught by them, and the sincerity at least of their professions, and their faith; but the death of Christ was the price of our salvation.[5]

[1] Benson and Watson. Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Wesley and Clarke. [5] Wesley and Fetcher.

Aquila.—It was. On the cross, in the suffering of death, he rendered that oblation and propitiary sacrifice, which prevailed on the Almighty God, who was offended at the sins of men, not only to be reconciled, but to bestow upon us all the means necessary to our believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeying his commands; that at last, when called to give an account to the Judge of all the earth, he might, though just, confer upon us everlasting joy at his right hand.[1]

Apollos.—Well may it be said, my dear friend—'there is no other name given, whereby we may be saved, but the name of the Lord Jesus.' The farther you proceed, the greater interest I take in our conferences. I really feel that it does me good to be led away from self, and from the world, to the Lord Jesus. What a thought is that?—'there is no other name given for salvation!' All the angelic hosts could not reconcile 'a holy God' to sinful men; but 'Jesus died the world to save,' and it is only by his death, that the guilt of sin can possibly be removed, and we be saved from it.[2]

Aquila.—But, my friend—if you will look at another thing, you will be more forcibly struck with the fact, that he, as a priest, is our only Saviour.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—A truth definitely set forth in the Scriptures, viz: that as Christ takes away the guilt of our sin, so also does he by virtue of his sacrifice for it, save us from its rule and dominion. His oblation is effectual in destroying the iron bondage of sin, and making the christian not only a 'new,' but a 'free' man 'in Christ Jesus.'[3] That this is the high privilege of God's children, and the great object of Christ's death, will be manifest by considering this subject,—first, with respect to God the Father; then with respect to our Lord Jesus Christ; and lastly, with regard to that state in which we are placed, by the death of him, who was set for the recovery of the world.

Apollos—How will you prove this by viewing the atonement, as it respects God the Father?

Aquila.—Thus:—In it we discover not only the transcendent love of God to man, in that 'he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,' which love of God toward us ought to excite us to love him. We also behold in it his utter abhorrence, his unquestionable aversion to, and hatred of sin, and his unchanging love of justice.[4]

Apollos.—How is it, my friend?

Aquila.—In this way:—Though the Lord was merciful, and not only inclined to be reconcileable, as we have before proved, and also disposed to pardon the offence of man; yet would he not be appeased, and lay aside his wrath toward us, unless that the Lord Jesus Christ, our great high-priest, should lay down his life, and sacrifice his blood for our sakes.[5]

Apollos.—I must confess, that this is a most powerful argument, against the dominion and reign of sin, in the hearts of God's children; and it proves to me, that, what the psalmist says, is true, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.'

Aquila.—That Christ does thus save his people from the dominion of sin, will be still more apparent, if we view this subject with regard to himself. As before remarked, by the sufferings of our Lord Jesus, he has evinced for us the greatest love; indeed, my friend—love the most intense and ardent; but, while this should excite in our bosoms, love to him and to his service, the pious mind is led to ask, why this mighty sacrifice,—why this immense suffering? What was it for? Was it merely to display the love of God, and the love of Christ, toward a portion of creation, formed capable of loving and rationally serving him? These are important questions. Let the beloved disciple, the apostle John himself,

[1] Wesley and Fletcher. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Watson and Limborch. [5] Ibid.

answer; 'The Son of God was manifested to take away our sins.' Here is the answer. Though Christ loved us thus intensely, yet would he die, suffering every ignominy, rather than man should abide in transgression, or even be saved from hell in sin.

Apollos.—O! who, my brother—that looks at this subject in connection with the end for which Christ died, is not ready, not only to abhor sin in his very soul, but to flee from it as from a deadly poison?

Aquila.—Let us look at it now as it regards that state in which we are by the death of our high-priest, who was sent for the recovery of the world. See now the happy and blessed condition in which we are placed, and how does it prove that he is indeed our Saviour. By the shedding of his blood he has not only obtained for us the divine favour, and the remission and pardon of all our past offences; but by his blood he has, if we are christians, actually freed us from the dominion and slavery of sin, and introduced us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.[1] As before quoted, 'the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins.' His blood 'cleanseth from all sin.' He 'saves to the uttermost' all that come to God by him. 'Sin,' says an apostle, 'shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.' 'Brethren,' saith he, 'ye are called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.' 'Be ye holy;' 'be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect;' 'without holiness no man shall see the face of God in glory.' Now we see, my friend—by all this, that the death of Christ is not only efficacious, for redemption, or deliverance from sin, but that it is a sacrifice, prevalent, for the promotion of a holy and a devoted life.[2] And besides all this, that it procures the grace, whereby we are enabled to live and honour God, free from the contamination and pollution, as well as the guilt of sin; persevering in the divine life, until death, being aided by that grace which was purchased by the blood and death of Christ.[3]

Apollos.—So that Christ 'shall be all in all,' the 'author and finisher of our faith,' 'the first and the last,' the 'beginning and the end;' in one word, our 'Saviour,' and that by his priestly office.

Aquila.—Yes; we cannot do without it; out of, or without Christ, and the application of his death, 'our God is a consuming fire;' and indeed, even after our adoption, and salvation from the defilement of sin, if we revolt and become again its servants, we shall, as an apostle has said, 'count the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, and shall do despite unto the Spirit of grace.' Yes; my dear friend—we shall not only 'fall away,' but as much as lies in us, we shall 'crucify afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open shame.'

Apollos.—We are then, constantly to look on Jesus as our present, only, and almighty Saviour?

Aquila.—We are; and daily should we feel and daily say, 'every moment, Lord, I need the merit of thy death.'[4]

Apollos.—But it is thought, that this view you have taken, of the extent of Christ's merits as a priest, and the virtue of his death, is incorrect. Some think, that the purpose of God was anterior to the sacrifice, and that it never was available for any but the *elect*.[5]

Aquila.—My dear brother—the force and energy of this sacrifice, is altogether destroyed, not only as it regards the *reprobate*, as they are called, but as it regards those named *elect*, by those who maintain that before Jesus Christ was appointed by the Father to be the mediator, there was an eternal, absolute, and irrevocable decree made by God, concerning the salvation and damnation of all men, without any regard to their *faith* or *infidelity*.[6]

[1] Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke and Benson.
[2] Clarke, Limborch and Watson.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Wesley.
[5] Calvin's Inst.
[6] Fletcher and Limborch.

Apollos.—How can you possibly make this out?

Aquila.—In this plain way: the very notion of a sacrifice, reconciliation, or propitiation, is overthrown, since neither they who are elected, nor they who are reprobate, can be reconciled to God, according to the plan laid down in the Scriptures,—thus: as to reprobates, the case is very plain; for according to this theory about the divine purpose, by an eternal decree, the reprobates are so far excluded from the grace and favour of Deity, that God does not so much as require that his Son should make any sacrifice for them; they are beyond all hope; by God's unalterable decree, they are shut out of heaven; for it is contended that 'the decree of God fixes their condition.'[1] And as to the elect, the case is a very evident one. As they are 'absolutely elected to salvation,' they are already 'beloved by God,' with the highest and an 'immutable love.' Now my argument is, that such cannot possibly need to be reconciled to God. Their election, their adoption, their reconciliation, their salvation, are all founded in the '*eternal* purpose,' and 'decree' of God.[2]

Apollos.—Really, these opinions look inconsistent, but many attempt to justify them.

Aquila—I know this. Efforts are made at a justification of this doctrine; but let every candid man bring this, as he should do every other opinion about religious matters, to the Bible, and he will find, as we expect to show, that it will not bear investigation, either at the bar of reason, or revelation.[3] At another time, we may have an opportunity of discussing these things thoroughly; we may not now stop, only to say, that such notions about the eternal purposes, and decrees of God, to save a part, 'the elect,' and damn the rest, the 'reprobate,' unconditionally and *absolutely*, in both cases, are full of absurdities and contradictions, and do most unequivocally destroy the force and energy of Christ's sacrifice, and diminish in a vast degree, the glory of that tenderest and dearest name of his: I mean SAVIOUR. Let us now proceed to show how, in the office of a king, he also saves us.

Apollos.—In what way is this done?

Aquila.—When on this subject, if you recollect, we noticed three principal acts, by which he obtains salvation for us.

Apollos.—O yes; his sending out his apostles and ministers, to announce to the world the terms of his kingdom; his taking care of the faithful, whom he places in a state of salvation, affording them, all the necessary means, internal and external, whereby they may attain to everlasting life; and his judgment of the world in the last day.

Aquila.—By all these acts of his, called the functions or regulations of his regal authority and power, he may very justly be styled our Saviour. Moses, who delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, the house of bondage, and brought them through an extensive wilderness, to the land promised to their fathers, was called their saviour or deliverer; so also, others who rescued the same people from the hands of their enemies and oppressors, were called saviours or deliverers; and the man that frees his country from the hand of oppression and tyranny, is ever styled not only a benefactor, but a deliverer. How much more applicable is the term to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords, and King of kings. For reasons the highest and most important, may he be called our Saviour and Redeemer. He by his word, converts us from the error of our way, and places us in a state of salvation; he by his power, preserves us in his faith, and the obedience of his gospel; he by his goodness and grace, animates and supports us in every conflict, through life's uneven way; and at last, from the grave, where the bodies of his saints have slept for ages, by his almighty power

[1] Calvin's Inst. [2] Limborch and Whitby. [3] Ibid.

shall he raise them in triumph, and bestow on them everlasting joy and comfort, at his right hand.[1]

Priscilla.—Truly, he is a complete Saviour. Death and hell have no power over God's saints, when once the mighty Jesus speaks, and bids them loose their grasp.

Apollos.—Ah! at his word in the appointed hour, 'death and hell shall be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.'

Aquila.—It is easy to see, from what has been said, my friend—why the remission and pardon of our sins, is usually ascribed to the death and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, viz: because in all his offices, and consequently in the whole work of redemption, it has a various aspect.[2]

Apollos.—Do you really think so?

Aquila.—I do. Look at it as you will, you will find it first the seal of the covenant; then the sacrifice and blood of the victim slain for sin; and lastly, the way and means, whereby Christ arrived at his regal authority. Here is the glorious and blessed system, devised in goodness, and accomplished by him, who gave his life 'a ransom for all.'[3]

Apollos.—From what has been said this evening, on this very important subject, Christ our Saviour in all his offices, I am struck very forcibly with a remark you made at another time, that the Socinian and Calvinistic systems are extremes. It is astonishing how some men, though in quest of truth, miss the mark. Oftentimes extremely mistaken in regard to the true character of the Saviour, they scarcely consider any thing that respects him, but the fact of his priesthood. On this they continually harp, and hardly ever look at him, as he saves, in right of his prophetic office, from the ignorance and the darkness of sin; and how, by virtue of his kingly office, rules and governs his people by the laws of holiness. Others not only neglect, but actually denounce his office as a priest, and totally reject the idea of any propitiation for sin.[4]

Priscilla.—All their religion is in the head. They have plenty of light, but no salvation from the guilt, power, and pollution of sin.

Aquila.—Christ, to be viewed in his true character of a Saviour, must be taken in all his offices. It will not do to pass by his priestly office in silence, and if not in words, by a necessary consequence, ascribe the whole work of redemption to him, as he is our prophet and king; on the contrary, we must remember that our redemption was effected by price, and that the Lord Jesus gave his life, to redeem and save us, and that in his death, is found the life of the world.[5]

Apollos.—We are never then, in speaking or preaching about the three offices, to undervalue either the one or the other. It is evident, from what you have said, my friend—on this subject, that it is an error to attribute the whole of salvation to one office, or to consider the Lord Jesus as sustaining, in the character of Saviour, one without the other.

Aquila.—Look at this all-important doctrine, as it is recorded in the Scripture, my friend Apollos. The great work of salvation was effected by our Lord Jesus Christ in the three offices so often mentioned. In him, the Saviour, who is our prophet, priest, and king, the world finds a remedy suitable to its vast misery. From this misery, all men may be freed. Though man is now involved in ruin, and wretchedness, the Lord Jesus is our present help, and has ability to save him. He will save from darkness, despondency, guilt, sin, sorrow, death and the grave; and at last translate us from this to a happier and better state of being, in a clime far more congenial with our interest and joy.

Priscilla.—Who that loves the Lord, and has the witness of pardon and peace with God, does not see how easy it is to apply all this to one's personal or indi-

[1] Watson and Benson. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Benson and Watson. [5] Ibid.

vidual experience? I have been thinking of it repeatedly, during your discussions. Jesus is our Saviour; because when in darkness and in sin, he enlightened our minds, he led us, though blind, by a way that we knew not. As a priest, when we, who were insolvent, who were guilty and ruined, approached him, he interceded, he plead the offering he had made; his five bleeding wounds spoke for us, and the Lord God forgave us for the sake of what this great high-priest had done to save. Now, if saved from the guilt, the power, and reign of sin, as our king he rules our hearts, and our lives too. In us he sways his sceptre, because he there abides, as 'we in him.' Yes!—and all our lives shall tell, if we love and serve him sincerely, not only that we are taught of God, and saved from sin, but that this salvation is ever connected with a holy, and an upright life.

Apollos.—I trust I shall be greatly profited by the discussion of this subject. Oh! I hope I may never forget it. Christ, a Saviour in all his offices! I want an instructor—I have one. I want a redeemer, a friend to plead my cause—I have one: Christ, my great high-priest. I want a protector—I have one, a most powerful king, at whose word the earth shall flee away; at the terror of whose name, devils tremble. He—he promises to protect, and guide into the promised land.

Aquila.—God grant that it may be so, my friend Apollos.

COLLOQUY XIV.

PROPHECIES WHICH PROVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE MESSIAH.

Apollos.—At the close of our last meeting, I thought that I should not have occasion to trouble my friend Aquila again, on any point relating to the Messiahship of our Lord Jesus, and his right to rule and govern the world. A difficulty has however occurred, and I must appeal to you for help again.

Aquila.—What is that difficulty, brother Apollos?

Apollos.—Although from what you have said about the person and offices of Jesus, it is manifest that he is the Christ, or true Messiah promised by God to the Jews; yet, as they do most positively deny this, I want a summary at least of those arguments founded in the prophecies, by which I may be enabled, not only to meet and answer them, but also to offer the Lord Jesus most confidently to them, as the 'seed of Abraham,' the promised Messiah, to whom 'the gathering' of Israel should be.

Aquila.—If we take sufficient time, it will be very easy to show, that all the predictions of the prophets, wherein the coming of the Messiah was foretold, have their completion in our Lord Jesus.

Apollos.—Well, my friend—do take the time, and let us have a sure foundation as we proceed. I want to be ready for Jew or Gentile; if 'a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me,' I am a debtor to both.

Aquila.—I have proved to you the authenticity of the Scriptures.

Apollos.—You certainly have. They are true.

Aquila.—Well, bear then in mind, that the New Testament, as I have proved, is true; and if so, the history contained in it, is of course true. This must be granted; and I will now say, that the historical facts set forth in it, are in perfect accordance with the accounts given by other and disinterested histories of the times. Unless this fact, of the truth of the gospel history be admitted, it would be very hard to convince a Jew by the prophecies only, and to show him that all things ought to have happened just as they are related in the gospel.[1]

[1] Limborch.

Apollos.—Well, but what is the reason of this?

Aquila.—Simply that the prophecies, a few only excepted, do admit of a two-fold sense, the one literal, the other mystical. The Jews can show that many of the prophecies are already fulfilled in the literal sense, but it would be difficult to convince them that the mystical sense, which relates to the Messiah, of which the thing taken according to the letter, was only a type, is contained in the words of the prophets.[1]

Apollos.—How then can the mystical sense of such prophecies possibly be known?

Aquila.—It is easy to evince it, from this circumstance: that the impletion, or fulfilment, which happened in the type, is for the most part, more imperfect than the promises of God, according to the true and proper signification of the words, and therefore a more sublime and perfect completion, is to be inquired after, which fulfilment is to be found in the person of the Messiah.[2]

Apollos.—How then will you go about proving that Jesus Christ is the Messiah prophesied of in the Old Testament?

Aquila.—Thus:—Taking it for granted, that the books of the New Testament are, as they have been proved to be, true, and contain a general narration of what relates to the person and offices of Jesus Christ, I affirm that all the properties required to be in the true Messiah, are to be found in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that therefore the Jew himself is inexcusable for rejecting him. Not only so, but all such, are guilty of the highest incredulity and obstinacy; having no just grounds for opposing him, whom they ought to adore as the true Messiah.[3]

Apollos.—How will you prove this?

Aquila.—You recollect, that the things foretold of the Messiah, are of two kinds. Some, I would say, only prove him negatively; that is, that he who has not such and such circumstances attendant upon his appearance, is not the Messiah. Evidence of this nature, is chiefly outward, as the time and place of Christ's birth, his family and kindred. Other things, or circumstances, do positively demonstrate that the person, in whom they are found, is the true Messiah; and of this kind are those predictions which relate to his doctrine, miracles, his death, resurrection, ascension, and the propagation of his gospel over the face of the whole earth.[4]

Apollos.—These then, you consider as properties which are to be found in none but the true Messiah?

Aquila.—I do so. Let us then consider first, those which afford us what we have called negative proof, or rather circumstances in which he who is deficient, is not the true Messiah. These, are the time and place of his birth, his family and kindred. I think we will show, that they all prove Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah.

Apollos.—Take, my friend—the time of his nativity, first. I am sure I shall be much interested in this important subject.

Aquila.—God had fixed on a certain period of time, within which the Messiah was to come.[5]

Apollos.—What period was this?

Aquila.—Whilst the Jewish polity, and temple, with their ceremonial worship lasted.

Apollos.—My dear friend—if this be so, it is manifest that the Messiah must have come long since, for all these are destroyed.

Aquila.—Well, it certainly is so; and whoever will seriously consider it, will be constrained to acknowledge, the signs manifestly show, that the fixed time of

[1] M'Ewen on the types, and Watson on the word 'prophecy.'
[2] Newton and Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

the Messiah's appearance has elapsed, for the Jewish commonwealth is destroyed, the temple is fallen to the ground, with it the Levitical priesthood, and their whole ceremonial worship has long since ceased.[1]

Apollos.—But did the Almighty fix upon this period of time?

Aquila.—This will appear from the most evident predictions of the prophets.

Apollos.—Well, show me first a prediction which speaks of the Messiah as to come, before the subversion of the Jewish commonwealth.

Aquila.—This is very plain from the prophecy of Jacob: 'The sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' Here, my friend—we may perceive, that three things are foretold. 1. The bestowing the sceptre on the tribe of Judah, which was fulfilled after the death of Solomon, when the ten tribes revolted from his son Rehoboam, and the kingdom of Judah was set up.[2]

2. The next thing we notice in the prophecy is the coming of SHILOH, by which word, according to the unanimous consent of all interpreters, whether Jewish or christian, and however they may vary as to the derivation of the word, all agree that by it is meant the Messiah, who was to come for the deliverance of Israel.[3] And this is farther evident, my friend—by what follows, and to him shall the gathering of the people be; for a voluntary submission and obedience of the Gentiles, by the Jews' own confession, is a genuine mark of the true Messiah. This will be manifest by a reference to the specific prophecies on this subject.[4]

Apollos.—Do name them, my brother.

Aquila.—I will give you one or two. The prophet Isaiah says, 'In that day,' i. e. the days of Shiloh or the Messiah, 'there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.' And again, in another place, the Lord says by the same prophet of the Messiah, 'I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.' The prophet Micah, speaking of this gathering of the people, says, 'In that day also, *they* shall come even to thee, from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even unto the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.'

Apollos.—Indeed these are very explicit on this point.

Aquila.—A third thing to be noticed in this remarkable prophecy of Jacob is, that the very time of his coming is foretold.

Apollos.—How so, Aquila?

Aquila.—Thus!—Before the sceptre should depart from Judah, which was exactly fulfilled in our Saviour's appearance, at that very time, as here signified.

Apollos.—But did not the regal power of Judah meet with some interruption during the Babylonish captivity? You also know that first the Asmonean race, of the tribe of Levi reigned; and after them Herod, a foreigner, was king. How then can it be said 'the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet?'

Aquila.—The text does not say that a king, and especially one of Judah's tribe, shall reign, until Shiloh come, over the Jews; but that the sceptre, the authority to regulate by its own laws itself, should not depart. In other words, that the Jewish 'commonwealth' should abide until the coming of the Christ.[5] Which, notwithstanding the captivity spoken of, and that foreigners administered their

[1] Newton and Limborch. [2] Ibid.

[3] Bishop Newton and Limborch, to whose excellent remarks on this very interesting subject the reader is referred. Indeed it will benefit any christian, to read Newton on the prophecies.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Newton proves, by an invaluable criticism, that sceptre is here used for ruler, and the prophecy means that the Jews shall be a body politic, and shall not be without a ruler, till Shiloh come.

laws, still at the coming of the Saviour, it is an undeniable fact that the Jewish commonwealth did exist. They were governed by their own regulations, and their own kings oftentimes of their own choice though of another tribe or nation. The sceptre did not depart from them until the Romans destroyed their city and temple, and thus put an entire end to the Jewish economy.[1]

Apollos.—This is certainly the meaning of this prophecy; but where is it said that Christ should come before the destruction of the second temple?

Aquila.—This is expressly affirmed by the prophet Haggai. 'And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house,' the second temple, 'with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.' And Malachi says, in prophesying of the time of the Messiah, 'Behold I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.' Hence it is evident that the destruction of the temple, and the termination of the Levitical priesthood, is a certain sign that the Messiah has already come. Haggai tells us that the temple built by Zorobabel should be more glorious than Solomon's, since in it 'the desire of all nations should make his appearance.[2]

Apollos.—It is certainly well known that the glory of the second temple did not consist in outward ornaments and decorations, for in this respect it fell vastly short of the temple built by Solomon.

Aquila.—Just so.—Its beauty consisted in its internal ornaments and spiritual gifts, which by the presence of the Messiah should far exceed the glory of the first temple. And we may notice, by the way, the astonishing wisdom of God, who so wonderfully contrived it, that by the coming of Messiah, and those three offices filled by him, as a prophet, priest, and king, he designed and did put an end to the Jewish government; since in the person of Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, they all have their full and entire completion.[3]

Apollos.—Still it is argued that the time is not definitely pointed out, it is not specific. You say, according to these prophecies, he was to come between certain periods of time.

Aquila.—O no! my friend—I said that he was according to prophecy, to come before certain things should take place; but these things have transpired, and he cannot now come before their accomplishment. If it be not done already, the prophecy fails. But it has not failed, as we shall see, Messiah did come before that event.[4]

Apollos.—And yet it does seem to me that if the time had been more definitely fixed, it would have had a more direct tendency to induce faith in the unbelieving Jews.

Aquila.—You are mistaken, my brother—so deeply is their prejudice rooted, that they will not stop even to inquire. They will not search and see for themselves. Besides one of their prophets did point out a certain fixed point of time, for the advent of the Messiah, and the Jews regularly read that prophecy and knew it.

Apollos.—Is it possible?

Aquila.—Look at and read the prophecy of Daniel. What can be more explicit? 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for

[1] Limborch, who in the main coincides with Bishop Newton and Watson.
[2] Newton. [3] Limborch. [4] Newton, Watson, and Limborch.

iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness; and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times, and after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined, and he shall confirm the covenant with many, for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.'

Apollos.—That is a most remarkable passage indeed. Here are the weeks of Daniel, so often spoken of by the learned. But how will you fix the advent of the Messiah by them?

Aquila.—It is unnecessary at present to inquire into the precise beginning or end of these weeks. It is enough for our purpose, and I want you to bear it in mind, that the Messiah was to come before the period when prophecy and sacrifices should cease, at Jerusalem, and before the city and temple should be destroyed, and consequently that Daniel's seventy weeks should have previously expired.

Apollos.—This is most certainly a fair and legitimate conclusion.[1]

Aquila.—The plain course before the christian minister now, in order to convert the Jew, is simply to prove that he whose advent and death, in this prophecy of Daniel, are foretold, was the very Messiah whom they expect, according to the predictions of that holy prophet. And, my friend—one would think that the very appellation of Messiah, which means *anointed*, repeated twice in the prophecy, once with the addition of prince, ought really to convince them, if they are disposed to know the truth according to their own Scriptures.[2]

Apollos.—But you remember that Saul, David, Cyrus, Josiah, and Zedekiah were all thus called the Lord's anointed in the Sacred Writings.

Aquila.—True; but when used it has a manifest relation to some person who is named in the context. So when Saul is spoken of as the Lord's anointed, he is most positively named, and thus is it generally; and we could show that this is sometimes the case when the term is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, as is manifestly set forth in the second Psalm. Where mention is made in the verse of the person alluded to, in the context he may be found under some other name. For instance in the second Psalm, it is said the kings of the earth have risen up against the Lord and his ANOINTED: if the question be asked who is the Anointed? in the seventh verse we are told, 'thou art my Son,' &c. The language used in the context designates the person. But you will remark, that in the passage quoted from Daniel, he is styled the Messiah, i. e. the anointed, absolutely so, and it is so by way of eminence. Neither in the words that precede nor in those that follow, is there any mention made of any other, to whom this application can be said to belong.[3]

Apollos.—But the Jews object that by Messiah the prince, is meant some other person besides the Messiah simply so called.

Aquila.—Indeed they are not agreed among themselves, who is Messiah the prince, and who the other Messiah, as they are pleased to name him. Here is indeed a strange uncertainty in guessing. They are not able to fix upon an explication to suit themselves.[4]

[1] Newton and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Newton. [4] Limborch.

Apollos.—I had not really thought of the bare faced contradiction, that is to be found in all this.

Aquila.—Now not to insist on what has been already said, the weakness of such an interpretation is manifest from this, that there is an uninterrupted connection in the words, and the appellation of Messiah is one and the same throughout; this is most certainly sufficient proof that one and the same person is alluded to all through the prophecy. Thus you see, my friend—whatever may may be the opinions of the Jews, the time of the Messiah's appearance is so definitely fixed that to it there can be no well grounded exception. He was to come within the compass of his seventy weeks.[1]

Apollos.—But a different exposition is given of this prophecy from that you give, and which is most generally given by those who have examined into this subject. This ground is assumed, or rather it is presupposed, that the prayer of Daniel and the answer of the angel were uttered twenty-one years, or three of Daniel's weeks, after the beginning of the Babylonish captivity.[2] This it is endeavoured to be proved from the circumstance that the vision here named happened to Daniel after his praying and fasting. Thus saith the prophet, 'I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession and said, O Lord! the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments,' &c. The length of this fasting, it is said, the prophet intimates in the tenth chapter, thus:—'I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.' It is said that he mourned during the days of these three weeks. It is supposed by some that he was accustomed to pray and fast, from the desolation of Jerusalem to the day of this vision, for three whole weeks of years, or twenty-one years. And upon this as a foundation, the following exposition has been given.

Aquila.—Well, brother—let us have it.

Apollos.—It is said that there is a distinction between the two numbers of weeks, separating the seven first from the last sixty-two. And it is declared that one portion belongs to the times of Cyrus, and the other to those of Antiochus Epiphanes. That to the reign of Cyrus, seven weeks or forty-nine years were still to come. And that, since three weeks or twenty-one years of the Babylonish captivity were elapsed, the angel tells him that after seven weeks or forty-nine years, the Jews should be delivered from their captivity, that he might confirm the prophecy of Jeremiah, who foretold the seventy years of captivity; but that the angel adds another prediction, concerning the desolation and oppression to be wrought by Antiochus Epiphanes, which should happen after sixty-three weeks.[3]

Aquila.—In this exposition, if I may call it such, my friend—there is neither ingenuity nor truth. I resist it therefore, for several important reasons. It is not only uncertain, but even the manner of speech used by Daniel, does not allow us to suppose, that by the days of three weeks, wherein he is said to fast, are meant weeks of years, or twenty-one years, but only weeks of days—as plainly appears by a comparison of the connection of the text with the entire context. But, my friend—suppose Daniel did mean three weeks of years, nothing can be concluded from this, unless it can be proved that both the visions here mentioned, happened at one and the same time.[4] In opposition to this, Daniel himself informs us, in the ninth chapter, that the former vision was in the first year of Darius the

[1] Newton, Watson, and Clarke.

[2] Limborch and Newton.

[3] Limborch refers to Sir John Marsham, of London, who wrote a celebrated treatise on chronology, and who is the author of this hypothesis.

[4] Ibid. also Prideaux.

Mede, and the vision mentioned in the tenth chapter, was in the third year of Cyrus, king of the Persians. Now, between these two visions, according to the calculation which you have named, was an interval of about forty-nine years. It cannot therefore, be inferred from the days of Daniel's fasting in the time of Cyrus, how long he fasted in the first year of Darius the Mede, unless that prophet's words, 'in those days, I Daniel was mourning three full weeks,' be explained so as to mean forty-nine years, before those days wherein 'I Daniel was mourning,' which any one may perceive to be absurd. And after all, Apollos—the words of Daniel are so clear in this matter, that it would seem a subject of astonishment, that any man, or set of men, should wrest them to a sense so different from the one intended, and also the one evidently implied in them.[1]

Apollos.—I confess there is a manifest absurdity in this, and I did not consider the bearing of this objection before.

Aquila.—And even grant the foundation assumed here, which I do not, the exposition is by no means consistent with, but destroys itself. The angel says, 'seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city,' &c. which seventy weeks amount to four hundred and ninety years. This time, according to the plan you have named, is cast into two periods. The first is seven weeks, or forty-nine years, which terminate at the reign of Cyrus; the last is sixty-two weeks, to which, if a week and a half be added, they will make four hundred and forty years and a half. Now, from Cyrus to Antiochus Epiphanes, by the very confessions of your objectors, there were not so many years. To evade this, it is said, that there is the same epoch of both computations, viz: from the destruction of Solomon's temple; and therefore the beginning of those weeks is not fixed at the end of the seven weeks, but carries them back ten weeks, or seventy years,[2] to the time when Solomon's temple was destroyed,—the inconsistency of which, is manifest from several considerations. How can the epoch of computations be the same? It was said in the plan of this exposition, that the epoch of the seven weeks, was fixed at the time when the angel spoke to Daniel, which they would have to be three weeks, or twenty-one years, after the destruction of the temple. Now, it is manifest that this is to make and unmake epochs, suited to the fanciful exposition that men are disposed to give of God's word. Surely it has been forgot by the friends of this plan, how widely different these epochs are.[3]

Apollos.—Certainly there is a wide difference.

Aquila.—And yet there is in this, a greater and still more apparent difficulty, my friend. The angel says, 'seventy weeks are determined upon thy people;' but according to this calculation, there will only be sixty, as will readily appear to the most superficial reader of this theory; if he will but reflect on what is advanced in regard to the two periods. Indeed, there are several striking difficulties which present themselves to both the biblical and historical students connected with this explication. It will not stand the test of strict scrutiny, whatever isolated facts such expositors may pick up, that seem to fix the completion of the prophecy, or any of its parts, at a period to suit their own views.[4]

Apollos.—But the Jews, when driven from this difficulty, say, that God has put off the advent of the Messiah longer than he intended, on account of the sins of that people; and that the transgressions of their nation, have occasioned the delay.

Aquila.—This, Apollos—is a much worse subterfuge than the other, as is most palpable for many reasons; among them, we notice, that all the promises of the coming of the Messiah, are absolute and unconditional. Besides, in Daniel's

[1] Limborch and Prideaux. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch. [4] Prideaux.

prophecy, the one now under consideration, it is expressly said, 'seventy weeks are determined,' i. e. by a certain and an immutable decree, this is the time definitely fixed for the advent of the Messiah. And what a contradiction does it imply? and how derogatory to the veracity of him who made an absolute and an unconditional promise, concerning this advent, to say, that the sins of the Jews delayed its accomplishment? especially, as it is on the contrary declared, that he should come in the most corrupt and sinful times, in order to reclaim a sinful and polluted people, to God.[1]

Apollos.—Is this the fact, my friend?

Aquila.—It certainly is. Hear what Jeremiah says concerning this matter: 'Behold the day shall come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which, my covenant *they brake*, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord,) but this shall be the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.' And Zachariah saith, 'In that day, there shall be a fountain opened in the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for *sin* and for *uncleanness*. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; and also, I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land.' Who does not see in these texts a fact clearly set forth, and one which, the history of the Jews, even by Josephus, a Jew, clearly proves, viz: that at the time of the advent of Christ, the time we affirm, in which, according to Daniel's vision, the Messiah was to come, the Jews were a most corrupt and profligate nation.[2] Hence our Lord addressed them as serpents, as hypocrites, as a generation of vipers. But if their sins could or did act as a cause to prevent the appearance of the Messiah, ought they not to show what particular sin or sins occasioned such an important failure in the accomplishment of prophecy.[3] I admit that God did threaten to deliver them up to captivity on account of their sins; and promised, upon their repentance, to rescue and restore them to their native country; but I do defy the production of any evidence which will go to show, that God could not, or did not send the Messiah, promised and prophesied of, because of the wickedness of the Jews. I want you to read, and I wish every Jew to read the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy. There may be found, most exactly, the same views I have just advanced on this subject.

Apollos.—O, I remember it well—that affecting and heart-searching appeal and address of Moses to the children of Israel. How truly did God verify his predictions in the seventy years captivity in the land of Babylon; when that time had expired, they were delivered, and sent home again.

Aquila.—Alas for them! Seventeen hundred years at least, have they been exiled from their home; scattered over the face of the whole earth, despised and hated by all, they still continue in unbelief, and obstinately reject the Messiah.

Apollos.—This is really afflictive to reflect on. No prophet in all that time, has ever appeared to comfort or cheer them.

Apollos.—Indeed, such appears to be the displeasure of the Almighty, that he gives them but little hope of restoration, as in former times. His anger seems still to burn toward them.

Apollos.—If no person had appeared, at the time spoken of for the appearance of the Messiah, then the Jews might have had some excuse—might they not?

[1] Doctor Clarke. [2] Josephus and Clarke. [3] Limborch.

Aquila.—They might be excused, had it been so; but as it is, they are guilty of the highest infidelity and obstinacy, since our Lord Jesus appeared at that very time, and not only declared himself to be the Messiah, but proved the truth of it, by many and evident miracles, none else appearing at the time to confront or oppose him.[1]

Apollos.—Really, the conclusion is irresistible, that our Lord Jesus Christ was the true Messiah promised to the Jews of old, and ought as such to be received by them, and by all. My mentioning the objections founded on the exposition of Daniel's prophecy, has given you much trouble, but I hope will profit me much. You may, my friend, advance to the other point, in external circumstances, and show the birth-place of the Saviour.

Aquila.—This then is another evidence of Jesus being the true Messiah. He was born in the place where, according to prophecy, Messiah was to be born.

Apollos.—What prophecy pointed out his birth-place?

Aquila.—That noted one of Micah. 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel,' &c. By these words it is evident that the place of the Messiah's birth is pointed out to us. Bethlehem, though small, is preferred to the thousands of Judah, because the ruler in Israel was to come forth in it.

Apollos.—The Jews object to this, that Bethlehem is reckoned among the thousands or princes of Judah, because out of it David sprang, from whose loins the Messiah was to come.

Aquila.—But this is a manifest wresting of the prophet's words, and that too with a view to cloak the infidelity of a depraved and unbelieving heart. By this they not only reject the interpretation of their own fathers, who at the time of our Saviour's birth looked upon this passage of Micah to point out the spot of Christ's nativity, but also put such a sense upon it as the words of the prophet will not allow. As it regards the former, you remember that when the chief-priests and scribes of the people were all gathered together, and it was demanded of them by Herod where Christ the Messiah should be born, they said unto him, 'in Bethlehem of Judea;' for thus is it written by the prophet: 'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governor, that shall rule my people Israel.' This then was the exposition of their fathers. To give a different one is to do what the words of the prophecy will not allow. For then they would not say a ruler or governor shall come, but if they allude to David's being born there, they would say, being spoken not only after his birth but also death, 'a ruler has come forth,' &c.

Apollos.—But the Jews object also to this, that the passage alludes to Zorobabel, or some other who was the deliverer of the people out of captivity.[2]

Aquila.—Even admit that in the first and more imperfect sense they did foretell a deliverance by this or any other man, it is here positively affirmed in regard to a future nativity or birth, that it should be at Bethlehem. There, it is said, an eminent ruler is to make his first appearance in the world, on whose account Bethlehem is to be ranked among the rulers of Judah. And I will add, my friend—that as this is said even after David, one of the most eminent kings of Israel, who had sprung from thence, it is plain that the one prophesied of was to be more eminent than even he. Besides neither of these things agree to Zorobabel, for he was not born at Bethlehem, and therefore cannot be said to come forth out of it, and he was much inferior to David himself in dignity.[3] It is therefore plain even if we grant that some other person may in the literal and more imperfect sense of the prophecy be here intended, yet in the mystical and complete sense,

[1] Limborch and Newton. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

the birth place of the Messiah is hereby most assuredly denoted.[1] Therefore the prophecy is plain, and in the completion of it according to the words and the most express meaning of Micah, our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judah: by the special direction of Divine Providence, there came out a decree of Augustus Cæsar that all the world should be taxed, which occasioned the mother of Jesus, who lived at Nazareth and perhaps little expected to be confined at Bethlehem, to go to that city just about the time that her days of pregnancy were accomplished, and there she brought forth her son Jesus, according to the prophecy of this prophet.

Apollos.—Truly the circumstances of this case are such as to manifest in an especial manner the fact that God rules all things, and does graciously reveal his truth, in such a way, that the humble may know and walk in the path of life.

Aquila.—It is even so; and will appear still more conspicuously, if you will but consider some few of the prophecies concerning the family of the Messiah.

Apollos.—Do let me have them.[2]

Aquila.—In regard to his family it was most positively foretold, that he should be of the lineage of David. 'And when thy days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels; and I will establish his kingdom, he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever,' &c.

Apollos.—Were not these words spoken of Solomon?

Aquila.—Though in their primitive and literal meaning, they may be referred to Solomon, yet in their mystical sense they can only be applied to Messiah, for of him alone can it be said that his kingdom is established 'for ever;' and accordingly by the genealogy given of our Lord, by both St. Matthew and St. Luke, it appears that he was, both by the father and mother's side, descended from the stock and lineage of David.[3]

Apollos.—Was not the family of David, when our Lord appeared, in a very low condition?

Aquila.—It really was not only low but mean, so much so that the Jews handled it against our Lord, saying, is not this the carpenter's son. This itself seems to be in accordance with prophecy. Isaiah said, 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots.' This prophecy certainly intimates that the family of David should be at the time very low, so much so that all should be gone except the 'root,' a bare remnant, from which Christ the branch should spring forth, 'and the Spirit of the Lord' should 'rest upon him.' Here then, my friend—we have his family.[4]

Apollos.—I see it; the prophecy is plain and explicit that he should be descended from David, king of Israel.

Aquila.—This being granted and I think proved, let us for a moment consider his kindred. His relatives, I mean the more distant, were to be, as we have proved, of David's family. This you admit and there is no necessity for more, except the prophecies which regard his mother.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—There are many prophecies of Jesus, but in this one of Mary, his mother, there are several things worthy of consideration. Take the one from Isaiah, where the mother of Messiah is spoken of and several important things are brought in the compass of one short verse. 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.'

Apollos.—I recollect the text well, and it is you know said, that in its primary signification and its literal sense at least, it was fulfilled in the days of Isaiah,

[1] Newton and Clarke. [2] Newton. [3] Ibid. [4] Limborch.

when a virgin, then pointed at by the prophet, was afterward married and had a son, which God was pleased to give as a sign of the Jews being delivered from the hands of the kings of Syria and Israel.[1]

Aquila.—But after all those words are evidently so conceived that this sense of them is only imperfect and typical, and some other more noble and sublime meaning is contained in them, which is only fulfilled in the Messiah.[2]

Apollos.—Do you really think so?

Aquila.—This will appear, I think, plainly, to every one who will seriously consider the whole matter as it is spoken by Isaiah. In the first place, she who was to bring forth this son is expressly called a *virgin*, a maiden whose virginity was untouched, according to the original meaning of the word. Again, the birth of this child is called a *sign*, by which the Almighty saw fit to convince Ahaz of his incredulity; but this could not have been such if only a maid, married to a man in the usual way, should bring forth a child, for this was only a common operation of nature. It must therefore be understood of a child born of a pure or an immaculate virgin, in other words, as is said in Scripture, one 'not knowing a man.' Moreover the name of the child was to be *Immanuel*, which is, being interpreted, God with us. One that should prevail as a remedy and help for us. This, my friend—cannot be applied to a common or an ordinary child. It is only applicable to the Messiah, who may in a more proper and exalted sense be styled, as he is, 'Immanuel, God with us.' The virgin then in the time of Isaiah was only a type of the blessed virgin, and her child which she had after marriage a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the deliverance of which that child was a sign, a type of the spiritual deliverance wrought by the Saviour in not only rendering God reconcileable to man, but in saving us from the oppressive power of sin.[3]

Apollos.—O the Scripture is explicit as to this, that the Saviour was born of a pure virgin.

Aquila.—This fact then is a manifest token of his being the true Messiah.[4]

Apollos.—How so?

Aquila.—Because it is the greatest and most illustrious miracle, by which at his very conception according to the flesh, and on his birth, he was separated from other men, and consecrated to this holy and blessed office, of securing our salvation and eternal joy.[5]

Apollos.—I am deeply impressed, my friend—with the wisdom of my God. I was truly interested when you were on the subject of miracles. I assure you I am not less so on the prophecies.

Aquila.—I wish we had time to consider them all, but we have not now. At our next interview we will attend to those which I proposed to notice as positive proofs of Christ's Messiahship. All that I have said goes simply to establish this fact, that without their fulfilment there can be no Messiah.

Apollos.—Yes—but you have proved that they were all fulfilled in Christ Jesus, and have thereby rendered them, I think, positive proofs of his being as he is, my friend—the true Messiah. Good night.

COLLOQUY XV.

PROPHECIES WHICH POSITIVELY PROVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE MESSIAH, CONSIDERED

Aquila.—I remarked to you, on a former occasion, Apollos, that the proofs deduced from prophecy of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus were of two kinds, those called negative, by which the fact was established that the person or charac-

[1] Prideaux, Newton, and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

ter in whom they were wanting could not be the true Messiah. The other proofs we said were positive, that they do foretell in such an explicit manner, the doctrines, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, and also the prevalence of his doctrine and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world, as to point out with indubitable certainty the Lord Jesus, as he who was to come, the anointed of the Father, the true Messiah, gloriously to accomplish the redemption of the world. These proofs, my friend, will have the greater effect on your mind, when you recollect that they are to be met with in none other personage in all the universe.

Apollos.—They regard then the exercise of his offices, as a prophet, priest, and king; and foretelling these with unerring certainty, point out the Lord Jesus, as he who was spoken of in them.

Aquila.—They do. We have already noticed the three offices which are peculiar to our mediator the Lord Jesus, and we are now to show that these three, with the several acts of them, were foretold by the prophets of old, and thus stand a monument of the fact that our Lord Jesus is the Messiah—a fact that shall cause infidelity to blush, and sink into its own insignificance.

Apollos.—Take then, my brother, the office of a prophet first, and show me how the prophecies point out the Lord Jesus as such.

Aquila.—I will then proceed after the same order in which we discussed his three several offices, and first show that the Messiah, according to the testimony of the prophets, under the Old Testament dispensation, was to be a prophet. This fact God foretold by the mouth of Moses. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of assembly, saying let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.' Here is a plain and an explicit prophecy of the fact, that the Messiah was to be a prophet.[1]

Apollos.—But the Jews object to this, that there is no mention made of the Messiah. That God, by this his word, promised that he would not leave his people without prophets, but would send them sometimes one, and sometimes another, to put them in mind of their duty.[2]

Aquila.—Whatever we might feel disposed to admit, in regard to the primary or literal sense of this prophecy, it is easy to show that it is not the true import of it; but the rather that it ought to be applied, as it justly is by an apostle, to our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah.[3]

Apollos.—Do you say it is applied by an apostle to him?

Aquila.—It certainly is. Thus says St. Peter, in that memorable address to the Jews, after he and John had healed the lame man, 'Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.' 'Yea and all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Here then, and in the context, is the direct application of it to our Lord Jesus. St. Stephen, in that powerful application of the prophecies to our Lord Jesus, quotes that now under consideration, as one pointing him out in the most explicit manner as the only Saviour, the promised Messiah. And whoever will notice the words closely

[1] Newton, Watson, and Clarke. [2] Limborch. [3] Limborch and Newton.

will find that the Lord promised the children of Israel a prophet like unto Moses, to be sent at a fixed time; and however he might send them other prophets in the interim, yet there was one which was to come, at an appointed time, who, as we have before showed, was destined to be the mediator of a new and better covenant.[1]

Apollos.—But what are your reasons for fixing on this as one that can be thus construed.

Aquila.—There are many reasons which might be offered, I will only name a few. It cannot be supposed that the singular is here substituted for the plural. God speaking says, 'a prophet will I raise,' &c. which doubtless denotes the raising of one eminent prophet, at some certain time, and not the sending of several prophets, whom God would have to be hearkened unto when he should send them. Besides it is expressly added, I will raise up a prophet 'like unto thee:' now from the time of Moses unto the coming of Christ, no prophet arose like unto him.[2]

Apollos.—I have often thought of this, 'like unto thee.' In what did this likeness consist?

Aquila.—Simply in this, that Christ the prophet, like Moses was a lawgiver. From Moses no prophet did arise like unto him, even down to Malachi, until Christ came. All between Moses and Christ were only expounders of his law. They exhorted the people to observe and do it, and sharply reproved every transgression of it. In this text, therefore, a prophet is promised of the same authority at least with Moses. Not an expounder of the law, but a legislator as was Moses, not only so, but one who should enact a more perfect law, and consequently be a greater prophet than Moses, and to be heard in all things.[3]

Apollos.—Indeed I am convinced that this prophecy, could be legitimately applied to none other than our Lord Jesus. But how was his law superior to that of Moses?

Aquila.—In addition to what I have elsewhere said on this subject, let me now say, that its superior excellence consists in three things, that he should announce, or declare to men the most perfect will of God. Hence says the prophet Isaiah, when setting forth this fact, 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon *him*, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.' And also in another place, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles.' And in that most sublime passage, after the lapse of many ages, read and applied by the Saviour to himself. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.' Here then was the great work of Jesus, to declare the most perfect will of God to men; and not only so, but that he should announce it, in the next place, in the most perfect manner. And that evangelical prophet speaks of this his most perfect manner of showing forth his truth. 'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the

[1] Limborch and Newton. [2] Watson, Clarke, and Limborch. [3] Limborch.

earth, and the isles shall wait for *his law*.' This is the perfect manner in which our Messiah was to proclaim and teach his law. And we notice, in the last place, that he should teach such a doctrine as should extend itself to all men over the face of the whole earth.[1] The passage just quoted will establish this fact, and by a reference to another prophecy of the same prophet, we see this still more plainly. Thus he represents the Lord as speaking to the Messiah, and saying, 'It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, I will also give *thee* for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.'

Apollos.—All must perceive that these things cannot be applied to any but the Messiah, and the laws enacted by him are in every respect, and truly for the most important reasons, far more perfect than those delivered by Moses; but what of the miracles of Christ, were they foretold likewise?

Aquila.—Although not expressly foretold, yet they may fairly be inferred from the prophecy itself. For if our Saviour had not performed miracles, he would have been inferior instead of superior to Moses, who was certainly noted for the miracles performed by him.[2] Some have also adduced that prophecy of Isaiah, which is most certainly in point. 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing, for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in a desart place.'

Apollos.—May not these words be taken figuratively, and be applied in another sense.

Aquila.—Well admit that they may, the quotation of them as a prophecy of Christ's miracles is certainly in point, if there was need of any prophecy concerning them. You will certainly, my friend, remember that the miracles he did perform, abstract from all prophecy, were a sufficient evidence of the divinity of his mission, and we have said so more than once. That he did perform those miracles is too notorious to be denied, by any who are acquainted with the history of his life, or that of the age in which he appeared and displayed his power.[3]

Apollos.—But where is it foretold that the Messiah should be a priest?

Aquila.—In several places—I will give you a few. The psalmist says, 'thou art a priest forever after the order of Mechisedec,' which, as we have elsewhere shown, was prophetic not only of his being a priest but also a king, as Melchisedec was, of whom Moses thus speaks, 'and Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest of the most high God.' Here it is affirmed that he was both priest and king, as was the Messiah to be, who is spoken of as a priest after the order of this good king of Salem.[4]

Apollos.—Brother, the Jews object to this that this Psalm was not penned by David in honour of the Messiah, but by some one else in honour of David himself, and that it therefore has no relation to the Messiah. Moreover they say that the same original word, which is here translated priest, is in several other parts of the Old Testament translated prince.[5]

Aquila.—Well we will consider the objection founded on the psalm first. Look at it my friend, the very title of it convinces that it was a psalm of David. What do you want more on this point? Besides this the elders among the Jews themselves did all anciently acknowledge this. I will prove it in a moment. Had they not have acknowledged it, how easy would it have been for them to have solved the question of our Lord, 'How did David call the Messiah Lord when he was his son?' They might have answered that those words were not spoken by David, but by some one of his subjects, and they were spoken of David himself, not Messiah. But instead of this 'they could not answer him a word.'

[1] Watson and Newton. [2] Limborch. [3] Paley and Chalmers. [4] Clarke and Scott. [5] Limborch.

This, my dear friend, is a modern fiction of the Jews, invented in opposition to the christian religion, because they find themselves so much pressed by this precious psalm, as it is so explicit in its prophetic allusion to the coming and office of our Lord Jesus.[1] And, Apollos, even admit that we grant the Jews all that they contend for, then the most that they could make of it would be, that the psalm, in its literal and imperfect sense alluded to David, who was as you know, the type of Messiah: but the noble and glorious things spoken in it, cannot, with propriety of speech, be applied to him, but have their completion in Jesus of Nazareth, the only and true Messiah, who came at the appointed time to redeem the world.[2]

Apollos.—Admitting this then, which I confess I cannot disprove, will you please take up my second objection. You know, my friend, that the same original word which is used for *priest* is also used for *prince*, and that in a variety of texts. For instance, Joseph's father-in-law is called the priest of On, but even in some of our common reference English Bibles, it will be seen, that it is priest or prince, and in this case it is most likely he was a prince and not a priest, his manners not according with the history we have of the Egyptian priesthood. So in the account we have of the father-in-law of Moses. He is called the *priest* of Midian, but in like manner the original word may be rendered priest or prince, in this case also the latter is most likely. And so also David's sons are said to be 'chief rulers or princes,' which might be rendered priest.[3]

Aquila.—It is true, Apollos—that the original word does sometimes mean a prince, but as all know who understand the original, even superficially, it is most generally rendered *priest*. Besides, it cannot here be taken for 'prince' at all, to make any kind of sense, He, of whom the words are spoken, is said to be a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec. Now, the original word, when applied to him, does necessarily mean priest; for he is called in the same verse, king of Salem.[4] Admit the objection, and you introduce a tautology, not admissible at all; besides, you make the Scriptures say, that 'he is *prince*, instead of *priest* of the most high God.' Moreover, the very act of blessing was one appertaining to the office of a priest, and we hear of the exercise of that function of his priesthood, by this good man. Thus: 'And Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the *priest* of the most high God, and he blessed him and said, blessed be Abraham, of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth,—and blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.' For all these reasons, and others that might be named, it is obvious that the priesthood of Christ, who, like the king of Salem, was to be both priest and king, is here emphatically prophesied of.[5]

Apollos.—All the objections to these plain prophecies, however specious they may appear, when properly investigated are proved to be without any foundation.

Aquila.—It is really thus; and as truth never suffers from investigation, it will be found, my friend—that the more closely we examine the claims of our Lord Jesus, to the Messiahship, the more fully shall we be convinced that he is the true Messiah. As a priest, we have on another occasion said, that he offered up himself, to an ignominious death, under circumstances the most cruel and afflictive. If we shall examine into this matter, we shall find that all these were foretold by the prophets.[6]

Apollos.—The death of Christ, as an accursed one, because on the cross, was a stumbling-stone and rock of offence to the Jews.

Aquila.—This is true; and yet it is a remarkable fact, that transactions the most minute, were all foretold long before they transpired, and thus stand as

[1] Limborch.
[2] Newton and Watson.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Clarke, Henry and Watson.
[6] Ibid.

evidence incontestible, that Jesus Christ is the one spoken of in the prophecy.[1] Take, for instance, the 53d chapter of Isaiah; there it is said of the Messiah, not only that he should have 'no form nor comeliness,' that he should be 'despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,' but also that he should undergo all these things as an expiation for sin. And it is there said, that he should 'bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows, be wounded for our transgressions,' &c. that 'the Lord should lay upon him the iniquity of us all, and that he should make his soul an offering for sin.' All these are prophetic of our Redeemer, who gave 'his life a ransom' for us.[2]

Apollos.—Do not some understand this prophecy, in its primary sense, to have some relation to the oppressions which the Jews suffered in the Babylonish captivity, or else that some extraordinary person, such as Jeremiah, is represented here as suffering?[3]

Aquila.—Even admit this, which I do not, it could only be a type of Christ's sufferings; for whoever will seriously attend to the whole description of the sufferings here mentioned, and to the character given of the person who suffered, viz: that 'he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth,' must acknowledge that it could not properly be applied either to the people of Israel, or to Jeremiah; but has its ultimate and most perfect completion in the person of the Messiah, and that person was the crucified Nazarene.[4] And there are other prophecies to the same purpose, in different parts of the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Psalms. Have you ever attentively read the 22d Psalm? It is certainly the most lively, and particular description of our Lord's sufferings on the cross, and all the attendant circumstances of that affecting tragedy. Have you ever seen it? The very language used by him, is foretold; also, the parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture. Do read this psalm; you will be forcibly struck with it. Our Lord doubtless on the cross, quoted the first verse, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' either in order to turn the attention of the Jews and others to this psalm, as prophetic of his sufferings, or else he repeated the whole psalm as a reproof to those who clamoured for his blood, and said, 'if he be the Son of God, let him,' do thus and so. I have elsewhere alluded to this subject, and only name it now that you may consider it well.[5]

Apollos.—I certainly will. I am at once convinced that this psalm does foretel the sufferings of our Lord, and almost all the circumstances of his death.

Aquila.—When you read and investigate this psalm, look also at the 69th; you will find it almost as explicit, about the sufferings of our great high-priest. Just, my brother—listen to the twenty-first verse, 'They gave me also gall for meat; and in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.' By none were these things fulfilled, even in a figurative sense; if they were, it was in a very imperfect manner. David's hands and feet were not pierced, nor was he in the suffering of death, reduced to the pain of drinking vinegar with gall. The perfect completion of these most explicit prophecies, was by the Lord Jesus on the cross. Take, my friend—the histories of those sufferings, in the New Testament, and compare them with those psalms, and with other parts of the Old Testament, and you will plainly see how all were explicitly foretold by the ancient prophets. You will also, my friend Apollos—learn another thing: that the king-

[1] Clarke, Henry and Watson. [2] Clarke, Henry and Scott. [3] Limborch. [4] Ibid.

[5] The authors of the great Universal History have some excellent remarks on this exclamation of our Lord on the cross, 'My God,' &c. They are the most consistent I have ever seen on this subject. Our Lord, doubtless for wise purposes, quoted the first verse of the 22d psalm, to confirm his disciples, reprove the Jews, and evince that the acts of that day were foretold in the prophets.

dom of the Messiah, which we are next to notice, as prophesied of, is a heavenly and spiritual kingdom; such as we have already evinced, that our Lord Jesus Christ set up, when he came to make atonement for sin. Hence it is plain, that the things which the prophets foretold, concerning his kingdom, are not to be understood as declarative of any thing earthly, and relating to the pageantry and pomp of this vain world. The Messiah was to be a king, however, and the prophets foretold this.[1]

Apollos.—The Jews themselves admit this; it is certainly needless to undertake, my friend—to prove a fact so notorious; but the dispute is concerning the nature of his kingdom.

Aquila.—I have already said that it was to be a spiritual, and a heavenly one; and that it was foretold as such, and of course its king prophesied of, was to be a heavenly and spiritual king, and his service spiritual and divine in its nature. Among other arguments of this, is the fact of his being spoken of, as rejected, afflicted, and put to death by his own people. This cannot certainly be reconciled with any ideas of a kingdom earthly and sensual.[2]

Apollos.—This accounts for the Jews feigning two Christs: one the son of Judah, a glorious and a triumphant prince,—the other the son of Joseph, miserable, poor, unfortunate, and who was to be killed.[3]

Aquila.—Yes; but these contradictions and inconsistencies will be easily reconciled and adjusted, if they would but submit to the Lord Jesus as a spiritual sovereign, and his death as the way by which he entered into, and possessed this his spiritual kingdom. The prophets foretold that his death and passion should precede his glory, and therefore their predictions of one, are as evident as those of the other; what therefore transpired after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, viz: his resurrection, ascension, and kingdom, or his setting down at the right hand of the Father, are plain demonstrations that he was the Messiah foretold by the prophets.[4]

Apollos.—The question then turns upon, whether it was prophesied that he should rise from the dead, ascend on high, and there live to reign as king forever and ever?[5]

Aquila.—It certainly does; and we are taught, that he was to rise from the dead, by all those prophecies which speak of the glory, extent, and eternity of his kingdom,—for the language is such as cannot be explained on any other principle.[6] Thus says the Lord by the prophet Samuel, 'I will establish his throne forever;' and you remember how Solomon claimed the fulfilment of this promise, on the dedication of the temple, 'Therefore,' said he, 'Lord God of Israel, keep with David my father, that thou promisedst him, saying, there shall not fail thee a man in my sight, to sit on the throne of Israel,' &c. The psalmist of Israel sings of him thus: 'His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven;' 'once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David; his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.' And again, 'The Lord hath sworn in truth to David; he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body, will I sit upon thy throne;' 'for the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for an habitation,—this is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.' The prophets also foretel, that he must suffer many things, be put to death, and then arrive at his kingdom and glory; it will therefore, necessarily follow, that he rise from the dead, in order to occupy that kingdom.[7]

Apollos.—But was not this expressly foretold?

Aquila.—O yes! it certainly was. Thus says David, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.'

[1] Benson and Clarke. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid.
[7] Clarke, Henry, Scott and Watson.

Apollos.—But the Jews do not admit this to be a prophecy of the resurrection.

Aquila.—But St. Peter and St. Paul both, against the Jews, have proved that this was not fulfilled in the person of David, according to the genuine and proper signification of the words, and the ultimate intention of Deity; for, says the former, 'David speaketh concerning him; I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved; therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.' 'Men and brethren,' continues that apostle, 'let me speak freely unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore he being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to set on his throne; he seeing this beforehand, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses.' 'But David,' says St. Paul, 'after that he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.'

Apollos.—It follows then, that this prediction must be applied to the resurrection of one that was dead, and who rose again before his flesh saw corruption; which was fulfilled in our Jesus, the true Messiah, whom God raised from the dead, even on the third day, before his flesh had seen corruption.

Aquila.—Next to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, followed his ascension into heaven, and his setting down at the right hand of God the Father. The ascension is plainly foretold thus: 'Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men;' which prophecy is certainly applied by the apostle Paul, to the ascension of Christ, in quoting this very text from the Old Testament; and he says, 'Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended, first into the lower parts of the earth; he that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.' And David, prophesying of this glory, says, 'the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I shall make thine enemies thy footstool; which words, as we have already evinced, relate to the Messiah and his heavenly dominion. They are truly a manifest prediction of his ascension into heaven; for he could not have set down at the right hand of God, nor have obtained the sovereignty over all things, had he not first ascended into heaven, and have been as he is, placed on the throne of God, to administer the government of the universe.[1]

Apollos.—I see now how and why it is, that St. Peter argues, 'For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand.' This is certainly equivalent to saying, that unless Christ had ascended, he could not have set down at the right hand of God.

Aquila.—It is so; and I would now say, my friend Apollos—in the last place, that the prophets of old foretold the enlargement and prosperity of his kingdom. If you will take the pains to search, 'you will find that all nations were to be called by the Messiah, to the service of the one true and living God, whom the Israelites adored and worshipped.[2]

Apollos.—The Jews themselves admit this; but they do not allow that the Gentiles were to be admitted into communion with them, on equal terms.[3]

Aquila.—O no! they suppose that they would be allowed the privilege of worshipping the true God as their servants, like the Gibeonites of old, and on the condition of submitting to all the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses.[4]

[1] Scott and Clarke. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch and Stackhouse. [4] Ibid.

Upon the close examination of the prophecies, we shall find that there is no distinction of people made—all were to be admitted with equal privileges; not only so, but that the Gentiles who believed, were to be taken in the place of the unbelieving Jews, and to be preferred before them. For the establishment of this fact, we can affirm, that there are numerous prophecies, and all the old prophets appear to have looked forward with delight to the days of the Messiah, when the time, the appointed time, my friend—should arrive, for the calling of all nations to share in the purchased possession of our Lord Jesus Christ.[1]

Apollos.—Do give me some of those prophecies. I am sure, if it will not detain you too long, it will be to me a source of improvement.

Aquila.—There are so many of them, that we have not time to give of them an exposition; at least only a few words, and then proceed to another point which we have yet to consider. Let us then begin with that evangelical prophet—I mean Isaiah; he says, using one or two of the most beautiful figures, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it; and many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'

Apollos.—Dear brother—how explicit is this prophecy, of the commencement and the spreading of the gospel of Christ.

Aquila.—It is, my friend,—I will give you another from the same prophet: 'And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea; and he shall set up an ensign for all nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.' 'For,' says he in another place, of the conversion of Egypt, 'they shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.' And here is another from the same prophet, who represents the Lord as saying to Messiah, 'I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation, unto the end of the earth.'

Priscilla.—O! indeed, this is far more explicit than the others, in regard to the spreading glory of Messiah's kingdom.

Aquila.—These are not the half of what is said about its advancement. The same prophet says, 'the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.' And such were to be the signal displays of his grace, that the same prophet represents him as saying, 'I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not. I said, behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name;' and even among the Gentiles, was he to find those who should minister in his truth; 'for,' says he, 'I will take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord.'

Apollos.—Is it not surprising, that I have read these texts over so often, and never observed how plainly they foretell the calling of all nations to embrace the truth.

Aquila.—The prophet Micah speaks to the same effect, 'But in the last days, it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord, shall be estab-

[1] Clarke, Scott, Henry and Watson.

lished in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he shall teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'

Apollos.—Almost the same words of the prophet Isaiah.

Aquila.—Yes; and to the same effect. Thus also says Hosea, 'And it shall come to pass, in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah, and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land,' &c. And the prophet Amos says, 'In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord, that doth this.' Zachariah says, 'Many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day, and shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee.' 'Be silent, therefore, O all flesh, before the Lord; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.' Last of all, my dear friend—the prophet Malachi crowns the whole, by saying, 'For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.'

Apollos.—Truly, my friend—I am ashamed of myself. How often have I read these precious declarations in the divine word, and have never until now, known that they do directly apply to the prosperity of our Redeemer's kingdom.

Aquila.—Let me tell you, there are many others. I said I would quote but a few; certainly they prove that all nations were to be called, both Jew and Gentile, into one communion, being alike adopted by faith into the family of the true and living God. And moreover, you will mark, my brother—that whatever the prophets foretold of this matter, was assuredly fulfilled by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; for upon his resurrection, he sent forth his apostles, and gave them commandment to preach the gospel unto all nations. Hear the command, 'Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' And again, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations.' The whole world was comprehended in this commission for preaching the gospel of Christ's kingdom.

Apollos.—The apostles themselves did not at first apprehend this, and therefore were opposed to it.

Aquila.—But you may see how correct the exposition, or rather application of the prophecies that I have made, is, by noticing the manner in which our Lord in a vision, reproved the contracted notions of Peter, and showed him that the Gentiles were not to be esteemed common, or unclean; and Peter himself was constrained to say, 'Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, the same is accepted with him.'

Apollos.—O, it is very plain! that his apostles were sent to preach salvation to all nations.

Aquila.—And they faithfully discharged this duty, as appears from several parts of Sacred Writ. 'Yea, verily,' says St. Paul, 'their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.' This same apostle speaks of the gospel as being 'preached to every creature,' and that it was his duty to do so, for that in this respect, there was 'neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor

uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free.' Indeed, my friend—the thing proves itself, for the gospel is spreading to every part of the earth; and in places where the name of the true God was never before known, it is now heard, and he is worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Apollos.—It was never meant then, that all these things had their entire completion as soon as the gospel began to be preached, but it was propagated and spread among the Gentiles by degrees.

Aquila—This was the case. The reformation of thousands of Jews, began under the preaching of the apostles themselves, who were sent more immediately and especially to them. This reformation would have advanced, but it was impeded and stopped in its progress by the incredulity and obstinacy of the Jews themselves, and for centuries seem to lose its effects on them. But it shall be renewed again, and doubtless have its full completion, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in; so that, as an apostle says, 'all Israel,' together with the Gentiles, may be saved through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—How striking is the fact, that the law of Moses could not, for sixteen hundred of years together, propagate the worship of the true God, and the knowledge of him, among the nations of the earth. It was confined within the narrow bounds of Judea, and could hardly keep that worship, with all its threatenings, alive there. But the preaching of Jesus, within a few years, filled all the known world.[1]

Aquila.—It did so; and that name was almighty for the overthrow of idolatry and Pagan superstition. Temples dedicated to an idolatrous, a profane, and often a lewd worship, were depopulated,—and all men began to feel the obligations to worship the true God. Is not that a very strong argument in favour of the divinity of Christ's holy and blessed doctrine?[2]

Apollos.—I assure you it is; and indeed the prophecies, like miracles, all carry with them arguments in favour of the truth and worship of that God, who is a spirit, that infidelity itself cannot gainsay.

Aquila.—I am truly happy, that you come to such a rational conclusion. God grant that as we increase in knowledge, we may improve in piety. May he bless and save us in his kingdom evermore. Amen.

COLLOQUY XVI.

SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE MESSIAHSHIP OF JESUS, CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED.

Apollos.—Thus far, my brother—we have progressed; and I am sure I feel the force of the arguments advanced, and am constrained by them to come to similar conclusions with yourself, in regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the true and promised Messiah, and that plan which infinite wisdom has devised, of saving man through him. I am myself prepared to enter upon another subject, and would suggest that you now commence it; but that I desire particularly to have a few objections answered: objections, my friend—which are brought by infidels from among both Jews and Gentiles, against the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus.

Aquila—I have always manifested a willingness to consider your objections, whether I have been able to answer them or not. I have repeatedly said, present them, and we will at least try, to answer them. Candour and frankness, are qualities that please me;—I would have you convinced, but not without argument; and I would have you apply your mind, until you understand a subject in all its bearings.

[1] Scott, Henry and Limborch. [2] Ibid.

Apollos.—I know this. I frankly acknowledge, I am not only convinced, but have often felt the power of those truths you have advanced, on my own heart. And I observed, there are objections offered by others, against the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, and I want a refutation of their arguments, and an answer to their objections. Therefore I have named them, and wish you to consider them, before you advance to the consideration of another subject. Would it not be best to do so now?

Aquila.—Most certainly it would, my friend—and I hope you will present them, that we may honestly investigate and weigh each.

Apollos.—The first that has been adduced, is not only against the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, but indeed against the truth altogether of christianity, and of the christian religion. Infidels, among both Jews and Gentiles, have offered this objection. It is said, that we do not as yet see that profound peace, predicted by Isaiah and others, which was to happen in the times of the Messiah; but on the contrary, among christians both in church and state, are enmities, intestine quarrels, and divisions. Indeed, it is objected that Christ himself said, that 'he came not to send peace, but a sword,' upon the earth; and there are scisms, and even bloody wars kept up among christians. How can this, it is asked, be consistent with that peaceful state, which it was predicted, should characterize the days of the Messiah?[1]

Aquila.—This objection is made up of several parts—to each one of which, it will be necessary to give a definite answer. You must remember, as it regards the prophecies which relate to the peaceful state of the church, during the times of the Messiah, that they predict rather the genius of the doctrines of the gospel, than the effects of it on particular individuals. I mean that it should inspire men generally with gentleness, and meekness of mind, whilst many an obstinate unbeliever, would still retain and exercise a contrary spirit.[2] Now, that this was the genius of the christian religion, is manifest from the bare inspection of its precepts, which breathe forth nothing but peace, and universal charity toward all, even our greatest enemies.[3]

Apollos.—This is admitted; and yet the Saviour says, 'I am not come to send peace, but a sword.'

Aquila.—This certainly does not denote the end, or design, but as already argued, the effect and event of his doctrines, which by the wickedness of men, should happen contrary to the genius thereof. It can hardly be imagined that Jesus, who is styled 'prince of peace,' who came into the world on purpose to reconcile men with God, and then with one another, would publish such a doctrine as would designedly put men at variance, though by its purity, it might raise many opposers, both to it, and the sincere professors of that religion which the Lord Jesus taught.[4]

Apollos.—All this then, is no more than an accidental effect.

Aquila.—It is just so; and this is occasioned by the malice of the devil, and the vicious inclinations of wicked men, whose hearts are set to oppose the truth. How easy is it for us to prove this, by comparing a Jew with a christian.[5] Take St. Stephen praying for his very enemies, who clamoured for his blood. Look at the difference in the feelings and conduct of Saul of Tarsus, before and after his conversion from Judaism to christianity. While a Jew, he was not only consenting to the death of an innocent man, but travelling about, to bring bound to Jerusalem, any, though women and children, who might be found calling on the name of Jesus. Yes—and the ministers of the Jewish religion authorized it; but the moment he is converted to God, and obtains the pardon of sin, and becomes a christian, 'in deed and in truth,' he is ready, without murmuring,

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke and Watson. [3] Stackhouse, Clarke and Scott. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

much less resistance, to endure the same, and much sorer afflictions. Here is the genius of christianity. This is the christian religion,—and because of its sanctity, it meets with resistance, and thereby is excited the angry feelings of the human heart. This is a mere accidental effect, manifest when christianity comes in contact with sin and the devil.

Apollos.—Well, what of the divisions and scisms, said to be in the christian church, and the wars carried on among christians.

Aquila—To this, a very short answer only is necessary. Wars are waged by those who are not the genuine disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ; they are contrary to the genius of the gospel; they have seldom, if ever, been absolutely necessary; they are generally carried on with a design to promote human grandeur and human glory; and I believe, Apollos—if every heart was under the influence of the blessed gospel of Jesus, there would be no offensive war, and consequently no necessity for that which is called defensive. 'The lion and the lamb' would 'lie down together;' peace and unanimity would fill the world, and love predominate in every heart. War then is not waged, nor carried on by christians only as they are nominally so; and so likewise as to scisms and divisions which have been, or still may be, in the christian church.[1]

Apollos.—Do you think these too, savour of human nature, and sin?

Aquila.—They are often mere diversities of opinions, without any breach of affection,—that is, a division in sentiment, not affection.[2] These do not certainly display christianity in an injurious light; but scisms, and rending the church into parties, are introduced by false, not real christians; and although these may be a cause of stumbling to the Jews, yet are they not to be attributed to the doctrine of our divine master, which inspires into every christian's heart a disposition to unity and concord, to love and to peace. Scism then, and all its consequences, belong to professed, not real christians; and that system, devised and inculcated by the author of christianity, will ever bind together, rather than sever the affections of his disciples.[3] 'By this,' said Jesus, 'shall all men know,' both Jews and Gentiles, 'that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another.'

Apollos.—This doubtless is a correct view of the matter; but it is said, that 'Messiah was to bring back the children of Israel to the promised land,' in that same chapter to which we alluded, the 11th of Isaiah, which is so far from being done by the Lord Jesus, that a little after his appearance, the very tribe of Judah which had returned from captivity, were cut off together, their temple destroyed, all of them carried away captive, and ever since miserably dispersed over the face of the whole earth.[4]

Aquila.—If you will closely observe the texts quoted bv the Jews, and by others too, as prophetic of the restoration of the Jews to the promised land, you will find that most of them refer to their restoration from the Babylonish captivity.[5] But suppose that they did refer to the times of the Messiah, they may be understood conditionally; i. e. if they receive the Messiah sent by the Almighty for the recovery of the world; and with this view, it is possible that the promise may be fulfilled, when the Jews and when Israel shall perform the conditions thereof.[6]

Apollos.—Brother—I did not think of this. Let the Jews accept Jesus, and then see what he, as the true Messiah, will do for them.

Aquila.—Moreover, my friend, these promises are not to be understood literally, of their being brought into the land of Canaan, but into heaven itself, for in the mystical language of prophecy, Canaan was a type by which God was

[1] Limborch and Stackhouse.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Stackhouse and Limborch.
[4] Limborch.
[5] Limborch.
[6] Ibid.

pleased to shadow out to that carnal people, the Jews, spiritual and celestial blessings.[1]

Apollos.—But again, it is objected 'that in the times of Messiah, it is foretold that all idols shall be taken out of the earth, and idolatry be destroyed,' 'and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day the idols he shall utterly abolish.' But this is not fulfilled under the Lord Jesus Christ, for in many parts of the world idolatry still prevails, and the worst sort of it is practised, it is said, even in the christian church.[2]

Aquila.—But those prophecies do not intimate that as soon as the Messiah shall appear such shall be results of his appearance, and all those things foretold, as things to be accomplished under the gospel dispensation, shall immediately come to pass; but that by degrees they should be fulfilled, and a beginning thereof be made, at the very first appearance of the Messiah, and be continued until the accomplishment of this great work.[3] It is most certain, that upon the very first promulgation of the gospel idolatry began to be rooted out, and by degrees you know that it, with the false oracles, ceased more and more in several places in the world, where the gospel was embraced. Moreover, my friend,—admit all you say about idolatry still prevailing in the world, this is not certainly occasioned by any defect in the gospel. It is either because Christ has not been there revealed in power, and his gospel preached to them; or it may be that it has been proclaimed by missionaries who made a gain of godliness, and regarded their own profit more than the salvation of souls, and who, in some instances, by the wickedness of their lives, have done more injury than advantage to the christian profession.[4]

Apollos.—But what say you as to that part of the objection which refers to the idolatry practised in the christian church?

Aquila.—I have several things to offer as a reply to this part of it. First, it is certain that the prophecies foretell the destruction of heathenish idolatry, but you will remember, that sort practised by the church of Rome, although contrary to the genius of christianity, is essentially different from the idolatry of heathens;[5] but, secondly, primitive christians abhorred all idolatry of every kind, and the church of Rome, which has introduced it again, has departed from the faith and the examples of not only the apostles and primitive church, but its own ancestors. Thus does it show itself moved by the spirit of anti-christ, instead of that Spirit which teaches that God requires the adoration of the heart. Yes, and this is the reason why so many thousand christians have broken off all communion with her, and have suffered the severest punishments by torturing, rather than be the partakers of these her abominations; and I hope the day will never come when there shall not be tens of thousands, who shall in heart, in precept, and in example, most sincerely *protest* against her idolatries.

Apollos.—To this prayer I do most sincerely, my friend, respond a hearty Amen.

Aquila.—There is one thing more that you must notice. The apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ did foretell that there would be this falling away, or apostacy in the church, and so far from its being an evidence against the Messiahship of Jesus, it is positive proof for it.

Apollos.—How so my brother?

Aquila.—'Let no man deceive you,' says St. Paul to the Thessalonians, 'for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was

[1] Limborch and Scott. [2] Limborch and Calvin. [3] Ibid. [4] Limborch. [5] Ibid.

yet with you, I told you these things. And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.' Here, my friend, is one of the prophecies of the New Testament, about that man of sin, the pope of Rome.

Apollos.—My dear brother, do tell me where is that text, truly it describes that very people in almost every particular.

Aquila.—You may find it in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and second chapter, and if you will take a reference Bible and consult it, you will also find other texts referred to there, that are equally in point. This apostacy from the faith was then foretold. I therefore argue that, as the destruction of heathenish idolatry was a sign to the Jews of the true Messiah, so this defection from the christian faith and religion, foretold by Christ and his apostles, ought to be a sign to them that our Lord Jesus Christ is the true Messiah.[1]

Apollos.—This is, really and truly, turning the arguments of Jews and infidels to the advantage of christianity, and indeed conquering a foe with his own weapons. But again, the Jews object that Jesus abolished the law of Moses, which they say was an eternal law, and given by God to last forever, therefore he could not be the true Messiah.[2]

Aquila.—It is plain, my friend, from all the predictions concerning the coming of the Messiah, that he was to be a legislator like unto Moses, and that he was to introduce into the world a more perfect law than that proclaimed by him. This we have already amply proved: however, it does not from thence follow, that he abolished the Mosaical law altogether by his coming, so far from this, he says of himself, 'I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them.' And although the objection that he came to destroy the law might apply, as it regards the ceremonial law, for the bringing in of a better covenant and a more spiritual worship, that consisting chiefly in types, it certainly cannot apply as to the moral law.[3] Our Lord was so far from abrogating it, that by his particular explication of its several precepts, he rescued it from the false glosses of the scribes and pharisees, and in this respect, he sanctified and made it honourable, claiming for it a strict obedience as an evidence of a living and evangelical faith.[4] And even in regard to the ceremonial law, as already insinuated, though by his coming the type was to vanish away on the appearance of the antitype. Yet it is certain that he observed those ceremonies himself, and commanded his Jewish disciples also to observe them. Thus it is written, 'Then spake Jesus unto the multitude, and to his *disciples*, saying, the scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not.'

Apollos.—But certainly St. Paul was utterly against the law of ceremonies, and did vehemently argue for christian liberty.

Aquila.—This I admit, but do you inquire into this matter, and you will, I think, see that all he contended for was, that the Gentiles were not obliged to the observance of it, though he, and other converted Jews, were punctual in observing its ceremonies.

Apollos.—The Jews offer one more notable objection, infidels have embraced and also offered it, and many christians are not able to answer it.

[1] Watson and Limborch.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Benson, Watson, and Limborch.
[4] Wesley and Fletcher.

Aquila.—What is this Apollos?

Apollos.—That Elias was to precede the coming of the Messiah. 'Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.' Now, say they, Elias has not yet come.[1]

Aquila.—By Elias mentioned as coming, or as the precurser of the Messiah, we are not to understand Elias, i. e. Elijah, himself, but one like unto him. And in this sense we say that Elias has already come. It was John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, who came in the spirit and power of Elias. This was he, according to the remarks of our Lord himself: 'For this is he,' said the Redeemer, 'of whom it is written, behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.' By his austerity of life and manners, by his great zeal, and astonishing boldness of speech, he justly, and indeed I may say exactly represented that powerful prophet Elias, both in person and in spirit, and in power too, as though he had himself reappeared among men, and this our Lord fully explains to his inquisitive and doubting disciples.[2] 'And as they departed,' viz. Johns' disciples, who had come to inquire whether or no Jesus was the Messiah, 'Our Lord said unto the multitudes concerning John, what went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind? but what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft clothing are in king's houses. But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee, verily among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist,' 'and if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come.' And again of John he says to his disciples, on another occasion, 'I say unto you Elias has come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed.' 'Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.' From what has been said it is evident, my friend, that Elijah, Elias as he is called, has already come, but the Jews would not receive him, any more than they would the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, who was promised by the Almighty, through the prophets, as 'a light to lighten the Gentiles and his people Israel.' Indeed, my brother, this subject, the Messiahship of our Lord Jesus, is one that may be turned most advantageously against the cause and objections of infidelity, whether originating among Jews or Gentiles.[3]

Apollos.—How so?

Aquila.—In that memorable prediction, recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, among other things which the Lord Jesus our great prophet foretold, was that 'false Christs,' i. e. Messiahs, 'should arise,' and 'many shall come,' says he, in my name, and shall deceive many.' Now, my friend, it is a remarkable fact, that in the fulfilment of this prophecy, from the first to the seventeenth century, no less than twenty-four false Christs, or Messiahs, have risen up, and at times have been the cause of almost the total destruction of the Jews. From Caziba, the first of any note, in the days of Adrian, to one Rabbi Mordecai a Jew, in Germany, in 1682, by sundry impostors have the Jews been deceived and almost ruined.[4] They acknowledge themselves, that in the short war with the Romans, occasioned by the impostor Caziba, in the defence of whom as their Messiah they engaged, there were sacrificed, on their side alone, at least six hundred thousand lives.[5] In Judea, in Crete, in Arabia Felix, in Spain, in France, in Persia, in the kingdom of Fez, in Moravia, in Austria, in the East Indies, and the lower countries of Germany, have risen up, at sundry times, those who have always succeeded, in a greater or less degree, in deceiving the Jews. Some of the heaviest fines that have ever been imposed on any people have been

[1] Limborch. [2] Limborch and Watson. [3] Ibid. [4] Watson. [5] Ibid.

imposed on them, by those monarchs whose governments have been insulted and disregarded by Jews, who followed their false Messiahs, whilst the imposters themselves have, in most instances, been brought to an unnatural death, under many aggravating circumstances, as the penalty of their crime.[1]

Apollos.—Of an individual it may be said, what is man when given up of God? and so also may it be said of an ungodly people. When God gives them up, who can deliver?

Priscilla.—O! I have been thinking, during all your remarks on this subject, of what the Jewish rulers and priests said, when they clamoured for the death of Messiah, 'His blood be upon us and our children.'

Aquila.—And blindness hath happened to Israel unto this hour. God grant that they may return, and find mercy by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Apollos.—O! that the Lord of precious souls, that knows to prize so dear what he has purchased by such an enormous price, would breathe upon those dry bones, and cause them to live.

Aquila.—In dependence on his assistance, my brother, it is our duty to teach, and leave the event with him, that only can restore and heal. We have advanced, I presume, to the termination of our third subject, namely, redemption. At our next meeting we commence another. Let us proceed cautiously, and ever keep our minds fixed on revelation, and our hearts lifted to God in holy prayer.

Apollos.—This work of redemption is a most delightful one for christian contemplation. As I think it over by night on my bed, my heart is inspired to love and serve God more faithfully. I seem to hear the Redeemer say, 'Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and spirit, which are his.' I will, yes—I think I will be his—and his alone. Oh that my heart may feel, and all my life proclaim, that I to him belong!

Aquila.—Let us never forget that we were captives, 'sold under sin,' slaves to earth and lusts, and hell, but being bought by the Lord Jesus, are now become the adopted children of our living God, our holy and our heavenly Father.

Priscilla.—And 'if sons, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Aquila.—Let us thank God that we have advanced harmoniously thus far, and devoutly pray that he may aid us in the continuance of our labours.

[1] Watson.

PREDESTINATION.

COLLOQUY I.

THE TRUE NATURE, FOUNDATION AND OBJECTS OF THE DIVINE PREDESTINATION, AS SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.—SOME GENERAL OBJECTIONS AGAINST ITS BEING CONDITIONAL, CONSIDERED AND ANSWERED.

Aquila.—I informed you, my brother Apollos—at our last interview, that on this evening, we would, according to our arrangement, commence the consideration of a new subject. We have been for some time, engaged in the investigation of the greatest work that ever was accomplished: I mean the redemption of man, and that plan, according to which, our salvation was purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important for us to understand how God makes men the partakers of this salvation. An examination of this, will lead us occasionally into the nature of the new covenant; but, as we shall not notice its precepts, promises or threatenings particularly, we shall consider, as heretofore said, that as a distinct subject, we may only notice it now, so far as to introduce one intimately connected with it. It certainly behooves us to inquire, on what terms God admits men to the participation of eternal life and joy.

Apollos.—This is indeed, a matter of great importance.

Aquila.—It most assuredly is; and in turning the attention to it, we are naturally led to ask two questions,—the first regards the Deity, and the second ourselves.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—The first, is this: What has God on his part, decreed to do by his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to make us the partakers of eternal salvation? And the second, which regards us, is simply this: What would he have us to do, by the assistance of his grace, if we would actually attain to this salvation?

Apollos.—I see at once, that this plan must necessarily involve a great deal.

Aquila.—It really does; and the farther we proceed, the more important we shall find it to be, that we lay a sure, and a good foundation.[1]

Apollos.—Tell me then, what it is, that God has on his part decreed to do, by Jesus Christ, in order to our eternal salvation.

Aquila.—In this question are involved two things, or, as they have been called, decrees—by which I understand purposes or intentions; and by these, would he stir us up to worship him, and sincerely strive for eternal life.[2] The first is a decree or purpose of predestination to salvation, commonly called an election to glory, which contains the method whereby God has determined to bestow eternal life upon men. The other is a decree of vocation to faith, as it is named by some, or of election to grace; which contains the manner of the divine calling, and of his heavenly grace, for the due performance of faith in, and obedience to Christ Jesus, according to the will of God, clearly revealed to us in the gospel.[3]

Apollos.—Your subject then, will be the true nature of divine predestination, and the gospel call, or vocation of man to salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Wesley. [2] Schmucker. [3] Limborch.

Priscilla.—What is the meaning of the word predestination?

Aquila.—It means, in its common acceptation, to appoint or purpose beforehand. It is however, not our intention at present, to consider the meaning of the term, or to insist on the sense of it as used in several places in the holy Scriptures, as we shall have occasion to consider it at large hereafter, and shall then have an opportunity to discuss it thoroughly.

Apollos.—The fathers considered it only as an appointment to salvation,—did they not?

Aquila.—We shall not confine ourselves to the notions either, of the fathers, concerning it. They looked upon it only, as you say, a predestination to salvation. A variety of definitions have been given of it,—according to some, it is a judgment or decree of God, whereby he has resolved from all eternity, to save a certain number of persons, called the *elect*. Others have defined it a decree to give faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to a certain number of men, and to leave the rest in their hardness and obduracy of heart. And others, surely more Scripturally, represent it as God's eternal purpose to save all that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.[1]

Apollos.—This looks a little more congenial with your views; but tell me, what is your opinion of divine predestination?

Aquila.—The most consistent and scriptural exposition of it, that I have seen, I think, is to this effect:—The predestination of God, is that decree or purpose, whereby, before all worlds, he determined that they who believe in his Son Jesus Christ, should be elected, adopted as sons, justified, and upon their perseverance in faith, should be glorified; and on the contrary, that the unbelieving and obstinate, should be reprobated, blinded, hardened; and if they continued impenitent, should be damned forever.[2]

Apollos.—From this, it would seem that the decree of predestination, relates both to those who shall be saved, and those who shall be damned.

Aquila.—The one, has been called the decree of election,—and the other, the decree of reprobation.[3]

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend—do all the religious denominations agree in this exposition of predestination, as given by you above.

Aquila.—They do not. There is a great variety of opinions respecting it. Indeed, predestinarians, as I have already shown, are not agreed in their expositions. Some, I have said, apply it only to an appointment to eternal life; others found it in the faith and unbelief of men, as foreseen and known of God, and others to a determination on the part of God, to appoint to endless life or misery, without regard to the faith or unbelief of men.[4] Thus says Calvin, 'All men are not created for the same end; but some are foreordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation. So, according as every man was created for one end or the other, we say,' says Calvin, 'he was elected, that is predestinated, to life—or reprobated, that is predestinated, to damnation.'[5] The French protestant church, makes this predestination consist in God's determination to save, without regard to works, out of the corrupt mass of mankind, those whom he has elected by his own goodness and mercy.[6] The Dutch divines agree in the same;[7] and the assembly of Scotch and English divines say, not only as much, but that 'by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.'[8] You will observe, that while there is a variety of expression, the sentiments of

[1] Watson.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Calvin so calls them.
[4] Watson.
[5] Calvin's Inst.
[6] French Protestant Confession of Faith. Paris, 1559, Art. 12.
[7] Art. 6, Synod Dort, 1618.
[8] Assembly's Confession of Faith, 1646.

divines, who may be classed as Calvinistic, on this subject, may be mostly referred to the opinion of Calvin, as here expressed; for although the reprobates are left out, as we shall show, still it must inevitably come to the same thing. Indeed, the Romanists themselves are partly Calvinistic, and partly otherwise. There was a long contest between the Jansenists of France, and the Jesuits, on this subject,—the former holding the doctrine of absolute and unconditional predestination, and the latter opposing them. An appeal was made to the pope, two or three bulls were issued by pope Urban VIII. Alexander VII. and Clement XI. against them; and it is remarkable, notwithstanding their notions of certain salvation for the elect, they practised a discipline the most severe—their repentance consisting in the voluntary infliction of corporal punishments and sufferings. They were finally suppressed in France, by the famous bull of the above mentioned Clement—which, on account of its commencing with 'Unigenitus Dei Filius,' has been called 'Unigenitus,' a decree that has occasioned so much confusion in that country.[1]

Apollos.—I recollect, Doctor Haweis speaks of Jansenius and his followers, and commends them highly.

Aquila.—He does doubtless, not for their piety only, but because, on this doctrine, their opinions were so much in accordance with his own; so that, notwithstanding the notions entertained on the doctrine and practice of penance, which obtained for them the denomination of Rigorists, the doctor, on account of that accordance between him and them on the Augustine doctrine, commends and claims as his brethren, not only Jansenius, but Paschal and Quesnel, his disciples.[2]

Apollos.—You think then, that God's decrees, in regard to man's eternal state, are founded in the prescience of his faith or unbelief.

Aquila.—You remember what we said on a former occasion, respecting the divine decrees; let me now add, that the church, in the first ages of christianity, thought but little of this doctrine. If you will search, you will find that the apostolic fathers, men little accustomed to the intricacy of metaphysical disquisition, deeply impressed with the truth of the gospel, powerfully influenced by its spirit, and from their particular situation, naturally dwelling much upon it, as a system of direction and consolation, do not in their writings, at all advert to the origin of evil, or to predestination, so closely allied to it.[3] They press with much earnestness upon those in whom they were interested, the vast importance of practical holiness,—they exhibited the motives which appeared calculated to secure this end; and in so doing, represent in lively colours, the blessedness which awaits good men, and the condemnation reserved for the wicked; but they do not once attempt to determine whether the sin they were solicitous to remove, could be accounted for, in consistency with the essential holiness, and unbounded mercy of God.[4] They took that view of it which every man takes, when he is not seeking to enter into a philosophical disquisition—never for one moment doubting that whatever is wrong, was ultimately to be referred to man, and that the economy of grace, proceeding from the Deity, was the most convincing proof of his tenderness for mankind.[5]

Priscilla.—And well, I think, had it been for the world, if christians had followed this holy and profitable example.

Aquila.—But they did not; for when the church received into her bosom, and into its communion, those who had been educated in the schools of philosophy, and to whom the question as to the origin of evil, must, while they frequented these schools, have been familiar, it is not to be supposed that, although they were convinced that men should be chiefly solicitous about the formation of

[1] Buck. [2] Haweis' Eccl. Hist. 3 v. fol. 46. [3] Watson. [4] Ibid [5] Ibid.

christian character, there would be no allusion to what had formerly interested them, or that they would refrain from delivering their sentiments upon it.[1]

Apollos.—But after this they did, and wrote upon it too,—did they not?

Aquila.—They did; yet none of them inquired into, and investigated those questions which must arise previous to a proper understanding of this subject. One or two of them only touched upon the origin of evil; and they, it is evident, did not allow any predestination, in the sense in which the term is now used.[2]

Apollos.—How do you ascertain this, my friend?

Aquila.—I will give you some of their own words on this very subject. Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho, remarks: 'They who were foreknown, as to become wicked, whether angels or men, did not so from any fault of God, but from their own blame.' This is certainly positive as to the matter; and again, he says, 'God created angels and men, free, to the practice of righteousness, having planted in them, reason, through which they knew by whom they were created, and through whom they existed, when before they were not, and who prescribed to them a law by which they were to be judged, if they acted contrary to right reason.' 'Wherefore,' says he, 'we, angels and men, are through ourselves convicted as being wicked, if we do not lay hold on repentance. But if the Logos of God foretels that some angels and men would go to be punished, he does so because he foreknew that they would certainly become wicked,—by no means however, because God made them such.'[3] Here also, my friend—while there is the admission of positive dependance on God, there is also the affirmation that both men and angels were able to retain their integrity, and fell and became accursed by their own voluntary act. Others admitted and taught the same, and it will be gathered from their writings, that prescience was no difficulty in the way of the free and unconstrained exercise of the human will. Having placed before you an outline of the view entertained by the church, in the first ages, on this matter, let us proceed to the discussion of our subject, according to that *definition* we have given of it. And we request you to bear in mind, that we believe in a decree, intention, purpose, or predestination of the Almighty, in direct connection with a prescience of the voluntary actions of men and angels, as moral or immoral, virtuous or unholy. But in this discussion, we are not to follow the schoolmen, who delighted more in losing themselves in inextricable difficulties and endless distinctions, than in opening the sources of knowledge, and removing the obstacles with which these were surrounded. Let us cleave to the word of the Almighty, and in the exercise of reason, aided by the light of God's holy and blessed Spirit, let us march up to this subject, consider it in all its bearings, and see if we cannot come to a rational conclusion on every point, in which there is involved a seeming difficulty. I moreover request, that you will bear in mind, all we have heretofore said of the divine purity, goodness and justice—all that we have proved of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and with the holiness, goodness, love, justice and mercy of God, and the truth of the Sacred Writings, before our eyes, let us approach this examination, and see whether this predestination, purpose, intention, or decree, all synonymous terms, before all worlds, having for its object the future and eternal happiness or woe of men and angels, is founded on the prescience of their obedience to the will of the Almighty, and their voluntary, avoidable rebellion against a prescribed law, or not.

Apollos.—You say, a decree before all worlds, my friend?

Aquila.—Yes—in that explication which we propose of the definition already given of divine predestination, the very first thing that demands our attention is,

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid.

[3] Watson, who has some admirable remarks on the nature and history of 'predestination,' to which the reader is respectfully referred.

that it was made and done before the commencement of all worlds; and according to this our Lord represents himself as saying to the redeemed and saved, in the day of judgment, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world;' namely, by virtue of that decree whereby he had determined to bestow salvation upon the obedient believer. And permit me to add a decree, to which is annexed the design of bringing all the faithful in time to eternal salvation. Therefore, all who believe in time, that is during the continuance of this world, by virtue of this decree, may be said to be predestinated to salvation before the foundation of the world: and the ground of this decree is Jesus Christ, because God, in his predestination, looks upon men either as believers or unbelievers in our Lord Jesus Christ, so that as no spiritual blessing is conferred on any here, but for his sake, and none is condemned in the day of judgment but the impenitent infidel; thus likewise, salvation or damnation is destined or predestinated for no man, but as he is a believer or an unbeliever in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men.[1]

Apollos.—What, my brother, then are the objects of this predestination?

Aquila.—They are either things or persons.

Apollos.—Well, take things first, and then persons.

Aquila.—Well, with regard to things, its objects as connected with election, are spiritual blessings in this life, such as pardon, adoption, or a change of heart, justification, sanctification, or a qualification for another world, and in that world eternal life. If we view its objects as connected with reprobation, they are divine or judicial punishments in this life, such as blindness, hardness of heart, &c. and at last eternal death, or banishment from God.[2]

Apollos.—Well now, what are the objects of predestination as it regards persons.

Aquila.—The election of persons, as the objects of predestination, is only as they are believers in our Lord Jesus, and persevere therein: as it regards reprobation, they are unbelievers, and these alone.[3] Now that I am correct in saying its foundation is the Lord Jesus, I will give you a text or two, which will set this matter at rest. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' says St. Paul, 'who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.'

Apollos.—Indeed this text sets forth the very plan you have just now asserted, as the one implied in God's predestination.

Aquila.—That I am correct as to its objects with respect to things and persons, you will hear what the Lord Jesus himself says. 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned;' and again, 'for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life;' hence says Christ, 'he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.'

Apollos.—This is certainly the word of the Lord, but pray tell me, what was the cause, the great moving cause, of this act of Deity?

Aquila.—That is what I now approach. The impulsive or moving cause of

[1] Whitby and Fletcher. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

this election of believers in Christ, as the foundation, was in God and him alone, being according to his 'good pleasure,' which will appear from several particulars.[1] The first is, that although God was not a debtor to man, he decreed salvation to him, out of his mere love and abundant goodness. Again, that he decreed to bestow it on sinners, who had deserved the contrary, which certainly was a voluntary and a gratuitous act, a deed of grace and grace alone. Hence St. Paul, in allusion to this very fact, in his letter to his dearly beloved Timothy, speaks of God thus, 'who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.'

Priscilla.—O the riches and the abundance of that grace. It was all of grace.

Apollos.—Yes—'by grace are ye saved.'

Aquila.—But through faith also, for it is added, 'through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' And this, my brother, is another very important thing to be considered in it, as a purpose of God, that he thirdly suspended it on faith, or rather appointed faith as the means of attaining this salvation; it might have been otherwise, for by his absolute will and pleasure he might have required works as the condition, and men might have been left in a state still miserable and desperate. But it was not so: for says St. Paul, 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' Hence says he, 'even so then at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.' Had it been by works, none could have been saved, but he predestinated it to be by faith, that the election or choice might display the grace or favour of God to undeserving man.[1]

Apollos.—Really, I am deeply impressed with this view of God's abundant grace, for I know that there was nothing in man to merit so much goodness and mercy.

Aquila.—Again, inasmuch as God made choice of such a method of salvation, as was the more suited to the low condition of the poor and humble, than those who are puffed up with their riches, wisdom, and learning. In this, how strikingly too, is manifested the divine mercy and grace. The wisdom, riches, and fame of the world being possessed by but few, if he had suspended this great salvation on like conditions, how few would have obtained it; but Jesus says, 'I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' And for this very same reason St. Paul says, 'ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, nor many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise,' &c. And the last thing to be noticed here, my friend, in regard to this economy is, that predestination, both to an election of life for the believer, and a reprobation or loss of life to the unbeliever, being on terms so easy, so just, so full of grace and goodness, must have, as its ultimate end, the glory of the almighty God.[2] St. Paul says, 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.' And it is, as is said by him in another place, and already quoted, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.' And that he permits the sinner to go on in his voluntary transgressions, yet not so as to lose sight of his own purity, the glory of his nature, and the holiness of his character, is evident from what he said, by Moses, to Pharoah: 'And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.'

[1] Whitby, Watson, Limborch, and Schmucker. [2] Ibid.

This then is the explication of that definition which we have given of predestination. Every man is allowed to explain, and as I wish you distinctly to understand what I conceive to be a scriptural predestination, I have entered thus largely into this subject, I mean an exposition of that meaning which I gave it.

Apollos.—I think I now see your whole ground, my friend, and you must permit me, as I am accustomed to do, to offer my objections, or those of others, against your theory.

Aquila.—Of course: I surely expect this.

Apollos.—I think I understand your definition, and also the exposition, and defence that you have given of it: but to that view it is objected that your predestination is one of faith, not of persons, since faith is thereby intended, or predestinated to be the condition of salvation.[1]

Aquila.—But, my friend, he who has elected faith as the condition to be performed by men, if they would attain unto eternal life, has truly elected men under that condition, and in his decree most certainly has an immediate and direct respect to persons. It will therefore follow, my brother Apollos, that these two things, the persons and their qualifications, are never to be separated, but are to be constantly joined together.[2]

Apollos.—But it is said that this, which you teach as a general decree, is no decree, but a law; and therefore some particular decree ought to precede it, with relation to saving and damning men.

Aquila.—But I have elsewhere proved, and now again say, that such a particular decree is inconsistent with this general one. For he who had before decreed, by his absolute will and pleasure, to elect such and such men to salvation, and to appoint the rest to destruction, can never be said to decree afterward, in general, that men should be saved, provided they should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or be damned if they obstinately reject him in unbelief. Moreover, a law and this general decree are not so dissonant that they may not be taken for one and the same thing. For he who appoints a reward to those who obey, and a punishment to those who disobey his laws, may very well be said to decree the reward to the one, and the punishment to the other. And this ought the more especially to be said of God, who has decreed to have his law put in execution.[3] Another and a very important answer may be given. With great propriety and reason may it be affirmed, that every one in particular who believes, was elected and predestinated to eternal life even before the foundation of the world: for since the general decree was made before the world began, and the particular application is made afterwards, when men believe, even particular men may be said, by virtue of that general decree, wherein the particular ones are included, to be predestinated before the world began.[4]

Apollos.—But then it would be offered as another objection, that according to this view, it would follow that the salvation or damnation of particular men was already fixed and established before the beginning of the world, which it appears is not consistent with every man's freedom and liberty, either of obtaining salvation by the assistance of divine grace, or of incurring the guilt of damnation, by a wilful disobedience.[5]

Aquila.—I am not sure that these two things are inconsistent, because the divine prescience not only presupposes that salvation may be obtained by faith and obedience, and men be damned for their impenitence and unbelief; but also, since salvation may be attained, it presupposes that it may be acquired by those moral exertions or efforts, placed within our reach, or be forever rejected by that same ability which God has granted. For the divine prescience not only presupposes a thing future, but even the very manner also, by or in which it shall come

[1] Calvin's Inst. [2] Whitby and Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Limborch. [5] Calvin's Inst.

to pass: so that, my friend, this decree is subordinate to the former general decree, and deduced from it, and therefore may be very consistent with it.[1]

Apollos.—I will adduce another objection, the propriety of which may be perhaps questioned, but as it is offered by others, I will present it. It is said that this doctrine of predestination, as explained by you, contains no mystery in it, but is clear and comprehensible, whereas St. Paul calls the predestination of the Scriptures an unsearchable mystery, saying, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?'[2]

Aquila.—My dear friend—the apostle here treats of calling the Gentiles to salvation, and their being grafted into the place of the unbelieving Jews; as also, that new grace, if I may so speak, to be offered to the Jews after the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, by which all Israel shall have another fair opportunity presented them, of attaining to salvation. This, my brother—is called a mystery, not with respect to the present time, wherein God has called the Gentiles to his communion, and by an apostle has revealed his decree of calling the Jews a second time; but with respect to time past, wherein God kept this decree secretly lodged, if I may so speak, in his own bosom, or rather had revealed it to no man. Then indeed, it was truly a mystery, unknown to any; and in this sense, the calling of the Gentiles, and the decree of calling again the Jews, and several other things in Scripture are called *mysteries.*[3] I will give you one or two texts, which will prove this, Apollos,—'And to make all men see,' says St. Paul, speaking of the gift of God's grace, to qualify him for preaching Christ to the Gentiles, 'what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ,—to the intent, that now unto principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus.' And the same apostle says to the Romans, 'I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits—that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' But he speaks of another mystery, 'Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;' and to the Colossians he says, 'that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love,' 'to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'

Apollos.—I am convinced you are right; several things in Scripture I see, are called mysteries, and I now recollect, St. Paul says to Timothy, of the whole system of godliness, doctrinal, experimental and practical, 'And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.'

Aquila.—It is then a wrong inference, my friend—that is made by some, who think because the decree of God concerning the call of the Gentiles, was a mystery, before its revelation, that it still is an unsearchable mystery, even after that it is revealed.[4]

Apollos.—But it is said that it is a mystery even with respect to the present time.

[1] Limborch. [2] Calvin's Inst. [3] Limborch and Whitby. [4] Limborch.

Aquila.—And if this be pretended, who will admit it, when it runs in direct opposition to the whole context; so that even in this case, they have no foundation to depend on. If you will refer to the chapter, you will find that in the commencement, there is a two-fold decree, or predestination of God, mentioned; one concerning salvation and damnation, and the other concerning the means of attaining salvation, to be communicated to, or withheld from men. I do not believe that predestination, in the former sense, is any mystery. The plan, purpose, or decree of God, is plain, it is fixed; all believers who persevere therein, shall be actually saved; and all unbelievers, dying such, and found to be such on the day of judgment, shall be damned.[1]

Apollos.—Is there any in the latter sense?

Aquila.—There certainly is; and it must be owned an incomprehensible mystery, on account of that disproportion that there appears to be in the communication of the means of salvation to men. Every where, at all times, and upon all men, God does not bestow an equal share of grace. Here is a mystery, and who can understand or solve it?[2]

Apollos.—I have never before looked at this matter. God does now, in Christ Jesus, communicate more light and grace, than he did under the Mosaic economy; I see this, but I cannot account for it—and therefore it is to me a mystery.

Aquila.—And even at this present time, he does not dispense his grace equally, with respect to the qualifications of the persons, but sometimes bestows a greater share of it on those apparently the less worthy, or rather the more unworthy, than he does on those the more worthy, or rather less unworthy, of so great favour. These things are indeed adorable mysteries, unsearchable by us; and they are such as depend on the mere good pleasure of God, who often gives much, even to the faithless, and unprofitable—but requires the more, on that principle laid down by himself—where much is given, the more will be required; and as an independent sovereign, he has the right to do it.[3]

Apollos.—I see then the reasonableness, I think, of your definition of divine predestination. It is that decree of God, whereby, before all worlds, he has determined that they who believe in his Son Jesus Christ, shall be elected, adopted as sons, justified, and upon their perseverance in faith, shall be glorified. On the contrary, the unbeliever, obstinately so, shall be reprobated, blinded, hardened, and on dying in unbelief, be forever damned. This is God's general decree, and in it, there is no mystery; all is plain, easy to be understood, and fraught with justice, goodness, and truth.

Aquila.—It is even so, my friend,—but while there is no mystery in this, we do not say there are not mysteries concerning other things; there are many in the Scriptures besides those named; yet notwithstanding this, all must, on a final hearing, give account of themselves, according to that which they have received, and be tried for all they have done, in view of all bestowed on them by that general decree, law, intention, purpose, or predestination of the Almighty, to save in heaven the believer, and damn in hell the infidel: so that none can reply against God,—all his ways are justice and truth.[4]

Apollos.—Well does the Scripture say, 'the ways of the Lord are equal.'

Aquila.—You must bear in mind, that this prospective purpose of the Almighty, is founded on a fixed, immutable principle of holiness, and the purity of his nature, and is the result of that knowledge he has of all things past, present and future, and the prescience of faith or unbelief in us—all of whom, his Spirit and truth influence, in a greater or less degree. This predestination therefore, is, as you will see, conditional, if I may use that expression—by which, I simply

[1] Schmucker and Watson. [2] Limborch. [3] Whitby, Watson and Schmucker. [4] Ibid.

mean, that it is not arbitrary, or as Calvinists generally suppose, absolute, and without reference to the foreknowledge of man's deeds, as a voluntary agent.[1]

Apollos.—I think I now understand you; but as this is a subject on which, from the days of Augustine to this day, there has been so much dispute, I shall be obliged to you, if you will examine those opinions at another time, that I may have a view of the arguments both for and against.

Aquila.—This I will try to do, with pleasure; in the mean time, you can examine the discussion of this evening, in connection with the texts quoted, for a proper understanding of the divine predestination.

COLLOQUY II.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE OPINIONS CONCERNING ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL PREDESTINATION.

Aquila.—A our last interview, I laid before you, my friend Apollos—what I believe to be the scriptural doctrine of predestination, having for its object the appointment of the believer and the unbeliever, to their appropriate rewards; but we have informed you before, that on this subject, there is a difference of opinion. This being the case, it is proper that we should, while we express our own views with frankness, examine the other side of the question, to ascertain whether or no, the opinion we have formed on this subject, be correct.

Apollos.—This is certainly the correct course; and it is the one I wish you to pursue; for I want to understand the grounds on which the opinions of others rest,—whether those notions are true or fallacious.

Aquila.—It has been maintained, that predestination is an antecedent, absolute and an inevitable decree of God, concerning the salvation or damnation of every individual man.[2] It must not however, be concealed, that there is a disagreement in the opinions of those who believe in absolute predestination, which difference may be reduced to two general heads. The one, is that of the Supralapsarians, and the other, that of the Sublapsarians. By the consideration and comparison of these two opinions, you will be able to understand the whole plan of unconditional predestination, with the comparative merits of each system, adopted by divines of the Augustine school.[3]

Apollos.—Do give me the outline of these two different opinions, if you please.

Aquila.—I will. You shall have that of the Supralapsarian, which is a term that simply means beyond the fall, or previous to the fall; and it is the opinion of those who hold and maintain, that God predestinated man, considered before his fall, nay, even before he was created. There is an order, or method, with respect to *priority* and *posteriority*, as held by them, in which they conceive, that in the decree of predestination, God proceeded and *willed* one thing after another, or rather for the sake of another.[4]

Apollos.—How is this?

Aquila.—Thus:—They tell us that God, first of all, decreed the end, and then the means conducing thereto,—that the ultimate end of God, was the manifestation of his own glory, which he decreed to demonstrate by the declaration of his attributes, especially these two: his mercy and justice,—his mercy, by electing some men to salvation; and his vindictive justice, by reprobating and destining others to everlasting torments. In order to effect this, God decreed that there should be a subject capable of misery, and accordingly decreed to create man, to endue him with freedom of will, and to prescribe him a law; and that

Schmucker, Whitby and Watson. [2] Calvin's Inst. [3] Buck, Watson, Limborch. [4] Ibid.

Deity might not fail of this end, he decreed to determine the free-will of man on one side, and to leave man to himself, so that he might be under a certain and fatal necessity of sinning; and as all men sinned in him, so should all be subject to everlasting death. Thus, man being lapsed into sin, God decreed to show his mercy to the ELECT, by appointing a mediator, and by calling them to faith and repentance, by infusing these graces into the hearts of the called, and preserving the same to their lives' end, and at last by translating them to everlasting life. And that he might show his vindictive justice with respect to the reprobate, God decreed to deny them the means of salvation; by which denial, infidelity, impenitence, and eternal destruction, must needs ensue.[1]

Apollos.—This then, is the supralapsarian notion?

Aquila.—It is. I will now give you the view taken by sublapsarian predestinarians.

Priscilla.—What is the meaning of sublapsarian?

Aquila.—It means under or after the fall, and by it is meant, that God predestinated man, considered as lapsed or fallen, and by his fall, as guilty of eternal death. These proceed in the same method as the former, but suppose the first decree to be concerning the creation of men, and the other to relate to the efficacious permission of sin.

Apollos.—Pray tell me, what is the essential difference between these two opinions?

Aquila.—There is some difference; but although there is some, in the main they agree; for both of them maintain, that man fell into sin and misery by the divine direction; both of them agree that salvation is destined only for a few, without the conditions of faith and obedience, and that by virtue of this predestination, the means of salvation are either afforded, or inevitably withheld; and, to crown all, both absolutely declare, that no sin, but the mere will and pleasure of God, is the cause of reprobation.[2]

Apollos.—To answer the arguments of one then, is virtually to answer the arguments of the other.

Aquila.—It is; and in undertaking to confute the notions of supralapsarians, we shall of course have virtually to encounter the opinions of sublapsarians; and what may be said, will therefore affect both.[3] You know, that from the commencement of our conversations, we have resisted wholly the doctrine of *absolute* predestination, with respect both to election and reprobation; we must now assign, in addition to those already at sundry times named in order, our arguments or reasons against it. But you must remember, not against a predestination, purpose, intention, or decree of God, to save the believer, and condemn the infidel or unbeliever, but against an absolute, unconditional election to eternal life, as an end, and all the means of accomplishing that end; and by parity of reason, the reprobation of others, without respect to their works; and this is openly avowed by some, to eternal death, and of course all the means of effecting it. This is called an efficacious permission of sin, by which this distinction is effected.[4]

Apollos.—I want the arguments against absolute predestination, whether as it regards election or reprobation, and I also want those especially against the decree of reprobation; indeed I wish you, my friend—to consider the arguments generally offered to vindicate and support the Augustine, or as it is now called the Calvinian system, whether supra or sublapsarian.

Aquila.—Then let us consider first, whether there is such a doctrine taught as the absolute and unconditional election of any set of men to life, or the absolute

[1] Account by Limborch,—which is pretty much the view of Calvin, in his Inst.
[2] Whitby and Limborch. [3] Ibid. and Fletcher. [4] Buck and Limborch.

and unconditional reprobation of men to eternal death and misery, in the Holy Scriptures or not. Permit me, my friend—to say that whatever opinion, advanced by men, subverts the truth or rather perverts the Sacred Writings is manifestly false.

Apollos.—Oh this is very certain!—The Bible is the arbiter to which all ought and must most certainly submit.

Aquila.—Well then, the notion concerning absolute, unconditional predestination does so, and must certainly be incorrect.[1] A very plain syllogism will solve this, provided its minor proposition be evinced by the Scriptures. Thus, whatever opinion perverts the Scriptures is incorrect and false; but the doctrine of unconditional predestination does contradict and pervert them, and is therefore incorrect. It will now devolve on us to shew that it is not in accordance with the Scriptures, but does as said contradict them. The Scripture informs us as it regards the salvation of man, that whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.' This is the doctrine every where taught in the New Testament. 'He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.' 'He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Now this declaration of the Scriptures is directly the reverse of an absolute predestination. Here we are informed that the believer or he that believes is the one destined for salvation, and that the unbeliever is the one whom God shuts out of life. Hence the major part of the syllogism is true, viz: that this perversion of the Holy Scriptures cannot be consonant to truth. This is evident, because such an unconditional act of predestination, or decree of God, is repugnant to the requisition of repentance and faith, as necessary to salvation.[2]

Apollos.—It does seem inconsistent to require repentance and faith, and to denounce eternal sorrow on the impenitent unbeliever, when God has determined, without reference to the faith or infidelity of either, the end of both. And to require faith as a condition of salvation, is an evident overthrow of this absolute decree.

Aquila.—God, by exacting faith and obedience as a necessary duty for attaining to eternal life, has made it the condition of salvation, as he has an obstinate perseverance, in infidelity the condition of suffering damnation.[3] It is therefore a contradiction to say that God decreed salvation and damnation unconditionally, and afterwards prescribed the conditions of both, and thus our syllogism is most certainly, as a whole, true.[4] This is not all, my friend, it tends to destroy religion itself.

Apollos.—What, it tends to the destruction of religion? How do you make out this?

Aquila.—Yes—it most assuredly does. And this is a second argument that we offer against it. Whatever doctrine tends to the subversion of all religion is false; but the doctrine of absolute predestination does this and therefore is false. The major proposition in this needs no proof, all will admit it, viz. That whatever is subversive of all religion is false:[5] but the minor proposition we must try to prove.

Apollos.—Do proceed, my friend, with your argument.

Aquila.—I notice then first, that this doctrine is too apt to beget a carnal security, in those who believe themselves elected, and despair in others, who fancy themselves to be of the number of the reprobate, the two great banes, if I may so

[1] Whitby, Wesley, and Fletcher.
[2] Schmucker, Limborch, and Whitby.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Whitby and Limborch.
[5] Ibid.

speak, of all true religion. Many who have been awakened, and have started fair for eternal life, as a necessary consequence of this doctrine, have become cold, at least lukewarm, and by degrees have lost the love of God out of their hearts, have turned to the world and lost their souls.[1] They reason thus, if this decree of predestination is so immutable, that the elect cannot, by any sins that he commits, fall from the favour of God; nor can the reprobate, by all his acts of piety and virtue, attain to salvation: it is unnecessary for me to be concerned about my eternal interest. Such say, if I am to be saved according to God's decree of election I shall be, if not I shall be lost, and there is no remedy at all.

Apollos.—This is most certainly a legitimate conclusion, if the doctrine of unconditional decrees be admitted.

Aquila.—But again, it of consequence diverts us from that care which ought to occupy our minds, to lead a holy and a devoted life, and to avoid all that is derogatory to the character of goodness, and opposed to the purity of the divine nature. For what signifies such care, if the decree be already so fixed and unchangeable, that if I am elected I shall certainly attain eternal salvation, though I neglect the practice of piety; but if I am reprobated all my holiness or efforts for it, will avail me nothing. I ask, my friend, any man being judge, if such is not the conclusion at which many a mind will arrive, as the consequence of such a doctrine?[2]

Apollos.—I must confess, it is not at all unreasonable to suppose this *may* be.

Aquila.—Yea—*will* be, and the fatal consequences of these two things is, that this very doctrine renders prayer insignificant and little available, toward the exercise of that faith and practice which lead to salvation. In vain do we *weary* God with our entreaties—if I may so speak. He has from all eternity made a decree, an irrevocable decree, concerning the salvation and damnation of every man, and the means tending thereto. What he has decreed not to give he will never give, though we pray and fast and agonize, until our hearts are ready to break with wo, all will be of no avail, his decree fixes the end, we must perish as the result of his purpose, and for his glory: and what he has decreed to give no man can disannul, it shall be given, faith or no faith, obedience or rebellion. It is as well to laugh as to pray and cry, for if I am to obtain it I shall certainly have it, if not it is no use to try, for his decree has fixed it.[3]

Apollos.—But those who embrace the doctrine of absolute unconditional decrees say that they do not hold this sentiment, much less act upon it.

Aquila.—I am happy to believe that there are thousands of devoted christians, who hold the opinions of either the supra or sublapsarian divines; yet, never act out those principles, but lead a godly and devoted life: but my brother, candour will constrain them to admit, that what is offered to take away the reproach, which the foregoing arguments, heap on those systems, and to destroy the force of our reasonings, is so far short of an answer, that it hardly deserves to be noticed.[4] However, when we come to consider the objections of such, you may present the chief at least of those, that can be possibly offered, and we will consider them.

Apollos.—The tendency of these sentiments I confess to be looked at properly, do not seem to inspire holy, constant, and persevering zeal, brought into lively and continual exercise by prayer, faith, fear, hope and ardent love.

Aquila.—Another important argument against it is, that this doctrine does absolutely destroy the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. For as we have clearly I think, set forth, when treating on Christ's offices, if the doctrine of absolute unconditional salvation be true, upon the supposition of such a decree, what

[1] Whitby and Limborch.
[2] Limborch, Whitby, and Fletcher.
[3] Whitby, Wesley, and Fletcher.
[4] Ibid.

Christ has done, is no longer a *merit* of grace and of reconciliation, but of salvation.[1] He only suffered for the accomplishment of what must come to pass any how, viz: the purpose of God for salvation.

Apollos.—Certainly on the supposition of an absolute decree the merit manifest, or the grace, and reconciliation are of no avail, or importance, all the praise is due simply for the display of the divine glory in decreeing to save some few by Christ, and most assuredly for that glory, damn the balance.[2]

Aquila.—Another argument I would offer, that is more immediately adapted to the opinions of supralapsarians, and I would urge it particularly against their notions. It is this, that by the doctrine of absolute decrees they invert the natural order and course of things; because they maintain a decree concerning the everlasting salvation and damnation of one, of whose creation God had as yet made no decree. Now this is plainly contrary to the natural order of things, to dispose of the eternal salvation and damnation of him who is neither *actually* nor *potentially*, as the schoolmen say, in his causes: for since God is the first cause of all things, he of whose creation, God had as yet made no decree, could not be so much as *potentially* in his cause: and by this means not man to be created, would be the object of predestination, nor can such an one be said to be predestinated, but only *predestinable*. Indeed, even as much as this cannot be said, since no decree of creation being as yet made, man could not by God himself, it is thought by many, be considered as a Being; nor, consequently as a proper object, of predestination.[3]

Priscilla.—While there is an inconsistency in the doctrine of an unconditional election, to life, and it certainly has a very deleterious effect on the piety of those who embrace it, you must acknowledge that this last argument is full of speculation.

Aquila.—I admit this, but arguments the most subtle and metaphysical, have been resorted to for the support of the doctrine of absolute decrees, and I confess, if we must go back to first causes, I cannot see how the argument just offered can be easily laid aside. It must, however, be remembered, I do not rest it on this or any one that I have offered particularly. I put the whole Calvinian plan, whether supra or sublapsarian to the test of God's word, and sound reason, bring both together, and let a conclusion be drawn, by the considerate and conscientious for or against my views.

Apollos.—If the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation be so directly opposed to the best interests of the soul, and the advancement of practical piety, how does it come that all the reformers embraced the Calvinian system as it is now called.

Aquila.—Luther, Melancthon, and all their immediate earliest coadjutors did not embrace it. 'That this statement of Luther's opinions is correct, is proved not only by numerous passages in his works, but also by the fact that he reviewed and sanctioned the twelfth article of the Augsburg confession of faith, in which is condemned the opinion of those who contend that men cannot fall from grace.'[4] That Luther, and his first adherents, did lean too much toward the heresy of Augustine, is evident to all acquainted with their writings.[5] This is attributable however, not to faith in those opinions held by him, and now commonly called Calvinistic, but to the fact, that the contest of the reformation was with popery at that day, and there was not perhaps that attention to phraseology, that there would be under other circumstances. But one thing is certain, that neither Luther nor his immediate associates did believe in, or teach absolute unconditional election and reprobation, as did Calvin who afterwards rose up and

[1] Limborch.
[2] Schmuker and Whitby.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Schmuker.
[5] Schmuker.

his supralapsarian followers. Few indeed of the reformed church in Europe, and comparatively few it is believed of the congregational divines of New England, are willing to admit that the decrees of God are unconditional, or that there is an absolute predestination, without reference to the foreseen and foreknown conduct of the predestinated.[1]

Apollos.—It would appear then that God deals with man as a free agent: and indeed, that his act of predestination is founded on the foreknowledge or prescience of the particular actions of each solitary individual.

Aquila.—It is evidently so. And as we have proved, and shall attempt further to prove, in the consideration of the various views of those who embrace the Augustinian opinions, they are contrary to that love, impartiality or justice, holiness and goodness, as well as the sincere declarations of the Deity in his word, the calls of the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus, which are ordered for all, the fact of Christ's 'tasting death for every man,' and that such a view will tend to destroy all subordination, and accountability for moral actions to any government, whether parental, civil, ecclesiastical, or divine, making man a mere machine, that does what he cannot help, and treads in a path, from which he cannot turn.[2]

COLLOQUY III.

ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL REPROBATION DISPROVED BY THE TESTIMONY CONTAINED IN THE SACRED WRITINGS, IN FAVOUR OF THE FACT, THAT CHRIST DIED FOR ALL MEN. ABSURDITIES WHICH MUST BE EMBRACED IF CHRIST DID NOT DIE FOR ALL.

Aquila.—At our last interview, my friend, we conversed of the opinions of those, who hold to absolute predestination, and considered it generally, as it regarded either the election or reprobation of man. We may this evening turn our attention to reprobation in particular, and inquire whether it is consistent with what is announced in the Scripture, in regard to the death of Christ, as an offering for all men.

Apollos.—You conceive then, that both parties, whether supra or sublapsarians, alike believe in reprobation.

Aquila.—I have said that both systems lead to this, the one positively asserts it, the other asserts that which is virtually the same.

Apollos.—How is that my friend?

Aquila.—Thus:—Calvin and his supralapsarian followers assert, that God determines the end, antecedent to any thing else, respecting the future condition or state of men. I give you his words; a few out of many, which are said on this subject. 'All men are not created for the same end; but some are foreordained to eternal life, *others to eternal damnation.* So according as every man was created for one end or the other, we say he was elected, that is, predestinated to life or reprobated, that is, predestinated to damnation.'[3] Here is the supralapsarian notion. The sublapsarian notion may be found in the French Protestant confession of faith, which with the Calvinian notion and others, have already been quoted by us. I will repeat it. 'We believe that out of the general corruption and condemnation in which all men are plunged, God draws those whom, in his eternal and unalterable counsel, he has elected by his own goodness and mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, *without* considering their works, leaving the others in the same corruption and condemnation.'[4] The Dutch divines say the same in effect, only a little farther, concerning the reprobate 'whom God' say

[1] Schmuker whose remarks on predestination are worthy a close reading, and will amply repay the candid reader.

[2] Fletcher, Whitby, and Limborch. [3] Calvin Inst. [4] French. Prot. Con. Art. 12.

they 'in his unchangeable good pleasure hath decreed to leave in common misery, and not to bestow saving faith upon them; but leaving them in their own ways, at last to condemn and punish them everlastingly for their unbelief, and also for their other sins. This is reprobation.'[1] The assembly of Scotch and English divines say 'the rest of mankind God was pleased, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath.'[2] Here my friend is the sublapsarian notion of reprobation, and it is apparent to me that there is comparatively little difference. The one to say the most is a decree to reprobate and damn a part of mankind, to glorify God, irrespective of both his fall and deeds. The other or latter, is a decree that acknowledges all as fallen in Adam, and it ordains that God will '*pass by*,' leaving them to 'dishonour and wrath.' Both come to this, that a part of mankind must be inevitably lost. If the reason be asked, a part will say, because God *decreed* it so. But another part will say, because God has *passed* them by. Now I affirm, that both notions in regard to reprobation are erroneous, and repugnant to reason and revelation. If the Bible did not contradict and disprove these opinions any other way, it does in this one fact, that it affirms a provision is made for the salvation of all.

Apollos.—I suppose the ground assumed by both parties is, that there is no such provision, that Christ only atoned for the elect who were predestinated to life.

Aquila.—We now approach the very point at issue, whether it be contended that the reprobate are simply passed by, or decreed to be damned, all who contend for these notions, affirm that Christ never died for them. Now we are willing that an issue shall be made on this very point, viz: that the Scriptures affirm that Christ did die for all, even the reprobate, and therefore, such are not reprobated, because Christ did not die for them, but for some other cause, and this cause we have proved from the Bible, is unbelief, their own act.

Apollos.—Now then my friend for the proof. O! this is an all important point.

Aquila.—This, then is our argument against these notions of absolute and unconditional reprobation, whether as received by supra or sublapsarians, that our Lord Jesus Christ did, by the decree and intention of the Father, die for all and every man, that he might obtain grace and remission of sins for them, no man excepted; therefore, God has not absolutely reprobated any man by an antecedent decree from salvation.[3] This is I am sure, Apollos, proved by many plain texts of Scripture. We will take first, those wherein Christ is expressly said to die for all men. Some of which affirm the intention of the Father, that he was pleased to deliver up his son, to die for all men. Thus we have the Father's intention. 'And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*,' and St. Paul says 'He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'

Apollos.—Nothing can be adduced to contradict this plain and positive declaration, of the Father's will, in giving his son to die for 'all' men.

Aquila.—But other texts in express terms say that Christ did die for all men, and therefore accomplished his Father's will in this respect. Thus says St. Paul, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that he died for *all* that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.' The same apostle informs Timothy that he would have prayers offered for *all*, because that it is 'acceptable to God our Saviour, who would have *all men* to be saved, for says he, there is 'one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.' And, says he, 'we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned

[1] Syn. Dort. Art. 6, et seq. [2] Assem. Con. chap. 3. [3] Whitby, Wesley, and Fletcher.

with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.'

Apollos.—But it is objected to the quotations which you have made, that the word all, does not denote the individuals of the *genus*, as if Christ died for all and every man; but only the *genuses* of individuals, that he died for men, of every sort or kind.[1]

Aquila.—This is a poor subterfuge to evade the force of an argument. Some, when a text is proposed which contradicts their notions, will take shelter under any semblance of a reason in order that they may retain a preconceived opinion, notwithstanding its unreasonableness and direct opposition to the word of the Lord.

Apollos.—But some say that this word all may be rendered sometimes *any one*, and think that in this way it is sometimes used in the Sacred Writings. You know how Beza, that zealous reformer, has pressed the use of *all* for 'some one, any one, sort or kind.'[2]

Aquila.—I could quote several texts that have been adduced to support this notion, but if such an exposition be allowed, it would be said that there is no sort of men whatever but Christ died for some of them. Pray tell me how this can be, unless he died for all or every man? Add to this, that among all sorts of men some there are who are wicked and impenitent, even to their dying day; for some of them therefore, according to this exposition, Christ died, and consequently, by this exposition, some of them shall be saved, though dying in sin, which is absurd. And again, according to this interpretation of the word all, it may with greater propriety be said of all men, that Christ did not die for them, or rather that he died for none of them at all, because, according to this opinion, in all states of men there is much the greater number for whom Christ did not die; and by this means ALL, i. e. any man must be said to be excluded from the benefits of Christ's death. And, moreover, the word all, when spoken of the most *special species*, cannot denote the genuses of individuals, only when mention is made of a thing of a different species. Now man is this most *special* species, as he is called, and has no other inferior to it.[3]

Apollos.—But you will admit that the word all is sometimes used in a restricted sense?

Aquila.—The circumstances of some passages require sometimes a restricted sense, I acknowledge, to be laid on the word all, but the context then evidently shows its application. I will give you a text or two that will convey my meaning: 'Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled,' &c. here all may be applied to persons in a married state, of whom St. Paul speaks, that is, all persons legitimately married, as the context shows, and the same may be said of similar texts. But in those which we have quoted, the death of Christ is not only affirmed, as purposed of the Father for the benefit of all; but as having been actually brought about for *all*, that is *every* man: for the Scripture affirms, 'that by the grace of God he tasted death for every man.' In those texts there are no circumstances that appear, nor none in the context by which the same may be at all restricted. Let me give you one of these texts with the context. I am sure you will see the truth of what I say.

Apollos.—Do, if you please, my friend?

Aquila.—I will so, and will show you that the quotation can only be applied as I have used it. In the first Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul says to his young friend, 'I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made for *all* men, for kings, and for *all* that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' My friend—

[1] Limborch and Whitby. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

here let us stop one moment, and ask Paul, why pray for all men, every individual, of every station? and the apostle answers, 'for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have *all men to be saved*, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.'

Priscilla.—O! this is positive. God would have all men to be saved, and in order to it, would have all attain the knowledge of the truth.

Aquila.—Let us read on. We next have the grounds on which all may be saved: 'For there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified of in due time, whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and verity.' Look now, my dear brother—at every part of the context in this interesting chapter, and you will find how immediately the one part corresponds with the other. God wills all men to be saved, because Christ has actually died for all, in due time was he testified for this, and the apostle is ordained a preacher and teacher of the Gentiles, because Christ, in dying for all men, died for them, as well as for the Jews.

Apollos.—I am sure you have given a correct exposition of this passage.

Aquila.—Other evidences of Christ having died for all men, are found in the fact that the Sacred Writings affirm that he did die for *all* the world. St. John says, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now the word world, in this place, certainly denotes all mankind. Another text is to the same effect. Thus, 'God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' And again, 'Little children these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: and if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the *whole world*.' In this very text it is positively affirmed, that Christ has not only made a *propitiation* for our sins, i. e. the sins of those now adopted into his family, but also for the sins of the whole world; or as St. John in his gospel informs us our Lord said to Nicodemus, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.'

Apollos.—Some have objected to those texts you have just quoted, however plain you and I think them to be, that by the world is often meant not all men, nor the whole world, but only a great part of the world, and that thus it is said in St. John, 'If thou do these things show thyself unto the world;' and the Pharisees said, 'Behold all the world is gone after him;' and Augustus Cæsar ordered that 'all the world should be taxed;' and in Revelations, Satan is spoken of as deceiving the whole world. Therefore it is said that St. John only uses, in relating the address of our Lord to Nicodemus, the word world for a part of it, viz. the *elect*, to whom Christ has become a Saviour.

Aquila.—No one can prove, even from the texts you have quoted, that all the world is not meant. Christ's kindred, who did not believe in him, wanted him to show himself to all men. The Pharisees spoke extravagantly in their alarm. Augustus claimed, as emperor of Rome, the empire of the world, and actually decreed that the world should be taxed; and we know that Satan has deceived the whole world. Now what can be made of this, or who dare bring it up to disprove, not what has been said in sober calmness by a good and truthful man only, but by the living God, who when he could 'sware by none greater, swore by himself, as I live I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,' and in proof of it proclaims that he sent his Son into the world 'not to condemn but to save the world.' And, Apollos, I positively deny that in Scripture, by the world is meant the *elect* at all, for the plain reason that the world is often used as a term to represent the wicked and sinners, who are styled the world, and in opposition

too to the elect, who are said to be chosen out of the world. This may be easily proved by the words of our Lord: 'I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the *world* cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you.' Also, 'I pray not for the world but for them that thou hast given me, for they are thine;' 'If ye were of the world the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

Apollos.—It is obvious that the children of God are not the world, from these very words of Christ: but it is said by some that the world, which God is here said to love, is not the world of reprobates, whom he never loved, but the world of the elect whom he did ever love.[1]

Aquila.—By the love of God here treated of, we are not to understand the love of friendship or complacency, which we have already on another occasion explained, and which is always joined with a determination for salvation, and implies a more especial and peculiar application of the benefits purchased by the death of Christ, and is only extended to those who believe in him: but by it we are to understand the love of benevolence, whereby God pities the condition of all men, and has toward them those feelings of kindness and mercy, which display themselves in his decree to give grace and salvation to all men, provided they believe. This love of benevolence is universal, and extends to all men; and from it as the foundation, did the mission of Christ into our world proceed. Hence it is said, 'God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son into the world.'

Apollos.—Take then the other text quoted, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' Of this it is said that the world here certainly means the world of elect, and, that from the face of the text; for God is said to have reconciled the world to himself, and not to impute their sins, &c. Now it is argued my friend, that he has reconciled none unto himself besides the elect, and it is to them alone that he does not impute sin.[2]

Aquila.—I have, my brother—already shown that, to understand by the *world* the *elect* is directly contrary to the Sacred Writings, and of course it is needless to repeat the argument on this subject; nor does the text itself admit of such a sense, since all are said to be reconciled to whom the word of reconciliation or the gospel was sent; now this was sent, not to the *elect* absolutely so alone, but to all men, 'every creature' indifferently. We do not say these things to evade an answer, because we are prepared to show, that reconciliation may be considered either as universal, in being extended to all men, or particular, as it is enjoyed and participated in by the elect.[3]

Apollos.—What is that reconciliation which is general or universal?

Aquila.—It is this, that God is so far appeased by the death of Christ, and that sacrifice which he has made for sin, as that, notwithstanding the fall and apostacy of man, and the lapsed and ruined condition of the human family in consequence of that fall, whereby the heart is at war with, and the carnal mind enmity toward him; yet he does not only not punish, but has laid aside his anger, is reconciled to us, and has entered into a covenant of grace with men, being ready to bestow eternal salvation on all who shall perform the conditions of the new covenant.[4]

Apollos.—By Christ's death then, the wrath of Deity is turned from us fallen and depraved creatures, and the propitiation of the Lamb of God has 'taken away

[1] Whitby and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Whitby and Fletcher. [4] Ibid.

the sin of the world,' all men are in a salvable state, God who benevolently loves them is ready to save all.

Aquila.—It is so, and what is called a particular or special reconciliation, is the application of this sacrifice by faith, for the purging away actual or personal offences, and accepting us in a state of favour and grace though our Lord Jesus Christ. That the apostle did mean reconciliation in the former sense, is evident from what follows: 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.' For what purpose could the apostle have made the earnest and solemn entreaty to be reconciled to God if the reconciliation in the text had been that state of favour, enjoyed only, as some think, by the elect. God was in Christ reconciling the world, all—all who were fallen in Adam—all whose nature was depraved, not imputing their trespasses to them: and he has sent forth ministers to offer the terms of reconciliation for personal offences, being reconciled on account of what Christ, our second Adam and federal head did, to save us from that which the first Adam had done and entailed on us, though we are left lapsed, fallen, depraved, and under the influence of a carnal mind, which is enmity to God; yet for Christ's sake we are quickened, and called to seek and obtain the pardon for all personal offences, and find mercy and salvation through Jesus Christ: to which end a 'manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit with all,' teaching and guiding him in the way, even of faith in the atonement of a crucified Redeemer.[1]

Apollos.—You quoted the passage from St. John's epistle, to substantiate the position that Christ is the 'propitiation for the sins of the whole world.' It is objected to the view you take of it, that it is true he is said to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, but this is simply because his death considered in itself, was a sufficient *price* for the redemption of all men.[2]

Aquila.—I do not my friend undertake to inquire what was the sufficiency of Christ's death, considered in itself, but of what avail it was with respect to others, whom God was graciously pleased to place in a better and more eligible condition, in consequence of the merit of this his death: otherwise what comfort would there be to a sinner that Christ is, as St. John tells us, an advocate with the Father? What is a sinner the better, by considering that Christ's blood is a sufficient ransom for all men, if it were only shed for a few elect, and himself debarred of the benefit by an antecedent decree of God? So far from this being the case, the very object of Christ's mission into the world, was to seek and to save that which was sinful, lost, and ruined. This is also another very strong evidence that Christ's death was for the benefit of all the human family. The very fact that he came into the world to save sinners, to seek the lost, which could not be done but by means of his death, is testimony not to be disproved, of the consolatory doctrine that his gospel contains, the glad tidings of great joy to all people. 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' says St. Paul to Timothy. Yea, my friend—Christ himself says, that he 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' and that he came 'to seek and to save that which was lost.'

Apollos.—Certainly the Scripture abounds with declarations of this fact; and all the expostulations and earnest entreaties to return to God, are founded on this truth: that Christ came to save sinners, and that he died to save them.

Aquila.—This is not all; but that he died to save even those who ultimately perish.

Apollos.—Can this be proved from the Bible?

Aquila.—It certainly can; and this is strong testimony in favour of our position. The text to which I refer, says that Christ died, not as some declare,

[1] Wesley and Fletcher. [2] Scott and Henry.

for the elect only, but for the reprobate too, even those that perish. Thus St. Paul says, 'destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died;' and in the parallel passage, 'through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.' Now all admit, that he died for those that are saved; but if, as we prove, he died not for them only, but also for those that actually perish, will it not follow, that he died for all? Here then, is positive proof, if the Bible be true, the opinions of others notwithstanding, that Christ did actually die for those that perish, and as above, of consequence for all men.

Apollos.—This would really seem a fair conclusion.

Aquila.—But in Hebrews it is positively also said, by the same apostle, 'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' How could he be sanctified; how could he trample this blood of the covenant under foot, if Christ never died for him? But St. Peter says, 'there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies—even denying the Lord that bought them.' How could this be done, if Christ had never died for, and never bought them?

Apollos.—Oh, my brother—many forget, or never knew, that there are such texts in the Scriptures; but others do know, and they offer their objections and expositions against the same—and in this way, prevent the effect they would otherwise have.

Aquila.—But what reasonable objection could be offered, against a position affirmed in language so positive, that none can misunderstand its meaning?—thy brother, thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.

Apollos.—It is objected to the two first texts which you have quoted, that St. Paul here treats not of the truly faithful, but of those who seemed to be such, and for whom Christ, in a charitable sense, may be reckoned to die.[1]

Aquila.—I know that this is the very kind and charitable exposition that is given, by several learned divines on these texts; and truly, my friend I am surprised, when I peruse them, to mark the inconsistency that is manifest in the same.[2] This is most certainly, my friend—contrary to the scope of both the chapters in which these texts are found. The apostle seemed disposed to set forth, and expose the heinousness of that sin committed by those men, who, regardless of their own duty toward brethren—and especially those of a tender and weak condition, in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, by an unseasonable eating of indifferent things, gave offence to, and injured them; and he adds this reason, why they should be more careful, namely, 'because they would destroy;' which, as Henry, a Calvinistic divine says, means 'utter destruction,' 'him for whom Christ died.' This reason, you know, my brother—would have been of no force at all, if Christ had not really, but only in a *charitable* sense, died for them.

Apollos.—It would really seem so; but then it is objected again, that here it is not said what should happen, but only what influence the offence given, would have upon the weak brother, in order to his destruction, since he who gives the offence does as much as in him lies, lead his weak brother into destruction, into

[1] Scott.

[2] The reader will be forcibly struck with this, if he will peruse the elaborate exposition of Doctor Scott on these texts; who argues, that in charity, it may be reckoned, Christ died for them, &c. and Henry, after affirming that the original denotes *utter destruction*, and saying that 'the beginning of sin, is as the letting forth of water; we are not sure that it will stop any where on this side *eternal* destruction,' tries to get over the force of the passage, in what will be acknowledged by all, I think, a very lame way.

which he would certainly fall, did not God restrain him by his all powerful grace.[1]

Aquila.—I do not say that the destruction of a weak brother, will always follow, whether he did or did not take the offence; but it is so evident, that none can deny it, that St. Paul tells us here, not only of the *natural* tendency of such an offence, but also what it may most positively effect, viz: that our weak brother might thereby fall into sin, and consequently, according to Henry, *utterly* perish, be damned in hell forever, notwithstanding Christ died for him. Deny this, and you will destroy the whole strength of the apostle's reasoning. Indeed, Doctor Scott, in trying to evade the force of these texts, remarks, 'Had the apostles written in that exact, systematical style, which some affect and require, they would scrupulously have avoided such language.'[2] Surely this learned expositor did forget, my dear brother—that the words of the apostle are those of inspiration, the language of the Holy Ghost.

Apollos.—It should really be remembered, that this is the language of inspiration; but take the third text you quoted, 'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.' Against this, my friend Aquila—it is urged, that the apostle does not treat therein of the truly faithful, but only of those who made an outward profession of religion; and that the sanctification here spoken of, was the setting apart of Christ, by his own blood, for the office of a priest.[3]

Aquila.—But look at this, they are not said to be sanctified by an external profession but the blood of the new covenant, or of Jesus Christ, which is impossible, if it were not shed for them. Never my brother was there a more fanciful and far fetched exposition than that to which you allude, this will be apparent by asking and answering two plain questions which arise from the text. 1. Who is here threatened and represented as worthy of a much sorer punishment than he who despised Moses' law, and died without mercy under two or three witnesses? Does not the apostle mean the punishment of hell? but to waive this, take the character. The apostle tells us that it is he who has 'done despite to the Spirit of grace' has resisted the Holy Ghost. Next he 'was sanctified,' not only set apart, but cleansed, saved from sin, its guilt, power, reign, pollution, but now he counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, wherewith he was sanctified, and in proof of his apostacy, actual from God, he has trodden under foot the Son of God, a most striking remark, declarative of the fact that he has now become a scorner. I ask you my friend, and any other candid man, if he that is represented here as treading under foot the Son of God, is not the same that accounts 'the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing,' and further, is he not the same that has 'done despite to the Spirit of grace?'

Apollos.—I must answer it is actually so. Honesty forbids my answering otherwise.

Aquila.—And could St. Paul ask of how much sorer punishment was he worthy who had accounted the blood wherewith 'Christ was sanctified?'

Priscilla.—It would really seem that a child could not be mistaken in the exposition of this text.

[1] Scott and Henry. The words of the latter are remarkable,—he says, 'If we understand the words of the particular determination of the efficacy of his death, to the elect, then, though none that were given to Christ, shall perish, yet thou mayest as much as in thy power, destroy such. No thanks to thee, if they be not,—by doing that which hath a tendency to it, thou dost manifest a great opposition to Christ; nay, and thou mayest utterly destroy some, whose profession may be so justifiable, that thou art bound to believe in a judgment of charity, that Christ died for them.' How this can be, I would like to know. The remarks of Doctor Scott, are to the same effect. [2] Scott's Com. Rom. 14, 15. [3] Scott.

Apollos.—The whole alludes certainly to the man who had tasted of the grace and favour of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—Now then 2. Notice his punishment of how 'much sorer punishment.' Death was the utmost extent of that punishment, set forth in the law of Moses. Any punishment that should surpass or exceed it, must be that of the sinner, in another state of being, and in the reasoning of the apostle we have this clearly set forth, that as death, temporal under the law was justly merited by those described as violating it, so death eternal a much sorer punishment, was the merited wo, of that man who thus wickedly apostatized from God, or as St. Peter says, denied 'the Lord that bought him.'

Apollos.—I must admit this text can only be fairly construed thus. But the one a part of which you have just quoted, I mean the words of Peter. 'But there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.' Now it is said that St. Peter does not here treat of redemption by the blood of Christ, as a word is used, that implies a buying or deliverance from the sins of the Gentiles, by embracing Christ's doctrine, and not the one that is generally used for redemption by Christ's blood. And it is also said that he does not here speak of denying Christ, but God the Father, as that word commonly used in the original for Lord, is not in the text, but a different one. Indeed, even admit what it is here said to mean, the denying the Lord Jesus, it is thought that it only has allusion to mere professors, and that it is not 'requisite to suppose the apostle meant that Christ died for them in *intention* or fact, but they barely claimed *him* as their Redeemer.[1]

Aquila.—This is nearly if not wholly as inconsistent an exposition as some others we have noticed. It is wrong my friend, for a man to fix his creed and then make the Bible bend to it. We ought, as has been often said, take the plain common sense, meaning of God's word. When this is done 'he that runs may read, and a wayfaring man though a fool cannot mistake.' Take then the text. 1. The knowledge of Christ always includes the knowledge, not only of his doctrine or truth, and laws, but of his death, experimentally, as a propitiation for sin. His doctrine and laws do not alone or together deliver us from sin, it is the death of Christ, the atonement he has made by it applied to our souls-that emancipates us from its thraldom, these are united. 2. Besides they who are freed from the sins of the Gentiles, and have really avoided the pollutions of the world by the knowledge they have of the doctrine of Christ, are also redeemed by the death of Christ, since no other cause could have procured their deliverance, and that the original word of which you speak is used to denote redemption by the death of Christ, as well as the other word I do most positively aver. Take the words of St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, 'Ye are not your own, ye are *bought* with a price,' here a termination of the very same verb is used, and means the same thing 'bought,' by the precious blood of Jesus, as 'of a lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The same apostle uses the same verb in another place in the same epistle, 'ye are *bought* with a price.' And in Revelations the same verb is also used to set forth redemption by price. Thus. 'And they sung a new song, saying thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou was slain and hast *redeemed us* to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.' And that the word here used for Lord is applied to Christ, we have shown in our exposition of the names of the Deity. I will just quote a text where it is used to prove it. St. Jude says 'certain men have

[1] Dr. Scott, who again says, 'it was not the manner of the sacred writers to express themselves, with that systematic exactness which many now affect.' But surely the Holy Ghost that speaks, and especially that here makes the apostle prophecy, must be exact and speak the truth.

crept in, &c. denying the only *Lord God* and our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, that keen critic, Dr. Scott himself, has more than once not only admitted but proved it. But why make an effort to distinguish between denying God the Father, and the denying our Lord Jesus Christ, for if God the Father be denied, with much greater reason may it be said that his ambassador the Lord Jesus is denied, since one is included in the other.

Apollos.—It is most certainly so. But how about its appertaining to them only as *professors* for whom Christ did not die, in *intention.*

Aquila.—Do, my friend—turn to the text itself; consider it as it is, a prophecy concerning the introduction of heresies by false teachers. Take it in all its parts, and you will at once, I think, understand its meaning. 1. The apostle sets forth the fact that there were in old time, false prophets, notwithstanding those that were true, 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' 2. He announces, that what has been, may be again; 'for there shall be,' says he, 'false teachers among you.' 3. What shall they do? they 'shall bring in damnable heresies,' heresies which lead to hell. 4. In what manner shall they do it? 'privily,' in an underhanded, artful, cunning, insinuating manner they shall enter, and deny the Lord that *bought* them. In this, consisted their heresies; they at least led to the denial of Christ, perhaps in one or more of his offices,—it may be, his unoriginated divinity and Godhead. 5. Notice their punishment; they bring it—it is their own act; they are the cause of their own woe. What is it? 'swift destruction,' sudden, unexpected; it is destruction in hell, for their heresies, says the apostle, are 'damnable.' What say you? those bought by Christ, 'destroyed,' suddenly and unexpectedly—and they too, teachers of his truth?

Apollos.—This does appear a fair conclusion, from the premises laid down by the apostle.

Aquila.—My brother—no conclusion at all; it is a positive assertion—a prophecy that will be fulfilled. They are bought by the Lord, but they deny him, and in their apostacy privily introduce heresies, becoming false teachers, as some of old; and while their heresies, damnable, which lead to eternal sorrow, soul-destroying in themselves, ruin the souls of others, these false teachers for whom Christ died, are, as a punishment, suddenly damned. May the great God grant to save us, my dear friend—from such a crime, and such an end! Amen.

Apollos.—O! my brother—how honest, how diligent we should be, in seeking to know the right way. I assure you, this is a most alarming subject; I pray my heavenly Father to impress it on my mind. O, may I never! no, never! forget my constant danger, and may a deep sense of it, stimulate me to prayer and watchfulness. You have certainly given an exposition of these texts, that is perfectly satisfactory to my mind.

Aquila.—Before we close this evening's conversation, I would notice the absurdities which would follow an opinion the reverse of that which we have set forth respecting the extent of the atonement. We have said, that by the intention and decree of God, Christ died for all men—by which I mean, every man. Well, suppose this position denied?

Apollos.—But it is denied, and by a great many.

Aquila.—I admit this; but look at the train of absurdities that must follow its denial.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—We say, that all to whom Christ is preached, are bound to believe in him, which they cannot do, unless they look upon him as their Saviour, who really died for them. From hence it follows, that he died for all men; otherwise, all those for whom he did not die, would be obliged to believe a lie; and by this means, a falsity might become an object of divine faith, which is absurd.[1]

[1] Limborch, Whitby and Wesley.

Apollos.—How is that, my friend?

Aquila.—Can a falsehood be an object of divine faith, my brother?

Apollos.—Certainly it cannot; why do you ask this?

Aquila.—Well, if it cannot, how can the gospel minister call on all to whom he preaches, to believe on the Lord Jesus, that is, receive him as a Saviour, who died for them?

Apollos.—I confess, this does appear absurd.

Aquila.—And here is another absurdity: If Christ did not die for all, then no man, when Christ is preached to him, can be sure that he is bound to believe in Christ, for he does not know whether he died for him or not. He may say, I do not know whether I have any interest in this matter or not.

Priscilla.—Indeed, many do say so now; and a great many go no farther than to hope they have an interest in his death.

Aquila.—Yea, I will go further, and say, that if Christ did not die for all, no man can or will be condemned for infidelity; for if such do believe he died for them, when he did not, they believe a falsehood; and according to the Calvinistic notion, if Christ died for them, they must be saved. Now, the Scripture saith, 'he that believeth not, shall be damned.' It attributes condemnation to the infidelity of man: 'he that believeth on him, is not condemned; he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and this is the condemnation: that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil;' and, 'he that believeth not, shall not see,' that is, experience, enjoy, 'life.' If Christ did not die for all, this could not be; and the proclamation of such an opinion would be absurd. In addition to this, it would be absurd in the extreme, if Christ did not die for all, for him to command that baptism should be administered to all who make an outward profession of religion; and also, that God the Father should command it; yea, that all nations should be baptized in his name. What is baptism, but the seal of that gracious covenant made through Christ, which on God's part, contains the promise of pardon of sins, and the offer of sufficient grace to obey the divine commands; on man's part, an engagement to perform the duties enjoined of the Almighty? but all is absurd, if Christ did not die for all. For if he died for none but the elect, and made a covenant only for them, then this baptismal seal will be uncertain; and with respect to the greatest part of mankind, most obviously false. Thus, in baptism, administered in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, God is called upon to be a witness to a falsehood, which I trust, no brother will allow; certainly it would be blasphemous to admit this. These, taken all together, my young friend—are absurdities under which, I think, the absolute predestinarian opinion labours, and for which, I am sure, there can be no reply that is important, because there can be none that is true.

Apollos.—Well, my friend—I am convinced more and more, that the plain, Scriptural course, is the best; all were lost—Christ died to save all, and God is ready and willing to save all, even the vilest, if they will return, repent, believe. The gospel, to effect this, is sent to all, and all may come; some will not come, and are therefore lost and damned.

Priscilla.—That is the plain old way, 'ye will not come to me,' says Christ, 'that ye might have life.'

Aquila.—May the Lord grant us eternal life. Amen.

COLLOQUY IV.

THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE ATONEMENT, AND AN EXTENSION OF THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S DEATH TO ALL MEN, CONSIDERED.

Apollos.—During our discussions on the subject of divine predestination, among other arguments against its being absolute and unconditional, offered by you, my friend Aquila—and an argument too, that is certainly founded in revelation, was the universality of the atonement. This, we dwelt upon at our last meeting. I then deliberately came to the conclusion, that the Scriptures aver, that Christ died for all; I am of this opinion still; but a great many objections to it, I find on examination, are offered by those of a contrary opinion. You know, I not only want to be fully persuaded in my own mind, and settled in my own opinions, but I want to be able to consider and answer the arguments and objections of others. I have then, a list of objections to this position, that Christ died for all, taken from the avowed opinions of others; and I want you to consider, and answer them.

Aquila.—I am certainly, my friend—ready to consider them; and, as far as I am able, I will answer. One thing however, is certain: no argument or objection, can disprove or set aside, a plain and positive declaration in God's word. 'Let God be true,' though it should turn out that 'every man' is 'a liar.' The Scriptures affirm, that he 'tasted death for every man,' that 'he gave himself a ransom for all,' that he 'died for all,' and that he 'came into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.'

Apollos.—All this I admit, and receive too, but others do not. They object many things to it; and while I do not admit the truth of these objections, and indeed believe them fallacious and contradictory, still I want them considered, that I may see and understand the arguments for and against the doctrine, that the benefits of Christ's death are general, and were designed to be for the happiness and salvation of all who will receive them by faith—the condition set forth in the Sacred Writings.

Aquila.—This, then, my brother—I am ready to undertake; and as it is done for our mutual improvement, and a proper understanding of the views of our brethren who differ from us, and with a desire to know the true and right way to eternal life, there can certainly be in the investigation, no want of charity. Let all be proposed and examined with frankness, with candour, and with a sincere desire to understand the meaning of others, as well as the true intent and meaning of the sacred volume.

Apollos.—I am sure this is all I want. I find the reasoning of those who hold the doctrine of absolute and unconditional predestination, is brought to bear on two points: the first is that class of arguments by which they undertake to prove, that Christ only died for those who were absolutely elected; and secondly, those arguments by which they would prove that Christ did not die for all men.[1] To establish either, is, with those who offer the arguments, a very material point; hence a variety of expositions are given, which are directly contrary to the position assumed; and I think, my friend—substantiated fully by you.

Aquila.—Well, Apollos—let us consider, first, the arguments adduced to prove, that Christ only died for those who were absolutely and unconditionally elected.

Apollos.—The first argument I want considered, is this: It is said that the phrase dying *for any man,* denotes the dying in his stead or place, so that the other should be freed from death: from whence they argue, it will follow that all

[1] Whitby, Wesley and Fletcher.

for whom Christ died, are freed from death; which cannot be said of the wicked, and those who are finally impenitent, since they shall be damned,—therefore, say they, Christ did not die for all men.[1]

Aquila.—But, my friend—to die for any one, does not always and necessarily mean the dying in the place or stead of another; so that he for whom we die, should actually be delivered from death; but to die for the sake or benefit of another, though an actual deliverance from death, as to him for whom we die, should not follow; and thus the good shepherd is said to lay down his life for the sheep: 'I am the good shepherd,' said our Lord, 'the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;' when it may happen after he has done this, or is torn to pieces by the wolves, that the sheep also may be torn in pieces. Now Christ therefore died for, or in the stead of all men; not that they might actually or absolutely, unconditionally and necessarily attain to salvation, but that on God and Christ's part, a way to salvation might be opened to men, through the death of Christ, as of a sacrifice slain for sins, that the new covenant might be ratified, and that the sins of all, who actually perform the terms of the covenant, might be blotted out. And in this sense, he died even for the wicked, and those who are finally impenitent—since, by virtue of his death, they have been not only placed in a state of initial salvation, and blessed with a probation for eternal life, but also with a measure of divine grace, by the holy and blessed assistance of which, they may be able heartily and genuinely, to repent of their sins, believe on the Lord Jesus, and by this means attain to eternal life.[2]

Apollos.—Why then, it is said, are they lost?

Aquila.—Because they refuse to improve that grace, they are deservedly deprived of the fruits of Christ's death, and incur a sore and most intolerable destruction. All men, my dear friend—are benefitted so far by Christ's death, as to have at least 'one talent;' some have three, some five. Thus all receive an advantage in the sacrifice he has made. Some refuse to improve the talent, or talents, and go and bury the same,—this is their own act; this, as voluntary agents, they are permitted to do, and thus, 'in the error of their way,' 'they choose death.'[3]

Apollos.—This is certainly accounting for the destruction of man, on a principle which, while it clears and defends the divine justice, holiness, goodness and benevolence, and justifies his ways with men, also accounts for man's eternal misery, in a way which is in perfect accordance with every principle of sound reason, and all the testimony which I can gather from the Sacred Writings. But it is said, there are many passages in the Scriptures, which proclaim the fact that Christ did only die for his sheep, the elect; and those texts are adduced to show, that all men are not interested therein.[4] Shall I quote a few of them, my friend?

Aquila.—Certainly; for there are none by which such an opinion can be substantiated.

Apollos.—It is said that Christ himself declares, 'I lay down my life for the sheep;' and again, 'that also he should gather together into one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.' It is asked if St. Paul does not say to the ministers in the Acts of the Apostles, 'feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;' and 'husbands,' says he in Ephesians, 'love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;' and it is added, that he was even prophesied of as coming to save his people, thus, 'thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Now, it is argued, these are not all men, but the elect, for whom he did this.[5]

Aquila.—In all these places, there is one word wanting, my dear brother—to make out the case.

[1] Limborch.
[2] Ibid. Watson and Whitby.
[3] Fletcher.
[4] Calvin's Inst.
[5] Calvin and Scott.

Apollos.—What is that?

Aquila.—It is the *exclusive particle* ONLY. If this word were there then I would give it up. If the texts read 'I lay down my life for the sheep' *only,* that 'he came to gather the children of God' *only,* that he gave his life for 'his church' *only,* and came 'to save his people' *only,* and by the by 'his people,' here mean the Jews, and we know he came to save the Gentiles too. Are we to infer my friend—because Christ died for 'his sheep,' that he died for none others, and that because he came to save 'his people,' true believers, he came to save none others? Why my dear brother, the Bible says that 'he is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.' Take the case of St. Paul as stated by himself: 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved *me,* and gave himself for *me.*' Suppose one should say that St. Paul meant that Christ died only for him, because he loved him, and gave himself for him. Look at the fallacy of the reasoning, Christ died for Paul, and therefore, for Paul alone. O no! says a brother, he died for the elect too. Well apply it that way Christ died for the *elect,* and therefore, for the elect *alone.* Will this do?

Apollos.—I perceive that this mode of reasoning is not correct.

Priscilla.—O speak it right out, 'he is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.' He has saved them all, all enjoyed the benefits of initial salvation, all are put on a probation for heaven, all are saved this moment from dropping into hell, by the blood of Christ that says 'let them alone this year also,' and all may be saved from earth and hell in heaven, that will believe on Jesus Christ. Thus he is the saviour of all: but some will not believe, others will, and he becomes to them a special Saviour, from actual guilt and personal offence in everlasting life.

Apollos.—Indeed I believe you are right in this. The Bible certainly does say 'he died for all.'

Aquila.—Besides, Apollos, the children of God, the sheep as they are called, do not denote those that are absolutely elected, as we have elsewhere proved, for they, as we have shown, if elected unconditionally by God's eternal decree, stand in need of no reconciliation, being always in the divine favour, and always in a state of grace and salvation, even 'from all eternity.'[1] But again, Christ did not die for his sheep, considered as such, i. e. for them who are already converted and saved, but for them considered as yet sinners, yet wicked, and in a state of alienation from God. This may be seen from sundry texts already quoted, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'For when we were yet without strength, *in due time* Christ died for the ungodly:' and says St. John 'herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins.' You will see from these and other texts that Christ did not die for his sheep considered then, as such but for a world of sinners including all that ever believe on him. We may also add, that none of the places to which those, whose objections you advance, treat of procuring remission of sins by the death of Christ, the point at issue, but of the actual application of the remission itself. The former we say is common as a benefit to be enjoyed by all men who will seek it, the latter is peculiar to the believer only, who is born of God, born from above, and adopted into the divine favour.[2]

Apollos.—But it is objected by those who contend for an unconditional election that, there are sundry texts which are used, where the saints are designated, not by the word all, but by the term 'many.'[3] Thus saith our Lord, 'even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ran-

[1] Calvin, Sott, and Henry. [2] Wesley, Watson, and Limborch. [3] Calvin Inst.

som for *many*.' And 'this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' St. Paul also says 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.' This many is not all, is it?

Aquila.—Really my friend your question would almost excite a smile. This objection looks a little odd in those who maintain the lapsed and fallen state of all men. Take the remark of St. Paul in Romans where the word *many* occurs, and answer me does it mean all. You shall have the whole of it. 'For if through the offence of one *many* be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ hath abounded unto *many*.' 'For as by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *many* be made righteous.' Here the advocates for the fall of man, as I am also myself, say that we have the apostle's testimony that all fell in Adam, and were thereby made sinners.[1] Your objection comes with an ill grace from those who teach that the fifth chapter of the Romans sets forth the fall of man in Adam. 'Many does not mean all,' here, is it possible? and yet all are fallen. Let us apply such an exposition of the word, and see what you will think of it my friend. On whom did condemnation come in consequence of Adam's sin?

Apollos.—On all men.

Aquila.—Granted, but St. Paul says on *many*, 'for as by the offence many were made sinners.' How many St. Paul? ALL, for in Adam all die. In the case before us can any reason be assigned why the same exposition should not be given. Can we suppose that Adam's transgression was more powerful to condemn and ruin, than the death of Christ is to justify and save?

Apollos.—I hope not. 'For as sin hath abounded grace did much more abound,' 'as in Adam all die, even so in Christ Jesus shall all be made alive.'

Aquila.—And to prove that this is correct, we add, that as the Scripture says in some places that Christ died for all, and in others many, the very thing itself will require that the word many shall be enlarged by all, and not that *all* shall be restricted by *many*. It may be correct to say Christ died for many when he died for all, but it is not correct to say he died for all when he only died for many, that is a *part*, and this part, though called believers, are the predestinated *elect* 'according to God's foreknowledge.'[2] Suppose, my friend, we take these verses after this mode of exposition, and ask when St. Paul says 'through the offence of one many be dead.' Who are dead? The answer is judgment came upon all men to condemnation. But the gift of grace 'hath abounded to many.' Who are they? What is the answer? If you do not answer as broadly in the one instance as the other, pray tell me how can the grace 'much more abound,' i. e. go far beyond the extent of Adamic transgression, and indeed be manifest in remitting on easy terms the guilt of personal offences. Who is there so inconsistent as to say that the many here, for whom the offering is made means only a part, viz: those who have been elected by an *eternal* decree?

Apollos.—O I cannot admit this. The plain argument of St. Paul is, that all die in Adam, spiritually and temporally, and all are made alive spiritually, being quickened by the second Adam who is the light of the world, and ultimately all shall be raised from the grave and be brought into life, they that have done good shall arise to life eternal, and they that have done evil to everlasting condemnation.

Aquila.—The apostle positively affirms this. 'The offence of one' was to condemnation, but 'the righteousness of one' 'came upon *all men* to justification

[1] Dr. Scott and Henry.

[2] Dr. Scott, to whose wire drawn exposition of this chapter, the reader is referred. I confess I was surprised when I came to his remarks in that comment. 'Through that one man's single offence the many or multitude of mankind are dead.' In another part he says, all, every one: but again, 'Through that one man Jesus Christ, the second *Adam*, the Lord of heaven, much more abounds to the *many*, even to all the multitude of BELIEVERS.'

of life.' Look at this Apollos. All men are here benefitted by his death, and that benefit is justification 'unto life,' not life eternal, for they are not actually saved in heaven, but from the guilt and condemnation consequent on the fall, are accepted in Christ, quickened by divine grace, and may go on and be saved in eternal life.[1]

Apollos.—This is certainly a fair exposition of the passage, but it is argued that the benefits of his death are not extended to all, and he did not die for them all, for it is written 'who is he that condemns us? It is Christ that died for us.' They for whom he died cannot fall into condemnation, but the world does fall into condemnation, and therefore, he did not die for them.

Aquila.—But indeed, my brother, that is a poor way of reasoning. Let me quote the text for you. 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea! rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' This text actually treats of those who are really faithful, not of the possibility of their becoming unfaithful. They were at that time suffering grievous persecutions, for Christ's sake, as is evident from the general tenor of the whole chapter. The apostle to cheer them under their afflictions, informs them that no creature, however spiteful and disposed to torment and afflict them, could cast them, force, constrain them, into condemnation; because Christ had died for them, and they having been most freely reconciled, by his death, the merit of which was now already applied to them, he would take care of them his faithful, suffering, and greatly tempted and persecuted followers, notwithstanding the rage of their enemies, and God would at last give them eternal salvation. Who will say that from all this it follows, that they for whom grace is purchased by Christ, by the help of which they may believe, and by believing may obtain a closer application, of the divine grace and remission of their sins, may not by their departure from the path of duty, 'make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience,' forfeit that nearer and more powerful application of divine grace, and incur the eternal displeasure of heaven, though no one can hurt or harm them while they do their duty: and moreover, although none can constrain or force them to sin, and God will not leave them to themselves, while trusting in him, they, by a voluntary departure from him as did Adam, in the garden in a much more blessed state, may throw away their dependence, let go their hold, depart from the truth, suffer their gold to become dross, and at last be plunged in an eternity of wo.[2] But more of this at another time.

Apollos.—It is said that those for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died, he greatly loved, but as he cannot love the sinful man, therefore, he did not die for him. He says there cannot be greater love than for one to die for another. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

Aquila.—I have before said that there are two sorts of love, which, though the same in nature, are not the same in degree. The love of benevolence which is extended to all, even to the unbelieving and wicked, and another more intense and ardent, called the love of complacency, which is extended toward the pious who do their duty, and continually obey God, walking in his ways, and loving him with all the heart. The former, I consider, is more noble than the latter, because it is more generous to love an enemy than a friend; but, the latter is as before said, more intense, since we love a friend more ardently than an enemy, and saith Jesus, 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Again, the highest degree of the love of benevolence, is to lay down life for another; nor can we think or conceive of a more generous act of love, than the dying for one's enemy; but look at Christ, who loving men, with what we call a love of benevolence, gave the highest instance of that love towards them, in that he

[1] Wesley, Clarke, and Watson. [2] Limborch.

died for them while sinners: his enemies. But to his children who faithfully serve him, he is not only benevolent and kind, but he loves them ardently, and delights in them, as his portion forever, with that love of friendship by which he is united to them, and they to him. 'I in you and you in me, I in the Father and the Father in me.' Saith this blessed Redeemer.

Apollos.—But many think that Christ intercedes for those for whom he died, but he does not intercede for all, only the elect. Thus he 'maketh intercession for us,' and he says, 'I pray not for the world, but for them that thou hast given me, they are thine.' 'Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.' Indeed, you know that the whole chapter is a prayer, an important and chief part of which was for his disciples.

Aquila.—And how my dear friend can it be inferred, that because Christ in the prayer mentioned in the 17th chapter of John, does not pray especially for the world, that he never prayed for it. We have evidence, that puts it beyond a doubt, that he does pray for it, and that it is his province to make intercession for *transgressors,* of which the parable of the barren fig tree, is very strong evidence. Besides, immediately after the very circumstance to which you allude, we hear him praying for the very persons that murdered him, saying 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do.' Now it must be either admitted that he does pray for the world, for sinners, or that the persons who actually and violently put him to death, were the elect.

Apollos.—I really did not think of this. He certainly did, while he hung upon the tree, pray for those who wickedly clamoured for his blood, and reviled and rebuked him.

Aquila.—Moreover, Apollos, it is plain that Christ meant when he said, 'them that thou hast given me,' his apostles and them alone; this is evident from the whole character of the chapter especially the 12th verse, which reads thus, 'whilst I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.' Here our Lord in his prayer announces that while he was with his apostles, while he travelled and conversed with them, he kept, guarded, instructed, and preserved them, none of them had wandered as yet from the way, or swerved from their purpose, but Judas. Being now about to be taken from them he prays that they may be kept from future ill, and at last be brought to everlasting joy.

Apollos.—I perceive that this chapter does relate to the twelve disciples especially. I never noticed before the subjects of this prayer. O! what an interesting one, the very contexture of which marks how our Lord felt the woes, that were to come upon his servants. I find that the arguments for Christ dying for the elect only, are not such as they are represented to be, unanswerable and full of comfort, indeed I think to the reverse. There is in this so much inconsistency, and few are willing to think themselves not of the elect.

Aquila.—I have noticed this. However men are willing to receive and believe the doctrine of election and reprobation, they are unwilling to believe that God has left out them, or rather has passed them by, in that provision he has made for man's redemption.

Apollos.—But it is objected that Christ did not die for all men, and although the doctrine of an absolute election may not be established, yet is there sufficient proof, it is said, that he did not die for all, and therefore must have passed by, or reprobated some. Several arguments are advanced to establish this point, among others it is said, if by the death of Christ grace and pardon of sins be purchased for all, it is necessary that this word of grace and redemption should be preached to all, that is every man, at all times, that so each one might partake of this reconciliation by faith, else Christ died, it is said, in vain for many to whom this

revelation was made, which is absurd. Now this word of reconciliation was not so universally preached. For before the coming of Christ it is said, the Gentiles were excluded from the knowledge of this law. Hence it is written in one of the Psalms, 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them;' and in the Acts of the Apostles it is said, that 'in times past he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.' It is also said, that he did not permit the apostles for some time to preach the gospel in Asia, 'they were forbid of the Holy Ghost' so to do, and at this very time it is said that many Indians and others have never heard it at all. How it is asked can these things be accounted for?[1]

Aquila.—In a very easy manner I think, my friend Apollos—they may all be accounted for. And the answer shall be first general, and then special or particular. For a general answer to the objection, I would say, that when it is announced that Christ died for all men, that all by the benefit of his death might attain to everlasting life, we have special relation first to those unto whom the gospel is preached, for if it be true that Christ died for all such, the absolute decree of reprobation of course falls to the ground. But again, the word of reconciliation by the express command of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and in accordance with its very nature, ought to be preached to every man: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,' is the command. 'For,' says St. Paul, of God, 'he will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Besides there has been no age of the world when men have been wholly deprived of it. Immediately after the fall the promise was made that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head: this alike related, and it cannot on any just grounds be denied, to *all men.*[2] And before Abraham, and more especially to him and his posterity, were discoveries made from time to time of the covenant of grace: and in the time of the gospel dispensation, the word of reconciliation was preached to all men, every where, without any distinction or respect of persons, according to the express command of God.[3] For we hear in the Acts, 'the time of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth he all men every where to repent.' St. Paul cries out, 'have they not heard? Yes verily their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world:' and says the same apostle, 'be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul, am made a minister.' But let us suppose that the preaching of the gospel has failed, what effect will that have on the question whether or no Christ died for all men. Certainly none, for though it failed either in old time, or now fails, the reason, is not to be found in an absolute decree of election, or because God would not suffer the benefit of Christ's death to be extended to them. The fault is to be found in men themselves, who either slighted or despised the gospel, or perhaps held the truth in unrighteousness; wherefore God in just judgment has deprived, and still deprives them of his grace.[4]

Apollos.—Then the whole blame falls on man?

Aquila.—Most assuredly it does; and this is still more apparent, if you will look at the special answer which may be given to the objection. The people who are now destitute of the knowledge of Christ, are either those who have neglected it formerly, when invited to embrace it through the preaching of the gospel, and are now deprived of that divine grace, through their own wickedness and infidelity, or they are such to whom the gospel has never been preached.[5]

[1] Scott, Henry, and Burkitt. [2] Limborch and Whitby. [3] Limborch and Watson. [4] Whitby, Limborch, and Schmucker. [5] Limborch and Whitby.

Apollos.—And what bearing has this on the question, my friend?

Aquila.—I will show you. With respect to the former, those once invited and who turned from it, there is this easy answer, which may be given: that God did once manifest his grace to them, and required that they should hand it down to their posterity, by preaching or proclaiming it to them; but if they neglected it, the fault is wholly theirs, it does not attach itself to the Almighty or the extent of Christ's atonement.[1] With respect to those to whom the gospel has never been preached, such as the modern Indians, and others. Their case is somewhat different. And in reply to it we say, 1. It is certain that God has now taken away all distinction of persons, and would have the gospel preached to all nations, and to all and every man without exception. 'At that time ye were without Christ,' says an apostle, 'being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' 'There is,' says he, 'neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' 'For there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.' But, 2. God has set up a ministry of his word, and sent his ministers to all people to persuade, to entreat, to enlighten, and turn them from the error of their way to seek the living and holy God. When converted they are expected in their turn to serve their generations. Still he calls and sends them out, and by his Spirit he is to this hour enlightening and striving with rebellious man. Now if men fail in their duty, or if the people to whom they come are so obstinate, as to drive away the teachers, by open force, and to shut their ears against the divine truth, this again is not God's fault, it does most assuredly lie at our door, either as ministers or men.[2]

Apollos.—This is too true my brother.

Aquila.—It is possible also, that God will not expressly send his word to some, there being some weighty reasons on the part of men, which obstruct this divine mission: for it is certain that God never denies the communication of his grace but on account of some special sinful act on the part of man, bringing on a judicial blindness or hardness of heart, he does grant at least one talent to all. 'A manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man;' the 'true light' 'enlighteneth every man,' but when men resist, as did the Jews, we hear our Lord saying, 'therefore the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;' and again, 'or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.'

Apollos.—But my friend, are those men more unworthy than others to whom the gospel is sent?

Aquila.—I cannot answer that question. I dare not say they are. I am sure the Scripture describes all men, before the divine call to be in the same lost and corrupt state. Look at the description St. Paul gives of it, in the three first chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, to the Ephesians he says, 'in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in children of disobedience, among whom also, we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.' 'For we ourselves also,' says the same apostle, 'were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.' Here is man, here the true state, the moral condition of the world. All that is good proceeds from grace. Some are

[1] Limborch.

[2] Watson, Wesley, and Whitby.

certainly better disposed than others, and it would appear that God sometimes has respect to what are called the good disposition and orderly demeanour of men.[1] When our Lord sent forth his disciples he said unto them, 'And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence, and when ye come into a house salute it, and if the house be worthy let your peace come upon it, and if it be not worthy let your peace return to you.' The term worthy here evidently means the well disposed, the orderly man; and on the same account the Lord said 'to Paul, in the night by a vision, be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city:' in other words, there are many persons who are willing to hear the truth, and who in hearing will be benefitted; they are now well disposed candid men, such as the noble Bereans, who 'searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so.'

Apollos.—But this is not always the case, is it my brother.

Aquila.—It is not always so, but sometimes passing by the less unworthy, he bestows a greater measure of grace on the more unworthy. Thus says our Lord, 'Wo unto thee Chorazin! wo unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and in Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.' And in another place he says, 'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here.' We have elsewhere observed, my friend—that this is a mystery unsearchable by us, and lodged in the womb of divine wisdom. But after all it is certain that God denies grace and salvation to no man, unless it be for some avoidable voluntary act of his own.

Apollos.—But still the matter has a difficulty connected with it. I want to know if those to whom the gospel is not revealed and preached, can be partakers of everlasting life; for you know the Scripture says, salvation is to be procured 'in Christ alone,' that he who has not the Son has not life, and the wrath of God abideth on him, and also that without faith in Christ none shall be saved. Now it is evident, I think, that a man cannot have faith in Christ without he hears of him, and of course can have no life, and must consequently perish.

Aquila.—And do you think so, my brother?

Apollos.—Certainly; is not this a fair conclusion? They cannot be saved, if never able to hear of and believe in Christ.

Aquila.—What then is to become of children and idiots, who neither hear nor understand?

Apollos.—O! I forgot them.

Aquila.—I know this is a favourite topic with some—that all the heathen who have never heard the gospel, must perish; and that too, notwithstanding the election; but I assure you, I cannot admit this—so long, at least, as I read of Cornelius, that 'devout man,' who never had heard of Jesus; and so long as I know from blessed experience, that 'God is no respecter of persons;' but 'he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.' Had he respected persons, when personal salvation was inquired for, he would have passed by me. There are several reasons, which I will offer, for adopting this opinion. I am sure you will at least ponder them in your mind, before you determine a point of so much importance, and one that involves the eternal destiny of millions of precious souls, who have never heard the name of Jesus.[2]

[1] Fletcher, Wesley, and Limborch.

[2] Wesley and Clarke.

Apollos.—Do let me have the reasons,—this is a thing entirely new to me. What! men saved that never hear of Jesus? and yet I cannot think all are lost; and, to tell the truth, if saved, I cannot tell how.

Aquila.—1. My first reason for not agreeing with you, in regard to their destruction, is this: no man is obliged to know those things which God has not, or will not reveal to him; nor will any man be damned for the want of this knowledge.

Apollos.—But, brother—I want the proof; give me the Bible for it.

Aquila.—I will, my friend. Our Lord says, 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now,' i. e. when they know better, being enlightened, 'they have no cloak for their sin.' 'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.' Here is positive proof, that there ever must be a knowledge of the law and its obligations, in order to constitute sin; but St. Paul is positive as to the fact, that condemnation must be proportionate to the light received; 'for,' says he, 'there is no respect of persons with God; for as many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law; for when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another.'

Apollos.—These texts at once decide the point, I confess; but would not this be salvation without Christ Jesus the Lord?

Aquila.—I think not, my friend—and I will give you my reasons. 2. No man will be saved but by redemption in the blood of Christ; which, as it was available for those who lived before Christ, though they either did not know him, or only obscurely, by types and figures; so nothing hinders, but that it may also be imputed to those who, after he was preached to the world, are ignorant of him, not through any fault of their own,—not indeed by virtue of any divine promise, but out of the boundless mercy of God, who only requires an improvement in proportion to that light that he condescends to bestow; and from this view of the subject, it is easy to perceive how an untaught Hottentot or Hindoo, that does the thing that is right, to the best of his knowledge, may at last, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, inherit everlasting joy.

Apollos.—We are judged then, not according to what a man 'hath not,' but according to 'that he hath,'—and 'to whom much is given, the more will be required.'

Aquila.—It is certainly so; and we have not only justice, but revelation on the side of this economy of divine grace. Besides, the places already cited for the punishment of sin, treat only of those who, through unbelief, reject the Lord Jesus Christ when preached to them: to such, there is no salvation; they refuse the only medium of reconciliation with God; and although there might be no special promise of salvation, to those who never have heard of Christ, yet this is no bar, but that God who is abundant in mercy and grace, may perform even more than he has promised, yet always with respect to Christ,—so that whatever salvation they may have the benefit of, it shall be given to them for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Apollos.—Some have maintained, that no man can be saved who is not an actual, evangelical believer in our Lord Jesus Christ, yet think it hard that the Gentiles, and those who never heard of Christ, should be damned for what they cannot help. In this, I presume, originated the hypothesis, that before or after the second coming of our Lord, those who never heard of him or his doctrine, shall, before the general resurrection, be raised again; that then the gospel and

the terms of it, shall be proposed to them—and that if they hearken to the one, and live up to the other, they shall likewise be saved by faith in Christ; but if they reject those gracious overtures of reconciliation, they shall finally be rejected by God, and be damned justly for their obstinacy and unbelief, and the blame of consequence, be only chargeable on themselves.[1]

Aquila.—This is not to be proved, my friend—by any part of God's word, however men may construe mystical passages of Scripture to suit their own notions, it is our duty to hold fast to the word of life. If ever we let this go, we launch into an ocean of speculation, and there is no knowing where or when we may land. Nothing certain can be built on a mere supposition,—this is all highly charitable, but there is a plain Scriptural way by which all may be saved, without resorting to speculations, which have no foundation in fact and revelation.[2] In that which God does, the perfections of justice, wisdom and goodness, shall be most signally displayed. It does not become us who enjoy the light of the gospel, and a revelation so clear, to inquire what God can, or may, or will do, with those who have been and are as yet, debarred from those privileges. Let us rather, as it more immediately concerns us, inquire whether we have lived up to the terms of the gospel revealed to us. If we have, when we come to heaven, we shall have no occasion to complain; let God be as gracious, and extend his mercy to the Gentiles, in what measure and method he thinks fit. One thing is certain: Christ died for all, and all are benefitted in a greater or less degree by that offering; and the day shall come, when the divine beneficence shall be displayed, and the ways of God toward men shall all be justified before an assembled world.

Apollos.—I am sure the Scripture says so, my friend—but if Christ did die for all, then he must have died for Cain, the Sodomites, Judas, &c. who died in impenitency, before his death, as well as for Abel, Lot, Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, &c.[3]

Aquila.—It has been remarked my brother, in the foregoing arguments, that we had respect chiefly to those who lived, after the death of Christ, and to whom the gospel was announced: but, although the wicked who died before Christ in their impenitence, could not reap any benefit from his death, yet Christ is truly said to die for them. Had they before their deaths, seriously repented and returned to the living God, so as to be converted from the error of their way, as they might have been, the divine grace assisting them, they would have met with remission of sins, in the blood of Christ afterwards to be poured out, as well as those who did repent, and died in the faith, long before the death of Christ, and whose salvation was already confirmed to them.[4]

Apollos.—Well, but how of the case of Judas?

Aquila.—He was but a single man, a solitary case, and even suppose that Christ did not die for him, which I do not admit, on account of the enormity of his crime, and the treachery and ingratitude, as well as baseness of his deed; yet could this indeed form no ground of exception, against the universality of the benefit, purchased by the death of Christ: but there is no need to except him; and therefore, we do directly say, that Christ died even for Judas, and he too might have been partaker of the fruits of his master's death, if he would have accepted it. By the grace communicated to him he might have abstained from the unparalleled sin, of betraying his master under so many aggravating circumstances, and even after he had committed it, if he had repented, he might have obtained pardon of God, and found acceptance through that very blood that he had been the instrument of shedding on Calvary.[5]

[1] Limborch.
[2] Watson and Limborch.
[3] Calvin.
[4] Whitby, Fletcher, and Limborch.
[5] Dr. Clarke and Limborch.

Apollos.—Well my friend, it is again objected to this, that if they perish, and some do perish, you admit, for whom Christ died, then their sins are punished twice, once in Christ who died for them, and again in themselves, by suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

Aquila.—I have already proved, in treating of the priestly office of Christ, that properly speaking, he was not punished for men, since he did not suffer what they deserved, but was rather a sacrifice for their sins, whereby, to reconcile them to his Father, upon their penitently returning, with faith in him, according to the terms of that gospel he has ordered to be proclaimed to the world. They therefore, who fail in the performance of those terms, are not punished for their sins twice; but by their own fault they make the sacrifice of Christ, to be of no effect, to them, though designed for their salvation; and not only so, but by this fresh obstinacy, they render themselves guilty of a much severer punishment.

Apollos.—Do you really think so?

Aquila.—I certainly do; and so did the apostle Paul. Hear what he says, 'For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace. For we know him that hath said, I will repay saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

Apollos.—The Bible does certainly thus determine this very important point, I see clearly. But you know that many of the Arminians do not believe in original sin, or the hereditary depravity of human nature. Now if Christ died for all, then did he die for all infants dying in an infantile state, and if they are not depraved, where is the necessity of his death for them, as they cannot be damned as not being originally corrupted.

Aquila.—Admit that the Arminians do believe as it is objected to them, I do not, but it is yet to be proved that they do: nor are the opinions of all to be judged of by a few. The fact is they have been misrepresented in many things, and it is very possible in this too. Because Arminius and his followers remonstrated against the leading doctrines of Calvinism, and the obloquy and persecutions with which they were threatened, they have been charged with almost every kind of heresy. Had they calmly submitted to the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation: had they never contended for the free agency of man, they might never have been charged with some things of which they are certainly innocent. Admit then, that they are guilty of this, which as I said before, I do not admit, at least in every case, we are not to set aside a gospel doctrine, because the Remonstrants or Arminians, as they are called err. Infants, doubtless, derive an hereditary depravity and corruption from Adam, and not only so, but an hereditary death, from which alone can Christ Jesus save them, by changing in the event of death, in a manner unknown to us, that unregenerate nature, and although the bodies die, raising them again, that they as the angels of God may ever abide in his presence.[1] He did therefore, the representation of the Arminian opinions notwithstanding, die for all infants. Not to save them from voluntary personal offence, for they could commit none, being incapable of voluntary action: but to save them from the impurity and pollution of a corrupt nature, inherited from their first and great progenitors, Adam and Eve, to deliver them

[1] Wesley, Fletcher, and Watson.

from the power of death, and the grave, and transplant them from this sterile soil, where every plant of grace is liable to wither and die, to that fair region, in a clime congenial with their highest happiness, forever and ever.

Apollos.—Christ did therefore die for all infants too, delivering them from sinful nature's iron sway, and death's oppressive power: and bringing them to dwell with himself in endless pleasures near his throne.

Priscilla.—O! what a comfort this is to a fond mother, from whose arms death has torn her dear little offspring, they are not lost, they are saved, are happy—happy as angels, in the presence of God, and shall be found again, where life's sorrows and toils are all ended.

Aquila.—Ah! We know to feel their loss; but also the comfort of anticipation. While they live in sickness we may say and do, as did David. 'While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept: for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' but when they are gone, comfort ourselves as he also did. 'Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' Here is the christian parent's comfort, he may go to Christ, and there find his lost children, abiding forever in the presence of his Father.

Apollos.—None can think that Christ would leave out dear little babes. No! he says 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' It is however, objected, that if Christ died for all men, for them who may and do perish, then even they who do believe in Christ as dying for them, can have no consolation from his death, nor any certainty of their salvation, since they may perish after all; but this it is said, is absurd and contrary to what the apostle teaches, saying 'who can separate us from the love of Christ.'[1]

Aquila.—In another place we have said enough on this subject, and have retorted the consequence of it, on those who maintain the predestination of the elect only; and it is unnecessary to insist farther on what is there advanced, all that has been said this very evening disproves this position. At another time we will enter upon it more elaborately, and will then take up and consider the arguments on both sides. Truth will lose nothing from a close and honest examination. I do think that the point is established that Christ did die for all, even those who shall ultimately be lost, and at another time, I will undertake to show you, my friend—that, this was according to the purpose and will of God, 'who would have all men to be saved.'

Apollos.—I hope you will not forget this promise, I am sure I shall be interested in it, and improved too, in knowledge and love for him, who is ever beneficent and kind, to all our race. Good evening!

COLLOQUY V.

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT PROVED, BY THE WILLINGNESS OF THE DEITY, TO SAVE ALL MEN.

Apollos.—I come this evening to claim the fulfilment of your promise, my brother Aquila. If I can ascertain that it was the purpose, intention or design of the Almighty, that our Lord Jesus Christ should die for all men, it will go very far, toward the confirmation of that fact, which you have said is announced in the New Testament.

Aquila.—This is a fact, that I have said is not only announced; but have really, I think, proved; and I am willing to leave it to all the candid. This is

[1] Dr. Scott and Calvin.

not all, I am ready to prove that it was not only so, but it could not have been otherwise to have been according to the will of God, for the Father himself was so deeply interested in the great work of man's salvation, 'he gave his only begotten son, that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man.' I therefore undertake my friend—simply from the Bible to show that this was the will or purpose of God.

Apollos.—But let us understand one another. Do you say that it was according to the decree or will of God, that the offering of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, should be for all men?

Aquila.—I do so. My argument is simply this, that God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: therefore, he has precluded no man from salvation, by an absolute and antecedent decree. The consequence is self-evident, the antecedent needs only to be proved, which is easily done from several texts of Scripture.

Apollos.—From both the Old and the New Testament can you adduce proof?

Aquila.—Yes!—from both of them, Apollos. Turn to the writings of that old prophet, Ezekiel, and read there the will of the Lord. 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves and live ye,' and again, 'As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'

Apollos.—But it is objected to this that the prophet means by the text, that he has no pleasure in the death of the poor disconsolate penitent.[1]

Aquila.—But you will remember, my friend, that all absolute predestinarians maintain that none but the *elect* do repent. Now if this is the case, it would seem strange, that they should introduce the Deity, as asserting, and indeed swearing, in such a pathetic and feeling manner that he would not the death of those men, whom he had elected by an absolute and an eternal decree, and who consequently could by no means perish, but must necessarily repent, and according, not only to their theory, but positive assertions be forever saved.[2] We may add another thing, unless this were a general entreaty or obtestation respecting all sinners, it would never agree with the exhortation that follows. 'Turn ye' 'why will ye die, O house of Israel?' And it does not signify any thing my friend, to say if God wills not the death of a sinner, he might prevent it since he is omnipotent: for the Deity does not always make use of his almighty power in hindering those things which he does not will. No! he will not do this, to prevent what depends on the free agency of man; he makes use of such means, as are most suitable to a free agent, such as precepts, exhortations, promises, threatenings, and the assistance of his Spirit; all of which are so many evidences plain and easy to be understood, that the Almighty wills not, and has not purposed, or decreed, abstract, from our voluntary impenitence and crimes the death eternal of any man. This too is in perfect accordance with the great principle of benevolence set forth in the New Testament.[3] 'God,' says St. Paul, 'will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.'

Apollos.—I confess that there is a great deal of reason in your argument, but there are several objections to the text you have just now quoted from the New Testament.

Aquila.—What are they my friend?

Apollos.—I mentioned one, you know the other evening, when on this very important point. It is said that the apostle does not here speak of individuals contained in their genuses, but of several kinds or sorts of individuals.

[1] Dr. Scott and Henry, both of whom apply these texts to the penitent. [2] Ibid.
[3] Whitby, Watson, and Limborch.

Aquila.—This is a mere subterfuge, a piece of sophistry, which you know was wholly refuted when we were on the universality of Christ's death, and I need not repeat the same things over. Do refer to our arguments on that subject, they are a full answer, I really think to that objection, if not I am ready to reconsider it at any time.[1]

Apollos.—I will certainly do so.

Aquila.—Let me however, say again on this subject, that the very context will not allow of such a construction to be put on the words, even admit that the interpretation which I deny, would prevail in any other place. The apostle commands us to pray for all men, giving this as a reason that God 'will have all men to be saved.' God does not command us to pray for several sorts or kinds of men, but for the individuals of every kind. If this had not been so, a pious mind would be at a loss for whom he ought to pray, and could, as heretofore hinted, only pray for the several sorts or kinds of men, as magistrates, &c. but not for any particular magistrate; and the question might arise, am I to pray for the one under whose government I live, or am I not? It may be he is elected, or it may be Christ died for him—*perhaps* he did not? God wills some magistrates to be saved, but my ruler may not be one of them, he only wills all kinds or sorts of men to be saved, not all individuals of every sort or kind.[2]

Apollos.—O this would be futile. God wills us certainly to pray for every man.

Aquila.—And why my friend?—simply because he wills that all men should be saved, by which I mean every man, for his Son, by his favour or grace, 'tasted death for every man.'

Apollos.—But some say if we must pray for all then for the dead too.

Aquila.—This is most a wretched answer, my friend—indeed, to an argument.

Apollos.—I do not make it, I only say that *some* offer it as an objection, saying if we must pray for all men, then also for the dead.[3]

Aquila.—Consider, my brother—the apostle is treating of the living, not the dead: of men who were rulers, who were in authority, that we may lead a godly and peaceable life. Moreover, this may be retorted upon those offering it, for if we must pray for all sorts or kinds of men, because God willed only the salvation of the various sorts, then we must pray for the different kinds among the dead too. I am sure those who contend for all being simply every kind, not every individual, will not be willing to admit this glaring consequence of their reasoning. I would not. There is certainly a manifest invalidity in this whole argument about kinds. I am sure that those only who are disposed to quibble with the word of God, would resort to one that has in it so little solid reason.[4]

Apollos.—I did not mention it because I was struck with the force of it, but as one sometimes adduced.

Aquila.—The word all, Apollos—does certainly, when applied to the fall of man, or his recovery by Christ, mean every man. It is often used thus by way of opposition, if I may so speak. A way in which Christ is opposed to Adam, the fall to man's recovery, the extent and ravages of sin to the extent of that offering which Christ has made, that the conclusion may be, and it is a natural one, from the averments of God's word, 'as sin hath abounded grace did much more abound.' This is called antithesis, and there are several very remarkable passages of this kind. I will quote one: 'God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all.' This is a text that cannot admit of that restrained sense

[1] While Doctor Scott gives a very inconsistent exposition of the first four or five verses, in this 2d chapter 1 Tim. it is just to say, that in short order he shows the fallacy of that objection, offered by some Calvinists.

[2] Whitby. [3] Limborch. [4] Scott and Limborch.

which some would put on other texts. Indeed this might be proved from the very nature of an antithesis, for all on whom God is presented as here disposed to have mercy, are opposed to all whom he has concluded in unbelief. As therefore, he has concluded all without exception in unbelief, as is very justly maintained by our Calvinist brethren, so also, by parity of reason, he has had mercy on all, not one excepted, by giving Christ to die for them, and opening up the way to eternal life, that they may walk therein.

Apollos.—I assure you this is a very plain and positive declaration of the mind of Deity.

Aquila.—It is so my friend—and there is another text, and the last I will at present adduce, that is like to it. It is this: 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering,' i, e. patient, 'to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

Apollos.—But you know it is objected, to this text, that St. Peter treats of the elect only, as appears, it is said, from the use of the pronoun US, and so it is objected to others that I could name, where the same word is used.

Aquila.—All who have read the Bible know that it was customary for the apostles to use the first person plural, and thereby to include themselves in the common mass of mankind: and it is evident that the word US here means all men.[1] The apostles of Christ were not like those ministers who never include themselves at all in the multitude, but ever say YOU instead of WE and US, which is certainly not the most excellent, because it is not the most humble mode.

Apollos.—But do you think that the apostle, by the use of this word, intended to signify that God was long suffering, or patient to all?

Aquila.—I surely do. In this sense the pronoun WE is used in several places in the Holy Scriptures. Thus says St. Paul, 'But meat commendeth *us* not to God, for neither if *we* eat are *we* the better, neither if *we* eat not are *we* the worse.' Is not the first person plural in its termination us, here used for all?

Apollos.—I must confess it really is.

Aquila.—Well—take another. 'If *we* suffer, *we* shall also reign with him: if *we* deny him he also will deny *us*.' Here again we is used for all. And you may also read what St. Paul says elsewhere: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.' Does he not mean that all who neglect it shall be damned? 'And if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not *we* escape if *we* turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.' And in this, as in many other texts, WE is used for all, and *us* is only another termination of the same word, or another form of speech, properly speaking for the same thing.

Apollos.—Well—but suppose we should allow some restriction.

Aquila.—But there can be none allowed; and if there could, we should have to restrain the passage only to those to whom the apostle Peter wrote, the flock, the visible church scattered abroad, in which were both bad and good, who promiscuously enjoyed church membership together: but my friend—what can be gained by such a concession? Peter does not say that God is not willing that any of US should perish, which might have afforded some pretence for such an objection; but the text reads that he is not willing that ANY should perish.[2]

Apollos.—But this is understood by some, of the elect only.

Aquila.—Then there could be no necessity for the long suffering and patience of God toward them, which St. Peter so much magnifies. They are safe, and never could be, as the elect, in any real danger of being lost. Besides, he could neither exercise it toward the elect or reprobate. To the reverse of this, the apos-

[1] Limborch. [2] Whitby and Limborch.

tle proclaims it, that God is 'patient to us ward,' i. e. to all. If we ask why? he answers, that God is 'not willing that any,' i. e. one out of all, 'should perish,' i. e. be damned. But suppose we ask the apostle what does God will then, if he does not will this? He answers, 'but that all should come to repentance,' i. e. turn to God to prevent their perishing or being damned.

Apollos.—This appears to be a fair exposition of the text.

Aquila.—It most certainly is, my friend, and in perfect keeping with the analogy of faith, and the concurrent testimony of God's word. And O! what a consolatory thought is it for the poor and wretched sinner, he need not despair, though involved in the mire of iniquity, Christ died for him, God is willing to save him, and therefore is delighted with his repentance. Yea! my dear friend—'there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance.' Let then 'the wicked forsake *his* way.' The long suffering of God is evidence of his desire to save him, on gospel terms; let him come, broken up with repentance, God will not send him empty away. Let him ask and he shall receive. What too, ought to be our gratitude for his patience, and that blessed provision which he has made for our salvation? Praise ye the Lord, O my soul!

COLLOQUY VI.

THE PERFECTIONS OF DEITY, AS REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES, WHICH DISPLAY THE DIVINE GOODNESS, ARE DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF ABSOLUTE REPROBATION.

Aquila.—In the sequel of our remarks, my friend Apollos—on the great subject of Christ's atonement, we have seen that the Lord Jesus died for every man, and that this his death was according to the divine will: Deity himself having proclaimed, that by his grace and good will toward man this offering for sin was provided. We have now to show, that if it had been otherwise, it would not have been as it is, a display of the divine goodness, by setting forth in lively colours, the holiness, justice, sincerity, wisdom, and love of God toward man; to all of which perfections, the doctrine of unconditional reprobation is directly opposed.[1]

Apollos.—Do you think so? Many learned and great men have argued to the reverse, and think that no legitimate conclusion of this kind can be drawn.

Aquila.—I do think so: the opinions of those learned, great, and I will add pious men notwithstanding. Yes! my friend—there are men before the splendour of whose talents and piety, I and you must sink into nothing, who have espoused this opinion about absolute reprobation, an opinion which I aver to be directly opposed to the divine perfections, and therefore derogatory to the divine glory. For what is opposed to his attributes must be repugnant to his glory.[2]

Apollos.—This would seem to be a fair conclusion, but how do you make out that the doctrine of absolute and unconditional election is opposed to the divine perfections?

Aquila.—I think this comparatively easy, if we take with us the Bible and reason. Thus this doctrine is opposed first to the holiness of God. If you ask for the proof, I answer that it is repugnant to it because it makes God the author of sin: and this is evident from the opinions of both supra and sublapsarians.[3]

Apollos.—Do point this out.

Aquila.—I will. With respect to the former, or the immediate and direct followers of Calvin, this is self-evident, since they maintain that God, before he

[1] Watson and Whitby. [2] Wesley and Clarke. [3] Wesley and Watson.

decreed to create any man, had decreed what should be the end of every man; namely, the happiness of the elect, and the misery of the reprobate. And that he might inflict this justly on man, he also decreed that he should fall into sin, which is the means of bringing the reprobate into that destruction to which they are destined. It is said that 'election itself could not exist without being opposed to reprobation.' 'To say that others obtain by chance, or acquire by their own efforts that which election only confers on a few, will be worse than absurd.' 'Whom therefore,' says the same author, 'God passes by, he reprobates, and *from no other cause than his determination* to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for his children.'[1]

Apollos.—But many who admit the doctrine of election, suppose it to exist by the effective decree of God.[2]

Aquila.—This comes to the same thing. Indeed Calvin, who revives the opinion of Augustine, rejects such an idea, and if he had not, it only, as already said, comes to the same thing.

Apollos.—How so?

Aquila.—The case is the same; because, by virtue of the decree concerning the end, the decree concerning the means for the accomplishment of that end, does necessarily exist; and the execution of that decree, is also necessary and unavoidable—so that man is fatally determined, and it is not in his power to avoid sinning, and thus God is made the author of sin.[3] Is there a Calvinist on earth, however moderate, that does not believe that the end is predetermined of the Deity, and is most certainly unavoidable?

Apollos.—Sublapsarians do not believe this—do they?

Aquila.—I think they do; at least it is inferable from their notions of God's decrees; for though they do not admit that God decreed sin, as the means of attaining this end, yet are we told that Adam, by the divine decree, fell necessarily, that is, unavoidably, into sin—from whence of necessity, followed all the sins that were committed afterwards, and the corruption of all mankind: which is, with the supralapsarians, certainly to make God the author of sin. It is taught, that the necessity of sinning was thus laid on the human family, and is wholly unavoidable on the part of the reprobate.[4]

Apollos.—In this view of it, surely both opinions amount to the same.

Aquila.—They do; and what can be more dishonourable, what more unworthy of the Deity—what more derogatory to the divine character, and opposed to the divine purity and holiness, than to make him, either by a positive averment, or by a plain and legitimate inference, the author of sin? Is it not sin, my brother, that is so highly inconsistent with, and opposed to the holiness of God? Does he not forbid it by commands the most positive? Does he not threaten to punish it with nothing short of everlasting torments—and can he wink at, or could he decree it?[5]

Apollos.—Most certainly he could not; this is too monstrous; such a consideration as this, would deter all who are concerned for the glory of God, from embracing such a harsh and unbecoming idea. But it is said, that this apparent inconsistency with the divine purity, in such an economy, is reconciled by the fact of its justice.

Aquila.—But this very thing we are prepared to disprove: for it is evidently repugnant to the divine justice.

Apollos.—How will you make out this?

[1] These are the express words of Calvin, 3d book, 23d chap. 1st sec. Many similar quotations to the same effect might be made.

[2] Scott and Henry seem to be of this opinion.

[3] Whitby, Fletcher and Limborch. [4] Ibid. [5] Fletcher, Watson and Whitby.

Aquila.—In this way: 1. By this decree, God is supposed to reprobate men, considered as innocent; i. e. irrespective of any future actions, according to the supralapsarian notion; for those whom, by his mere will and pleasure, he would render guilty and reprobate, when they deserved no such thing—which is the sublapsarian notion, are both contrary to the very nature of justice, as understood by us, and maintained in God's word.[1] To predestinate an innocent person to eternal destruction, regardless of his future deeds, is most certainly beyond the bounds of the divine right, which is limited by the rectitude or righteousness, of the divine nature, as was argued at another time, my friend; nor is it less unjust to reprobate men, who are rendered guilty, not voluntarily, but by a determination before even the decree for their creation, of that Being who purposed that creation. While there is the corruption consequent on the fall, and the natural leaning toward and disposition for sin, yet can there be no propriety of speech, and no reason, in affirming, that any are personally guilty who are incapable of voluntary action; or who can avoid, on a knowledge of duty, the labyrinth of sin, by flying to Christ. The guilty person, properly speaking, is he, who, when it was in his power to avoid sin, made choice of it by his own free and voluntary act.[2]

Apollos.—But it is said that God foresaw their acts, and decreed accordingly; and therefore it is just.

Aquila.—But, my friend—this is changing the ground, and coming over to our side of the question; let this be admitted, and it is all we ask—we are agreed: God foreseeing the unbelief and wickedness of the reprobate, decreed his punishment, as an unbeliever.[3]

Apollos.—I perceive, there is the difficulty, and this would be changing the ground.

Aquila.—The eternal decree for the destruction of the reprobate, without respect to his unbelief and rejection of the gospel, is also opposed to the divine justice, since by it God is supposed to require of the reprobate, under the penalty of eternal damnation, faith and obedience, though he has either taken away, or decreed not to give them, the power of performing those terms. Tell me, Apollos—what can be more opposed to the pure justice of a holy God, than this?

Apollos.—Surely no man is bound to perform impossibilities.

Aquila.—Nature itself teaches this. A man cannot render himself guilty of eternal punishment, by not performing an impossibility.[4] Indeed the guilt of the greatest and the severest punishment, requires such a power and faculty, that we may be able to preserve, by faith in Christ, that freedom from condemnation and guilt, which are wholly incompatible with necessity. Necessity or constraint, for the performance of an action, absolves us, my friend—from all fault, and consequently from all guilt.[5]

Apollos.—It would really seem so.

Aquila.—No man can be justly punished for a thing that he could never avoid; and on the contrary, no man can be rewarded as a believer, for any deed done, in evidence of his faith, if it were not voluntary, perfectly so, on his part.[6]

Apollos.—But there are sundry objections to these positions, my friend Aquila. It is said, among other things, that God, in the business of predestination, does not act as a judge, but as a sovereign Lord.[7]

Aquila.—But I hope you will not, then, make God, therefore, an unjust sovereign. The dominion of God, as it ought not, so it cannot be separate from his justice, by which, it is always governed; and especially, Apollos—when the

[1] Fletcher, Watson and Whitby.
[2] Whitby and Limborch.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Wesley, Fletcher, Limborch and Watson.
[6] Ibid. and Whitby.
[7] Calvin.

eternal misery of men, the severest punishment that can be inflicted, is concerned, surely the quality of a judge ought not to be separated, and distinct from that of a sovereign. Besides, God himself shows, that he will not deal with us, as an absolute Lord, but as a judge; because, as a just Lord, 'the judge of all the earth,' he has prescribed laws, under the sanction of rewards and punishments, according to which, he has declared that he will judge us. All his acts then, that relate to the eternal destruction of men, are judicial—from whence it is, that the punishment is styled a condemnation, or damnation; i. e. an exclusion or banishment by the righteous act of a just judge, from his favour, into a state of perpetual torture and misery.

Apollos.—But you know it is said, that reprobation is not a destination to punishment, but a bare *preterition*, or non-election to glory.

Aquila.—But this cannot be said of those who maintain that reprobation is a destination to eternal destruction.[1] It is true, my friend—others use softer expressions, yet do they in reality agree in the same opinion, as we have already proved. What is this preterition? Is it a bare negation of all divine actions, my friend Apollos? Has God determined nothing about those that are passed by? Surely this will not be asserted by any who believe in an unconditional election.[2] Few will venture to say, that God leaves them unnoticed; as the elect are destined to eternal life, by an absolute decree, do let the votaries of it tell us, to what, those who are not elected, but are passed by, are destined. Are they to go to hell or heaven? O, say you not to heaven? and is that a display, my friend—of the divine benevolence?

Apollos.—But you know, it is urged that God was not a debtor to any man; and though the human race should lack those abilities which are requisite for the performance of duty, yet God does not on that ground, recede from his right of exacting it; just as a creditor, my friend—does not lose his right to claim, by the insolvency of his debtor.

Aquila.—I frankly admit, that God is a debtor to no man; but notwithstanding this, he cannot depart from the rules of justice and equity. Neither the one, nor the other, allows that a man should be punished for not performing a duty which, for want of ability, it was impossible for him to do. And I may add, much less does justice allow, that a duty should be required of him, whom the Almighty himself has rendered incapable of performing it.[3]

Apollos.—Still it is said, that God in Adam, gave all men the power of believing the gospel; but when Adam sinned, they all lost it in him.

Aquila.—I never read in Scripture, that God gave Adam any such power, much less all his posterity in or through him. This will be apparent, from the fact, that Adam, in his state of innocency, was not obliged to believe the gospel, since such a faith implies that we are sinners, freed from sin by the grace of God, and restored to the state of salvation. Let me ask, is it likely that Deity should give to the first man a power which he did not need, but deny it to those who wanted it most? This would certainly be contrary to all justice and equity. Moreover, according to their argument, Adam was necessarily to fall into sin, by the previous divine determination, and his sin, by that predestination, was to be entailed on his posterity, not by a natural dependency, or the corruption of our nature, but by the imputation of God alone. It follows then, that neither he, nor his posterity, lost this power through their own fault—but God, by determining the one, and imputing sin to the other, deprived them of that faculty.[4] I would then ask, how could he require a duty of those whom he had rendered incapable of performing that duty, by thus taking away the faculty, or the ability, by

[1] Calvin, and all who follow him, are decisive on this point.

[2] This is positively the argument of Dick, at which the reader will be surprised; page 369, Ed. 1836. [3] Wesley, Whitby and Fletcher. [4] Whitby and Limborch.

which it was to be accomplished? And I think it will doubtless appear reasonable to all, that God restored the power of returning to him and believing, lost by the fall, to Adam, when he gave the promise, 'the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. If so, with what colour of justice is it denied to his posterity, who consented not to his sin, who were born many ages after? Would not this be to grant favour to the one guilty of the voluntary offence, and to punish the one who took no part in that offence? This would be injustice;[1] but according to the Scriptures, God is ready to save all for Christ's sake, and that which we have not by nature, is bestowed by grace—so that all have the ability, and all may improve the light, and come, if they will, to the knowledge of the true, the living, and eternal God. Indeed, my friend—it is not only in opposition to justice and holiness, to admit the doctrine of unconditional decrees, but the whole system of absolute predestination, is repugnant to the divine sincerity.

Apollos.—How, my brother—can you possibly make out this?

Aquila.—Upon the supposition of absolute election and reprobation, every action of God, with respect to men, and all the things which he decrees, and operates, as they regard men, are merely illusory and equivocative.

Apollos.—Where will this appear?

Aquila.—It will especially present itself in the divine precepts, and in the promises and threatenings of the Deity, both with respect to the elect, and reprobate.[2]

Apollos.—Do show me, how it will appear with regard to the elect, first.

Aquila.—I will. First, in that he requires of them an obedience that he knew it was impossible for them to perform, and which he alone could work in them, by an irresistible power; this is certainly equivocation, to say the least. Again, he threatens them with eternal death, if they do not obey, into which it was impossible for them to fall, because he had already predestined them to salvation and life, by an eternal and an irrevocable decree. Is there sincerity in all this, my friend? In addition to these things, what God works in the elect by an irresistible power, he reckons as a duty performed by them, in which he professes to be pleased, for which he commends them,—and at the end of the world, will reward them, for having thus faithfully and perseveringly discharged their duties, with everlasting life. What is all this, but a mere farce, my brother—if man be incapable of voluntary action? Is it not charging the Deity with prevarication, with representing one thing as true, while he certainly means another.[3]

Apollos.—This does really seem inconsistent.

Aquila.—It will more obviously appear, if you will but look at it as it respects the reprobate.[4]

Apollos.—Why do you think so?

Aquila.—The prevarication which the doctrine of absolute and unconditional predestination charges on God, with regard to the reprobate, will appear manifestly, if we consider that God is supposed to prescribe obedience to those whom he would not have to be obedient, and to whom, by an absolute decree, he determined never to grant the power requisite for obedience. And he is represented as offering and promising salvation to those whom, by an absolute and an irrevocable decree, he has rejected from salvation forever; and as a consequence of these two things, he offers eternal life to them, under a condition impossible for them to perform, and which he will never render possible. Is there sincerity in this? Is it not prevarication, admitting, as I before said, the doctrine of unconditional, eternal decrees, as true?[5]

Apollos.—Indeed my friend—I had no idea that so many consequences would follow in the train of these opinions.

[1] Whitby and Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Fletcher, Whitby and Limborch.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Wesley and Fletcher.

Aquila.—These are not all. Admit it as true, and you will also have to admit, that God entreats, expostulates, is angry with, and is grieved at the reprobate when they do not discharge their duty, though he is not willing, that they should perform it. They are not only born incapable of moral actions, that shall be acceptable to him, and are not only incapable of discharging, in the strength of divine grace, granted through Jesus Christ, any duty prescribed in God's word, but by a decree, before the purpose was ever formed to create them, irrespective of any future act of theirs, they are doomed to endless misery and despair, as 'vessels of *wrath*,' fitted by God's decree for the promotion of his *glory* alone, for everlasting destruction.[1] And besides all this. To say that Deity condemns the reprobate, as obstinate and rebellious, to eternal fire, as the just punishment of this their rebellion, whom before that they were rebels, he appointed to that state of misery, by his own, mere arbitrary pleasure, is Apollos—to charge God with hypocrisy. I know not what else to call it. Admit this, and who can clear the Deity of the foul charge of dissimulation, which is thus, *unintentionally* no doubt, imputed to him by those who contend for the doctrine of absolute decrees.

Apollos.—But stop my friend—let us hear what is said on the other side of the question concerning God's sincerity, in all this matter. Some object to your view, by saying that God in his precepts, does not declare what he would have men to do, but only what they are obliged to do, because his true will, is not contained in the divine commands, but in his holy decrees, which are his *secret* will.[2]

Aquila.—Why my dear brother, this very exception, confirms most positively what we say. It proves the accusation true. Who, I ask would not conclude, when God commands a thing that he wills it, especially when he annexes to it the greatest promises, and the severest threatenings? I ask what greater evidence can there be, of his true will, than his commands, as set forth in his word? But if God according to this view commands one thing, and wills another, and that too, that is quite contrary to it, and that also, which shall, notwithstanding his command, inevitably come to pass, may we not in justice say, that he prevaricates with men?[3] And besides, if God be said not to will what he commands but just the opposite with respect to the reprobate, how in the name of common sense, can these men be said not to do the will of God, when they neglect his precepts? Indeed, they could not do otherwise, for 'God has predestinated whatsoever comes to pass.' It is true they disobey his commands; but they are his revealed, not his secret will. They are fulfilling his secret will, purpose, decree or intention, in living in sin, in order to be damned.[4]

Apollos.—But may it not be said that the will of God may be, though not his revealed will, the rule of the reprobate's duty?

Aquila.—Certainly not, if you mean not the duties set forth in the Bible, but the decreeing or secret will of God. For the plain reason, that if it be secret, it lies hid from the reprobates, nor does the rule of duty lay in his commanding will, that is, the Bible, for that is not the true will of God, but is improperly so called, and such as is no will at all, only with respect to the elect. There is according to this argument no law for the reprobate.[5]

Apollos.—But may it not be inferred from the precepts, that the reprobate are bound to do a prescribed duty.

Aquila.—I think not: for if they were obliged to do contrary to that which God decrees, they must surpass in power the Deity himself, and you will not certainly admit this. No man can be bound to the performance of an impossibility, but God has decreed, that the reprobate shall never repent, believe, and be

[1] Dick admits this to be the supralapsarian notion, but condemns it, while by his own argument he runs into the same error.

[2] This is Calvin's argument.

[3] Fletcher, Whitby, and Limborch.

[4] Calvin.

[5] Whitby, and Limborch.

saved, and if they could do it, they would certainly be more powerful than God himself, and counteract the strength and force of his decrees.[1]

Apollos.—But brother, it is said that God offers salvation to none unless they believe, but reprobates will never believe.

Aquila.—We have a plain and a short answer to this objection. God offers salvation to all to whom the gospel is preached, and my friend—he offers it to them on the terms of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. He invites them to lay hold on those terms, that thereby they may attain to eternal life: but if he did not offer eternal life to the reprobate how could they reject it? What, reject a thing they never were offered? No man can reject a benefit, of which he never has had the proffer. To the reverse of this, in the Bible it is positively affirmed, that they who do not believe and hearken to the voice of the Lord, do actually and personally reject the counsel of God against their own souls.[2] I will give you a few texts in confirmation of this point. In Mark's gospel it is said, that Christ when he ordained his apostles, said to them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.' Here is the offer of a benefit, to all, to whom the gospel shall come, on condition of faith. But this offer we contend is rejected by many to their own ruin, and the Scripture says so. 'But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.' 'I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, and will mock when your fear cometh.' Hence said our Lord, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' 'He came to his own, and his own received him not.' 'They would not have him to reign over them,' they rejected the word of God 'and counted themselves unworthy of everlasting life.' Indeed, my friend, the Scripture styles those who perish not only *rebels* but *fools*, 'for my people,' the Israelites, 'are foolish, have not known me, they are sottish children, and have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.' 'The wise men,' says the same prophet, Jeremiah, 'are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?' The prophet Hosea, speaks in the same way, 'Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.' Hence says our Lord, 'Every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.' Do let me ask my friend—can that man be called a fool who rejects a good, of which he never heard, or had the offer? Do tell me *can* one reject a benefit, which was never intended for, much less proffered to him?[3]

Apollos.—But my friend, it is said, that there is your error, that no promises of eternal life are made to the reprobate, but when God declares to them 'repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,' or 'he that believes' 'shall be saved,' that these and like passages are not divine promises of eternal life, but only so many bare intimations, whereby God signifies, that according to his decree remission of sins is annexed to repentance, and faith in Christ Jesus to eternal life.[4]

Aquila.—This, my brother Apollos—is either a very trifling and unimportant objection, or it is a very serious reflection on the promises of God.

[1] Whitby and Limborch.

[2] And as Whitby justly argues if the reprobate do not believe, they are not to be blamed for they cannot help it. [3] Whitby, and Limborch. [4] Calvin, Scott, and Henry.

Apollos.—How will you make this out?

Aquila.—It is trifling if your statement be true, since those propositions, wherein salvation is declared to be joined with faith, being pronounced by the supreme Lawgiver, who prescribes faith and obedience, are real promises, and equivalent to this, 'believe, and I will bestow upon thee eternal life.' But if this be not allowed, then this objection reflects on the divine promises, for it supposes that God is inviting men to faith in him, and is pressing its importance by the promise of eternal life, while the great object is not to save them, but barely to assert the connection that existed between salvation and faith: and because he will not bestow faith upon them, does really deny to them salvation, to whom it is offered in his word, which he has commanded to be preached to every creature.[1] Tell me, Apollos—is this sincere?

Apollos.—I must say it does not appear so.

Aquila.—From hence also it will be seen, as well as from your other objections, that the gospel, if the doctrine of absolute decrees be true, is preached to the reprobate, the largest portion of those living in Christendom, not for their benefit but to their disadvantage, which is to transform the word of life and salvation into the word of death and destruction.[2] My brother—this cannot be?

Apollos.—But it is said that the reprobates are not in themselves the object of the heavenly call, but only so by accident, as they are mixed with the elect.

Aquila.—But this is to call into question all manner of certainty about the divine call: for how can any man, according to this, be certain whether the gospel that he hears preached calls upon him or not. For ought he knows he has a call, which of late years is named the *common call*, which is given him by accident only, as he is mixed with the elect? But if the promises of God belong not to the reprobates, then neither can they, since it is confessed there is a necessary and an irrevocable connection between the two, reject the precepts, nor by rejecting them become disobedient.[3]

Apollos.—But ministers may indeed propose salvation to the reprobate, 'but God,' it is said, 'does no such thing, it is only to the elect that he offers it.'[4]

Aquila.—But, my friend—to say thus much is most wretchedly to evade the force of an argument. Are not ministers, if properly commissioned of God, his ambassadors, set apart, and sent forth on purpose to announce his will to all the world? When they invite men to repentance and faith upon the promise of eternal life, ought we not to consider it as valid and true as if God had spoken it, especially when they declare nothing but what is consonant to his will?[5] Surely, Apollos—the Bible, if such men would only peruse it with unprejudiced minds, would set them right, and show a more excellent way. Brother—our respect for a theory, however specious, should never permit us to warp, or twist the word of God, to suit our preconceived opinions. In this case, however, I must say, that to receive the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, which the best Calvinistic divines say, and argue too, can never be separated, one must receive so many inconsistencies, and must admit so many consequences, which, with the doctrine itself, are so derogatory to the divine perfections, that I am astonished when I behold men of acknowledged ability, resorting to methods to palliate and sweeten what Calvin justly calls a 'horrible decree.' Indeed Calvinistic divines appear convinced of the unreasonableness of the doctrine, at least of absolute reprobation, and admit it, only because as they contend that it is positively affirmed in the sacred Scriptures.[6] I must really, my friend, say, after all the time I have spent in the investigation of this subject, after all the reading and attention of which I am capable, it does appear strange to me that men are not ashamed: that

[1] Fletcher, Whitby, and Limborch.
[2] bid.
[3] Limborch and Whitby.
[4] Calvin.
[5] Wesley and Fletcher.
[6] Calvin and Scott.

they do not blush at the reception of a doctrine that casts so much reflection on the divine sincerity, a doctrine that cannot be maintained without doing violence to our own reasoning faculties, without wresting the holy Scriptures, the word of eternal life.[1] To admit this, we must be involved every day in difficulties and intricate mazes, from which we cannot, while we hold such opinions, extricate ourselves, or speak of God's dealings toward men in any other way than as a tyrant, who does not punish them because they have voluntarily rebelled against all law, and rejected the Saviour, but simply because he wills to reduce them to anguish extreme, for the promotion of his glory. I aver it, my friend—that such an intention or purpose is diametrically opposed to the infinite wisdom of the eternal God.

Apollos.—But it is argued that it is a display of the infinitude of his wisdom and foreknowledge.[2]

Aquila.—No! my friend—it cannot be reconciled with the divine wisdom, because it introduces the Deity as expecting what he never intended should come to pass, and what never can come to pass, viz: the conversion and reformation of the reprobate, and also as prescribing, under the promise of eternal life, what he intended always should be done, and which very thing can only be done by him, and unless he should do it, will never be done at all: I mean to constrain the *elect* to believe and obey. Are not these things, my dear friend—repugnant to all the notions we have of divine wisdom?[3]

Apollos.—Most assuredly, if the end be predestinated unconditionally, it cannot be avoided by any contingency, and it would argue a want of wisdom in Deity, to expect and desire what he has determined shall never be accomplished.

Aquila.—Yes—and a want of sincerity too: but above all, this absolute decree is incompatible with the love of God.

Apollos.—How will you prove this?

Aquila.—In the Holy Scriptures the divine philanthropy, or love of God to man, is magnified to the utmost extent, as it should always be. There we are especially informed that God is reconciled to us by Christ Jesus, his love is magnified because extended to all men: he is represented as tender and compassionate, as a gracious and merciful Father, as the universal friend of all mankind, and the passionate lover of all souls. But this narrow contracted doctrine, take it as received by supra or sublapsarians, we have proved it all one, presents the Almighty in the most hideous form, as a wilful, cruel, inexorable being, revengeful and unwilling to be merciful, or rather so unmerciful, that he formed men only for sorrow that is extreme.[4] In the decree of absolute reprobation, God is placed before us as one who acts towards his rational creatures, the greatest part of them at least, with implacable rage and boundless hatred: one whose cruelty, and tyranny surpass that of the most inhuman and cruel of tyrants: one who damns men by an absolute decree, before they were created: and one who creates them only to damn them.[5] You seem amazed by brother—let me go on. This unconditional reprobation represents God as destining men to sin and to destruction, and it precludes them from all hopes and means of bettering their condition. It then consigns them to everlasting misery for what they could not help nor avoid.[6] This is represented as the God that sports himself at our unhappiness, and triumphs in our fall. In a word, my brother—they would represent him as

[1] The words of professor Dick are remarkable: 'However awful and revolting to our feelings the doctrine may be, however liable to objections it may seem, and whatever startling inferences our perverse reason may deduce from it, it is impossible, with any appearance of fairness, to deny that it,' namely, the doctrine of reprobation, 'is delivered in the Scriptures.'—Dick's Theo. page 369, ed. 1836.

[2] Calvin, Scott, Dick, and Henry.

[3] Fletcher, Wesley, and Whitby.

[4] Fletcher and Watson.

[5] Limborch and Whitby.

[6] Limborch and Whitby

one who wreaks his vengeance, and darts his thunderbolts all around, without distinction, sparing but a few whom he fondly, and for no reason, but simply because he wills it so, loves, while with a revengeful hand he casts the rest of mankind down to everlasting fire.[1] Not only men of all sorts and conditions, families, tribes, nations and countries, but what is horrid to think of, even some of those helpless innocent babes, born both of pagan and christian parents, who die before they have known the difference of good and evil, much less acted or performed either. What think you, Apollos—to represent the Deity thus, is it to make him a God of love?

Apollos.—O! my friend—this is making the Divinity a ghastly spectre, a frightful monster, or some fell fury, not a God of mercy, the father of consolation and comfort. If these be some of the fatal consequences that naturally flow from such a system, I am sure I shall never adopt it as the plan which displays such an immensity of love.

Aquila.—The world, my friend—will see, and after all find, that God is ready to have mercy on all: and you may depend on it, that the absolute predestinarian, when he looks at his system, and applies it to his own family, his wife, his children, himself, must tremble. Good night.

COLLOQUY VII.

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PARTS OF THE SACRED WRITINGS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ADDUCED, IN SUPPORT OF THE DOCTRINE, OF ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL PREDESTINATION.

Apollos.—I have been engaged since our last interview, my friend—in the consideration of the great subject of divine predestination. I have been looking into the arguments of that class of divines who receive and teach the doctrine of an unconditional election and reprobation—and I find, there are a certain set or class of texts, which they usually quote, to support their notions. I have come this evening, with the determination to request an examination of them; and I shall be truly pleased, if you will undertake it.

Aquila.—With pleasure, my friend! It is not to be supposed, that a body of such intelligent and holy men, as many of the divines of that way of thinking are, would embrace opinions of this kind, without believing that they were authorized to do so from the word of God. I am of opinion, that in this they err, not that I would offer that opinion as an answer to their arguments, but I believe, that such a fair and consistent exposition has been given, of those very texts, quoted to prove the doctrine of absolute predestination true, that any man who will read them, in connection with the context, must be constrained to say, that reason and Scripture are against this notion. It will then, only be my part to introduce the opinions and expositions of others, and your part to offer your objections.

Apollos.—Not my own, my friend—but those of others, who hold the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation.

Aquila.—Well, I mean simply, that you shall offer the texts in favour of this doctrine, and I will assign some reasons why I think they should not be taken in

[1] I hope it will not be said that this is a misrepresentation. I had thought myself that it was only the opinion of supralapsarians, until I referred to others called sublapsarians or moderate Calvinists. These are the words of professor Dick, 'Their sinfulness,' he means the reprobate, 'could not be the reason of rejection in the one case, since it was not the cause of rejection in the other,' the elect. 'We must therefore resolve their opposite allotments into the will of God, who gives and withholds his favour according to his pleasure.'

support of the Calvinistic creed. But that we may avoid confusion, let me suggest, that our arguments be reduced under two general heads:—those in which an attempt is made to defend absolute election, and then those offered in support of unconditional reprobation.

Apollos.—This is well thought of; for the more methodical we are, the less liable to error, at least to confusion. I find it a great advantage to consider things in order, and by rule; it helps me much.

Aquila.—It does so; and a great man has advanced the idea, that he who does not act, and think too, by rule, accomplishes nothing of importance. Let me also suggest another thing that may help us; I mean a division of the several sorts or classes of texts, which are offered in support of absolute election; so that we may come understandingly to the point at issue. For instance, some texts make mention of election, of electing a few, and of some ordained to eternal life; others present the cause of election, and in them, as we once before named, are set forth the good pleasure and purpose of God, the counsel of his will, and the grace and the mercy of God; while other texts seem to present all other divine and gracious acts, as subordinate to the election of God, which as an act, preceded all others.

Apollos.—Well, my friend—take this very arrangement; I have no objection to it at all—and commence with those arguments founded on the word *election,* or *elect,* and consider them.

Aquila.—As to that class of arguments, Apollos—I would say, it is certainly incorrect, to infer an absolute and an eternal election to salvation, without any respect to faith, from the bare word 'election.' It should most certainly have been proved that this word has no other sense in the holy Scriptures. Now when we come at another time, to treat of the actual election of the faithful, as one of the promises of the New Testament, we will then produce the various acceptations of that word; by which it will appear, that it is no where in Scripture to be met with in that sense, in which it is held by either supra or sublapsarians. At present however, my friend—as it will not divert us from that arrangement which we proposed for ourselves in the commencement, we will consider any text that is usually presented, to show that our view of it, as conditional, is fallacious.

Apollos.—With this understanding then, I will offer a text, and it is one which is often quoted, and one that was used by our Lord himself, 'So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.' These last words are also to be met with in the twenty-second chapter of the same book, 'for many be called, but few chosen.'

Aquila.—Although my friend—I have heard them quoted hundreds of times, I never could see, and I am sure no honest mind can come to the conclusion, that they do at all teach the doctrine of absolute election. In the twentieth chapter of Matthew, the book out of which these words are taken, as is manifest from the foregoing parable, by 'the chosen,' we are to understand those who were last called, viz: at the eleventh hour of the day, and who, after working one hour, received a reward equal with those who had borne the heat and burden of the day. From this, it will be seen that these elect, or chosen, are not opposed therefore, to others who were excluded from receiving the reward, which must have been, did this text really mean the decree of absolute predestination; but it actually relates to those who were made equal to them, in the reward, though they had borne, as already said, the greatest burden and heat of the day. Besides, my brother—election, or this choosing, is not said to precede the performance of the duty, but to follow it, when the day's work was ended.

Priscilla.—O! that is what I have often looked at—then, and not till then, are they called the elect, or chosen.[1]

Aquila.—And this, on account of that goodness and grace granted to them, by which the Lord was pleased to make them who were last, equal to those who were first. If you will turn also to the 22d of Matthew, you will find that the other place, where these same words are used, is a conclusion from a parable; but that it does not relate to such an absolute election, whereby those denominated the elect or chosen, are opposed to the called, and who themselves are brought in with an inefficacious call, by the external word only, and yet are irrevocably reprobated by God, which appears from the parable itself, and the whole scope of it.[2]

Apollos.—I had forgot to take these texts in connection with the context.

Aquila.—In the whole parable, our Saviour designed to represent the divine goodness and beneficence towards the Jews, and their wilful rebellion and obstinacy toward the living and merciful God, as the true and proper cause of their rejection, which would have been of no force, on the supposition of an absolute decree of election and reprobation. From the intention then, of the parable preceding the words, it must be said, that by the 'called,' we are to understand those who did not hearken to the invitation of God, although they did profess, in some measure, an external obedience, and by this means would be reckoned among the number of the faithful, yet were devoid of true faith, and upright and holy hearts;[3] but by the elect, or chosen, those who had obeyed the call of God; and are therefore taken out of, and elected from the rest, that they may be partakers of the marriage feast, i. e. everlasting life.[4]

Apollos.—I find, whenever I advance a text to sustain the objections which are made to any doctrine, it is of infinite importance to understand the context, and that well: indeed it is, my brother—so forcibly impressed on my mind, that I hesitate to present the opinions of any man, however learned, until I have read the entire context.

Aquila.—You are certainly right, my friend—to take detached parts of Sacred Writ, we may prove almost any thing. The Bible should be taken altogether as a whole, and as a whole too that can never contradict itself.

Apollos.—Well—I will adduce another text, it may be found in the first chapter of Ephesians, 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' Does this text clearly set forth the doctrine of an absolute election? Now it is said that an election is not only here proclaimed, but that it is made before the foundation of the world; and also that faith and obedience are the fruit of it, and cannot therefore be the condition that precedes it.

Aquila.—If you will search the Bible I think you will find that this is the only text that mentions an election before the foundation of the world; but in all other places, wherein that word is used, we are plainly to understand by it, that divine act by which the Deity makes a discrimination between men in time. Election therefore, in this place, does not properly mean or denote an election to glory, but election, or rather the decree of election to grace; for by it we are chosen to be holy and faithful, God decreeing, before the foundation of the world, to elect us in Christ, i. e. to call us to faith and holiness of life, and by this means to all spiritual and heavenly blessings.[5]

[1] Whitby and Limborch.

[2] Ibid.

[3] This is according to the exposition of both Scott and Henry.

[4] Scott and Henry both apply this calling to the different sorts of men, and the choosing, to an experimental knowledge of salvation in this life.

[5] Whitby, Benson, and Limborch.

Apollos.—Think you this is the meaning of the text?

Aquila.—That this is its true and intended import you will perceive, my friend—if you will consider that this election is said to be in Christ; but the absolute election so much spoken of cannot be said to be made in Christ, because it preceded the decree of sending Christ into the world, according to the opinion of those who contend for the absolute, unconditional, and eternal decrees of the Deity. Their argument is this, God does not elect men, because he considers them as delivered by Christ, but because he has elected them, therefore he decrees Christ to be their Mediator.[1] Moreover, if the apostle here meant an election to glory, it will follow that this *glory* is the means of *grace;* for if God has elected us to glory, to the end that we may be holy, it follows that holiness, which is usually denoted by the word grace, is the end with respect to glory, which is highly absurd.[2] Now from these considerations, I think, my friend—that the exposition here given, in opposition to that by Calvin and others, is much the most consistent, and indeed suited to the whole argument of the apostle, throughout the chapter.

Apollos.—But it is objected that the election, such as you maintain, does not bring with it spiritual life. Election, it is said, in this place is of the same latitude as the blessing of God: as mentioned in the third verse, 'He hath blessed us according as he hath chosen us.' It is said it ought therefore to comprehend the blessing of faith, and a spiritual life, communicated by the grace of God.[3]

Aquila.—There is no consequence at all in this argument. The apostle thanks God for election, and for all the blessings flowing thence upon those who submit to this divine election: but does it follow that those blessings are of the same latitude with the divine election?

Apollos.—No! I suppose not. It may more justly be inferred, I presume, that those blessings shall be the portion of none besides the elect, because they flow from the election or choice to gospel privileges. But it is said that, 'as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Here again it is argued that not only some were ordained to eternal life, but likewise that this ordaining preceded their faith.

Aquila.—Mark, my friend—they are not said to be preordained, much less by God, but only ordained, i. e. disposed according to the true import of the word, to eternal life.[4] Now that by *ordained* we are not to understand those who are absolutely and unconditionally elected or chosen to eternal life, is manifest from hence, that it would then follow, that they who did not believe were reprobated by God from all eternity. That St. Paul and Luke the Evangelist not only knew this, but also were willing that it should be known to all men, and therefore committed it to writing, all of which is absurd in the extreme.[5] Moreover, if we examine we shall find that the whole context does not admit us, by the ordained, to understand those absolutely elected to eternal life. For St. Paul turns himself from the Jews to the Gentiles, because the former 'rejected the word of God, and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.' Then it is added of the Gentiles, that 'as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' If by the ordained we understand those absolutely elected to eternal life, this would not have been a reason of his turning from the Jews to the Gentiles, on account of the former rejecting the word of God, for it would follow that the Jews rejected it, because they were not elected to eternal life: and further, whoever among the Gentiles were not elected, it would also follow rejected the gospel?[6]

Apollos.—But this will not do?

Aquila.—I think not, my friend,—but it may be asked, what was the occasion

[1] Fletcher and Whitby.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Calvin and Scott.
[4] Benson, Whitby, and Clarke.
[5] Limborch.
[6] Ibid.

of the apostles turning from the Jews, to the Gentiles; and why was not the infidelity of those among the Gentiles, who were not elected to eternal life, as good a reason for his returning from them to the Jews, since according to this theory, whoever among the Jews were elected, did believe, as well as the elected among the Gentiles?[1]

Apollos.—What then, is the true meaning of the text?

Aquila.—It is said, and doubtless with much propriety, that some words which seem passive in the Hebrew language, are not really so, but are active, and signify an immanent and a reciprocal action; and the apostles of our Lord, with great propriety, follow in their writings, this example of their native tongue.[2] I will give you, my friend—some very glaring instances of it: 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' 'Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us; and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?' 'Submit yourselves therefore, to God; resist the devil, and he will flee from you;' 'likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you, be subject one unto another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,—casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' 'If so be, that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.' 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as is fit in the Lord;' 'that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded—in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part, may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again,' &c. 'Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.' Here then, Apollos—are specimens of that internal, that reciprocal action, as it is called, all which are calculated to show what is implied in the text you have offered for elucidation.

Apollos.—All certainly show an action on one-self.

Aquila.—They do; and to the same rule or custom, may be reduced the words of the text; for we have already suggested that the same word in the original, may be correctly rendered *disposed*, τεταγμενοι Tetagmenoi, here translated *ordained*, is most certainly used in this way here. Indeed it is elegantly opposed to the act of the unbelieving Jews, who judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. It signifies then, those who, by the assistance of the preventing grace of God, were *disposed*, purposed and intended in themselves to embrace, with that aid which the Deity granted, eternal life, under whatever terms it might be proposed to them.[3]

Apollos.—This does appear to be the meaning of the passage; but there is an objection to this exposition,

Aquila.—What is that, my friend?

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Whitby, Fletcher, Limborch.

Apollos.—If this be admitted, then some previous dispositions in men, may also be admitted. That is to say, a man may be disposed to eternal life, and willing to seek it, before he hears the gospel invitation.

Aquila.—My dear brother—the Scripture is clear on this point. Was not Cornelius disposed to eternal life, before he heard the gospel invitation by Peter? Surely he was; and we read, 'but he that doeth truth,' i. e. the man sincerely disposed to know the way to heaven, 'cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God.' 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;' 'he that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.' I am not alone then, in this opinion; the Scriptures, and many of the learned, are on my side on this important point.[1]

Apollos.—This does most certainly render the words of the text most consistent, and in perfect accordance with the economy of divine grace, and the free agency of man.

Priscilla.—Yes; and it is so much calculated to justify the dealings of God with man, and lay the guilt at the sinner's own door. Every man has granted to him one talent at least, 'the true light lighteneth every man,'—when that light is improved, and properly exercised, there is a disposition to pursue the course that will lead to eternal life; but if it be stifled, the reverse takes place. I have often known it the case, that people were seriously concerned about their souls, before they ever were accustomed to go to church, or ever heard a gospel discourse. At last the man of God comes along, and as in this case, those who were honestly anxious for eternal life, at last perceiving the way that led to it, laid hold on, and embraced the pardon of sin, by faith in our Lord Jesus. O! how simple and how plain is this method! it is all of divine grace; 'grace,' 'light,' a 'manifestation of the Spirit,' are given to all; like the fire hid in the flint, it is implanted in every bosom by the living God; many men 'quench the Spirit,' and smother the fire, until by unbelief it is extinguished forever. Others voluntarily seek to improve the light, and when the gospel is preached to such, like steel it strikes the hidden flame, from the flinty heart, and such *disposed* to eternal life, believe, and are freely pardoned.

Apollos.—O, this clears the text of every difficulty; I have not the shadow of a doubt on my mind, 'as many as were *disposed* to eternal life, believed.'

Aquila.—This is certainly the fair and consistent meaning of the text. I would not say so, if I did not most conscientiously believe it.

Apollos.—This appears very clear to my mind; there are other texts however, which are often quoted, where the counsel and purpose of God are spoken of, that I should like to have also examined.

Aquila.—These come under that second class of arguments, which we proposed to consider. There are many of these texts where the *will, counsel, good pleasure,* and *purpose* of the Deity are named. But permit me, Apollos—to tell you, that it is certainly a weak way of arguing, to infer any thing from words only, in favour of the absolute election of some few, unless it could be proved from those places, that God, according to the counsel of his will, had elected some men *especially,* to eternal salvation, without any regard to their faith or works; which certainly cannot be done, since in none of these texts is there the least sign of any such election.[2]

Apollos.—Do you think that this can be proved, my brother?

Aquila.—I really do,—and that by the closest and fairest examination of the texts themselves.

[1] Whitby, Fletcher, Limborch; and Doctor Scott himself, admits that it may mean a previous disposition, the product of preventing grace.

[2] Whitby, Watson, Limborch.

Apollos.—Well, let me give you one; analyze it, and see if it be not found there. The first I will give you, are the words of our Lord: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

Aquila.—I am sure that there is nothing in this text, that does in the least imply any such absolute election; much less can any solid argument be deduced from it, in favour or defence of any such system, as that of unconditional predestination.

Apollos.—How do you prove it?

Aquila.—The text admits of a two fold interpretation. The first is, that our Saviour, having an eye to the mission of the apostles, described in the foregoing chapter, thanks God that he had not committed the doctrine of salvation to wise men, endued with the learning of this world, by whose ministry he would call men to salvation, and bring them to the faith as it was to be revealed in him; but to 'babes,' i. e. men comparatively illiterate, like children, wanting in wisdom and learning. The glory of God was most conspicuous, in enduing such illiterate men with a knowledge so sublime, and rendering them capable of an undertaking so arduous and difficult.[1] Again, my friend—another interpretation of the text is, that by the 'wise and prudent,' we are to understand those puffed up with self-conceit, and the vanity of their own wisdom and understanding; and by 'babes,' persons that are humble and teachable, like children, this being a common term, I mean children, for the disciples of our Lord, on account of their simplicity and humility of heart and manners. The meaning then, of the words, would be, that the Saviour, reflecting on the infidelity of those who inhabited Chorazin and Bethsaida, thanks his Father for having so planned that system of truth, about to be promulgated to the world, that it should be adapted to the peculiar condition of the lowly and humble poor, while it was humiliating, and unsuited to the pride and vanity of the haughty worldling. And this may moreover, be the meaning of the text, because the gospel has no regard, and pays no court to the good things, or wisdom of this world; but commands us to deny these, and pursue the future invisible blessings of heaven, from whence it seems to be foolishness, in the eyes of the worldly-minded and thoughtless man.[2]

Apollos.—This then is the simple reason, why the gospel is said to be hid from the wise—simply because they will not believe it; but revealed in the humble heart, that is, adapts itself to the peculiar state of their minds, and they, in the simplicity of their souls, readily hearken to it.

Aquila.—Yes; the Scripture every where advances this idea; 'For when, in the wisdom of the world, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.' Take then the words in any sense you will, Apollos—and it must be apparent, that the good will of God is manifest, and presents itself as the cause of the divine action; but in neither sense, is there any thing that will present itself as evidence, in support of the doctrine of absolute election.[3] To all this may be added, the exposition of our Lord himself. When John sent to him, to know if he were the true Messiah, he directed the messengers to inform him of the signs, by which his Messiahship was attested, and among others, bid John's disciples to tell him, that 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them.' These, in every age of the world, have been neglected. Might not the remark of our Lord, have special relation to them, and imply that the time had arrived when men would go forth, who should proclaim salvation to the poor, as well as to the rich; when the lowly in heart, and in mind, should hear and understand the great and glorious plan for rescuing men from everlasting death?

[1] Benson and Limborch. [2] Whitby and Limborch. [3] Clarke and Wesley.

Apollos.—This, I think, seems quite reasonable. There is however, another text that is very often quoted, and as it is a favourite one, with some, who constantly apply it to themselves, I want you to give me your views of it; 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'

Aquila.—There is not in this place, any thing at all, that countenances the doctrine of absolute election. It is evident that our Lord, by the 'little flock' here named, means his disciples, who cleaved to him, while others deserted, and were but few in number. He calls God their Father—therefore he considers them as ingrafted into himself by faith, for by faith it is that we are the sons of God. 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' They had received him, or as St. Paul says, 'they were all the children of God by faith.' Hence is apparent, the design of our Lord. He wished to dissuade his disciples from a needless solicitude and care, for the things of this life; not only because their heavenly Father careth for them, but also because all those things should be added over and above to them, who 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' He then adds, 'fear not, little flock,' i. e. be not anxiously careful for the future things of this life, for 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,' viz: that of God. Pray tell me, my brother—what is there in all this, that favours the doctrine of an absolute and unconditional election of some, to everlasting joy, without any respect to their faith or obedience?[1]

Apollos.—There is no election or reprobation either in it, I do candidly believe; but then it is said there is in that other favourite passage. And indeed it is one in which I delight, though I do not receive it as absolute predestinarians do.

Aquila.—What is that?

Apollos.—'Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

Aquila.—Truly, my brother—I see nothing here from whence, even with any sort or kind of probability, it may be even inferred, that we are to understand the divine purpose here mentioned, as the absolute and unconditional appointment of some persons to eternal life, no respect being had, to either faith or works.

Apollos.—What then is the purpose of God here mentioned?

Aquila.—It is evidently, as set forth, that determination of the Deity, whereby he was fixed, before the world began, to call men to seek salvation, and place them in the possession and enjoyment of the same, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle simply and plainly tells us, that the calling proceeded from God, not according to our works; that is he was not moved to do it by the merit of our works, since we were all sinners, subject to the divine wrath and condemnation, but according to his own purpose and grace in Christ Jesus. Now, my brother—although God in his gracious call to salvation had no regard to our works, yet would he not bestow it on man, though called, only on condition of that faith. That is the medium and instrument, not meritoriously so, of a change of heart, and the renovation of our nature, which cannot be denied.[2] Let me, Apollos—transpose these words, and present them according to the order of time, evidently set forth therein, and you will at once see the propriety of the above remarks. 'According to his,' i. e. God's, 'purpose,' i. e. intention or decree, 'and grace,' i. e. favour, 'which was given,' i. e. fixed upon in the mind of the divine Trinity, 'before the world began,' i. e. was created, 'but is now made manifest,' i. e. revealed, 'by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' He has 'called us with an holy calling,' 'and hath saved us, not according to our works:' O no! for

[1] Limborch and Whitby. [2] Ibid.

it is by faith, without the deeds or works of the law, that we are saved. Tell me, my friend—is there any unconditional and eternal election in all this?

Apollos.—How necessary it is to analyze almost every word of a text, sometimes, in order to understand it fully. I am sure that the purpose here set forth, was to call men to be saved, by Christ in his way of grace, without the merit of works. There is another text, and one too that is often quoted, which is used by St. Paul to the Romans. These are the words, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified.' Here it is said, my friend Aquila—is the golden chain of salvation, each of whose links is so fastened to the other, that whoever is partaker of the one, must be partaker of all the rest, and since the uppermost link is the *foreknowledge* of God, or his decree, from thence is derived, by a necessary connection, all the other comfortable blessings, together with salvation itself.[1]

Aquila.—To give a full reply to this objection, and clear up the words of the text, it will not be amiss to inquire, in the first place, what was the apostle's scope and intention in adducing it. From the whole chapter his design appears to be nothing else but to comfort the faithful, under the most grievous persecutions which they suffered for the sake of the gospel, and that for this reason, because if we suffer with Christ, we shall also partake with him of the heavenly glory, which reason he prosecutes at large, from the 17th to the 28th verse. In these and the following words, for the further consolation of the faithful under persecutions, he teaches them that these afflictions, so far from hindering them, would be a furtherance to their salvation, and shows by what methods and by what steps they should, through them, attain to everlasting salvation. Various expositions of this text have been given, but the context must ever be taken into the account, in order to understand it.

Apollos—Indeed I never thought about the design of the chapter. This is a very important thing, I at once perceive it. Many neglect it.

Aquila.—Yes, my friend—many an error has grown out of this course, not necessarily, but because those who read will not seek to understand the true meaning and design of an author. From the design of the chapter, thus cleared up, it is easy I think to give a fair solution of the words, so much insisted on, by those who hold the doctrine of absolute predestination.[2] It will thus appear, 1. That the characters, or subjects of these remarks of the apostle, are those who truly and sincerely love God, and to whom all the other things that follow are to be applied. Now the lovers of God, my friend—are those who obey him, or keep his commandments. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.' 'For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments.' These are 'the called according to his purpose,' the christian believers, who live according to the gospel rule, and seek not for righteousness according to the works of the law. 2. Now to such he says, that 'all things,' not their sins as some pretend to think, but their sufferings and persecutions, 'should work together for good;' because by them, instead of becoming miserable, as the world supposed, they should be the better prepared for everlasting life; by which, as by so many degrees, they should ascend to it. Hence, 3. This very assertion that 'all things work together for

[1] Calvin, Scott, and Henry.

[2] Dr. Scott admits the design of the chapter is to comfort the church under its afflictions, which were at times ready to overwhelm and discourage it.

their good,' the apostle proves by adding this reason, 'for whom he did foreknow them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,' &c. by which it is plain that none others are meant by those 'whom he foreknew,' than they who love God, 'being called according to his purpose.' You will observe, my friend—that this foreknowledge does not denote a bare knowledge, but also the approbation of the Deity, as is plain from Scripture, 'for the Lord knoweth,' i. e. approveth, 'the way of the righteous:' and again, 'Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth,' i. e. approveth, 'them that are his,' from whence it follows, that if to foreknow, as used here, means, according to some commentators, to decree, which I am ready to admit, the Deity thereby resolves to love and approve of those who, according to his calling through our Lord Jesus Christ, love him: for as he actually loves and approves, with complacency and delight, of none but them that love him, so he has decreed to delight himself in the love, and approve the course of none else.[1]

Apollos.—All this being granted what will be the exposition of the subject?

Aquila.—If we take those whom God foreknows, or approves, in this sense, the context it is thought, will be clear, and runs thus: All things, i. e. all the adversities and ills of this life, 'work together for good to them that love God,' i. e. for these faithful souls whom God approves, whom he foreknew, or decreed to love, 'them he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son,' i. e. that they should arrive at salvation by the way of the cross, or 'through much tribulation,' after the example of his Son, for this conformity does not consist only in the holiness which the faithful children of God possess, and exercise here, and the glory possessed by them hereafter, being thus like their master, but they are called to be like him in suffering, yea! to suffer with him, and thus be conformed to the image of God's dear Son, i. e. to tread in the way that leads to that glory. 'If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.'

Apollos.—My dear friend—I begin at once, I think, to see through the whole subject. Do proceed if you please, I interrupt you.

Aquila.—Well now, 4. The apostle adds, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: where, by the connection, it is evident that he still speaks of the same predestination, viz. that of the faithful to salvation, by the cross and afflictions, after the example of Christ, to whose image they are thus by suffering to be conformed. From this it also appears, that the calling ought to be taken in the same sense, not of the first calling of men to the faith, but of calling the faithful to the cross, to suffering and death, after the example of their master, and according to the purpose of God. For God in his Providence calls his children, at his own appointed time, to suffer, to which they ought to submit with a faithful and fixed purpose, a cheerful mind, and not to be diverted from the integrity of their lives, the sincerity of their love, the lively exercise of their faith, and the constancy of their profession, 5. It now follows that whom God calls to this work of suffering, them he also justified, or rather will justify, i. e. sustain, acquit, approve, the past time being used for the future, thereby to show the greater certainty of it, as is the meaning of the next words, and whom he justified them he also glorified, i. e. God will bestow upon them grace to support, shall daily approve their course, and give them continued evidence of acceptance in that work of affliction in which they are engaged, 'great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' Not only shall they have the daily witness of their pardon, and their acceptance, but God shall adjudge to his faithful suffering children eternal life as just: and in the general judgment shall justify, accept, and approve them, notwithstanding the accusations of him who is the 'accuser of the brethren:'

[1] Limborch and Whitby.

and at last, he shall crown them with that reward which he has promised to those who suffer with his Son—'they shall be glorified together.'[1]

Apollos.—Here is most certainly an interpretation, consistent with and agreeable to the design of the apostle, as evidently set forth in the context, the text being intended by him to comfort the afflicted under their numerous sorrows.

Aquila.—But if, by the foreknowledge of God, we should understand that eternal, absolute, and immutable election of certain men to salvation, and by the calling here named, what some denominate that efficacious call to faith, by which the called, are necessarily inclined to it—no reason of comfort, under afflictions, can possibly be raised from these words. It would not then follow, that all adversities will tend to the good of those that love God; because he has irrevocably elected some persons to salvation, according to his absolute purpose, without any regard had to their faith, and in time, calls them so effectually, as to work faith in them by an irresistible power. Now all this, has nothing at all to do with the afflictions of God's children, the great object and design of the apostle's remarks; nor does it follow, because whom the Lord justified, them he also glorified, that the justified should persevere, and never swerve from the faith, and the love of God, to their lives' end; for what is here spoken, is only certainly spoken of them, as far as they love God; but if they should happen to fail, in persecutions, as they deny God, so will he also deny them. 'If we suffer,' says the same apostle, 'we shall reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.' And our Lord, doubtless in allusion to the same thing, says, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.'

Apollos.—My friend—I am forcibly impressed, I assure you, with the consistency of the exposition given, and plainly perceive, that there is not that difficulty in the text that many suppose, especially when you take it, not in a detached way, but as every part of God's word should be, in connection with the context, and the analogy of faith, without which, few passages of Scripture ought ever to be taken at all.

Aquila.—I have said, that various expositions have been given of this part of Sacred Writ; before we advance farther, we may, and perhaps ought to take a cursory view at least, of the whole subject; it is an interesting one, when properly considered.

Apollos.—Do, my friend—if you please; I shall be truly gratified, for I want to understand it fully.

Aquila.—I have suggested, that the past time is used, in order to set forth the certainty of God's accomplishing what he has promised, to those that suffer with Christ Jesus, though the benefit itself is to be enjoyed in future time; but if it be decided that the past time, is that by which the true meaning and import of the text is to be ascertained, I do not certainly object to it; and it will be found that it renders it less liable to be used, in support of the doctrine of an unconditional election.

Apollos.—I have noticed this; for if 'them he also glorified,' be taken according to the fact of past time, it evidently shows, that there cannot be in it, that absolute and unconditional appointment, that is supposed, from all eternity, to heaven; for they are glorified now, and it is not that paradisical state of joy at God's right hand, that is here set forth. This I have been often led to observe.

Aquila.—It is certainly so, my friend—but to take the words as they were designed by the apostle, removes every difficulty, and makes the whole perfect, and easy to be understood. Here, in the design, is set forth the fact, that God's

[1] Limborch and Whitby.

children must suffer as did the Lord Jesus, their elder brother; that all the sufferings of those who loved God, and were called according to his purpose, of making them sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ, shall work together for their good; for whom he thus foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son; i. e. to be like him in sufferings, as in the 17th verse, 'if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together;' and as also quoted before, 'if we suffer, we shall also reign with him;' 'for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,' says St. Peter; and St. Paul says to the Thessalonians, 'that no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know, that we are appointed thereunto.' Now, whom he thus, in his purpose, to render them like their divine Master, and who are to be conformed to his image, of patience, meekness, resignation, in fine, holiness in suffering, he in due time called, as he does all his children, 'to endure hardness as good soldiers,'—while thus patiently engaged in doing the work to which they are, in the purpose and providence of God, appointed, he justified, i. e. he approved of them as faithful servants to their Lord, and afterward gave them a glorious reward for all their sufferings, they having 'through faith and patience inherited the promises.' This part of the text may be rendered, he made them glorious under sufferings, by the spirit of glory and of God, resting on them, and rendering them happy sufferers indeed.[1] Thus says St. Peter, 'if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part, he is evil spoken of, but on your part, he is glorified.' This I think is indubitable evidence of the true meaning of the last part of this controverted text, and it appears perfectly clear, when taken in connection with the avowed design of our apostle.

Apollos.—It seems then, from the whole tenor of the chapter, that to be 'justified,' as here mentioned, does not mean to have past sins pardoned, but to be approved of by the Deity, as patient sufferers in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they shall not only be sustained, and blessed with the approbation, presence and glory of God here, but after death be crowned with eternal life, at God's right hand.

Aquila.—Our Lord himself, used the same form of expression, when speaking of the presence and comfort, called glory, which his disciples, under affliction, should possess. 'And the glory,' says he, 'which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.' Now here is, my friend—a glory which was already possessed and enjoyed by Christ's disciples; although not in heaven, they were 'glorified;' God's presence, peace and joy, rested on them. The word εδοξασε Edoxase, 'he glorified,' upon the sense of which, the whole passage is made to turn, by some divines, is interpreted by the fathers in the same way in which we have done.[2] They say, 'he hath made them glorious, by giving them his holy Spirit,' and by 'endowing them with spiritual gifts.' All those christian virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit, are to them the earnest and confirmation of that future glory he hath promised to them.[3]

Apollos.—The arguments then, for unconditional election, and the absolute, final perseverance of the saints, as built generally on this text, are certainly fallacious, because founded upon an erroneous construction, or the false sense of a single word.[4]

Aquila.—But admit, as I before said, that it is taken as past time, it will follow that they are already glorified; the thing is now done, and the meaning will then

[1] Whitby and Limborch; also Mr. Wesley, who has some of the most pithy and excellent remarks—to which the reader is referred, on this subject.

[2] Whitby. [3] Whitby and Limborch. [4] Ibid.

be, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called, according to his purpose, of bringing sons to glory, by Christ Jesus; for whom he hath foreknown—chosen for his church and people now, as he did the Jews of old, and approved as such, them he predestinated, or fore-appointed, to be conformed to the image of his Son, their elder brother; that is, to be the sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ; and the method which he used to bring them to this adoption, was first to call them to faith in Christ; secondly, to justify them, upon their cordially embracing this faith, from past sins, so that there might be no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; and thirdly, to render them a glorious people, by the holy Spirit given unto them, because they are sons, as an earnest of their future glory. This is another very consistent interpretation of the text.[1]

Apollos.—This would appear quite a natural exposition, as the words are introduced to substantiate a previous position.

Aquila.—Just so; to confirm this, you may notice that the connective particle οτι oti, the first word in verse the 29th, meaning *for, on account of, because,* shows that the following part of the verse is adduced by the apostle, to prove the truth of the preceding proposition, viz: that all things work together for good, to them that love God—that are called according to his purpose; 'for whom he did foreknow,' &c. Again, my friend—you will remember, that this whole proof refers not to any thing yet to come, relating to the persons who are said to be called, according to his purpose, but to the time past, and what hath been done for them already; for the words are, 'whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate, he called, he justified, he glorified.' You must also bear in mind, that the words ους προεγνω ous progeno, 'whom he did foreknow,' do not relate to God's knowledge from all eternity, as already shown, but to his 'affectionate knowledge,' or approval of them as christians, and as members of his church, his chosen generation, his peculiar people. Hence says an apostle, 'if any man love God, he is known of God,' i. e. is approved, accepted of him. 'But now, that ye know God, or rather are known of him,' i. e. approved of him, 'the Lord knoweth who are his,' i. e. not only does he discern them, but they have his approbation and favour.[2]

Apollos.—With this exposition of the words how clear the text appears to me. The apostle informs the Romans that all their afflictions shall work together for good to them that are called according to his purpose. For those who were approved of him, the faithful members of his church, he has designed the choicest favours, though called to suffer, and they being justified and accepted of God, he hath also glorified by the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, so that as he elsewhere says, they are changed from 'glory into glory,' for with open face, as in a glass, beholding the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image with him, 'from glory to glory,' poured upon them 'by the Spirit of the Lord.'

Aquila.—I do conceive this to be the great object and meaning of the apostle. Thus we have dwelt upon a text, which, in view of the design of that remarkable and holy man St. Paul, would have taken but little, very little time in its investigation; but which, on account of that variety of exposition, which has been given it, has induced remarks founded on those different views, which have been taken of the same, and I am sure that it cannot be fairly construed any other way than in one of those which we have pointed out, any one of which which is certainly a refutation of the doctrine of an unconditional appointment to eternal life.

Apollos.—This text has been produced a thousand times, with no sort of reference to the subject or occasion on which it was used at all. I think I will be more cautious in taking detached parts of the Scripture, separate from the context.

[1] Whitby. [2] Ibid.

During our conversations, I have often seen the impropriety of this. There are two other short texts I want explained, and I know of no better opportunity than the present.

Aquila.—What are these, my friend?

Apollos.—The words of our Lord, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Here the *giving* of the Father is said to be antecedent to faith.

Aquila.—I cheerfully and most freely own it, but then the question is, what is this gift of the Father, my brother Apollos?

Apollos.—It is said that it is the eternal, absolute election to salvation.[1]

Aquila.—That it is not this, or any thing flowing from it, is most evident, and will appear, my friend—by the consideration of a few facts. If this had been the case, and Christ had alluded to such an absolute appointment to eternal life, by this *giving* of the Father, he would by this very means, for his speech is exclusive, have taken away the condemnation and guilt of the Jews for not believing in him.[2]

Apollos.—This might have mitigated the punishment of their rejection.

Aquila.—It would not have mitigated it only, but it would have absolved them altogether.

Apollos.—How so, my friend?

Aquila.—Simply because they were not given to him of the Father, and therefore could not come.[3]

Apollos.—Dear me!—I did not think of this.

Aquila.—Certainly, my brother—if they were not given, i. e. elected by the Father to salvation, nor endued with that converting grace, which is the fruit of election, and which it is not in any man's power to bestow on himself: therefore they could not be guilty, and I defy any man to prove that I can incur guilt by not doing a thing for which I am both physically and morally incapable.

Apollos.—I believe you are right. What then do you understand by this *giving* of the Father?[4]

Aquila.—The giving with energy and efficacy as it is called, and who they are that are thus given by the Father to Christ, the Scripture elsewhere informs us. They are not those who are elected by an eternal absolute decree, immutable in its very nature, for the Scripture no where speaks of such an election; but they who are prepared by the Father, with the assistance of the more *general* grace, for the embracing faith in Christ whenever preached to them: for though the Father sent Christ to publish the doctrine of salvation to all men, and to bestow sufficient strength on all for believing in him, yet is he more especially said to give them to Christ who are thus disposed, and who led by the Spirit, seek until they are really converted by the word, and come to Christ, or believe on him; but not to the exclusion of others.

Apollos.—This makes the whole a consistent reproof to the Jews for their rejection of him. A similar passage is, 'It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.'

Aquila.—Well but, my brother—before any thing could be proved from this text, in favour of unconditional election, it must be proved that this gift is the effect of such an election. Now the contrary of this appears. For it would seem that Christ, by this expression, declared to all his disciples that they were elected, and therefore God had bestowed on them the means of faith: whereas there was a Judas among them—was he elected too? And besides, it would have been that the rest were reprobated, which is also untrue, for among them were Jews, thousands of whom afterward believed, unless some one will be found daring

[1] Scott and Henry. [2] Wesley and Fletcher. [3] Ibid. [4] Wesley, Fletcher, and Whitby.

enough to say, that among so many there was not one faithful *elect* soul to be found. The meaning therefore is—to you, my disciples, it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to those wicked hearers of my word, it is not given—it is not upon your, but their account that I speak in parables; what is obscurely presented to them, God is pleased should be clearly revealed to you. This is the true meaning of the text.

Apollos.—I am perfectly satisfied—I have been entertained and instructed during our examination of the subjects proposed. I want, however, an investigation of the 9th chapter of Romans at our next interview. I hope I am learning something at every meeting. Adieu!

COLLOQUY VIII.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE NINTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS.

Apollos.—When we parted last evening, I mentioned my desire that you would examine the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans; and if I mistake not, at a previous interview, you promised to consider the case of Esau and Jacob, at least; I come this evening, to renew that request, and as I suppose, it will not lead us from our general arrangement, I shall be pleased if you will give me your views of it.

Aquila.—There could be no more appropriate time for us to consider this chapter, for out of it, those who receive the doctrine of absolute election, quote largely; and there are parts of it, that, without a close examination, are liable to be construed so as to favour that doctrine.

Apollos.—Absolute predestinarians urge in behalf of their opinions, several parts of this chapter—particularly these verses: 'For the children being not yet born, neither having done good nor evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' So also, in another part, we have, 'Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another unto dishonour?'

Aquila.—What I said at our last interview, in regard to another subject, may also be said, my friend—of this chapter; various have been the interpretations that have been given, of several of its parts; but as there is a train of argument used by the apostle, from the first, to the termination almost of the epistle, I am sure that we cannot understand the chapter, without entering, in a greater or less degree, into the whole subject of the epistle. I may give you the thoughts of several learned authors, on this chapter, in connection with some of my own views of it; and I am sure of one thing, that you cannot, taking it in its proper dependence on the context, say, when we are done, that the doctrine of an unconditional and personal election and reprobation, to an everlasting state of bliss or misery, is to be found in the chapter.

Apollos.—But you will admit, that there is an election named therein?

Aquila.—Most assuredly; and to it I do most heartily subscribe.

Apollos.—Let me have your views; I am really all anxiety to hear them.

Aquila.—That we may come to a right understanding of these words, it is proper in the first place, to inquire into the drift of the apostle's reasoning, and

the end that he proposes in the whole chapter. In the preceding chapters of this book, it appears that St. Paul had proved at large against both the Jews and Gentiles, that no man is justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ,—that the condition of this justification, was revealed by the Deity, without respect of persons, to all men, both Jews and Gentiles,—that not only the Gentiles by transgressing the law of nature, but the Jews by also infringing the law of Moses, had become guilty before God, were under condemnation personally, and were subject to the divine wrath, as the penalty of their personal offences; that from this guilt and condemnation, they could not be freed by the law of Moses, but only by an application of the mercy and grace of the Almighty God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. From this, it followed, that the Jews looked upon it as a great absurdity for the apostle to say, that they who sought for righteousness by the law, and rejected faith in Christ, are no longer in special covenant with God, nor are saved; while the Gentiles, who adhered to God by faith in Christ, are admitted into the covenant, and have proffered to them salvation, being called thereto by the divine appointment.[1] In the ninth chapter, the apostle allows that inference as one justly correct, and undertakes to show that there is no absurdity in it.[2]

Apollos.—But, my brother, it is said by some that the apostle goes further back than this, and undertakes to inquire into the causes of faith and infidelity, and that he points out those characters to whom God was pleased to grant faith by virtue of his absolute decree,[3] viz. to a few Jews and a great many Gentiles, whom he had elected to salvation from all eternity, according to the purposes of his will; the greatest part of the Jews being rejected, who could not therefore necessarily be converted to the faith, but must be hardened in sin and unbelief.

Aquila.—Such, my friend, have entirely misapprehended the meaning of the apostle, and the drift of his argument in my opinion. To this I have a right, and although I am not disposed to press it, if I could on others, yet do I feel at liberty to express it. There is an egregious mistake on one side or the other, and however an election, to which I cheerfully subscribe, is taught in this chapter, yet is it not a personal absolute election, without condition to everlasting life.

Apollos.—Your reasons for this conclusion, my brother?

Aquila.—In the first place, if you will look at the commencement of the chapter, you will find that St. Paul begins by a solemn protestation, in which he not only declares his great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart, but likewise wishes that himself were accursed for his brethren according to the flesh. Here let us pause! and let me ask you, my young friend—is this agreeable to the views we ought to have of an apostle of the Lord Jesus? That he should grieve at the will of God, and wish himself accursed, that the irrevocable decree of God, wherein he is supposed to have manifested his glory, might be revoked and rendered of no effect? Do you think that St. Paul, if he were preaching such a doctrine, did not know it better than to be guilty of such a piece of inconsistency? And besides, would he represent himself, when about to preach it, as so much better than God? What! that he could wish himself accursed for his friends? but that God, who was infinitely his superior in goodness, willed that it should be otherwise, and had by an unalterable decree determined purely for his own glory, that but a few of them should be saved. Yea! my friend—that the most of them should, irrespective of their works, be damned.[4]

Apollos.—Well, my friend—I must really say, and candor constrains me to it,

[1] Whitby, Watson, and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Calvin and Scott.

[4] This is the plain argument of Calvin, and he wonders that men should attribute it to any other cause than God's will.

that I have read this chapter again and again, and never until now observed this, and many others doubtless do the same. Why, my dear brother—this would be the most palpable inconsistency.

Aquila.—It would so. Now look in the next place toward the end of the chapter. Hear what St. Paul says, 'What shall we say then? that the Gentiles that followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness hath not attained to the law of righteousness: wherefore, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they stumbled at the stumbling stone,' &c. Now all this is but an inference drawn from what went before, and certainly represents to us the scope of the apostle's discourse, and shows it to be nothing else but this, that God who rejected the Jews, on account of their following after the righteousness which was of the law, and thus rejected the Lord Jesus and the necessity of his death; while the Gentiles who believed on him were taken by a merciful God into his favour, and received, in the place of the Jews, as the members of his visible church. And if we do, my friend—but duly mind this intention and scope of the apostle, the verses in this whole chapter will admit of a fair and consistent exposition, the difficulty will be removed, and all will be, I humbly think, comparatively easy.[1]

Apollos.—Here again I am forced to admit my want of attention. I never did notice this conclusion. Paul was a fair and a powerful reasoner, and he never would have made such a conclusion unless it had been consistent with the premises, which he had previously laid down. Never!—No!—Never! I think, if I were capable of writing an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, I would pen it in the colloquial style.

Aquila.—With these preliminary remarks let us proceed to notice how the apostle begins, by answering an objection which was started against his doctrine, as very absurd indeed, viz. If God, upon rejecting the Jews, who sought after righteousness by the law, admitted the Gentiles who believed in Christ into their place, then the word of God is of none effect, whereby in entering into covenant with Abraham, he promised that patriarch to be the God of him and his posterity. Here I suppose is the sum of the objections of the Jews to St. Paul's system.[2]

Apollos.—Well—how does the apostle answer this charge?

Aquila.—To take off this objection St. Paul answers, that God did not, by this promise oblige himself to the carnal posterity of Abraham, or his seed after the flesh, as if all who were born of him according to the flesh, were comprehended within this promise; but that God reserved to himself the right of declaring at any time, whom he would have to be looked upon as the blessed seed of Abraham, for whom he designed his promises; and so God might, without any breach of promise, upon rejecting the unbelieving Jews, reckon the believing Gentiles as the seed of Abraham, whom he would bless. And that the Jews might not look upon this as absurd, he shows that God, at the very first, made such a distinction and declaration, in the very family of Abraham, for though Ishmael was the first born, and by the right of primogeniture, according to that generation, that is fleshly or carnal, was entitled to Canaan, and the inheritance of the divine blessings: yet God would not own him for the promised seed, but made his covenant in Isaac and his posterity, in whom peculiarly all the families of the earth should be blessed. And lest some should take exceptions to this instance, adduced in the case of Ishmael, as not being full and to the purpose, he being the son of a handmaid, whilst Isaac was begotten of a lawful wife, the apostle adds, in the words which you quoted this

[1] Whitby and Limborch. [2] Ibid.

evening, and shows that the very same thing was done in the family of Isaac. 'For the children being not yet born, neither having done good nor evil,'[1] &c.

Apollos.—Do, my friend—proceed, I am truly anxious to hear, and really my curiosity is greatly excited.

Aquila.—The patriarch Isaac had, by his wife Rebecca, two sons born at the same birth, Esau the elder, and Jacob the younger. If the prerogative of birth right had been of any avail with God, then Esau certainly would have been preferred before Jacob, to whom and to whose seed the possession of the promised land should have been given.

Apollos.—But the contrary came to pass, Esau and his posterity were rejected.

Aquila.—Yes—for God designed the promised land for Jacob and his descendants: and this is what is here said, 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. Some perhaps might think it was no wonder that Esau, a profane person, was passed by, since he deserved on account of his impiety, not to be esteemed by the Deity, though he was the first born. To obviate this, and to show that the whole proceeded from the mere good pleasure of God, the apostle says that this declaration was made before Esau and Jacob were born, and before they had done good or evil.[2] This purpose then of God is not that eternal decree, whereby he elected some men to eternal life, and some he passed by or reprobated to all eternity, without any regard to the faith or the obedience of the one, or the infidelity or disobedience of the other. But it is that purpose which God made with election, if I may so speak, or some sort of discrimination whereby he reserved to himself the free choice of esteeming at all times whom and what sort of persons he pleased, as the seed of Abraham, to whom the blessings should belong. This the Deity showed formerly, in the instances of Ishmael and Isaac, and of Esau and Jacob, and demonstrates the same again under the gospel; in that he does not look upon those who sprang from Abraham according to the flesh, but his spiritual posterity, who walk in the steps of faithful Abraham, as the seed to whom the promised blessings appertain.[3]

Apollos.—This interpretation then, is illustrated and justified by the examples of Esau and Jacob, and the prophecy which foretold that 'the elder should serve the younger.'

Aquila.—It is so; and that prophecy has nothing to do with the eternal election of the one, nor with the absolute reprobation from spiritual life, of the other.[4] It only relates to temporal and earthly things, and concerns rather the posterity of Esau and Jacob, than those ancient worthies themselves. The posterity of the one was designed by the Almighty, to be the owners and inhabitants of the promised land, and all the blessings attendant on that possession, with a superiority over the descendants of the elder branch of Isaac's family, which was to be excluded from that land. They were to enjoy fewer privileges and blessings, and be subject to the descendants of the younger branch of the family. Among the former, the Messiah in a regular descent from Jacob, according to the flesh, was to come. This same thing is likewise evinced by the words which follow: 'as it is written, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated,' which words are not so to be connected with those that precede them, as if spoken at the same time, when the other prophecy was given; for they were, as you will well remember, uttered by the prophet Malachi, many ages after the death of Esau and Jacob. God, by this saying, 'the elder shall serve the younger,' was pleased to signify the same thing that was afterward spoken by Malachi, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'[5]

[1] Limborch.
[2] Whitby, Watson, and Limborch.
[3] Limborch and Whitby.
[4] Limborch, Whitby and Watson.
[5] Watson, Benson and Whitby.

Apollos.—This hatred I recollect you once proved satisfactorily to me, not to mean that absolute disgust and aversion whereby God rejected Esau himself from salvation, and doomed him by an unalterable decree, to everlasting destruction.

Aquila.—Most assuredly it was not so; for then, by this means, all the posterity of Esau would have been rejected too, which is absurd. It is a term here used, to set forth that preference which was given to the descendants of Jacob, as the owners of the promised land, and Jacob himself, as the progenitor of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this respect, as we have elsewhere proved, the term hatred, which was merely comparative, is used, by which God is said to have hated Esau; that is, he loved him with a less degree of love, than he did Jacob, or rather preferred the latter and his posterity, to the former and his descendants, for some special temporal privileges, wholly unconnected with their eternal salvation.[1]

Apollos.—These points appear perfectly clear, indeed.

Aquila.—It is therefore now easy, I think, to give a solution of the others, which are produced from this chapter, and to show that they do not at all support the doctrine of absolute predestination.

Apollos.—You have given me the key to the entire chapter, my friend. I do not wish you to run through the whole; only let me have an exposition of some passages in it, which are ever and anon adduced, by those who maintain the doctrine of an unconditional salvation. Take this part of the chapter, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.'

Aquila.—From what has already been said, it is plain that this text does not relate to an election to eternal life, so that it is unnecessary to be concerned about the performance of our duty; and that it does not matter whether or not, we run cheerfully and diligently in the way of salvation, by doing those works that are right and acceptable to God. We are not to understand by *will*, in this place, that whereby a man purposes and does what God requires of him, for this, the Scripture expressly tells us, is his duty.[2] 'The Spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth, say come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely.' 'O Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered,' 'and ye *would* not.' 'And ye *will* not come to me, that ye might have life.' 'So run, that ye may obtain.' 'Let us lay aside every weight;' 'let us run the race that is set before us.' Here, salvation evidently is both to him that *willeth*, and to him that runneth; the whole passage means an election to the privileges of the gospel, commonly called the means, or as it is named by some, an election to grace,—and by the will of man, we are, it is thought, to understand that will, as it precedes the divine call: as if St. Paul had said, it is not for man to make choice of the ways and means of attaining the favour and blessing of God; but it belongs to God, who, as he bestows his blessings upon men at pleasure, so likewise prescribes the means of attaining them by his mere will, without which declaration, all the will of man, in prescribing to himself a law, would have been in vain, and to no purpose.[3]

Apollos.—That then, opens the way for the next remark of the apostle, 'Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' This is an inference from what was said before, I presume, my friend?

Aquila.—It certainly is; and the true meaning of it appears to be this: 'God has mercy,' that is, offers the benefits of his grace, to whom he will, and under whatsoever conditions he pleases; so that he is tied up to no nation, nor to any generation of men according to the flesh, nor has he any regard to the methods

[1] Watson, Benson, and Whitby. [2] Limborch. [3] Watson and Limborch.

whereby they endeavour to obtain his favour, unless they be according to his will; 'And whom he will, he hardeneth:' that is, he can at pleasure justly punish those sinners who obstinately reject his grace, though they should profess a great deal for the divine law, which he now declares not to be the medium of obtaining justification, or righteousness and salvation.[1] And he may not only permit them, upon the abuse of his long suffering and patience, at last to be hardened, but by withdrawing the light of his blessed gospel, may leave them in darkness, and to themselves. We are not to understand by this, that the Deity works in them in the first instance, this hardness; far from it, but that they, by their own wickedness, turn all those gracious methods, which in their own nature, tend to the softening their hearts, into so many occasions of hardness and obduracy, until the Almighty brings on them, as on Pharoah, judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, by withdrawing his Spirit, and leaving them to perish in their sins, as a just punishment, for refusing to hear and obey, when he called and invited.[2] Against this doctrine, the apostle introduces an unbelieving Jew, as making an objection, and saying, 'why doth he yet find fault?' for 'who hath resisted his will?' the meaning of which objection is simply this: if God will harden us, that he may afterward punish us more severely; and by our punishment, as by that of Pharaoh formerly, manifest his glory—he has no reason to find fault with us, for we are not stronger than God, that we should resist his will, or hinder what he has decreed with respect to us. If he has decreed to harden us, it is impossible but we must be hardened.[3]

Apollos.—It had escaped my notice, that these words were an objection, adduced by the apostle, in the name, as it were, of another; and you have given the very pith of it.

Aquila.—To this objection, for it is such, St. Paul replies with indignation, on account of its foolishness and inconsistency, 'Nay, but O man, who art thou, that repliest against God? shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?'

Apollos.—What is the meaning of this answer of St. Paul, to their objection?

Aquila.—He shows by this answer, that the Jews had no reason to take exception to what he taught, viz: that God, in rejecting the unbelieving Jews, who sought righteousness or justification by the works of the law, elected or chose as his church, those among the Gentiles who believed in Christ, and followed after the righteousness which is by faith. He also shows, that their objection was the most idle and unreasonable, as though a creature should expostulate with his Creator, for not making him more excellent than he was. God had the right to suspend salvation, on what condition he pleased; if the Jews chose to reject it when offered through the medium of faith, and the Gentiles chose to accept it, who dared to reply against God?[4]

Apollos.—Now, my brother—you have come to the very point; I see it plain as day-light, the apostle illustrates this position by the figure or similitude of the potter and his clay.

Aquila.—It is just so; St. Paul explains his answer by taking the case of a potter, and says, 'Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?' by which he shows, that God has no less a right of declaring whom he will esteem, as in covenant with himself, and the conditions of that covenant, on which he will bestow salvation, than the potter has a right over his clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honour, that is, to honourable uses,—or one to dishonour, that is, to uses less honourable.[5]

[1] Watson and Limborch.
[2] Limborch and Whitby.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Watson and Limborch.
[5] Ibid. and Whitby.

Apollos.—In other words, he has no less a right to reject the unbelieving and obstinate Jews, who rejected all the terms of his salvation, and to take the believing Gentiles into his covenant, who acceded to those terms, and grant to them eternal life, than had the potter over his clay. God had a right to prescribe his terms, and if either rejected, the sin was at their own door.

Aquila.—This appears plainly to be the meaning; only there is this difference in the similitude, or figure used: the potter himself makes both sorts of vessels, but God, in prescribing to men a condition, by the observation of which, they may become vessels to honour, or by rejecting the same, may become vessels to dishonour; and by offering them grace, through the assistance of which they may perform the condition, has placed it in their power, to become either the one or the other—that salvation may be attributed to the divine grace; but in the event of perishing, their destruction, on account of their rejection of Jesus in unbelief, is attributable to the obstinacy and unbelief of their own hearts.[1] Hence the apostle proceeds, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?'

Apollos.—Are these words an application of the figure of the potter and the clay, or are they a new argument in refutation of the objection proposed?

Aquila.—It does not matter in which way they are taken; it will amount to the same thing; for it is plain, by 'vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,' and whom God had 'endured with much long suffering,' are meant the unbelieving and obstinate Jews, who, by rejecting the means of salvation offered them, became the objects of the divine displeasure.[2] As to the 'vessels of mercy,' here mentioned, they are such as obey the divine call, and will by the grace of God, attain salvation—whom God himself, is truly said to have prepared unto glory, in that he has opened to them the way of salvation, and bestowed upon them grace to enter and walk therein; and has created them anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he has prepared for them to walk in.[3]

Apollos.—It does appear to me, that there is no real difficulty in this chapter after all; on the whole, it seems that there is nothing to be met with in it, that does countenance the absolute decree of reprobation; but that the whole of it is most assuredly agreeable to the scope and design of the apostle, as set forth on several occasions: that is, to show that justification and salvation are both by faith in Christ, and not by the deeds of the law; that God had the right to prescribe his own terms; that because the Jews obstinately held to works, and rejected Jesus, God had rejected them, and accepted the Gentiles; and, as he had a right to do, accounted them as the seed of Abraham, by faith in the Lord Jesus, who was the offspring of that patriarch, in Jacob's line, in preference to that of Esau. God had the right to do it, and it could not be replied against, for there was no injustice in it, inasmuch as the Jews had voluntarily rejected the Lord Jesus in unbelief.[4]

Aquila.—If I did really suppose that there was any serious difficulty in the way of a proper understanding of this chapter, my friend—I would gladly accompany you in the investigation of every verse, but I do most conscientiously believe, that the design of the apostle in his arguments being taken into the account, there is no real obstacle, no barrier that may not be easily surmounted, so that we may understand not only this chapter but the entire epistle. If we examine the chapter itself, with respect to the question, is the election here spoken of absolute personal, or a collective election? We are forced to the conclusion that it is the latter, and not the former.

[1] Watson, Fletcher, and Whitby. [2] Watson, Limborch, and Clarke. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

Apollos.—It would really appear so.

Aquila.—It is acknowledged by all, that whatever other subjects the apostle may or may not connect with it, he treats of the casting off of the Jews as the visible church of God, and the calling of the Gentiles into that relation. As already stated, for the Jews, 'his kinsmen,' 'of his own nation,' he expresses great sorrow of heart; not because that God had determined to compose his visible church upon a new principle, viz. faith in our Lord Jesus, and to constitute it no longer upon a natural descent from Abraham, to be manifested and proved by an attention to the rights and ceremonies of the law—this was not the ground of his sorrow, O! no—but on account of their rejecting the terms, and the calamities that must ensue, inasmuch as God now rejects them.[1]

Apollos.—Yes!—and how beautifully does he enumerate what had been the honours and privileges of that nation, while it remained the church of God, accomplishing the ends of its institution.

Aquila.—And moreover, St. Paul shows, that while the Deity proclaimed a new foundation, on which to construct a church, to be made up of members out of all nations, from whom he would elect, on the principle of faith, a people, he, that is the apostle, would not detract from the divinity or glory of the Mosaic institution. He then proceeds to set forth the facts already alluded to, in our exposition of those texts which have been quoted by you. I am sure that, taking the design of the apostle, i. e. to show the purpose of God, the rejection of the Jewish nation, as his church, and the adoption of Gentile believers in their place, we cannot err. All St. Paul's reasonings, both from the case involving members of Abraham's family, and that of Isaac, and the right of the potter over his clay, are well calculated to show that while the way of salvation was possible for all, the Deity had the right of determining the terms of that salvation, and the grounds on which he would form his visible church.[2]

Apollos.—I have, at every step in the investigation of this great and important point, found it of infinite importance to take into consideration, on all important points, the design of an author. I was forcibly impressed with this when you commenced your remarks on this chapter. I hope I have learned a lesson never to be forgot.

Aquila.—My friend—I cannot believe that any minister can do justice to the chief part of those texts usually preached from, unless he shall carefully and faithfully examine into the great object and design of the writer. The sacred writers did not deliver the most solemn truths without design—O! no. They had an end before them always, ascertain this, and then you may proceed safely and successfully in all your investigations. We are not searching the Bible to establish our creed, we are investigating its blessed pages in order to form that creed: and we ought to be determined to submit to the truth at all events.

Apollos.—I perceive this, my friend Aquila—and I hope I shall improve by your advice. I see we are liable to the grossest errors imaginable, if we do not seek to understand the great and glorious object of the sacred authors. This is particularly necessary, I find, in those parts of the Bible that admit of a construction, when taken separate from the context, entirely different from that which was intended by the author.

Aquila.—And there are many parts which may be thus taken. Indeed, if a

[1] Watson, Limborch, and Whitby.

[2] Limborch and Watson, whose excellent remarks on this chapter the reader is respectfully invited to peruse. Indeed I believe Mr. Watson's view of the ninth chapter of Romans, unanswerable, and I doubt whether any will ever read it attentively without being convinced that there is in it no unconditional personal election to everlasting life. This view is equaled only by Doctor Clarke's invaluable comment on the epistle to the Romans. It is hoped the reader will peruse them both.

man first takes his creed, and then comes to the Scriptures, he may, without reference to the context, find authority for his belief: but if he will take the word of God, and read it with the design of the writer as evidently avowed, ever in view, and keep in mind also, as I have said more than once, the analogy of faith, he will surely see one uniform and perfect system of truths, mutually dependent on each other, and so connected as to be incapable of a separation, without destroying that harmony and connection that are ever manifest to those who most closely study the word of God. I have been induced to make these remarks from the fact that, losing sight of the apostle's design in penning this epistle, under the teachings of the divine spirit, many texts have been drawn from it to establish opinions the most adverse to the divine goodness, wisdom, sincerity, justice, love and mercy. God has been virtually proclaimed as the author of all our woe, and as constraining every act of piety on the part of the religious, and all that leads to that piety. I hope we shall retire resolved to guard against these evils.

Apollos.—In regard to the election in the ninth chapter of Romans, I am perfectly satisfied. I want to make some inquiries as to the true meaning of some texts, that seem to import an unconditional reprobation from everlasting life. Have you the time, and can you attend to it my friend—before we part this evening.

Aquila.—I think not, Apollos. We had better make that a subject of consideration at our next interview, and let us in the meantime weigh well that which we have just finished. Let us pray over it, and ask in this, as we ought to do in other things, the direction and light of God's blessed Spirit. Let us not forget a text quoted in the commencement of our conversations, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given.'

Apollos.—For light from on high, I do most sincerely pray, and I hope, in your private devotions, you will ask for me that wisdom that God can only give.

COLLOQUY IX.

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PARTS OF THE SACRED WRITINGS, WHICH ARE OFTEN ADDUCED IN DEFENCE OF ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL REPROBATION.

Apollos.—I requested, at our last meeting, that you would, my friend—examine some of those texts that are usually adduced to substantiate the doctrine of absolute and unconditional reprobation. I am not disposed to detain you long on this subject, I however think it is important to me to understand fully those parts of the Sacred Writings that are most generally brought forward to establish this notion.

Aquila.—We could not indeed complete our investigation of the subject of divine predestination without an examination of that opinion, and an inquiry into the true meaning of those texts that are generally advanced in support of the same.

Apollos.—Well, let me give you a text at once—I suppose I have heard it a hundred times, 'For there are certain men, crept in unawares, who were, before of old, ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Aquila.—And what of this text, my brother?

Apollos.—Here it is said is the reprobation of ungodly men from all eternity, or according to God's decrees.[1]

[1] Calvin, Scott, and Dr. Gill.

Aquila.—If by this 'ordaining of old,' men would have us understand the eternal predestination, whereby he has reprobated the greatest part of mankind to the everlasting torments of hell fire, without any regard to their infidelity or disobedience, and that this reprobation is attended with the divine desertion, so that they lay under the fatal necessity of sinning, and of persevering in impenitence to their lives' end, then it must be said that those men were predestinated by God to those enormous crimes which St. Jude here describes, and which, as it regards them, were unavoidable, they could not help it. To assert this would really be horrid, would it not be blasphemous?[1] By such an antecedent decree, they make God to be the sole author of sin, acquit the wicked of all its guilt, and consequently from justly suffering the punishment of their transgressions. This is an affront to the divine holiness, and altogether contrary to the scope and design of the apostle's reasoning, throughout this epistle, in which he describes the distinction as just.[2]

Apollos.—What meaning then, my brother—will appear in the epistle more congenial with that design?

Aquila.—Certainly there must be one. St. Jude, exhorting believers earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, fortifies their minds against the scandal which they might easily conceive of, as the result of the seducings of false teachers and impostors, telling them in these words, brought in by way of parenthesis, that God had signified or pointed out, beforehand 'of old,' the coming and wickedness, as well as the punishment and destruction of these men; so that they ought not to imagine that God had cast away all care for his church, into which these men had 'crept in unawares,' but intended that it should be forewarned of such impostors long before.[3] Hence it is, that as all those acquainted with the original know, that the words used in the sacred text do not mean that they were preordained, or appointed from all eternity, the word παλαι, PALAI, *of old,* not denoting eternity, but a time long since elapsed. Thus our Lord says to Chorazin and Bethsaida, that the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would have repented, if they had been blessed with their privileges *long ago,* παλαι, palai, in sackcloth and ashes. Also in St. Luke, where the same address is mentioned, the same Greek word is used, and is translated in our version *a great while ago,* and in Hebrews, in the first verse, the same word is translated *times past,* i. e. long ago.[4]

Apollos—And the meaning of the other word, I do believe, corresponds directly to it.

Aquila.—It certainly does. If you will refer to a lexicon you will find that the word here translated ordained, means to exhibit, to signify, to set forth, to make known, and these are the most common and ordinary acceptations of the same.[5] How plain then the exposition of the text, God has *long ago made known* or *signified* the condemnation of these profane men. For the word here used does not denote a preordination or appointment beforehand, especially to sin, death and hell. It is simply a description, or the delineation of a character, made beforehand, *long ago,* whereby the frauds, impostures, and punishments of those seducers are foretold, and as it were *actually* set forth, so that, by their being thus described for condemnation, we are to understand, not their sin and disobedience, which, as we said in the beginning of our remarks on this text, might throw the guilt of their crimes on the Deity, but we have pointed out in this, their actual punishment, which God has revealed as the portion to be inflicted on them.[6]

Apollos.—My brother—the meaning of the text is perfectly clear and plain now to me. A long time ago God had exhibited the condemnation that should fall on those ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness.

[1] Whitby and Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Whitby and Limborch.
[4] Parkhurst and Donegan.
[5] Parkhurst and Donegan.
[6] Watson and Limborch.

Aquila.—Yes—and this their end was signified by the punishment of other wicked men, and the prophecy of Enoch, as named by this apostle. By this God had of old described to the church the punishment of these impostors, and that by a timely warning of their danger, they might avoid the seductions and snares that would be laid for them, by such ungodly wretches.[1]

Apollos.—The word translated ordained here, is not the same that we conversed of before, as translated 'ordained' to eternal life, that should be 'disposed?'

Aquila.—No it is not the same word, and for the criticism founded on the real meaning of these words, and the only common meaning too, I can appeal not only to every lexicon of the Greek language, but to any individual conversant with the writings of authors in that language.

Apollos.—I am truly astonished that I did not more carefully examine this text. Had I turned to the original, and noticed the use that was made of the same words, and their most common, and as I now know, almost universal use, and that by the Saviour himself, I should not have detained you a moment here.

Aquila.—You will find, my brother—the more closely you examine the truths of God's word, the more apparent will be the reasonableness of that system of truth recorded therein.

Apollos.—I have heard this text often brought forward, to prove that the destruction of the reprobate was pre-ordained, and is inevitable, being absolute and irrespective of their unbelief; 'Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.' It is, my brother—affirmed, that the cause of their unbelief here mentioned, was the previous appointment and pre-ordination of the Almighty.[2]

Aquila.—It will seem strange, my friend—that I should again affirm, from the face of the original, that no such thing is said; here is no action of the Deity expressed, nor is God said any where, to have blinded their eyes, or hardened their hearts. This is only an impersonal way, or mode of speech, by no means peculiar to the Hebrew language, and in the idiom of that tongue, it has a passive signification, and is as much as to say, their eyes were blinded, and their hearts hardened; and moreover, that 'they could not believe,' does not import all manner of incapacity, much less such an one as proceeds from any antecedent decree, or the divine desertion upon such a decree; nor do the words 'could not,' imply always such an incapacity, I humbly conceive, my friend—but some disposition in man, which impedes and takes away the action, which otherwise was capable of being done by him.[3]

Apollos.—What then, would be the proper sense of these words?

Aquila.—Evidently here, that although the Saviour wrought many miracles among the Jews, yet were they very far from believing in him, by reason of their own enormous wickedness; by which their eyes were blinded, and their hearts hardened, lest they should turn unto the Lord, and he should heal them.

Apollos.—And this is perfectly consistent with all the ideas we have, and all the declarations in the Bible concerning the actions, of the free and unconstrained agency of man; but there is a text in Peter, 'who stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.' I want your opinion of this passage also.

Aquila.—The word here used, I presume, is the gospel, and certainly no mention is here made at all, of any men predestinated by the Deity, to disobedience. This is the plain meaning of the words; they who stumble at the word, are they who bring upon themselves the punishment threatened, to the despisers

[1] Limborch. [2] Calvin, Scott, and Dr. Gill. [3] Limborch.

of that word; and they are said to be appointed thereunto, viz: that they might, when they would not believe, incur the punishment appointed to the disobedient.[1]

Apollos.—God has appointed, or decreed, that the disobedient shall fall: this is his general decree,—the Jews are disobedient, have rejected the Lord Jesus in unbelief, and therefore they stumble and fall; this is a particular application of God's general decree.

Aquila.—The phrase itself, is taken from the case of a man who does not walk circumspectly, and therefore falls upon a stone; his want of attention and care, is the cause of his falling and being hurt. Had the Jews searched the Scriptures as directed by our Lord, to see if these things were so, they had not made such a wide mistake, and he had not been to them a rock of offence, and a stone of stumbling; nor had his gospel proved a savour of death unto death. They walked carelessly, and of consequence fell, and endured that penalty that God by an unalterable decree, had pronounced to be the result of unbelief.

Apollos.—I do not know, my friend—that there are any other texts, that in more strong and apparently positive terms, seem to favour unconditional reprobation, and I must really say, I have none others to offer; but I will present an argument that is often advanced by those who maintain this doctrine. It is one which is found on the lips of almost every predestinarian.

Aquila.—What is this, Apollos?

Apollos.—It is an argument addressed to our reason, and is drawn from reason itself, it is said; it is this: The predestination of God, is a decree relative to the end, and to the means necessary for the attaining that end. The end, is the demonstration of God's glory, in saving the elect by his mercy, and destroying the reprobate by his justice; by virtue of this end, are all the means, necessarily tending thereto, determined by the divine decree.[2]

Aquila.—You ought to carry it out, my friend—and add: and therefore, thousands are damned without reference to their unbelief, through the decree of God, in order to promote his glory, by the endurance of a state of interminable wo.

Apollos.—O no! I give it to you, as it is usually advanced.

Aquila.—Let us then answer it in the same way: The end may be plainly seen, Apollos—to admit of a two-fold meaning; one an end absolutely fixed, and the other an end granted as a reward or punishment, suspended on certain conditions, and to be conferred on him who shall either perform or neglect the conditions specified—on which the reward, according to the divine appointment, may be obtained.[3] If we consider the end in the former sense, I own, that by virtue of the decree relating to the end, the means also relating thereto, ought to have been determined; if in the latter sense, then it is requisite that this condition should not be precisely determined by the decree of the legislator, and afterwards be wrought in man according to the decree, but that it should be performed by man himself. Now, to discern after what manner God considered salvation in the decree of predestination, we must inquire into the execution of it, as it evidently is from thence, that we ought to judge of the decree itself; but in the execution of this decree, God promises salvation as a reward, and threatens destruction as a punishment, and requires a condition on man's part; by the performance of which, he will obtain a reward; and by the neglect whereof, he will be liable to punishment. It is, my friend—as you will plainly perceive, impossible therefore, that he should have decreed salvation and damnation, as the fixed and ultimate end.

Apollos.—I see this plainly now; for the execution thereof, under a condition, does not quadrate with the absolute decree, since one that is conditional, overthrows the very notion of one that is absolute.

[1] Whitby and Limborch. [2] Calvin and Scott. [3] Watson, Whitby, and Schmucker.

Aquila.—This is most certainly a conclusion that is inevitable.

Apollos.—Still you know, that it is objected to this, that a conditional predestination, such as you contend for, and I believe in, is irreconcilable with the wisdom, power, and constancy, or immutability of God.

Aquila.—But this I deny, and we are therefore completely at issue. It is most evident, that it is perfectly consistent with them all.

Apollos.—Well, take the wisdom of God first, and show me now, how a conditional salvation is a manifestation of that wisdom. It is said, that it is not reconcilable with it, because the Deity foreknows what man would or would not do, and consequently, whether he shall ever attain to salvation, or be ultimately damned; but it is said, what wise person would undertake to do any thing under a condition, which he foreknows, through defect of such a condition, he would never do; nay, has determined the contrary with himself, because he foreknows for a certainty, that the condition will never be fulfilled?

Aquila.—I have one or two reasons, why this objection should have no weight or force on any mind. 1. Your argument may be retorted on the adversaries of a conditional predestination, in this way: What wise person would seriously promise any thing, under a condition which, by an absolute decree, he had before determined not to give, and had moreover decreed, that the condition required, could never be fulfilled—do tell me, would a wise God do this? Thus I have answered your question, by asking another, and I might say, when this is answered, I can also give my answer; but I will not,—you shall have it at once. 2. I do not say that God decreed to do any thing conditionally, which he foreknows, for default of the condition, he will never do, &c. By this means, the divine prescience, if not in point of time, yet in natural order, ought to precede the conditional decree: whereas, I maintain on the contrary, that the conditional decree precedes the divine prescience of the faith and salvation, or of the infidelity and damnation of every man. The order of nature, my friend—requires that the Deity should not foreknow whether a man should believe, and consequently be saved, unless he had first decreed to bestow salvation on man, under the condition of faith, to call him thereto, and to grant him the influence of his grace and spirit to obey the call. Now all this does not proceed from any defect of wisdom; but because it is repugnant to the nature of things that any one should believe or disbelieve in Christ, to whom the faculty of believing is not or will not be given.[1]

Apollos.—I assure you that the question is a very good answer to the objection; but I had never thought of what really is the true state of the case, as set forth in the answer. This is, most assuredly, the proper and natural order of things, and indeed is, I think, a full refutation of the objection. But, my brother—it is said that a conditional reprobation is not to be reconciled with the power of the Almighty, because, upon the supposition of such a conditional decree, the man whom God would have to be saved, under that condition, may, for want thereof, be damned, and so man would be more powerful than God.

Aquila.—My dear friend—this objection might have some pretence to reason and truth in it, if God willed the end, and by virtue thereof, absolutely willed also the means tending to that end, and man might, notwithstanding, oppose this divine act; but whereas God does not absolutely will the end, the objection has no force at all.[2]

Apollos.—Although it be true with regard to the wisdom and power of the Deity, yet it is pressingly objected, that a conditional predestination is directly opposed to the immutability of the divine nature, that it strikes at the very foundation of the divine constancy and faithfulness; for, my friend—it is boldly

[1] Limborch and Watson. [2] Watson and Whitby.

affirmed, that it is a sign of mutability to destine men to salvation conditionally, and upon the non-performance of the condition, to doom them afterwards to damnation.[1]

Aquila.—This is so far from being a sign of mutability, that it is a token of the highest degree of constancy, Apollos—for whatever shall happen the decree of God shall be fulfilled, for his immutable decree is to save those that believe in the Lord Jesus, and damn all unbelievers, and this can never be annulled or altered. True, the particular application of this decree may vary, according to the various circumstances of men, to whom it is applied. Thus, for instance, one who believes in Christ is reckoned in the number of those who shall be saved; but if he apostatizes from the faith, he is of the number of the damned.[2]

Apollos.—This change then does not proceed from God, but from man, since the Deity is constant to his established decree, which, if it were otherwise, he might then be charged with mutability.

Aquila.—Certainly, for the variation is in man, not in the Almighty, on man must it be charged, on poor, unsteady, apostate man, the Lord 'changes not,' he cleaves to his purpose, the patient, humble, constant *believer* shall as surely be saved as that there is a God above, and the unbelieving, living and dying so, shall as surely perish.

Apollos.—At every step in the investigation of this point in theology, so much controverted, I have strove to collect all the objections which have been offered against the doctrine of a conditional salvation, after framing some for myself, and collecting others from authors on either side, I have presented them, and must say I am convinced that salvation is by grace, through the medium and instrumentality of *faith*, and that 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' I have viewed the decrees, and the doctrine of predestination in every way, and I am forced to the conclusion that our salvation is suspended on the simple condition of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—And the closer you examine the subject, the more fully will you be convinced of this. If the end were predestinated, my friend—without reference to the means to be used and improved by the agency of man, our race would be but a mere machine; the very foundation of rewards and punishments would be destroyed, and the Deity himself would appear in the eyes of all, especially the sufferer, the veriest tyrant in all the universe. Thank Almighty God that it is just the reverse.

COLLOQUY X.

AN EXAMINATION INTO THE OPINION OF THOSE WHO HOLD AN ABSOLUTE ELECTION OF SOME PERSONS TO ETERNAL LIFE, BUT REJECT THE NOTION OF AN UNCONDITIONAL REPROBATION.

Apollos.—I had thought, my friend Aquila—that I would not trouble you again on the subject of election and reprobation; but, on reflection, I find that there is, among many, a third notion concerning these matters: it is that, in which an absolute reprobation is altogether exploded or rejected, and election wholly unconditional is embraced. The two former opinions concerning election and reprobation have been, I believe, clearly stated by you, and also to me satisfactorily answered. I wish you to take up this subject, and investigate an opinion the consistency of which I cannot perceive.

Aquila.—As far as I am able I will cheerfully do so. You must, however, recollect that there are various and contrary opinions among those who hold the

[1] Calvin and Dick. [2] Limborch.

scheme of a partial redemption. Truly you will not find many, who think and converse exactly alike on this point.[1]

Apollos.—This opinion is to the following effect:—'that God offers to all who are called by the gospel, grace sufficient for conversion and salvation; nay, that even those that are not called are not deprived of all grace to assist them in coming to God; but withal they maintain that God has elected some in particular, whom he has endued with an irresistible grace, and will infallibly bring to faith and salvation.'

Aquila.—This opinion would seem more tolerable, and one would suppose to look at it, as expressed, that it labours under less difficulty than the two former; it seems *intended* to offer no injury to the divine justice, mercy, and philanthropy of the Deity; for it certainly is no injustice, but the highest liberality to heap up favours on man. Still, my friend—it is erroneous; and however specious it may appear, I can neither receive nor allow it, much less advance and promote it.

Apollos.—But what are your reasons for rejecting it?

Aquila.—They are the following:—The Scriptures everywhere propose faith, as the condition of salvation; and therefore we are elected to it as such, or are translated into the number of those that may be saved through it; whereas those absolutely elected to salvation, are called the elect according to this plan, without any regard to their faith, and are brought by constraint to embrace it as the means subordinate to the end, to which they were elected: now this is wholly unscriptural. Again with respect to those thus elected, all the threatenings of God, concerning destruction and damnation, if men should become infidels and disobedient, or apostatize from the faith, would be insignificant; and all the exhortations to perseverance would be to no purpose. That the Diety may not bestow an equal measure of grace upon all may be readily admitted, and as far as we are capable of judging, which is only from outward circumstances, this fact cannot be denied; since he granted it doubtless for wise purposes in a greater degree to the apostles, to St. Paul, and perhaps Cornelius, than others. Yet I cannot think that even that degree of grace was so great, but that it might have been hindered in its operation by obstinacy and unbelief. And for this very reason St. Paul says of himself, that he 'was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,' and that when called by God's spirit, he 'conferred not with flesh and blood.' Besides he plainly tells us that he was not free from the danger of revolting from the Deity; so far from this we learn from him, that there was an absolute necessity for taking care and leading a life of devotion to God. 'I keep,' says he, 'my body under and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a cast away.' Moreover, my brother—this opinion does seem to be inconsistent with itself.[2]

Apollos.—Where is the inconsistency?

Aquila.—If that universal grace which is granted to all be sufficient for salvation, it seems strange that no man can be saved by it, but that an irresistible grace is further necessary to constrain man to repent, believe, be converted and saved: and I cannot conceive how God wills the salvation of men, on whom he does not bestow this necessary grace. To all this I may add, that from the very face of the position and arguments offered, it would appear and with great reason may it be said, that God is not willing that all men should be saved, indeed that he would not have them all saved.[3]

Apollos.—But, my friend—it is objected to your last broad assertion, that God does will all men to be saved, because he makes use of such arguments as are sufficient to salvation.

[1] Almost all the different views are touched on in these Colloquies.

[2] Whitby and Limborch.

[3] Whitby and Watson.

Aquila.—Stop, my brother—I say how are they sufficient, when a man by *impotency* cannot be the better of them?

Apollos.—To this there is a ready reply by those who favour this system. They argue that 'impotency or incapacity is two-fold; the one is NATURAL, for the want of the natural intellective *faculty*, and of an intelligible object, and of sufficient light to discern that object, this, it is said is blameless and liable to no punishment. The other is MORAL, which, upon the supposition of a natural intellective faculty, and an apprehensive object set in a clear and distinct light, is founded in the over eager desire of a reasonable creature, bent upon an object either different from or contrary to the thing proposed, and is an aversion of manners, in opposition to the conditions and circumstances of the propounded object.'[1]

Aquila.—And here, my friend—is virtually what is called *new divinity*, an opinion revived and brought into operation which had been long since exploded. You will please notice that this incapacity which is called *moral* is really and truly *natural*, for it is contended that it is not acquired by a voluntary custom, but is implanted in man by nature and derived from that original corruption wherein men are born. And, Apollos—whether this impotency and incapacity be *natural* and blameless, or *moral* and criminal, it has nothing to do with the question in debate. At another time we may touch on natural and moral ability, for the present let me prove that they have nothing to do with this matter. We do not inquire whether a man be culpable for an incapacity acquired or contracted, which hinders him from embracing the grace of God; but whether the grace which God offers to men is sufficient for salvation. Now we say, that if grace be not sufficient to master this incapacity, be it natural or moral, then it is not sufficient to bring men to salvation, and thus is rendered the grace which such call sufficient wholly insufficient.[2]

Apollos.—O! I see this; and here is the very reason, and in view of this very difficulty, others confess that there are some, though but few, who believe in Christ by the assistance of this common grace; but that God, out of his free unmerited and boundless goodness, for the end that more may be saved, bestows a greater assistance on some, who are peculiarly elected, whereby they may be irresistibly converted from the error of their way. As one has said, 'We own that there are different degrees of divine grace; and if it be allowed that some are saved by common grace, then it must be granted that irresistible grace is not necessarily requisite to conversion, but only for rendering it the more easy!' Cannot you subscribe to this quotation, my friend?

Aquila.—I am not disposed, Apollos—to subscribe to any thing that does not carry with it reason and truth all through. Let us have the Bible, and that system of divinity taught therein, the essential truths of which are plain and easy to be understood by the most simple and untaught. There are, however, two admissions in all this that are remarkable to come from a man who may be considered one of the originators of this system; I mean the one from whom the quotation is made, who was justly esteemed among the first of scholastic divines.[3]

Apollos.—What are these my friend?

Aquila.—I perfectly agree, in two main things that are set forth in the remark. The first is that no man is to be damned for his own fault. O! this is an admission on the part of new divinity men that is invaluable: it is, my friend—the cutting away the very first prop of the huge dragon of Calvinism: and the second is like it—the obedience of faith is left free and voluntary. Here, I frankly confess is what I never looked for. That men who have ever pressed the doctrine of a limited and a constrained salvation, as well as one founded on an eternal decree of God, should rise up by hundreds, and admit that all are capable of voluntary

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. Watson, and Whitby. [3] John Overall, the bishop of Norwich.

action, that all are damned for their own sins, are saved by faith alone, and above all, may come when they please, or stay away as they choose, with only a few extraordinary exceptions of divine grace, for extraordinary ends, known only in the divine mind.

Apollos.—Is it not strange that I did not observe these things? Why, my dear brother—they are upon the very face of the statement itself. But then this common grace seems so easy, it is like making a man take heaven by his own exertions.

Aquila.—You must remember, my friend—that a man can as well accomplish an action, only to be performed by the exercise of physical or natural powers, by those that are simply moral, as that a man by natural powers, or natural ability, as it is modestly termed, can possibly perform a moral action. A man has no power, abstract from, and short of divine grace, and the direct light and influence of God's holy and blessed Spirit, even to think a good thought, much less perform the work of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and attain to eternal life and salvation by natural ability.

Apollos.—I shall not soon forget your remark the other evening, that men are liable to run to extremes. At one time the way to heaven is made so difficult and inaccessible that only a favoured few can possibly tread therein; at another, it is so easy that men may, with as much ease and readiness of themselves, become converted or turn to God, as they can leave the door of the church and approach the pulpit.

Aquila.—All who know any thing of the experience of divine grace in their hearts, know that nothing short of that grace can subdue the affections, stop the current of nature, and bring the same into sweet captivity to the law of Christ. 'Without me ye can do nothing,' but through 'Christ strengthening,' we can do all things. God helps every man, and requires, only in proportion to what is given: hence all the world is left without excuse, and he that rejects Christ is justly condemned, and his punishment is the result of his own deed.

COLLOQUY XI.

THE DIVINE VOCATION, OR CALL OF ALL MEN TO SALVATION, AND ITS NECESSITY, AS SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

Aquila.—Heretofore, my friend Apollos—we have been engaged at large, in the discussion of the subject of divine predestination, a proper understanding of which is of vast importance, and it is also intimately connected with the best and vital interests of the church of God.[1] There is a subject which we have mentioned more than once, that is also an important one. It grows out of the other, and must not be passed by.

Apollos.—What is that, my friend?

Aquila.—It is the divine vocation or call of all men to salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Apollos.—What do you mean by this vocation or call?

Aquila.—There are various acceptations given to it in the word of God; it has also been defined differently, according as men differ from that system of theology taught by Augustine and revived by Calvin, or as they adopt and support the same. The latter make it a link in the chain of unconditional predestination to an end signified in the divine decree, by which the Deity appoints the elect absolutely to eternal life. But the former, or opponents of the Calvinistic opinions,

[1] Watson and Clarke.

consider this divine call as the voice of the Deity, which comes to all for the specific purpose of their salvation.[1] They give of it this simple definition—the divine vocation is that gracious act of Deity, whereby he calls all men, who are sinners and without the knowledge of him, and consequently guilty, and exposed to everlasting death, to faith and repentance through the gospel of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that if they obey this call he may make them partakers of everlasting salvation.

Apollos.—What are the objects of this vocation or call?

Aquila.—They are men taken in a universal sense, that it might be distinguished from the divine call in the Old Testament.

Apollos.—Why to distinguish it from that?

Aquila.—Because then, or under it, God made a discrimination of people, he elected only the descendants of Abraham, as his peculiar heritage, and gave to them alone the written law, by which they were to be distinguished from other nations, that were excluded from the privileges which the children of Israel enjoyed, as the true church under that dispensation of the living and ever blessed God.[2]

Apollos.—But now that this distinction of people is abolished, the Gentiles are admitted to an equal participation of those privileges with the Jews, and together with them are called to the possession of the heavenly inheritance.[3]

Aquila.—Yes it is so—and the necessity of such a divine call will sufficiently appear, by the consideration of the miserable and corrupt condition in which men were previous to it. They had no knowledge of things necessary to salvation, upon which account they were styled darkness. 'Ye were sometimes darkness,' says St. Paul to the Ephesians, and the eyes of the Gentiles were said to be closed to the truth of salvation, they were blind, hence the same apostle says 'that he was sent to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith' in the Lord Jesus. And, my brother—they directly erred, and had wandered far off from the knowledge of the true God.[4] The Gentiles worshipped idols; i. e. not only false gods, but even devils—of whom they believed such things as it is a shame so much as to mention. Hence at that time, they are said to be 'without God in the world, and to sacrifice to devils, and not unto God.' As for the Jews, they had inverted the primary intention of the law, and placed the principal part of their religion in the observance of external ceremonies, as our Saviour charges flatly on them in the fifteenth and eighteenth chapters of Matthew. Indeed, my friend—before this divine call, both Jews and Gentiles were under the prevailing custom and habit of sin; they were as so many captives, dragging the heavy shackles of their slavery, and bound down in their servitude, both by the depravity of their wills, and their affections, and by the seeming sweetness and allurements of their sins.

Apollos.—Nothing then, but the divine grace, could knock off their fetters, and set them at liberty again.

Aquila.—Nothing, no! nothing else.

Apollos.—But they were not, all alike, involved in the same degree of corruption, were they?

Aquila.—Though all men were corrupted, and unable of themselves, to think of, much less do, what would tend to their salvation, yet all were not alike personally plunged as deep in transgression; consequently, the obstacles in the way of the reception of the divine call, were not equally numerous and difficult.[5]

Apollos.—By nature, all were corrupted and fallen, and surely all are sinners by practice.

[1] Watson, Clarke, and Whitby. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

Aquila.—Yes; both these statements are correct, being founded in fact. By the fall, all were corrupted, and incapable of moral action; and were by nature, ever inclined to evil—conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity.[1] But while all were by nature sinful, and inclined to evil, all who had arrived at a state of accountability, were sinners by practice, deeply involved in personal guilt. There were however then, as now, different degrees in the transgressions of the sinful; this must be obvious to all.[2]

Apollos.—How will you make this appear?

Aquila.—There are some, who have wholly laid aside the use of right reason, and have abandoned themselves so entirely to one or more lusts, that they cannot be prevailed on by reason, revelation, or the Spirit of God, to part with them; indeed, there is no counsel to which they will hearken—but they press on in the broad, frequented way to endless ruin. These men, under the control of a perverse and wicked spirit, having no faith, because of the neglect of every means of light and grace, and by putting far away from themselves all that might remedy the ill and evils consequent on their fall, are given up as a just judgment, to the vile lusts and affections of an impenitent heart, and a conscience seared as with a hot iron. Again, there are others, who are not fallen into so bad a state; these have not quite silenced the dictates of conscience, and of right reason, much less the Spirit of God; still they are carnally minded, and are concerned about earthly things; in them, then, are still the remains, if I may so speak, Apollos—of docility, or the means, when brought into action, of improvement—more or less so, as they are more or less accustomed to evil.[3] And again, there are others still better than those, though perhaps few in number, who serve God according to the best of their knowledge, but being ignorant of the gospel, they are under the prevalency of some vices, from whence the gospel can alone free them; and they are deprived of some virtues, which can never be acquired, but by the grace which that gospel proposes, and points out the means of obtaining.

Apollos.—I see from your remarks, and indeed I might have perceived it, from observations on society, that there is a diversity in the condition of man.[4]

Aquila.—The Scripture presents many examples of this diversity, my friend. There we see the degrees in the moral state of man most strikingly exemplified; there, some are said to fear God; thus in the case of Cornelius, who had never heard the gospel, yet had improved the light that he had received.' 'I perceive,' said St. Peter, 'that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.' Here is a man, who had not lived regardless of the best interests of his soul; and this is a striking fulfilment of the divine declaration of the Redeemer, 'he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God;' for, saith he, 'if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;' and 'he that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God,'—have never submitted to the influences and teachings of the divine Spirit in any degree. But those who are 'disposed to eternal life,' believe, almost as soon as the gospel is proposed to them, submitting themselves on the spot, to the divine government, and the teachings of God's Spirit.

Apollos.—I find it important to trace the progress of human life, back to its very first acts; and the improvement or neglect of the first talent, granted of Almighty God.

Aquila.—It is so, my friend,—take the case of good Nathaniel, who, according to the best of his knowledge, served God; what was the result, when Jesus con-

[1] Wesley and Watson. [2] Limborch and Whitby. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

vinced him that he was the true Messiah,—in the honesty of a soul, determined to serve God at all events, he cried out, 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel.' Take the case of the Ethiopian treasurer, an honest inquirer after truth—who had been to Jerusalem to worship God, and find the way to endless life. He is reading an old manuscript volume, dark, and ignorant of the true way, but determined to improve the one talent, and being disposed 'to eternal life,' when his eyes fell on these words, 'he was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.' See how the gospel call at once produces its effects, and by them we also behold its necessity. 'There Philip began and preached unto him Jesus,' and forthwith the Ethiopian prince believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and embraced that true religion which his apostles taught. I have already mentioned the case of Cornelius, and there are others.

Priscilla.—O! do you not remember that woman, the vender of purple, from the city of Thyatira, which 'worshipped God,' although she had never heard the gospel, having improved her one talent, when the gospel call came, the Lord opened her heart—he granted her other talents, and she 'attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.'

Aquila.—This is a very remarkable example of the truth of our theory; but we must observe one thing, that although these were less corrupted than others, yet they stood in need of the gracious call of God to repent of all the sins, in which hitherto they had indulged themselves, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their only Saviour.

Apollos.—It is evident, however, that all men, notwithstanding this diversity, as to the progress they have made in iniquity, and in wandering from God are most certainly depraved, and in heart and nature, until transformed by grace, ever inclined to do evil, being unregenerate and unclean.

Aquila.—Certainly. As we once said, by the act of the first man, all the powers of the human soul are lapsed, 'the whole head is sick and the heart faint,' by nature we are unteachable and disposed ever to wickedness. This indocility is often augmented by a vicious education, and by customs and examples that are wholly bad; hence it is not equal in all.[1] All natural things would appear to be upon a level. All at least in respect to this point are so, for all are by nature fallen, corrupt, and ignorant. Custom or education and example, under diversified circumstances, in conjunction with voluntary action, when men arrive at years of maturity, render them unequal in the progress of sin and in their moral turpitude of guilt.[2]

Apollos.—Since all are dark, ignorant, prone to sin, indeed corrupt, being naturally not only inclined to and disposed for sin, but so lapsed in all their powers as to be incapable of moral action: how is it that any man can become teachable and disposed to learn at all the path of duty and the way to everlasting life?

Aquila.—This docility in man proceeds only from that general, common, or universal *grace*, which in virtue of the sacrifice and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God communicates to all men, by the agency of his Spirit, sanctifying for the illumination of man the works both of creation and Providence.[3] God has not only endued men with reason, or the power to deduce conclusions from premises laid down, but he has granted, as we have said more than once, to every man at least one talent, 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.' 'The true light' 'enlighteneth every man.' 'A manifestation of the Spirit of God is given to every man to profit withal.' Here then, permit me to

[1] Whitby. [2] Ibid. and Limborch. [3] Ibid.

say, we find the Lord striving with every man, stirring each one up to seek after the living God. By this light he is ready to direct them to himself.[1] His Spirit brings into action natural conscience, and so applies the works of creation and Providence as that every man feels that there is a God, and that he is responsible for his actions. By the contemplation of these works, assisted by reason, guided and influenced by the Spirit, and under the operation of that general grace, men are led to seek, adore, and magnify the Almighty, as the donor of every good and perfect gift, the wise Creator and Governor of the universe.[2]

Apollos.—This is the reason why the Psalmist said, seeing the application that God's spirit makes of these things to the conscience and heart of man, 'the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handy work.'

Aquila.—Yes—and St. Paul says, that though 'God suffered all nations in times past to walk in their own ways, yet he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good and sent them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.' And again, 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on the face of the earth, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him.' Now from these texts it seems inferable, my friend—that men are led to the consideration of the divine works by the Holy Spirit, who is and has been ever since the promise, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, divinely influencing their hearts, and teaching them the way to life. Many, when its operations are yielded to, are excited with an earnest desire to seek after God and secure an eternal inheritance at his right hand.[3] Hence St. Paul says, 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.' And speaking of the Gentiles, he says, 'When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meantime accusing or else excusing one another.'

Apollos.—But, my brother—was this common grace sufficient to bring men to salvation and everlasting life?

Aquila.—Without any more grace and without improvement it was not. Otherwise you might as well ask me if a spark is sufficient to kindle a fire. One talent improved will lead to the bestowment of more. God does not give the light for nothing. Now to explain myself I would say Apollos—in order that a sinner, guilty of sin and condemned to death, may be saved, the remission of sins is requisite. This is a gratuitous act of divine grace exhibited to us, by God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, as being the Saviour and Redeemer of lost and sinful man. The plan appears to be this. By that universal grace granted to all men, in virtue of Christ's death all are under divine influence, at some one period or time of life, in a greater or less degree. By this grace men are stirred up to seek God and perform the general duties of religion, to the best of their knowledge; if living under the light of the gospel, to seek salvation according to its precepts, if not living under that light, according to the best light they have, they try to serve God and are accepted accordingly, as was Cornelius, the Roman centurion; the Deity only requiring and being pleased with a service according to the light a man has, and the state in which he is placed.

[1] Limborch and Whitby. [2] Watson and Limborch. [3] Ibid.

Apollos.—But I take man under the light and blessings of the gospel. How is it then?

Aquila.—When this light is improved, by hearing, attending, meditating, reflecting, praying, by one or more of these means, he is led on, until the great deep of his heart is broken up, and in the anguish of his soul, as a poor, praying, seeking, sin-sick penitent, he seeks to God for mercy, and is enabled by grace, to do what would be otherwise impossible—that is, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and God pours on his soul the comforts of his love.

Apollos.—I see it now; the first light was granted of God; it was by the influence of general grace, that the sinner first had any light at all; and all, in virtue of Christ's death, are under a gracious influence. By this, they could not attain to everlasting life, without its augmentation. On the improvement of it, as one talent, they obtain more; 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' They could not at first have repented; they knew nothing of the deep depravity of their hearts; but as they progress in an inquiry after the true way to endless life, God does mercifully increase that light, and pour upon their souls the divine Spirit, until by divine grace, they are enabled to repent and believe, to the justification of their souls, and the pardon of all personal sins.

Aquila.—Repentance and faith, are only revealed by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are made known to man, who is only enabled to discharge these duties by the grace granted to him, of heaven's boundless mercy.

Apollos—But some object, that since this common or universal grace, is not of itself sufficient to bring men to everlasting life, would it not follow, that all deprived of the knowledge of the gospel, consequently want the means by which they may attain to everlasting life; and will they not therefore perish forever?

Aquila.—You recollect, doubtless, that at another time, I gave an answer that I think Scriptural, to this question. Let me now say, that this is not, in my estimation, the case, by any means. So far from it, it is evident from the Holy Scriptures, that if the degree of light bestowed on man, be improved according to the ability granted, God will mercifully bestow more and more, until at last, of his bounty, we shall obtain heaven. Indeed, if some men make a right use of this common, or universal grace, and to the utmost of their power, live to honour and glorify their Creator, acting on the great principles of integrity, sincerity and probity, toward God and man—to them, the Almighty, who sees the fear and reverence they have for him, though they know not his name, nor are blessed with his gospel, yet will he accept of them, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to that state wherein they are.[1] They shall not be condemned, nor excluded from everlasting salvation; being thus ready to improve the light they have, and make a right use of reason, which is a gift of God; for every good and perfect gift, cometh down from the Father of lights,—the Deity finding them disposed to embrace his gospel, whenever it shall be proposed to them, accomplishes a change doubtless in a way, unknown to us, and accepts of them. These are ready to account to him, according to what they have, not according to that which they have not.[2]

Apollos.—But then another objection arises: if by the improvement and use of this common grace, a man may be prepared to embrace the gospel, and become an evangelical believer, whenever it is proffered to him, is not the grace of the gospel then, or that of salvation, granted to men according to their merits?

Aquila.—By no means, I think, my friend,—for it is a contradiction, to say that grace is given, and yet that it is according to merit, for the very idea of grace, excludes that of merit, else grace is no grace at all; besides, the improve-

[1] Whitby and Limborch. [2] Watson and Whitby.

ment of ourselves in pious dispositions, and our efforts, by reason and inquiry, to learn the true way, are only the fruits of that general grace granted to man, for the sake of our Lord Jesus. Indeed we should never think of God, or desire his knowledge, but that his Spirit divinely operates on the hearts of all, and gives to every man at least one talent. Here then, is the capital, if I may so speak, on which we commence; without it, we could not think a good thought, much less desire and will to serve God. Now this Spirit and grace, first enlightens, and then works with us, whose hearts are corrupted, and whose wills are perverse, until we are enabled, improving each benefit bestowed, to venture on the living God, and trust in him for everlasting life. And even admit that men, by an exercise of reason, and human efforts, could do the will of God, yet would they only be doing their duty—they would merit nothing; but this they cannot do; they must have the first degree of light, and at every stage be aided of heaven, or fail forever.[1] God, seeing the honest efforts to acquire a knowledge of the way to eternal life, grants the necessary help to every sincere and prayerful inquirer.[2] This is not all, to show that there is no merit in it; the Father often offers the grace of his gospel, and opens the way for it to be preached, even to those who have never made a right use of that universal grace, or light, that heaven pours on man.[3] This is not only evident, from the corrupt state in which men were before the great evangelical call was given; but we behold it to be the present condition of men, if we but consider the state of many parts of the world at this very day. I may in the last place add, my friend—that though the wickedness of man may prevent God for a time, from making known his call to them, or provoke him by rejecting it, to take the same away from them, yet does he always dispense his grace absolutely at pleasure, without any regard to the deserts of men.[4]

Apollos.—This inequality and disproportion then, in the dispensations of divine grace, are by no means repugnant to the justice or equity of the Almighty.

Aquila.—Certainly not. For he administers all things to all men, according to their several states, by the rules of infinite justice and wisdom. This is a great mystery, a secret hid for ages, unsearchable by poor finite man, but now revealed in the gospel of Christ, as the common mode of the divine government God at pleasure grants one, two, three, or five talents, and justly demands a corresponding improvement. He may, and perhaps often does, as the most glorious Sovereign of the universe, give two to him, that has not improved the one, or three, or five, but at last, as a being of infinite purity, he requires that there shall be a corresponding improvement. But it is his pleasure sometimes to grant to some nations, families, or individuals only one talent, and of consequence he only requires a corresponding improvement. When therefore the one, or two, or three, or five, are improved, he does most certainly grant more, and give to such an ample reward.[5]

Apollos.—The grace of God then, revealed to us in the gospel, is the beginning, the progress, and the completion of salvation.

Aquila.—Yes! my friend—there is no saving good that does not come from God. Without its co-operation, we could not think of, as has been already said, much less perform any thing conducing to salvation. This is apparent from the word of God, which furnishes abundant testimony to that effect.[6] Thus we hear St. Paul saying of this grace, as the fountain of all moral ability and action, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.' 'For the grace

[1] Watson, and Limborch.
[2] Wesley, Watson, and Limborch.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Wesley, Watson, and Limborch.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' And says the same apostle, for after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the working of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'

Apollos.—O! this is incontrovertible evidence that our salvation originates in grace, where else could it originate? This made St. Paul say, that God 'hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, but it is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.'

Aquila.—That the progress of salvation is dependant on divine grace, we have ample evidence in the Scripture, my brother—'Being confident of this very thing,' says St. Paul, 'that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.' Here it is evident that two facts are set forth. The first is that God had begun the good work. The second is that he alone can carry it on. And thus said the same apostle to his Corinthian brethren, 'I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.'

Apollos.—Surely this is an ascription of all our benefits to the divine grace.

Aquila.—Yes—and the completion of salvation, can only be ascribed to divine grace. After St. Paul had shown the Philippians that the progress of religion was dependant on grace, he adds, showing that its completion was also attributable to the same, 'And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment. That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence, until the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.' Hence says he, 'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.' And finally, in an acknowledgment that all our salvation is of God, St. Paul prays for the Hebrew church, 'Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

Priscilla.—Who for a moment could doubt that all our hope is founded in divine grace. Fallen, dark, ignorant, and helpless, grace comes in to our assistance, and but for it we never could progress in the divine life. O! we ought to feel that we every moment need, the grace of God to help us on to everlasting life.

Aquila.—And when the storms of this our mortal career shall be ended, we shall return home to heaven, and there ascribe our salvation to the grace and mercy of God; forever! even forever and ever!

Apollos.—How plain and simple the blessed plan of salvation appears to be. Here is the divine calling or vocation of the gospel. All men are far away from God, God's grace and Spirit influence all, the gospel comes in and presents a Saviour, when the sinner hears, and betakes himself to inquiry, prayer, and ardent entreaty for eternal life; God helps him by grace at every step, sustains

and supports him under every trial, and at last gives him a crown of eternal life, of free unmerited grace in heaven.

Aquila.—All this is according to the economy of grace. 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened, for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.'

COLLOQUY XII.

AN INQUIRY INTO THOSE DIVISIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE DIVINE VOCATION, OR CALLING OF MEN TO SEEK THE FAVOUR OF GOD.

Aquila.—We have considered, my brother—the divine vocation or calling, as a gracious act of God in Christ, by which, through his word and spirit, he calls forth sinful men, who are liable to condemnation and are placed under the dominion of sin, from the condition of nature, and the pollutions and corruptions of the world, that they may answer by faith to God and Christ, who give the call, and thus become the covenant people of the Father, through Christ the mediator of this covenant, and as believers and parties to the covenant, they may love, fear, honour and worship God and Christ, rendering in all things, obedience to the divine precepts.[1]

Apollos.—I have heard various divisions of this vocation or calling, what are the chief of them?

Aquila.—Divines have divided it variously, so as to make several classes thereof. The first distinction or division has been into *internal* and *external*.[2]

Apollos.—What is implied in the external call or vocation of divine grace.

Aquila.—This is said to be the word of God, either as spoken or committed to writing, called the Sacred Writings or Scriptures. Of this kind or nature was the law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and lastly, that more perfect word, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; which is God's present eternal call to all mankind.[3] Sometimes the Deity spake immediately by himself, at other times by angels, most frequently, however, by men, such as his apostles and prophets of old, and the ministers of the gospel at the present day. These if divinely commissioned and 'moved by the Holy Ghost to take on them the office of this ministry,' are sent to speak to and call men, and this is an external call to salvation; and it is allowed that any external means which are used of divine grace, to recover the sinful and bring them back, are also calls from God, which may be said to belong to this class.

Apollos.—What is the internal vocation?

Aquila.—It is that holy influence or operation of the divine spirit on human hearts, moving, exciting and stirring men to obey the outward call made to them by God's word. A very striking instance of this we have in Lydia, 'whose heart God is said to have opened, that she might attend to the things spoken by Paul.' Of this inward call and teaching of the Divine Spirit, we know comparatively very little indeed. Although it is the same every where, yet is there a diversity of operations. It enlightens, strives with, and calls men to attend to the best interests of their immortal souls. It ever accompanies the word, when preached, as God has commanded, and brings it in power to the human mind and heart, awakening the sinner, comforting the mourner, supporting the believer, and condemning the guilty. In this view it may be considered, but as one vocation with the word, for that word cannot come in power, unless it is attended by the holy

[1] Watson. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

Spirit. The former, or an external vocation, reaches our ears only, and enlightens the mind, the latter, or the internal call affects and prevails upon the hearts of men.

Apollos.—What is the next division or distinction that is generally made.

Aquila.—The second is into sufficient and efficacious, about which there has been great disputation among divines.[1]

Apollos.—How so my friend?

Aquila.—Those of the Calvinistic system maintain, that the efficacious vocation, is distinct from that which is sufficient.

Apollos.—How can this possibly be? I can't understand it. What does it mean?

Aquila.—It is supposed that the Deity grants the sufficient call to many, to whom he will never give the efficacious call, and therefore they never do obey and return to God.

Apollos.—Do tell me is this a correct view of it?

Aquila.—I think not. I am of the opinion that both of them are but one and the same thing, only they are distinguished on account of their different relation to us. The fact is that no vocation is ineffectual, which proceeds from God, true it does not always accomplish the end for which it is sent forth, and therefore it is not effectual, but the fault proceeds not from God, or the want of power or energy in the call. The defect is in man, who when God calls, will not obey.[2]

Apollos.—Do give me a view, however concise, if you please, of both opinions.

Aquila.—I will do so with pleasure, Apollos. Sufficient grace or vocation, as it is received, is that which is not, it is said, sufficient in a degree, to bring men to salvation and convert their souls; but only to convict them of ingratitude. Now if it be not sufficient to convert, neither is it to convict of ingratitude; for as it is no ingratitude to refuse a favour that was never offered, so no better excuse could be given for it, than the want of means requisite to do or perform the duty.[3]

Apollos.—But is there not an objection, such an one as I once had occasion before to notice, that it is self-sufficient to convict men, but it is their fault and wickedness alone which hinders it from being sufficient.

Aquila.—But you must recollect my brother—that the word sufficient is a relative word, nothing therefore is sufficient only with respect to the person to whom it is said to be so. If therefore it is insufficient to destroy the wickedness of man, it is not sufficient to convert him, when corrupted and involved in the labyrinth of crime.[4] You must also remember, we are not inquiring what such a call can do with a man whose powers are not lapsed and fallen, by no means, such a case does not exist, all are debilitated and ruined by sin, and the gospel call is for all to repent and return to God. Such is man's wickedness, and such his state of iniquity and rebellion, that a call which does not meet the exigency of the case, and that is not intended to lead him forth from his prison house, is of no true value, and does not, as I have already once argued, display the beneficence and the kindness of our God.[5]

Apollos.—Well but it is said that the prison doors are opened, and the call is given, and though it is not effectual, yet is not the fault in Deity, it is sufficient, and if they remain in prison, with the doors thrown open, it is their fault, not that of the Almighty.

Aquila.—This is specious, but not true, or founded on fact. It is not a sufficient means of escape for man, for God to throw open the door, and give the call, when the poor wretch is chained to the floor, and incapable of action. His chains must be knocked of, the doors thrown open, the call given, and every facility ren-

[1] Watson, Limborch, and Whitby. Ibid. and Fletcher.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Limborch, Watson, and Clarke.

dered, for a departure from sin and the devil, and then there is a sufficient call, and he that will not come, must inevitably and justly be damned.[1] Leave the sinner shackled, and incapable of design or resolution much less moral action, then is the call insufficient, or of no avail?

Apollos.—I did not think of human corruption and moral inability.

Aquila.—O never my friend—forget, 'without me ye can do nothing.'

Apollos.—But it has, you know been urged, that God is not obliged in justice to bestow a large degree of grace on men.

Aquila.—This my brother—has long since been admitted by me, and I now add, we have no claims on the divine mercy, all is of grace. But, yet grace you know, is not called sufficient with respect to God, but men; if it be inadequate to prevail on them to repent, in the state in which they are, it is really insufficient. But moreover, God annexes to this vocation not only a promised reward, but also, the threatening of a severe punishment, and in justice, with humility I say it, he is obliged to bestow as much grace on man, in virtue of Christ's death, as is necessary to enable him to repent, and return for mercy, and the remission of his sins, otherwise he cannot expect men to accept the gospel call, much less in equity, damn them, for not doing a thing, that he refused to aid them to perform. Is this all? No! my friend—damn them for not doing a thing he never intended they should do, and one which if he desired their obedience to, he would constrain it forthwith.

Apollos.—What then is the proper or correct view of this subject?

Aquila.—It is evident from the general tenor, of the holy Scriptures, that the vocation, which God gives to man is sufficient, if properly improved, for his recovery. In virtue of the death of Christ as we have proved, a *gracious ability* is conferred on him, and in the state or condition in which he is now placed, in the providence of God, when the call comes, the influence resulting from that call, and a proper exercise of that ability bestowed of grace, combined together, will terminate under the blessing of heaven, which is promised in the salvation of him that thus improves his talent, though it be but one.[2] Thus all may obey the call of God, and when this is obeyed, in the prosecution of their course, they shall find grace sufficient to obey all God's commands.[3]

Apollos.—If then this call be ineffectual, it is by the voluntary and avoidable wickedness of man, who makes no use of the *gracious ability* so freely granted him, of heaven, for Christ sake.

Aquila.—It is so. The light is all round us, but men close their eyes, to this light, and then lay the blame of their sins on the Deity. 'They have eyes to see, but see not, and ears to hear, but hear not.' God is said to have omitted nothing on his part, to bring them to the right sense of things, and prevail on them to show forth the fruit of good works, which yet, they do not. You remember that beautiful and affecting parable of the unprofitable vineyard, in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, do you not? O!—it sets forth in the most lively colours, the forbearance and goodness of the Almighty, the blessings with which we are surrounded, and the obstinacy of man. God 'looked for it to bring forth grapes and it brough forth wild grapes.

Apollos.—Now, I think I see, what is truly an efficacious call, it is that which by the co-operation of man's will, obtains its effect, yet so as not to exclude the possibility of a failure, when the vocation is resisted by the wickedness of men.

Aquila.—Most certainly. Every call is sufficient and would be efficacious if men would obey it; but they will not, and therefore, it is inefficacious. So the effectual call, as it has been denominated, might have become inefficacious, by

[1] Watson and Whitby. [2] Watson, Whitby, and Clarke. [3] Ibid.

the voluntary resistance of men, and the same grace, is called or named sufficient and efficacious, on account of the different ways in which it is received.[1]

Apollos.—That is, it is sufficient, because it is capable of producing the desired effect, and efficacious when it has produced that effect. Here the agency of man is preserved, and the ways of God are justified, and proved to be perfectly consonant with the strictest justice, and the purest principles of righteousness and holiness.[2]

Aquila.—There has been another distinction, or division among divines, that I will name. It is a division of this vocation into *congruous* and *incongruous*. The former is that by which the Deity suits his call, to the persons, times and circumstances, wherein he foresees that it shall attain its effect. By incongruous, it is said, is meant a vocation, which God applies to persons, in such foreseen times and circumstances, wherein men will not believe, but render the divine call of non effect.[3]

Apollos.—My brother—this does not appear to be a consistent and proper distinction.

Aquila.—It might be allowed, if we were permitted to add, that no vocation according to God's *intention* is incongruous, but is only so accidentally, that is as men mixed with other men, to whom the divine word is preached, and whose feelings and other concurrent circumstances unite to 'choke' the precious seed, and prevent the operation and legitimate influence of the divine grace.

Apollos.—It is however, certain, that the methods of the vocation of God are various, and they are not all of them alike suited, if we may judge from outward circumstances to what may be called the present condition or state of the individual. For instance, if we are advised by a friend, one noted for piety, while we are in a calm and serious mood, we shall certainly be sooner prevailed upon, than if admonished by a man who is a stranger and grossly wicked, and who approaches us when we are excited by passion.

Aquila.—The comparison my friend is inapplicable. The Deity searches for no such occasions. We are incapable of judging of the proper time to call, God knows what time is best, whether the silence of night, or the brightness of day, the sereneness of a calm, or in the midst of tempests and storms, whether by a whisper, or by the hoarse and roaring thunder, and forked lightnings. We know not, and are not capable of judging, and I am sure that every call God gives is perfectly suitable, with all its attendant circumstances, though we may not see it, to man's true condition. That is the time, the place, the proper occasion, and if improved, shall most certainly have the desired and salutary effect. To argue otherwise, would be to charge ignorance on the Deity, if not to slander that infinite purity and goodness which are characteristic of him, who is our only and sure friend.

Priscilla.—Now it cannot be concealed that all these distinctions, of sufficient and efficacious, congruous and incongruous, common and special calls, grow out of the doctrine of an absolute and an unconditional election, of some men to eternal life, and others to eternal damnation. Are not these divisions made to carry out the leading features of this scheme?

Apollos.—Indeed I am led to think, you are nearly right in this matter.

Aquila.—No gift of God is to be considered common or unclean. Every call is all sufficient, if met aright by man, for his salvation. Every attendant circumstance shall be overruled for good, and shall tend to man's eternal welfare, if it be submitted to him, who rules and calms the boisterous billows of the tempestuous ocean. Let us never admit a principle, that will compromise the honour of the Deity, or be unbecoming of that notion which we ought to entertain of him

[1] Clarke, Whitby, and Watson. [2] Clarke, and Watson. [3] Limborch.

as a being, infinitely wise, holy, and good, who ever seeks our soul's salvation, by means the most appropriate and congenial, with the immense purity of his own nature, the vast misery of man, and the agency of a rational intelligence, capacitated to determine his own actions.

Priscilla.—I know, and know it well too, that I might have obeyed the first call I ever had, but I thought, what will the world think, what will they say? If I offer God my heart, my life: my friends and the world will all oppose me. Thus I put off for years, what might have been, and ought to have been done at first. I suppose some would say that the first was a common call, sufficient, but not efficacious, incongruous and common, and not effectual, while the last was the reverse. O! I dislike these distinctions of schoolmen and metaphysicians.

Apollos.—I believe the plain good old way is the best. Good night!

COLLOQUY XIII.

THAT THE OPERATIONS OF DIVINE GRACE, WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO CONVERSION, MAY BE RESISTED, IN THE FREE EXERCISE OF THAT LIBERTY GRANTED TO MEN, IS CLEARLY SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS.

Apollos.—A great deal has been said, my brother Aquila—about the influence, exercise, and energy of divine grace. I am anxious to have a scriptural view of those its operations on the human heart. I wish to know whether or no there is clear an indubitable evidence, in the Scriptures, that these operations can be resisted, and I am desirous of understanding, how by it, the conversion of man is brought about.

Aquila.—I have frequently remarked upon the manner in which God visits, instructs, and guides man in the way of truth, and you know how often I have argued that grace can be resisted to such a degree, as to render abortive every exertion, consistent with the agency of man, for his conversion. This, however, I have admitted is a controverted point. Those who adopt the Calvinian theory, of unconditional election and reprobation, believe that grace can never be resisted; those who believe in a conditional salvation, adopt an opinion exactly the reverse.

Apollos.—But you know that Calvinists seldom or never use the word *irresistible* in all their writings.

Aquila.—This too I admit, my friend—and what of that? Other expressions which are dubious, and those also that may be understood well, as of the same meaning, by any man of common sense, are constantly used, even by those the most moderate. However as that word is not only proper but a most significant term, and one that represents to us the whole state of the controversy at one view, without any ambiguity, we choose to make use of it, rather than any other expression which would render the dispute more abstruse.[1]

Apollos.—Well, but as that word is not generally used, except only by supralapsarians, let it pass, and let the state of the question be, whether, when God seriously wills that a man believe and be converted, it is in his power not to believe, nor be converted.

Aquila.—Well, my friend—you know my position, a man can resist the sacred influences of divine grace, and turn his back on every effort of that grace for his redemption. And I believe it will be easy to prove by incontrovertible evidence from God's word, first that this position is correct, and secondly that what is proposed against it, is not founded in Scripture and experience.[2]

Apollos.—Come then—take up the first, and show that men may resist the

[1] Watson and Whitby. [2] Ibid.

operations of divine grace, which influence their hearts for their conversion from the destructive ways of sin.

Aquila.—Agreed—and the very first argument is deduced from several places of Scripture, in which God is said not only to have willed the conversion of some men, but also to have made use of the very means for their conversion which would have accomplished it, but that they would not hearken to the divine vocation, and rebelled against the government of God their lawful sovereign.[1] Of these kind there are many texts that we might consider.

Apollos.—Of course I may express the objections that are adduced, against any text you offer.

Aquila.—Most assuredly; this is what I always expect. And as I have had occasion once or twice to mention the beautiful parable of the Lord's vineyard, named in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, I will present that: indeed I might adduce the whole: you can read it at your leisure. I will at present, to substantiate the fact that men do rebel and resist successfully the grace of God which is designed for their conversion, quote the fourth verse: 'What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?' In these words God very pathetically shows, that he used all necessary means for the conversion of the people of Israel, and yet they were not converted.[2]

Apollos.—But, my brother—you know there are several exceptions made to this text, by those who oppose your theory. In the first place, it said, that the prophet here makes mention only of the external means which God made use of with respect to his vineyard; as that he planted it in a fruitful soil, built a tower and wine press therein, and gathered out the stones thereof; but does not say that God watered it with the dew of heaven, or caused his sun to shine upon it, which properly produce the fruit of the vineyard, and are analogous to the internal grace whereby God converts men.[3]

Aquila.—But, my friend—these things mentioned do not exclude the rain and the sun, far, very far from it; but indeed they rather take them, I think, as granted, they being common to all vineyards; but herein is denoted the special care which God took of this vineyard in particular, in that he removed several things that might otherwise have been a hindrance to the designed effect; so that the expostulation which God makes becomes thereby the more reasonable. And again, these words, 'what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it,' comprehended all those things that are requisite for the bringing forth fruit; else if such a grace had not been given, it might have been replied, thou hast not made use of thine irresistible power, without which all means are insignificant, since all that heretofore were made use of have proved ineffectual. Besides the expectation of grapes could never have been ascribed to God, if he had withheld the rain and sun, without the influence of which the vineyard could not bring forth grapes. God therefore applied such means as were proper for the conversion of the Jews, and might accordingly have expected a correspondent effect, though by their obstinacy it happened quite otherwise.[4]

Apollos.—But it is said by some that these words 'what could have been done more to my vineyard,' are not by way of inquiry, what could have been done more for the producing of fruit in the vineyard: but by way of deliberation, what should be done to the vineyard? since it brought forth no fruit, viz: that it should be destroyed, as it follows in verse the fifth, 'I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard, I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up,' &c.

Aquila.—But my brother—such an interpretation is positively repugnant to the

[1] Watson and Whitby.
[2] Whitby and Limborch.
[3] Drs. Scott and Gill.
[4] Dr. Clarke, Whitby and Limborch.

text itself. For God does not speak in the future tense, what shall I do, but 'what could I have done more to my vineyard,' a past tense being used, thereby denoting that he had omitted nothing, that was requisite for its producing good grapes. In addition to this, the determination for destroying the vineyard, would have been unjust, since for want of the divine grace, it could not bring forth any thing else, but wild grapes.[1]

Apollos.—It is true then that God determines the punishment, but it is not, until all the remedies, which he had applied, have proved ineffectual.

Aquila.—Just so, and this is a most equitable economy. There is another text in the Old Testament that I will adduce. 'Son of man thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and they see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house.' Now by hearing and seeing in this place, is not meant the external sense of the eye or ear, but the knowledge and observation of the divine precepts. It is therefore evident that by eyes to see and ears to hear, is meant the faculty of knowledge and obeying the commands of God; which though the people, of whom God by the prophet speaks, were blessed with, yet they did not make a right use of, but neglected a most imperious duty.[2]

Apollos.—But you do not think that by eyes and ears, we are here to understand, grace as granting ability to repent and return to God, seeking regeneration through our Lord Jesus, but simply, the conviction of the mind and heart, with respect to the truth of the doctrine taught by the prophets.[3]

Aquila.—I readily grant my friend Apollos—that by eyes and ears in this place we are not to understand the irresistible grace, as it is called, of God, for conversion and regeneration, for I have denied more than once that God ever makes use of such a grace in the conversion of a sinner: and it would be a contradiction to say that God applies such a grace, and yet the man is not converted. Now I say that by it is meant grace sufficient to produce such a conversion, with which men might have co-operated, and thereby have repented. It is therefore evident, that it is their own wickedness in resisting this divine grace, which is the sole impediment to their conversion. To all this I may add, that a people cannot be justly charged with rebellion, as God threatens them in the eleventh verse of this chapter, though they should be convinced of the truth of the prophet's doctrine, unless at the same time there were given them a faculty, or ability as it is termed, of obeying that doctrine. There are two impediments which obstruct our obedience to the divine commands. They are blindness of understanding, and perverseness of will. Now the removing of ignorance is not sufficient to produce obedience, unless a power or ability be granted, of correcting the perverseness of the will. If this be not admitted all the reproofs, as well as calls of God, are of no avail.[4]

Apollos.—This is certainly true, I did not think of it.

Aquila.—Another text in favour of the opinion I have advanced, you will find in the gospel by St. Matthew, I have had occasion to notice it also once or twice. 'Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto the Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done, in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes: but I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you,' &c. Now it is affirmed that such a degree of grace, was communicated to the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, by which the Tyrians and Sidonians would have repented, had it been offered to them, and consequently the persons whom the Saviour addressed might have repented, by virtue of it, although they did not.

[1] Clarke and Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Scott and Henry.
[4] Clarke and Limborch.

Apollos.—But my friend, to this construction there are also exceptions. It is said that the Saviour does not say, what would really, but what probably would have come to pass in Tyre and Sidon.[1]

Aquila.—But my friend—an objection of this kind, to our construction, would destroy itself, if it did not the very force and meaning of the text.

Apollos.—Would destroy itself, how?

Aquila.—It is said that without the power and influence of grace, that can alone regenerate the human heart, it is impossible for any man to be converted to God; what therefore, is by no means possible, according to their own showing, is not certainly very probable, and cannot be expected to transpire.[2]

Apollos.—But it is thought that this is a hyperbolical mode of expression, which does not intimate what the Tyrians would have done, but only aggravates the wickedness, and the impiety of others, by an instance taken from the worst of sinners.

Aquila.—This is a very serious, and pathetic mode of speech directed to men, exceedingly obstinate, in which are things not dissimilar but of a like nature, viz: men with men, and the wickedness of some, with the wickedness of others, all of which are compared together.

Apollos.—But some say that our Saviour does not speak of true, and saving repentance by which men actually turn from their sins, and are converted to God, but of such an external repentance only, as was manifested by outward signs, of sackcloth and ashes.

Aquila.—The repentance which men expressed by humbling themselves in sackcloth and ashes, was the greatest; and they made use of those external signs to testify the sincerity of the same. So this is certainly not said to degrade the repentance of the Tyrians, as if it would have been only external but greater. Besides the original word is the one in common and constant use for an internal and genuine, and not a word that barely signifies an outward repentance or rather the external acts thereof. Moreover, it is evident, that such a repentance is here understood, as the Saviour required of the cities of Judah, which was not external but internal. Add to this, that on account of that which the Tyrians would have performed, it is said that their condition should be more tolerable in the day of judgment: but the external signs of repentance only, whilst the heart remains impenitent, cannot mitigate the punishment, therefore the inference is that the repentance spoken of would have been internal and genuine.[3]

Apollos.—The remark then was a pointed reproof given by our Lord, to those who had the opportunities of repentance, and the grace to enable them to do so, and repented not.

Aquila.—It was and I will also name another text. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house left unto you desolate.' Here our Lord declares the earnest desire he had for the repentance of the Jews, in that he not only once or twice but *often* applied to them, the means that were calculated to produce their conversion. And this was not done lightly or carelessly, but with great affection, and an anxious wish to gather them together, with tenderness and kindness, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. But they would not be gathered, that is, they would not repent. What a very striking evidence is this, that men can and do resist the grace of God.[4]

Apollos.—But by Jerusalem it is said that we are not to understand all the inhabitants of that city, but only the princes and elders of the people; and by chil-

[1] Beza, as quoted by Limborch. [2] Limborch and Whitby. [3] Watson and Limborch. [4] Ibid.

dren the commonalty; and out of these last it is said that the Saviour did gather many, though the elders of the people did what they could to prevent it.

Aquila.—Indeed my brother Apollos—recourse is had to many a subterfuge to evade the force of those plain truths that strike at the very root, of an unconditional election, and that places the agency of man on its own true ground, as declared by reason and revelation. You have referred to a new sort of interpretation, especially of the word Jerusalem. Indeed the exposition of 'the children' thereof, is not less exceptionable. These explanations of God's holy and precious word, are certainly contrary to the Scripture itself, which by the remarks in the text, denote the inhabitants of that rebellious city, the rulers as well as commonalty and *vice versa.* Now I can prove this by several texts from the sacred code.

Apollos.—Do my friend—let me hear them.

Aquila.—'Go and cry,' says the Lord to Jeremiah, 'in the ears of Jerusalem, saying thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown, Israel was holiness unto the Lord.' Did not 'Jerusalem,' here mean all the inhabitants of that ill-fated city?

Apollos.—I really believe it did.

Aquila.—And says the same prophet, in view of the unbounded iniquity of the Jews, and especially the inhabitants of their capital, 'O! Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved.' Did not God here mean all the inhabitants of the city also? And in a similar text he says, 'Be thou instructed O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.' Therefore, 'thus saith the Lord after this manner, will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.' 'Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore, she is removed: all that honoured her, despised her, because they have seen her nakedness, yea she sigheth and turneth backward.' I have quoted these texts my friend, Apollos—to show you, that by the term Jerusalem, its inhabitants taken collectively, are meant. And no exception of this kind, ought ever to be admitted, the obvious end being simply to avoid by such inventions, the force of an argument. Even however, grant that Jerusalem and its children, might in some other place admit of such a sense, yet the circumstances of this text will not allow of any such interpretation; but rather indeed, prove that the words were spoken of the whole people, as well rulers and princes, as those of the lower or inferior sort.

Apollos.—But it has been said that Christ uttered this in his human nature, as he was a prophet sent forth from God, to call all men to salvation, not in his divine nature, wherein he has decreed never to make them partakers of his effectual grace, but in the order of an outward ministry.[1]

Aquila.—Well I supposed it would come at last to this: but this objection does not well agree with the other, my brother.

Apollos.—How so?

Aquila.—Therein the Saviour is said to have been willing to gather them, i. e. some out of the commonality, though the rulers resisted it. Now it is said that the Saviour speaks this of the same persons, who would not be gathered; but only says it in his human nature. Are you aware of the dark reflection that this casts on the Lord Jesus? What! to attribute such a two-fold will to him, that he purposes one thing according to his human, and another according to his divine nature, as if he were divided from and contrary to himself?

Apollos.—I see this would never do, and indeed my own objections to this text were answered long since.

Aquila.—This granted, let me produce another text that confirms the fact that

[1] Beza has this very argument, and it is quoted and endorsed by Doctor Scott.

grace may be resisted: 'But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, against themselves, being not baptized of him.' Here it is apparent that the counsel of God, which had decreed for the salvation of the Pharisees and lawyers, was rejected, and the design evidently frustrated by them; and the conclusion is inevitable, that the grace whereby he wills the conversion of men may be resisted. There are also one or two other passages of the Scriptures parallel to this, that are to the same effect. 'These things I say unto you that ye might be saved.' 'And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.'

Apollos.—But here, as is declared by many, we have the expressed intention of the Saviour, as preaching to men, but not the intention of God.

Aquila.—Those who would in earnest offer such an objection, do most assuredly attempt to insult both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you, my friend—or any man who looks at this subject aright, attribute to our Lord, as a preacher of his own everlasting truth, an intention contrary to the design of God, which very intention he came into the world to publish, and whose preaching itself was but the declaration of the will of God to us? Why, my brother—this would be to destroy the certainty of Christ's preaching, and to shake the very foundation of the christian's faith.[1]

Apollos.—It is however argued, that the meaning of the words is simply this, that Christ appealed to the testimony of John, not so much for his own credit as for their salvation, if there were any sheep among them, that would hear his voice.

Aquila.—But this is a positive wresting of Christ's words. He does not say that he spoke these things for the salvation of the elect alone, whom such understand by the term *sheep*, if there were any among them, but for the salvation of those who would not come to him that they might have life, as the words of our Saviour clearly evince. Christ, my brother, was in earnest in bringing the Jews to salvation, and by his doctrine and grace furnished them with means sufficient to enlighten their minds and aid them to seek a change of heart, in order that they might be saved. This was the end he proposed, but they obstinately resisted his grace, and disobeyed his every call, until he declared, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.'[2]

Apollos.—The whole determination of this matter was to be traced to a deliberate exercise of their own agency.

Aquila.—Yes—and the Scriptures prove positively that it was a resistance of the gracious influences of God's precious Spirit. 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your Fathers did so do ye.'

Apollos.—There are, to this very text that you have just quoted, several objections raised. The first is, that it does not from thence follow that the operation of the Holy Ghost, by which God would convert men, can be resisted, but only that the unregenerate may resist the Holy Ghost, nay cannot do otherwise.[3]

Aquila.—I know that by the unregenerate some persons mean the reprobate. They hold the idea of an eternal justification, founded on the unconditional decree of regeneration for all the elect, and are not aware that the very objection that you have just named destroys itself. By such persons it is said that the Holy Ghost never intended to work repentance and faith in the reprobate, therefore they cannot resist him, it being impossible to resist an action that was never intended to be performed.[4]

Apollos.—But it has been affirmed, that they resisted what has been called the virtual and *interpretative* intention of God, who made use of all the means that tended in their own nature to the begetting of faith.

Aquila.—And, my friend—this is an objection as fanciful as it is specious.

[1] Watson and Limborch. [2] Whitby and Fletcher. [3] Calvin. [4] Whitby.

For those interpretative means, as they have been named, according to the views of those who offer the objection, are according to them only external means, such as preaching the word, miracles and the like: now these, without the internal and irresistible operation of the Holy Ghost, are as ineffectual for the production of regeneration, according to the Calvinian view, as the voice of a man would be for the raising up of one from the dead. How then do they tend, in their own nature, to the begetting of faith? Besides, they are not said to resist the word but the Holy Ghost: now, according to this view, the act of the Holy Ghost is distinct from the word, therefore either they resisted the action of the Holy Ghost, or else it must be owned with us, that the act of the Holy Ghost, in purposing the regeneration of men, is always joined with the word, and consequently whoever resists the one resists the other; for if holy men 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' the words of God are but the language of the Holy Spirit, and he who resists the one resists the other.[1]

Apollos.—But then it is said by others, that they resisted, as far as they could, the intention of the Holy Ghost, in working faith in others, and that was done in this way. They killed those who were sent, being moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the truth to them.

Aquila.—Then according to this opinion they did not resist any act of the Holy Ghost, whereby he intended to work faith in their own souls; and consequently as God would not have them to believe in Christ, they by their infidelity, committed nothing contrary to the divine will: To assert which, is certainly, to say the least, preposterous. But again, by their being said to have resisted as far as in them lay, the intention of the Holy Ghost in producing faith in others, it is plainly granted, that they themselves did not really resist the Holy Ghost; nor my friend—by this killing of the apostles, are they said to resist the Holy Ghost, because as far as possible they hindered the conversion of others; but because they hardened themselves, and would not believe the gospel, though convinced of the truth of it by the wisdom and preaching of Stephen. You will thus see, that there is no other way of taking the text, than just as it reads, it is a most positive declaration of actual resistance to the operations of grace and the visitations of the divine spirit, by the free exercise of that ability or power, which exists in man. It was an act of their own, 'as your fathers did, so do ye,' 'ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.'[2]

Apollos.—I believe you are correct in your exposition of the passage.

Aquila.—There is another text I will adduce. Many objections have been made to it. This however may be sustained by unanswerable arguments, indeed, the scriptures advance almost every where, the very same doctrine that is set forth in this very text.

Apollos.—What is the text my friend?

Aquila.—'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts: A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face.' Here the intention of the Deity, to convert that people from the error and rebellion of their ways is certainly most manifest. God represents himself as one, opening wide the arms of his mercy, ready to receive, embrace and save them, and this he is said to have done 'all the day.' And to these may be added those texts, wherein they are said to have been called by the Deity, but they would not obey the divine call. 'I also will choose their delusions and will bring their fears upon them, because when I called none did answer, when I spake they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.' And the other parallel text

[1] Fletcher, Watson, and Limborch.

[2] Whitby has some excellent remarks on this subject, to which the reader is referred.

is 'because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.' If these texts taken together or separate as you please my brother—do not establish our position, then I am ready to give it up. I have thus given you a variety, the number of which might be increased, to sustain the principle, so clearly revealed in the Bible, that man is endued with the fearful ability of resisting divine grace, to the everlasting ruin of his own soul.[1]

Apollos.—I am sure of one thing, I have exhausted my store in quest of objections, and I have drawn largely on that of others; but I must frankly acknowledge, that this power, if the Scriptures be true, does most certainly belong to man, and he can resist divine grace.

Aquila.—There is also another argument, my brother Apollos—that is, in my estimation equally to the point. It is drawn from the scriptures and runs thus. God himself commands men to repent and believe, annexing thereto a promised reward, and a threatened punishment; which repentance and faith, he prescribes as necessary terms of salvation. Now if God would work these conditions in us, by his irresistible power, he could not prescribe them by promising a reward, and threatening a punishment, without a manifest contradiction of his justice and wisdom, as we have elsewhere showed.[2] I will now quote those texts, which show that the Deity commands repentance on the terms just mentioned.

Apollos.—Name them if you please.

Aquila.—I will then at once. 'Cast away from you, all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will ye die O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.' 'Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' 'And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God.' 'Wherefore he saith awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' And to encourage the sinner to attempt all this, he is told that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.' And 'these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.' 'Go ye therefore,' said our Lord, 'into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. 'And this is the commandment, that we believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ.' Now who does not see that the repentance and faith here named, as so intimately connected with each other, are the terms prescribed, on which divine blessings are bestowed, and their neglect induce a punishment, which is the sure result of their impiety? And for the Deity to work in us the conditions irresistibly, is manifestly to contradict his own wisdom, justice and goodness.[3]

Apollos.—These texts are certainly very plain and positive declarations of the will of God concerning man; but it has been objected to this position, that the example of our Saviour, who is said to have paid a perfect obedience to the Father, and yet he could not sin, as also the holy angels, who cannot sin, but yet their obedience is prescribed as a pattern for ours in the Lord's prayer; and lastly of the evil angels themselves, who are deprived of all manner of power of doing good, and yet are disobedient to God and guilty of punishment.[4]

Aquila.—There are several branches to this objection, and each one requires a

[1] Clarke, Benson, and Watson.
[2] Whitby and Watson.
[3] Clarke and Watson.
[4] Limborch.

distinct reply. And first, as to our Saviour Jesus Christ, it cannot, my friend—be proved that he, in the days of his flesh, with respect to his human nature, was deprived of the power of not obeying the divine precept, relating to the redemption of man by his death: which, if any one will term a power of sinning, well! we will not quarrel about a word; but let me say if our Saviour had been impeccable on account of his human nature, he could never have been said to be like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, for there would have been a great difference between him and us; nor could his obedience have been proposed as a pattern of ours, as it is frequently done.[1]

Apollos.—But sin, taken in its proper sense, as that whereby man incurs the divine displeasure, could not be in him, but as he was subject to the same infirmities with us.

Aquila.—He could not be said, as a mere man to have been impeccable, or not liable to sin, though he committed none. He was without sin, holy and pure, but I cannot say that it would have been impossible for the humanity to commit, if it had been so disposed, any sin.

Priscilla.—You may depend on it this is real speculation. I do not conceive that this has any thing at all to do with the matter, at least all this is a mere hypothesis, that cannot be proved, and that of course can never be adduced in proof of any important point.

Apollos.—Well, I confess there is too much speculation in questions of this kind, yet they will sometimes occur.

Aquila.—As to the remarks about good angels then, to proceed in answer to your objection, I suppose either that they are subject to some law, or have retained the reward of their obedience, and are confirmed in what is good. In the former sense, I deny that it is impossible for them to fall into sin, since they are not of a nature different from the fallen angels, who we know, for the Scriptures say so, did not keep their first estate.

Apollos.—Do the Scriptures say so?

Aquila.—They do: for says St. Jude, 'The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.'

Apollos.—This is a positive declaration of their state.

Aquila.—But as to the second thing, viz: that the good angels have attained the reward of their obedience, and are confirmed in what is good, I have simply to say that this their state, which is certainly a very probable one, has nothing in it like to ours, but is such a condition as the blessed will enjoy in the other world. Now the action of spirits made perfect are spontaneous motions, whereby they are necessarily inclined to do what is agreeable to the divine nature and will; but there is no obedience, properly so called, in them, nay they come nearer to natural actions, at least have a suitableness to them, than to true and proper obedience.[2] And, my friend—the sins of bad angels cannot be ascribed to their incapacity to do any good, for though the Scripture informs us that they do sin continually, and tempt others to sin, yet does it nowhere teach, that I know of, that they are deprived of all power of abstaining from sinful actions. Hence it has been supposed that their continued perseverance in sin, and obstinate rebellion, proceed from despair: for they know that they are consigned over to punishment by the irrevocable sentence of God, and have no means left of escaping it; and therefore it is that they harden themselves in wickedness.[3]

Priscilla.—Well now—do let me say, my husband—again, and I hope you will pardon the interruption, that this does appear to be too speculative.

Apollos.—Indeed, I am to blame, who presented the objection.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Aquila.—O no! I must acknowledge there is much of speculation in all this: still, there is enough also, I think Priscilla—to answer the objection, which was adduced by Apollos.

Priscilla.—Well, be it so—you know it is not often, I presume to express my views, only here, I think there is a speculation, that is, perhaps, a waste of time, at least it is arguing on an hypothesis.

Aquila.—I will proceed and offer then another argument, to show that grace may be resisted. It is this, the word of God or the gospel, is the ordinary means appointed of the Deity, by which he intends to bring men to repentance and faith, but even that does not work upon them with an irresistible power, so as to make them repent and believe inevitably. The first part of this argument is self-evident, for whatever notices the Gentiles, who are without the light of the gospel have to direct them to lead a moral life, they want the immediate means of attaining salvation: And whatever God may do, out of the common way, of which we make no dispute at all, yet is the ordinary mode of conversion, through the medium of the gospel, the word of God's grace, whether preached or written.[1]

Apollos.—Hence it is then, I suppose, that regeneration or conversion is usually attributed to those, whose ministry God makes use of, because by announcing the gospel to men, they are persuaded to return to the living God.

Aquila.—Yes—they become the instruments of the sinner's repentance and reformation. Thus St. Paul says, that the Lord had rescued him, and sent him 'to open the eyes' of men, 'and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith' in our Lord Jesus. And in another place he says, 'in Christ I have begotten you.' To the Gallatians, 'my little children of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.' And to Philemon, he says, 'I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.' Now this word, powerful as it is, does not work irresistibly, so as to constrain men to repent, and that their repentance is unavoidable, but it leaves it in the power of man, to improve the means and influences of divine grace, so that a heart-felt and genuine repentance, and an evangelical faith are superinduced thereby, or they may, and indeed do often neglect these to their soul's destruction. This will appear if we consider all the operations of the gospel with respect to men, and we shall find in every instance, man left to his own liberty, to obey or reject the gospel.

Apollos.—Do you think that this is the case generally.

Aquila.—I do—for first when the word is proposed to man, he is not constrained to hear it, but can and often does disregard the preacher, stop his ears to what is said, and go some where else than to church; so that the very hearing of the word is a voluntary act. Again, when he does hear that word, he cannot but understand it, if it be clearly expounded by the preacher and adopted, in the use of common language, to his capacity or understanding. It is then his duty, and it is in his power, to meditate on this word, thus heard and understood; to inquire closely into the weight and importance of every argument, which is offered in behalf of its truth and divinity, and indeed to examine more exactly, the nature and obligation of that duty which has been inculcated.[2] On the other hand, he may, and alas! man too often does, forget every sermon, neglect every call, and banish God and all his commands, far from his heart.

Apollos.—Then you suppose that a man, after he has heard the word of God, may meditate diligently on that word, by the grace of God assisting him, he may embrace salvation, or through the perverseness of his will, he may reject it forever.

[1] Wesley and Clarke.

[2] Watson and Whitby.

Aquila.—I not only suppose so, but I have testimony from a source not to be doubted of this fact.

Apollos.—From what source my friend—do you derive this evidence?

Aquila.—From the word of the living God. If you will have recourse to the Sacred Writings, you will find my brother—upon consideration, clearly and satisfactorily set forth, several particulars that are of infinite importance in the decision of this point. There we learn that the sacred penman, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, positively ascribe to man, the liberty of embracing or rejecting God's word. 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you,' said Moses, 'that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.' Joshua spoke in similar terms to the very same people. 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.' 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord:' and he proclaimed to them, that ability bestowed on them by the Almighty, and the use they had made of it, to all which they most frankly responded. 'And Joshua said unto the people, ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve him. And they said we are witnesses.' You also my friend—remember the address of the old prophet. 'And Elijah came to all the people, and said, how long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.' The very same doctrine taught of old, by those ancient seers, is also plainly taught in the New Testament. Thus saith our Lord 'take heed therefore how ye hear, for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.' St. James says, 'wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only: deceiving your own selves.' 'For whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.' Now let me ask you Apollos—do not these texts, and I might add to them a dozen, clearly prove that men have the liberty of embracing or rejecting the word of God.

Apollos.—I must readily acknowledge, I cannot give them any other fair construction.

Aquila.—There is another very striking fact to be found in the word itself.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—It does most earnestly persuade men to embrace that salvation it teaches. Now persuasion, implies that there is no necessity or constraint, and it leaves the choice to be made, by him who is to be persuaded.[1] If not this, could it be persuasion at all, my brother?

Apollos.—And is this the case, do the Scriptures use persuasion?

Aquila.—Most certainly they do. Hear just one or two texts. 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.' And my brother—the word of God exhorts and persuades men on the other hand, not to reject the truth as it is in Jesus. Thus, 'to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.'

Apollos.—It does really seem that the admonition would have been insignificant and of no account, if a man could not do otherwise than harden his heart, or if as one of the elect, it were impossible for his heart to be hardened.

Aquila.—And Apollos—you will be still more forcibly struck with this, if you will but reflect how the Almighty entreats, desires and importunes men to receive his word and become obedient thereto. For one moment listen to a few of the affecting appeals of this kind. 'O that there was such an heart in them that they

[1] Whitby and Limborch.

would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever.' 'O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies and turned my hand against their adversaries.'

Priscilla.—And do you not remember the words of St. Luke, concerning the merciful Jesus, 'and when he was come near, he beheld the city and *wept* over it, saying if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' What an affecting appeal was this?

Aquila.—Yes—and God does thus entreat men, and the scriptures teach us so. 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we beseech you in Christ stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Apollos.—This seems to argue, that they who reject the word, might have embraced it.

Aquila.—Certainly, unless we would charge God with dissimulation, in importuning men to do that, which he is pleased, they never should be capable of doing. There is also another very important point, that we ought here to notice, my brother. It is this, the severest reproofs are given to those who reject his word, or call, as the authors of their own misery.[1]

Apollos.—Is this really so?

Aquila.—It surely is. 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life,' said our Lord. 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do ye.' 'Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles.' And on another occasion, the apostle Paul reproved the same people, by a quotation from one of the old prophets, saying 'the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.'

Apollos.—Here they are declared the authors, in this rejection, of their own misery.

Aquila.—And it might have been otherwise. See how God expostulates with them, even with the people that, thus to their own destruction, rejected his word. 'Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me: The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.' 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts. A people that provoketh me to anger continually, to my face.' And our Lord says 'whereunto shall I liken this generation, it is like unto children, sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented;' and yet again 'O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children,' 'and ye would not.'

Apollos.—What tenderness! What loving kindness is this? How deeply it affects my heart, to consider the mercy, and condescension of our God.

Aquila.—Now behold Apollos—how on the contrary, those who readily embrace the word of God, are highly commended for that act. 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto

[1] Clarke, Watson, and Whitby.

them about three thousand. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.' All this is spoken in their commendation. When the Jews rejected the word and the Gentiles embraced it, they are commended for it, and the account is given in a way to show the divine approbation. 'And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.'

Apollos.—And I remember the noble Bereans, and how they are commended in the New Testament. 'These were more noble, than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word in readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so, therefore, many believed, and of honourable women, which were Greeks, and of men not a few.'

Aquila.—I have yet one thing more to notice here my friend—in establishing the fact, that the gospel, the ordinary means of salvation may be resisted. Many proofs have been adduced: I have only now to notice that they who rejected this gospel, or who after receiving it did not live up to it, are declared in the Bible to be punished for the same. And their punishment for this sin, is certain evidence if God be just, that it can be committed, and that men have the fearful power of refusing to hear the word of the Lord.

Apollos.—But is this the case?

Aquila.—Certainly it is; I have already had occasion to quote from the Proverbs, 'Because when I called, ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.' I will now quote some passages of the New Testament, equally in point. 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you,' i. e. approved of you, 'depart from me ye that work iniquity.'

Apollos.—O! what a tremendous sin it is to neglect the will and word of God.

Aquila.—Again, our Lord says, 'this is the condemnation that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' And St. Paul speaks of the punishment that shall come on that man of sin, who rejected the word of the Lord, saying, 'and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.'

Apollos.—An awful responsibility rests on those who hear the word of the Lord.

Aquila.—There assuredly is; and when men attend to that word, receiving it in honest hearts and obey the same, they are not only blessed with the graces and fruits of God's Spirit here, but with everlasting life hereafter, as the reward of that obedience. Thus says our Lord, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.'

Apollos.—Well might an apostle, in view of the infinite value, and the immense blessings of the word of life, ask the question, 'what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God.'

Aquila.—I have yet another argument to prove that grace may be resisted.

Apollos.—What is this my brother?

Aquila.—It is an argument taken from the absurdity of the contrary opinion; for if a divine and irresistible power is requisite for the conversion of men, then no man can be converted to God, who is not irresistibly constrained thereto, and

it will also follow, that whosoever is converted, could not be converted sooner or later: both which conclusions are false and absurd.[1]

Apollos.—This is a very important point, do give me your proofs of this position.

Aquila.—This I can easily do. The first reason is, that if none but those who are irresistibly led to seek the divine favour, are converted to God, then, it will of course follow, that God does in vain exhort the rest who are not converted to believe, and in vain offers salvation to them, on whom he has decreed never to bestow it, which as I have elsewhere proved, is very inconsistent with the divine sincerity.

Apollos.—Then indeed would the gospel, instead of being a savour of life unto life, according to its primary intention, be to the reprobate a savour of death unto death, or in fact, their certain and eternal condemnation.[2]

Aquila.—This very position that the call is not to the reprobate, I have elsewhere disproved, that there is no such thing as an absolute unconditional reprobation I have also disproved, and you my friend—have admitted the validity of those arguments.

Apollos.—I did so, because I could not reject them without rejecting God's word, and hope, I shall never do this. There is, however, one thing that I do not recollect you ever touched on at all.

Aquila.—What is this my friend?

Apollos.—It is that no man that is converted could possibly have become a converted man, until the very time when he was thus changed, and brought home to his Father's house. Or as it has been called, the Lord's own good time.

Aquila.—This is as absurd, as the idea that no man could be converted; but, he that is converted. If we admit that a man could not have been converted before the time in which he is converted, we do thereby give every encouragement to sin, and carnal security, and all those exertions that ought to be made, to stir up the gift of God in us: genuine repentance is discountenanced, at least discouraged, as being needless, and of no importance, because to no purpose. Take this my friend—if a man be sure that all the pains he takes will be lost and is of no avail at all, he will rather choose to wait for the irresistible operation of divine grace, than vainly, and fruitlessly to endeavour for the accomplishment of a thing that God will certainly do, if he intends it, at his own time and in his own way.

Apollos.—But my dear friend—this will never do.

Aquila.—No indeed! for God has said, 'now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.'

Priscilla.—You know that some say, I wonder they are not afraid to do it, that all a man does in order to his conversion, such as praying, seeking, &c. before that God shall work it in him *effectually*, is of the nature of sin.

Apollos.—O! I have heard it affirmed, that it is sin.

Aquila.—My brother—do you not see the fallacy and ruinous consequences of all this? Surely any man would rather wait idly for the divine operation than by a previous act, involve himself in a new sin. And O! what a fatal occasion of carnal security is this? Men of superior intellect, and I trust practical piety, whose holy lives have far outstripped their creeds, both for consistency and usefulness, have advanced these opinions,—opinions my friend—that never influenced their minds; but the illiterate and carnally secure have caught at them, and have in thousands of instances doubtlessly, been led to procrastinate the period of their return to God, when his precious and blessed Spirit was daily knocking at the door of their hearts.

Priscilla.—How many thousands of untaught men, at this very hour, are groping in the darkness and dungeon of sin; having extinguished the light of

[1] Limborch and Whitby. [2] Whitby and Limborch.

divine truth and grace by unbelief, they are vainly waiting and looking for a better day. God! grant that it may come; but it is certainly high time that they 'awake to righteousness.'

Apollos.—I am sure the spirit, word and calls of God, all point to the present time, as the day of grace, when mortals may secure those blessings, which a kind Father proffers to bestow on those that seek his face. Indeed he has given the very time when every man ought to come to him. Seek ye first says he, 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' 'and they that seek me early shall find me.'

Aquila.—O yes—'It is good for a man,' saith the Almighty, 'that he bear the yoke in his youth.'

Apollos.—O! I am thankful to heaven, that I started when young. I daily, and I trust devoutly pray, that I may hold out to the end.

Aquila.—I trust you will, my young friend—and I hope you will live to be useful in every stage of human life. I too, know from heavenly experience, that youth is the time to seek the Lord. Oh! that all the young were convinced of this, and would 'remember *now* their Creator, in the days of their youth.' If the young were taught every where, and by all the dear people of our God, of every sect and name, that now is the accepted time, the Lord's time, and day of salvation, how many more would, in the morning of life seek his face.

Priscilla.—Well, let us try to act our part, aud leave the event to him.

COLLOQUY XIV.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ARGUMENTS THAT ARE GENERALLY ADDUCED, FOR THE IRRESISTIBLE OPERATION OF DIVINE GRACE.

Apollos.—At our last interview you gave me, my friend Aquila—your reasons for believing that divine grace, such as is sufficient to convert man, may be resisted. I am anxious to have the arguments on the opposite side of the question considered, and I wish to understand them fully.

Aquila.—This is right my brother—and this I intended before we dismiss the great subject of divine predestination. There are many, very many, that are advanced, and they ought to have a serious and a respectful consideration.

Apollos.—Sundry texts are adduced to show that the incapacity of man is such, previous to his conversion, that he cannot repent and return to God, without the operation of his irresistible and adorable grace, to bring about a change, in that manner that is efficacious.[1]

Aquila.—I am aware that it is said so, but I am of opinion, when the Scriptures are closely examined, it will be found that they do not sustain an opinion of the kind. Let this be the first general head of arguments in favour of the irresistibility of divine grace, and I am willing that you shall adduce any and every passage you please, and I believe, when properly examined, you will find that they do not teach that grace is irresistible, and that the entire incapacity of man is such that he cannot obey the divine call, to repent and seek his salvation.

Apollos.—But it is said that the Scriptures speak of men as 'dead in trespasses and sins,' that it represents them in sundry places as 'blind,' and 'in darkness,' as 'a corrupt tree,' and 'the servants of sin,' as 'carnal,' and 'not subject to the law of God,' as in a 'natural' state, and 'unable of themselves to do any thing' for salvation.[2]

Aquila.—The best way to come at a proper understanding of all these texts,

[1] Calvin, Scott, and Gill. [2] Ibid.

my friend—is to examine them singly or separately, and then we shall be able to understand their true meaning. As a general answer, permit me to say, that most of these expressions are figurative, and are to be extended no farther than the design of him who makes use of them. For you know that whoever will apply all the circumstances of a similitude or figure to the thing alluded to, will egregiously mistake the meaning of Scripture, and fall into many absurdities.[1]

Apollos.—I know, that, for a right understanding of the figurative expressions of the Bible, the intention or design of the author, who uses those expressions, ought ever to be taken into consideration.

Aquila.—Yes—they must first be inquired into. We must mark what the author declares to be his mind elsewhere, when he speaks of the same thing in proper words, and without a figure: nor is the figurative or saying to be stretched any farther than the author's design and his own proper words will justify.[2] Now, my friend—if this were observed in the expressions which you have quoted, the argument deduced from it would soon fall to the ground, it being founded on the general acceptation of the phrases, without any due application of them to the subject matter, as may be very easily evinced by a consideration of the texts themselves.[3]

Apollos.—Well, my friend—I do hope you will consider them one by one. I want to understand them, and indeed I have named them, not for a general, but really a particular answer.

Aquila.—I have no objection to this course, we shall never suffer loss by an examination of the word of our God. Its truths are like apples of gold, they are more precious than rubies. We need not fear of being injured by such an investigation.

Apollos.—Well, take that text, a part of which I just quoted. It is an expression that is said to set forth a fact, that men are entirely incapacitated, while unconverted, for moral action. 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.' From these words it is inferred, that a dead man has no power of himself to return to life again, but that the omnipotency of God is required to raise him to life. So also, it is said, that men, before conversion, have no ability for converting themselves, but must be raised to spiritual life by the irresistible power of the living God.[4]

Aquila.—And who that knows any thing, my friend—of the operations of the grace of God, would ever teach that man can convert himself. I am sure that I would as soon suppose that he can make a world. I freely own that there is no power in man by which he can, in his own natural strength, attain to a saving change or spiritual life. However, it does not from thence follow, that the irresistible operation of God is necessary to raise him to that life.[5] Look, my friend—at the text itself. Take your Greek Testament: in the original there are no words for *hath he quickened*, they are in italics in our common English Bibles. I have proved that the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, is a quickening spirit, and that all men are alive in him; and moreover, that God, for the sake of our Lord Jesus does, with every call, give the ability or power of obedience. Hence the Deity actually commands men, and it is remarkable that the words are used by the same apostle, in which men are commanded to arise from the dead. Death is a state of inactivity, and on this account it is used to represent the condition of men living in sin, they are doing nothing to effect their salvation. Thus says the word of God, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead,' i. e. a state of apathy and spiritual inactivity, 'and Christ shall give thee light.' Hence we learn that we are 'co-workers together with him.' Now it is evident, my bro-

[1] Clarke and McEwen.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Calvin and Scott.
[5] Whitby and Limborch.

ther—that the command to a dead soul, according to your exposition of man's natural condition, is wholly inconsistent even with the irresistible operation of divine grace.[1] Besides, from the word 'dead' itself, no similitude, correspondent in all respects, can be inferred between a natural and spiritual death. And if we shall search we shall ascertain that a spiritual death itself, is attributed to those to whom the grace of the gospel is offered, and on such, in connection with that fall, is bestowed the power of raising from a spiritual death.[2]

Apollos.—In what then does the comparison between a natural and a spiritual death consist?

Aquila.—Simply in this, that as those naturally dead, as already suggested, exert no vital operations, so those, who are spiritually dead perform no spiritual works, without any regard or respect, to the fact, whether they can, or cannot perform them. As though the man whose arm was withered, should have said, my arm is 'dead,' 'I cannot do any thing,' instead of trying to stretch it forth.

Apollos.—Indeed that example is just in point. I never before thought of it. But then my friend there is another text, a part of which I named. 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me, to preach the gospel unto the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the *blind*, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

Aquila.—And it cannot from hence be even inferred, that an irresistible power is required to remove this blindness. This is evident from the fact that some men are commanded to be enlightened. 'Arise, shine,' i. e. be enlightened, 'for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Blindness is here and elsewhere used figuratively, to set forth the moral condition of men.

Apollos.—What is that condition?

Aquila.—It is one of the ignorance of divine and spiritual things; for the removing of which, such an irresistible power, is by no means requisite, but only that due course of instruction, and clear revelation of divine things, which are to be found in the operations of grace, the divine call and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. That it does not denote a total incapacity, for understanding divine truths, when proposed to them in a clear light, is evident from what our Saviour says of the Pharisees, 'if ye were blind, ye would have no sin,' by which expression, we are to understand ignorance only, and this is most evident.[3]

Apollos.—But the words of our Lord, 'if therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.' How do you take them? Can a man see in the dark?

Aquila.—There is no greater force in these words, than in those setting forth the blindness of men. I know it is argued from the strictness, if I may so speak of the word, that as they are in darkness, they are also incapable of light. I am sure this is not a legitimate conclusion. I might prove from thence my friend—1. That a man for the very same reason cannot be converted even by the irresistible power of divine grace; because as darkness is a mere privation, it is most certainly capable of illumination. Will you say that it is impossible to enlighten it.

Apollos.—I hope not.

Aquila.—It certainly is a fit and an appropriate subject for receiving the light. It would therefore, be absurd, to suppose that it cannot be enlightened by the Deity in that way that he has appointed. From all the remarks on the ignorance and darkness of men, as set forth in the Scriptures, I should draw a conclusion just the reverse of those who quote so often the term darkness, in order to present man as incapable of seeing. For if the unregenerate, because they are said to be

[1] Whitby and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

darkness, are to be considered incapable of doing any spiritual work, then by parity of reason, the regenerate cannot sin, because they are called light. Will you admit of this conclusion?

Apollos.—I could not certainly allow this, and it will be allowed, by none who contend for the meaning they affix to the text, which has been adduced.

Aquila.—The word *darkness* my friend—does not denote that men are wholly destitute of every principle of knowledge, even of the gospel itself. And although it be admitted that they are corrupted, and that vicious inclinations are not only derived from their progenitors, in consequence of the fall, but also that they are confirmed by habits of transgression, that cannot be conquered by mere natural strength, yet by all this we are not to conclude that they are wholly incapable of the opposite disposition, unless God shall work it in them, by an irresistible power.

Apollos.—Well—but a 'good tree,' the Scripture says, 'cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit,' and 'either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by its fruit.'

Aquila.—This similitude or figure, taken from a corrupt tree is no more a proof that the unregenerate can do no good at all, than that taken from a good tree, argues that the regenerate can do no evil, for our Saviour's expression is the same with respect to both. Nay my friend—if we were to take the whole in a strict sense, the inference will be, that men are either good or bad, just as a tree is, by natural necessity, which would be to introduce the fatal necessity of all things. By this comparison the Saviour evidently means that as fruit is answerable to the tree that bears it, so the outward actions will evidently correspond, with the true state of the mind, and that it is impossible for it to be otherwise. Good actions will proceed from a heart and mind sanctified by grace, while a sinful and a polluted heart, will as it does in every case, send forth a corresponding course of conduct. The man who is pious will live godly, and the ungodly man will prove it by the acts of his life, and if any one will produce good fruit, he must first have his heart filled with the grace of God.

Apollos.—While then man is corrupt and unclean by nature, God's grace is moving still in the way of mercy, on the great deep of his heart. But, my friend—is there not a total incapacity denoted in the expression of St. Paul, 'When ye were the servants of sin ye were free from all righteousness.' Does not this mean that they were not only in bondage to sin, but there actually was the entire destitution of all godliness. How then will you make them godly?

Aquila.—But, my brother—this is not the state of the question. I humbly conceive that the question is not whether or not the slaves of sin are godly, but whether they may or may not, with the assistance of grace, which is granted to all, with the gospel vocation to repent, return to God, that he may make them godly. I might ask also, can those spoken of in the same chapter as the 'servants of righteousness,' become the servants of sin, or rather can they sin?

Apollos.—But it is said that as servants under the power of their masters, cannot free themselves from slavery; so neither can the servants of sin shake off the dominion of it.

Aquila.—But, my friend—I reply, that the very same objection lies against them with regard to the state of the regenerate, who are called the servants of righteousness, and when this argument is answered I might say it is time enough to make a reply. But I am willing to meet this just as it is, and in all its force. We have never said, nor never shall admit, that a man is capable of himself, to repent and return to God. So far from this, Apollos—we have declared, from the commencement of our conversations, that 'the condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural

strength and works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.'[1] Man is not capable of shaking off the dominion of sin, without the divine grace to prevent him, and furnish him with strength to conquer it. Mark you well, my friend—we are all agreed that it can only be done by grace assisting, but the question is, after what manner does that grace operate.

Apollos.—Now I see it! that is the very point.

Aquila.—Is it irresistible or not? It certainly cannot be inferred that it is, from the similitude or figure of slavery here used, or of one freed from it: for there is a very wide difference between a corporeal and a spiritual slavery, the one is commonly by constraint, the other voluntary, for no man can be the servant of sin unless by the default of his will. Hence it is apparent, I think, that in order to shake off the dominion of sin, it is not only requisite that God shall grant his grace to assist, but a man must seriously and steadily purpose to be the slave of sin no longer.[2]

Apollos.—If the comparison then between a corporeal and spiritual slavery were carried out it would not do; for to be delivered from a corporeal servitude, the will alone is not sufficient, but the spontaneous release made by his lord and master.

Aquila.—But, my friend—suppose that we should grant that the figure is adequate in all respects; then I add, as servants sometimes run away from their masters without consent, and sometimes kill them, so the servants of sin may shake off the yoke and destroy the tyrant. I add indeed farther, as a servant released by his master may return to slavery again, and not be willing to enjoy the sweets of liberty, so the servant of sin, to whom God grants the power of being freed from that his bondage, may despise the gracious offer, choosing freely and voluntarily to be enslaved again: yea, Apollos—hug the very chain from which he had once been delivered: and all this too in the free exercise of his volition.[3]

Apollos.—I believe your view is a correct one. Still there are other texts that seem to favour the opinion that irresistible grace is necessary, 'because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'

Aquila.—But there is no greater force in the word 'carnal' than there is in the word slavery. The 'carnal' of whom it is said they are not subject to the law of God, is a term it is thought that is used to represent, as will be seen by a close investigation, the lusts of those ungodly men who were devoted to pleasure, and which of course never could be subject to the divine law.[4] The word 'carnal' means flesh or fleshly, and you will permit me to say, that all men are not called *flesh* in the same sense as the word is used in this text; being often styled so on account of that substance of which their bodies are made, and with respect to the frailty and infirmities of their natures, without any regard being had to sin. This will be evident by a reference to the word of God: 'The voice said cry, and he said what shall I cry? All *flesh* is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.' 'Now the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses *flesh* not spirit.' 'Cursed be man that trusteth in man, and that maketh *flesh* his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.' From these texts, and also the original, you will perceive, and indeed it might be adduced in support of the fact, that this is the peculiar quality of a particular class of men. It is a carnal fleshly mind, or the minding of the flesh, which cannot be subject to the law of God. I

[1] Art. 8, Met. Epis. Church. [2] Whitby and Limborch. [3] Limborch. [4] Ibid.

know that it is supposed by some, and perhaps with some propriety, that the mind, as here used, does not denote the thoughts of men, so long as they are unregenerated by grace, nor even the conduct of those who live according to the dictates of natural reason, among whom some there were who were morally honest, and doubtless would, if they had known the gospel, or had it revealed to them, have obeyed the will of God.[1] This disposition of mind then signifies the lusts of those carnal men, who look upon the pleasures of the flesh as their greatest happiness, and who would not exchange them for that which is more solid. Such as these, while under the prevalency of this fleshly mind, are not subject to the divine law, which prescribes the mortification and denial of carnal lusts, upon the expectation of future and spiritual good, of which they have no relish or notion.[2]

Apollos.—The words of the text certainly do describe that disposition of mind, and while under its influence, the heart will not yield to the requisitions of the divine law.

Aquila.—But reject this exposition, which is introduced that you may have every view of every subject, and give it all the latitude that any will ask for it, extending it to every man, and what is gained? Nothing certainly, to prove that grace is irresistible. The mind if you choose, the heart, the affections, the soul, of the unregenerate is not subject to the law of God. But the gospel comes in with all its light and power, the sinner is awakened, he cannot break his chain, O no! —but he can consent, and this is all that he is asked to do, that the mighty Jesus shall do it. He can accept the offer of pardon, or rather consent to be delivered, and grace does for him that he cannot do for himself.

Apollos.—He is in the mire, and though he cannot deliver himself he can consent that the Lord Jesus Christ may save, and then the love of God, which is the fulfilling of the law, is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, which changes his nature and regenerates the soul.

Aquila.—And in the very same sense are we to understand that text, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.' The natural man here spoken of is one, according to some, 'whose God is his belly,' one given up to a sensual life, and like to the beasts that perish, who indulges himself wholly in the lusts of the flesh. Such cannot, as is proved both by observation and experience, receive, i. e. understand, see the propriety of, and obey the teachings of the Spirit.[3] But admit that it is spoken of a man in his natural state, by which I mean, as he is born in the world, what is thereby gained to prove that grace may not be resisted? All men by nature receive not, i. e. do not naturally embrace the things of the Spirit, but the grace of God, comes in, and they are brought to see and understand their duty even against their wills. Convinced of sin, and forced to see their danger, here they may stop, or yield and be enabled by grace to proceed, and be happily and powerfully converted to God.

Apollos.—So that nature is changed by divine grace, 'and what the flesh could not do in that it was weak, God sending forth his Son in the flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Satisfied of the truth of these expositions, at least to show that the grace necessary for conversion may be resisted, I have now, my friend—to ask an examination of one more text. 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' Does not this show our incapacity to do good, and that the grace of God cannot be resisted?

[1] Limborch and Whitby. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

Aquila.—Though I should admit that the text does show an inability to do good by nature, it would not prove my brother, that a man might not do evil, and resist the calls of the gospel.

Apollos.—I did not really think of the difference between these two things.

Aquila.—I am ready to admit that no man can do any good, without the grace of our God to assist him. And such is the liberty of his will, that he may refuse that God shall help him. But my friend—I want you for a moment to look at the context. It is thought that the apostle has here no special relation to good works, which were to be performed by men, but to the apostolical office itself, in which, he won to the faith of our Lord Jesus, the Corinthians.[1] This will appear from the preceding verses. Now although we should admit, and this I am ready to do, that man cannot perform of himself spiritual good, and that the divine grace is ever necessary thereto; yet is there no mention of any such thing in this place, much less, that this grace cannot be at all resisted. There is only here set forth the ministry of an apostle.[2]

Apollos.—Dear me!—What was I about, St. Paul therefore very properly says, that they could not accomplish so great a work, without the divine aid, and all their sufficiency was of God. These as well as other works dependant on the divine grace, require the special assistance of God.

Aquila.—This was the great object of St. Paul's remarks.

Apollos.—I am not yet however done with my interrogatories. There is another class of arguments taken from those texts in the sacred Scriptures, wherein the action of God in converting man is described. It is supposed that such a divine act, is so denoted or marked out, as is calculated to show us, that it is wholly irresistible, and to which man can contribute nothing, but is merely passive.[3]

Aquila.—And where will you find such things set forth in the Scriptures?

Apollos.—I will give you several texts wherein God is said to 'create' and 'make a new heart' in man; to 'regenerate' him; 'to raise' him 'from the dead,' to 'quicken,' and illuminate him, to give him 'faith and repentance,' to 'give and write laws in men's hearts,' to 'open, circumcise and draw the heart,' to 'work in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Aquila.—And to all these, I might make almost the very same general reply, that I made before. I mean that most of these texts are figurative, and no solid argument can, or ought to be drawn from them, any further than the design of the author, who utters them will allow of.[4] I am however, willing my friend—as I said before, to examine with your assistance, each one of those texts, and see, if from the face of the sacred page, men are merely passive creatures in the vast works of their eternal happiness.

Apollos.—That is the very thing I want, and I will give you a text from the prophecy of Ezekiel, that it is said displays the fact, that man has nothing to do in this great work. 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' Now my friend, Aquila—two arguments are raised from this place. One is taken from the state of men before their conversion, and the other from that action that is here ascribed to God. Under the former is noticed the fact that man's heart is a 'stony heart,' and under the latter, that God performs an action that can be accomplished only by him. 'I will take away the heart of stone,' and 'give a heart of flesh.'[5]

Aquila.—Well my friend—and all this, neither proves the incapacity of man, to purpose, nor yet the irresistibility of divine grace. The heart by a similitude,

[1] Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Calvin and Dr. Gill.
[4] Clarke and Watson.
[5] Scott and Henry.

or figure, is said to be stony, because as a stone is hard and rejects what is cast against it, so the heart of man also by nature, and more so by practice, is hard and obdurate, and does reject the word of God and the sweet invitations of the gospel of our Lord Jesus, whereby we are called to repentance, and does not hearken to it, and this is certainly without any regard to the fact, of its being capable of such an impression or not. This my brother—we say of an unmerciful and an unkind man, that his heart is as hard as a stone, and that he cannot be inclined to charity, surely we do not mean by such an expression that he is quite bereft of the capacity to be merciful. And although we are ready to admit that men are by nature sinful and hard hearted, yet it is to be recollected that this is augmented by our own disobedience, and that in the commission of sin, we incapacitate ourselves still more for duty, and render our hearts as an adamant, hard as the nether mill stone. You will also remember that this hardness being increased by the free will of man, it is plain that the irresistible action of God is not necessary for taking it away, and the text does not say that it is. Hence it is apparent, that by giving a heart of flesh, is not meant any irresistible operation of divine grace, and this is evinced by all the circumstances of the text, for the promise itself, Apollos—was made to a whole nation, was to be fulfilled within a little time, and therefore, is not as it is declared, the promise of a special, and a determining grace, belonging only to a few, viz: *the elect.*[1]

Apollos.—It is then simply to be gathered from the text that man's heart is hard, and naturally rebellious, that God softens and makes it feel, and again that the change of our nature, and the regeneration of the soul is the effect of divine grace, which commences and completes this blessed and holy work.

Aquila.—Most assuredly it is so. Man cannot make his own heart feel, far very far from it—God's grace first moves and melts its hardness down, and then when we feel, and see too, our danger, it is with us to decide, whether these hard hearts shall become fleshly. We cannot work our own change, we have only to throw ourselves on the bounty of heaven, and God does a work for us that an angel's arm is too short to accomplish. He changes our natures, and sanctifies our souls.

Apollos.—There are other arguments founded on the words 'regenerating,' 'raising from the dead,' quickening,' &c. All synonomous terms, importing the same thing evidently, I will not therefore trouble you with them.

Aquila.—Let me tell you my friend—that regeneration is ascribed to God, who by his word and Spirit, brings men without any irresistible force, but by and with, not only their own consent, but earnest entreaty, to seek redemption in the blood of Christ. 'For he begat us with the word of truth,' and that 'by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Indeed, my brother—by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, God has proved his whole doctrine to be divine, and has also rendered us certain, of our resurrection to eternal life, if we tread in the steps of our great master, the Lord Jesus, who raises us by his grace from a death of sin to a life of righteousness.

Apollos.—Our belief then in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a powerful motive to induce us to become pious and devoted to God, by seeking after the regeneration of our souls, that we also may partake of a happy and glorious resurrection.

Aquila.—This is the plain reason why our salvation is attributed to faith, in the resurrection of Christ, as that which stimulates and excites us also to action, to a life of holiness and devotion to God. 'If thou shalt confess the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'

Apollos.—This whole operation then is not natural, but moral, and such as may

[1] Whitby and Benson.

be resisted by us; so that in order to attain its end, it is requisite that the mind of man should not be refractory or rebellious.

Aquila.—The whole similitude consists in this, that the heart of man is entirely changed by this act of divine grace; the sinner cannot change his own heart, he can only enter on a new course of life, through the aid of his heavenly Father. Thus, upon comparing his former with his present state, and way of living, he finds he is wholly a new creature, renovated in his understanding, will, affections and works, and on account of this change it is, that he is in Scripture called a new creature, 'if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things have become new.' 'For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.' Such have been enabled to put off the 'old man,' and are 'renewed in the Spirit,' and have put on 'the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.'

Apollos.—What then do you understand by illuminating, giving of faith, and writing the law in our hearts?

Aquila.—The illuminating and the enlightening of man, is by an act of the Holy Spirit, which while it operates on the heart of man applies God's word, causing that it shall become, as a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths. This true light, applying the everlasting gospel, chases away the darkness and ignorance of men, and bestows upon them that instruction that is necessary for embracing the true faith.

Apollos.—Then there is no necessity of an irresistible operation for effecting this?

Aquila.—Certainly not. The spirit of God first enlightens, perhaps, through a faithful ministry, and a clear exposition of the divine truth. By it these are fastened on the mind, and in proportion to our light is our obligation, and in the moment we feel the weight of this obligation to such a degree, as to be willing to give up all, and consent to be saved by the Lord Jesus, then does the Lord apply that grace that only can save us, and it does deliver us from all our transgressions.

Apollos.—But it is argued that God gives men both repentance and faith.

Aquila.—This does not by any means imply an irresistible action, nor has this gift as it is thought by some, always, and necessarily its effects joined with it. When therefore upon the proper attention to the divine call, God gives to men, by his spirit and grace the power to repent and believe, he is truly said to give repentance and faith, since it is all, that on his part, he is required to give: and when a man makes a right use of the strength granted him, then the gift becomes effectual. You will however remember that this power to believe, is not so effectual as it has been called, but that it may be rejected by men, who too often spurn the calls of a merciful God.[1] This the view of some, is perhaps correct, with only one exception. The Deity when men improve one degree of light, grants to them another: so to those who upon obedience to the divine call, betake themselves to prayer, the Lord pours out his spirit more and more, until they are enabled, in the extreme anguish of their souls, to throw themselves on the bounty and mercy of the living God, by faith in our Lord Jesus.

Apollos.—God gives me my hands, but I exercise them, my eyes, I use them, and discern objects that would be otherwise hid, so with the grace and power to believe.

Aquila.—And this is the reason why faith is frequently compared to the senses of men, or rather they are used to represent its operations. Thus, 'whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

[1] Limborch.

Apollos.—Is not the opening the heart ascribed to God in the Scriptures, as in the case of Lydia?

Aquila.—This is admitted, and it is the Lord, and he alone that opens all hearts. And although we were to grant that a greater degree of grace was poured out on Lydia, than on others, what would this prove, only that there was the greater responsibility; certainly, not that the grace she received was irresistible. However great the measure of grace bestowed, it does not destroy the liberty of the human will, and the ability of men to refuse the good, and turn to the evil. To determine on obedience or disobedience, is with us my friend. But even here there is no occasion for such a plea; for we have in the case just named, only an account of the good effects of St. Paul's preaching, through the instrumentality of which, the Lord opened her heart, and she turned to him. Mention is made of the circumstance, as the reasons why Paul took up his lodgings at her house. We are not, I think, to infer, that she could not have resisted this grace, nor that others were not affected by the same preaching; this had an effect on her, that it had not on others, who, through their own fault and obstinacy, rejected the calls of the grace of God.[1]

Apollos.—And to the 'circumcising the heart,' attributed to God, the same exposition may be given, I presume?

Aquila—Certainly; for men's hearts are uncircumcised, they cannot change them, it is a work of divine grace, but that grace is not therefore irresistible; far, very far from it. We are not to infer because in an external circumcision a man is wholly passive, that he is therefore so, in the case of his conversion to God, since in this, not only is there required the concurrence of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, but also of man himself.[2]

Apollos.—But it is said 'no man can come to me except my father draw him.' Are we not to understand by this, an irresistible act of grace, and do not the circumstances of the text, attest the same?

Aquila.—In this chapter, our Saviour sharply reproves the Jews, for not coming to or believing on him. If Jesus had said that no man could believe on him, unless the Father should draw him by an omnipotent and an irresistible power, it would have been a different case altogether, the blame of that infidelity instead of being cast on them, would have been cast on the refusal of the divine operation, and it would also have been a manifest occasion of despising his reproof, and of objecting too, that they were blamed in vain, since the Deity withheld from them, the influence requisite to their return and conversion.[3]

Priscilla.—And it might have been added, that as soon as he pleased to draw them, they would come and also believe. What can be more absurd? And I certainly think, that although this drawing may be in some way, even forcible, yet might it not be also a friendly and moral action, such as may be resisted. For instance, if you would persuade one to come out of any place, and gently draw him by the hand, he may resist that motion, withdraw his hand, and not hearken to your counsel. It may, I should think, also be a moral and gentle act, as when a man draws others after him, as I have often seen, by his eloquence or his benefactions. This is you know, Apollos—an every day circumstance.[4]

Aquila.—This is so, and it is the reason why God is said to have drawn Israel with the bands of love. 'I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love.'

Apollos.—That no man *can* come to Christ, except the father draw him, will be owned by you, will it not?

[1] Clarke, Whitby, and Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Fletcher and Whitby.
[4] Limborch.

Aquila.—Most certainly, divine *grace* is the foundation and support of every spiritual and saving good, but then the question is, as I have more than once said, how does this grace act? Are its operations irresistible, or may men obstinately refuse every call, and finally plunge themselves in ruin. It is evident that an irresistible operation cannot be inferred, from this drawing of the Father.[1]

Apollos.—But what is this drawing then, that is here spoken of?

Aquila.—It is simply the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, which, although he is the same, yet has he a diversity of operations, by the light and action of which, the hearts of men are prepared, when its calls are attended to, and are disposed after such a manner, that they may come to Christ, and that when the gospel is proclaimed to them, it may be embraced as God's plan for salvation.[2]

Apollos.—Are there any instances of this?

Aquila.—There certainly are. The Jews themselves afford examples of this very thing. Many among them who were obedient to the law of Moses, and thereby were disposed to receive the doctrine of Christ, believed on him as soon as they heard of him and the joys of his kingdom.[3] And we have already mentioned Cornelius and Lydia, whose hearts were disposed for life eternal.

Apollos.—The fault then of this infidelity, was virtually cast upon the Jews by the Saviour, and was attributable to their wickedness in not suffering themselves to be drawn and prepared by those means appointed of heaven, as well as by the operations of the Holy Spirit, for the reception of him.

Aquila.—This is the case, and at the same time the very text you quote, is an assertion not only of the divinity of Christ's mission, but also of his doctrine; for if no man can believe it, unless the Father draw him, it must necessarily follow, that all appertaining to it is divine, for God is its author.[4]

Apollos.—There appears to be a good deal of reason in your observations; but it is said by St. Paul, 'For it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Now in these words, there appears to be a greater force, than those quoted above.

Aquila.—If, my friend—you will seriously attend to them, and take them in connection with the context, you will find that there is nothing there in favour of that determining and constraining grace, whereby it is declared the Deity irresistibly converts men, and that they are necessarily drawn to seek his face. Certainly the apostle does not here speak of an effectual operation, by which God works repentance and faith in our wills, but he evidently speaks of an operation in believers, in opposition to the workings of the devil, as the god of this world, who is said to work in the children of disobedience.[5] Moreover, God is not said to do this by an irresistible power, it is only declared that he works in us to will and to do, and this I have already admitted several times; but the dispute is only about the method of this operation—is it irresistible or not?

Apollos.—I keep forgetting this; the question is not about the fact, but the mode.

Aquila.—Yes—there are several modes of doing a thing, all of which are not always so effectual, as never to fail in the accomplishment of the proposed end. Thus, he who persuades and excites a man by gifts and promises, works in him to will and to do, but yet the other may despise his exhortations and promises.[6]

Apollos.—Alas!—this is too true my friend.

Aquila.—In addition to this, the text itself does not my brother—allow such a construction to be put on it. The words of it are a motive used by the apostle to enforce the admonition he had given them, of working out their own salvation

[1] Wesley and Fletcher.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Clarke and Benson.
[4] Limborch.
[5] Limborch.
[6] Ibid.

with fear and trembling, which would have been trifling and insignificant, if a God worked on them with an irresistible power; and besides all this, the apostle would have spoken an untruth, for as his exhortation is directed to all Philippians, it follows that the motive enforcing it, is likewise directed to all of them. Now it is not true that God worked in all the Philippians, so effectually to will and to do, that they could not possibly fail of attaining the proposed end.[1] Indeed the contrary of this appears, for in another part of the epistle we read 'for many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction,' &c.

Apollos.—Well, but it is said that these words belong to the elect only.

Aquila.—Then it must be said also, that the preceding admonition belongs only to them, than which, nothing can be more absurd. The plain meaning therefore of the text, and the verse that precedes it, is this, 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, not only when I am present with, but much more when I am absent from you; for you are under the inspection of an all-seeing God, it is he who communicates his grace, according to his good pleasure; it is he, who bestows all things requisite on his part, who works in you, both to will and to do; be not therefore negligent in your duty, lest he withdraw his grace again from you.[2]

Apollos.—I have yet one other text with which I must trouble you, my brother Aquila. It is urged by many that God is said to exert an omnipotent power, in effecting a work of grace; in this text, 'and what is the exceeding greatness of his power, to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.'[3]

Aquila.—There certainly is nothing that can be concluded from hence, for such an efficacious and irresistible operation of God, in the conversion of a sinner. And this may be seen by the consideration of several things. 1. The apostle does not here speak of the greatness of the power, which God would exert toward unbelievers, in order to bring them to the faith, but the operation which he does and will perform, toward the *faithful*, for it is expressly said 'towards us who believe.' 2. And he does speak not only of the power of God which is exerted toward them that believe now, but shall be more eminently so, when he shall raise them from the dead; which, while we live in this world, we cannot fully comprehend; though some notice of it is given to us, by the power which God manifested in raising Jesus Christ from the dead, and exalting him at his right hand.[4]

Apollos.—It is apparent that the power here mentioned as exerted, has no relation to the irresistible operation of God, and cannot be, with any sort of propriety, adduced to show that the Deity works, by an irresistible operation, repentance and faith in the hearts of men.

Aquila.—The fact is, my friend—the Scriptures do not teach that man is a machine, to be forced to the exercise and performance of moral duties, by the omnipotent and irresistible power of heavenly grace.

Apollos.—But it is said by many that reason is against your position, and to some of these arguments, deduced from reason, I would my friend—turn your attention. It is thus argued, that if the grace whereby we are converted does not operate with energy, and fails of its effect, because the co-operation of the free will is requisite thereto, then grace is not the principle of all good, but man's free will.[5]

Aquila.—There is no consequence in this argument at all, for it does not follow that because grace is not the principle of all good, in such or such a manner, that

[1] Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Scott, Calvin, and Dr. Gill.
[4] Limborch.
[5] Calvin, Scott, and Gill.

therefore it is not so in any other manner. If for instance, it be asked, how it comes to pass that when an equal measure of grace is conferred on two persons, the one believes and the other does not? I answer, that it is because the one embraces and the other rejects the grace offered to him. By the proper use of the will, the one receives it, when excited and stimulated thereto by the operations of the grace of God; but the other, by the free exercise of the same faculty, rejects it, and in the abuse of that faculty, bestowed on him for a wise and glorious end, he adds open disobedience to obstinacy and unbelief.

Apollos.—But is not grace the primary cause of faith?

Aquila.—Certainly it is, but it is not the only cause concurring in its exercise; for the co-operation of the will is evidently necessary for the lively exercise of evangelical faith. Divine grace stirs up and prevents our depraved will, places before it proper motives, and gives the strength for action, at the same time it enlightens the mind and presses the necessity of 'believing,' i. e. trusting the Lord Jesus. If it were not for this, there could be neither obedience nor disobedience in man.[2] At this point men decide for eternity. Some throw, by faith, aided by grace, their helpless souls on the Lord Jesus, while many, alas! too many, reject him and all the admonitions of their heavenly Father.

Apollos.—I did not think about the fact, that man's will must be brought into action, in order to the proper exercise of faith. It is however argued, if God in the conversion of man does not make use of the effectual operation which determines him, but leaves it in his power to reject or embrace divine mercy, then he distinguishes himself from others, and the man has whereof he may boast, contrary to what the apostle says, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?'

Aquila.—You ought to have added, after your word *efficacious*, irresistible, a word that you know is so studiously kept back by all the authors of these objections. We have repeatedly said, man of himself has no power to distinguish himself from another, by returning without divine aid to God, since all stand on the same ground, and in need of the same salvation: but when the divine grace is offered, if one rejects and another by faith embraces it, what can be plainer than that he who believes does, by his ready obedience, distinguish himself from the unbeliever; and there ever has been a vast difference between faith and unbelief, piety and impiety.[3]

Apollos.—Ever has been?

Aquila.—Yes—a very notable instance of this distinction or difference we have in the Acts of the Apostles, where the Jews are said to have rejected the word, and to have counted themselves unworthy of everlasting life, whilst the Gentiles rejoiced in it, and 'as many of them as were ordained,' i. e. disposed, 'to eternal life believed.'

Apollos.—And this then is the reason why such are commended and rewarded of God, whilst many others are reproved and punished: but would it not therefore follow, that a man has some reason of boasting before God?

Aquila.—By no means, for what occasion can there be for boasting, because he is obedient to, and embraces for his own salvation, the grace offered by the Lord. My friend—a beggar, whom a prince has raised from the dunghill, and enriched with his bounty, might as well boast against him, and say that it was by his own industry and power that he got his wealth, because he did not refuse when he might, but readily accepted the offered treasure.

Apollos.—But he may boast against another, who is an unbeliever.

Aquila.—But if he does this with a design of magnifying himself, he commits

[1] Whitby, Wesley, and Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch.

a sin, and forfeits the very relation that he sustains to the Deity: because whatever good he possesses is owing not to himself, or his own forethought, but to the grace of God, that first led him to see his danger, and call on God for mercy.[1]

Apollos.—But may he not boast, in order to stir up another to emulation?

Aquila.—And if he does, I do not know that it is forbidden any where in the word of God. Indeed, my friend—we have St. Paul's example to countenance such a boasting, which is manifest from several texts which are recorded, and from the elaborate accounts given of the conflicts and persecutions which he endured for the sake of our Lord Jesus, and by which his grace is ever magnified.

Apollos.—But ye he did it with modesty.

Aquila.—Yes—with the modesty of a christian ascribing all to the grace of God, which alone supported him, and not to his own industry and strength.

Apollos.—But in the text which I quoted, St. Paul forbids the boasting, that is over others.

Aquila.—That the comparison then, does not run between believers and unbelievers, but between believers only, who were endued by the Deity with different measures of grace; and that the apostle treats of those extraordinary gifts, which were in primitive times, for the confirmation of the truth, so abundantly poured on the church, and on account of which, the Corinthians actually valued themselves one above another is plain.[2]

Apollos.—This then is the boasting that St. Paul, forbids or rather condemns as vain, because those gifts depended entirely on the gratuitous disposal of the Almighty, who distributed them to every man as he thought fit.

Aquila.—It is simply so, and in this case there was no occasion of glorying, or else St. Paul had an eye on that vain glory, whereby one man boasted of being converted, by the most worthy apostle, and thus claimed the superiority over his brother.

Apollos.—All those gifts were external, and depended on the voluntary dispensation of the living God. But my brother Aquila, it is argued, if such a *determining grace,* be not requisite for the conversion of man, then God does not bestow a more special grace on those, who are converted, than on those who are not converted: and consequently greater grace, was not given to Peter or Paul, than to Judas or Pilate.[3]

Aquila.—If it be meant that God in the ordinary vocation of men bestows that grace upon all, whereby they may be converted, so that though God calls some peculiar persons, to whom, for wise purposes he gives an extraordinary degree of grace, and gifts of that grace; yet that all have grace sufficient for their conversion; then we grant that God in his ordinary calling of men, does not bestow a more especial grace on one man, than on another. The state of the case though is properly this. God calls all to serve him by his Spirit. To spiritual influence, he adds, in many parts of the world the gospel call, with the sanctification of many circumstances, to produce a reformation and conversion. Some choose to obey, some will not obey, out of those who do obey he selects, as he in his infinite wisdom sees best, some persons as Peter and Paul, to do a particular work, and thus he calls also every true minister of the Lord Jesus. But some reject at the commencement the calls of God, and crush christianity as far as they are able in its very beginnings, in their souls, as did Pilate and Judas: and what Apollos of all this, where is there any injustice, or any display of what is called determining grace.[4]

Priscilla.—I never did like those unscriptural expressions—such as determining grace, and effectual calls. I never hear them used, that I do not think of the

[1] Wesley and Clarke.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Drs. Scott and Gill, also Calvin's Inst.
[4] Limborch.

minister, who, in dismissing his congregation, always prayed that the saving grace of God might rest upon them: until one day he was cured of it, being asked if there was damning grace, or if all the grace of God that was properly improved by man, was not saving in its nature? The Psalmist says, 'when thou saidst seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, thy face Lord, will I seek.' Here is a noble example, the very first call that heaven ever gave was obeyed by him. O! if men would only do so every where, how soon would this wilderness blossom like a rose, and the deserts themselves rejoice and become glad. My brother Apollos—a spark of grace if properly improved, will kindle a fire that shall burn and blaze through all eternity. 'See thou have nothing to do with that just man,' was a call from God, through Pilate's wife, to that iniquitous prince: had he obeyed the call, all for him had perhaps been well.

Apollos.—I am constrained to admit, that the utmost value ought to be placed on every degree of grace.

Aquila.—From the very instances which you have named, no consequences, either in favour of irresistible grace, or against the universal call of God, can possibly be drawn. For though God may not bestow an equal degree of grace on all, yet all are only accountable for what is actually bestowed. And if he does bestow an equal degree on all, in that common or universal call to all, and such as is sufficient for all to obey and become converted, when those calls are obeyed, he may consistently with his perfections, make choice of certain persons for certain purposes, and grant to them the grace necessary for the great work to which they are appointed: such was the case with the apostles of our Lord Jesus.[1] But again, if Apollos—by greater grace is meant a grace distinct in kind, I can but reject the idea altogether, for all the grace given to man, is one in nature, but you must remember, that it is different in degree. The conclusion is therefore, inevitable, the grace that God gave to Peter and Paul, was not irresistible in its operations, no more than was the grace given to Pilate and Judas, all of whom were only responsible for what was actually bestowed, and no more.

Apollos.—But suppose that God did, in the commencement of the gospel vocation, bestow a greater degree of grace on the apostles, than on Pilate, Judas, or infidels in general, how would it then be?

Aquila.—In this there would not be that absurdity that is supposed, for it is no derogation to the divine honour, which bestows on all men grace sufficient to salvation, indeed this is rather an aggravation of the unbelievers' fault, and renders them the less excusable.[2]

Apollos.—Then it will be said that he who believes has no greater cause of returning thanks to God, thank he who does not believe.

Aquila.—It certainly is no absurdity to say, if all men receive grace sufficient to repent and believe, all are bound to give God thanks, whether believers or unbelievers, and whether they do it or not. The very first offering of divine grace lays them under an obligation of gratitude. But apart from this, it is certain that God from time to time does bestow on men who believe in him, new and greater largesses of his glorious grace. So that he who believes, and he who believes not, if he will stop and reflect, will find alike they have sufficient reasons for thankfulness to God.

Priscilla.—O! this is exceeding plain, for if it were not thus, how could the unbeliever be charged, with ingratitude, he could never surely be considered guilty of it, if this greater grace, called by some the determining, irresistible, effectual and saving grace, was necessarily requisite to the conversion of his soul, and was not bestowed: he could reply, I am not ungrateful, God never gave me the grace to determine my heart on the side of repentance and faith.[3]

[1] Fletcher and Clarke. [2] Fletcher and Whitby. [3] Ibid.

Apollos.—Why then, it is asked, does St. Paul so often make mention of the special grace of God toward him, thus 'when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.'

Aquila.—Take this which way you will my friend, it does not alter the case at all. Admit that St. Paul speaks of the extraordinary degree of grace, vouchsafed to him, as a chosen vessel, for that great work, to which he tells us here he was appointed, it does not prove that it was irresistible. But if you choose take it as that common grace, implied, as granted in the universal call, and well might the apostle call it extraordinary, in view of the fact, of his true character, that of a most violent persecutor, of the church of him, who bestowed this grace without money and without price: and he had been designated by the author of this grace, who created and called him to seek his face; for this very apostleship, not for any merits in him, but by this grace alone.

Apollos.—But it is affirmed, that the method of this divine Providence, is such, that all second causes, do so depend on God, in their very *possibility, being* and *operation,* that they cannot determine themselves to any actions; but it is requisite, that those acts with all their circumstances should from all eternity, be preordained by God, as the first cause, and the second causes should in time, be predetermined by Deity, not only to the act itself, but even to the mode of action.[1]

Aquila.—This very opinion, you will remember my friend—when we were on the divine Providence was largely discussed, I refer you to what was then said in regard to this point. But my brother, we may here notice, only one or two things concerning it. If we allow this opinion, then there will be introduced a fatal, and an inevitable necessity of all things and events, both negative and positive, as well bad, as good actions. And as we have often seen in the course of our conversations, this would be to make God the only cause of all the sins, and enormities which are committed over the face of the whole earth; than which nothing can be more blasphemous; nothing more destructive of all religion; and nothing more repugnant, to that just retribution of rewards and punishments, appointed by a God, who is holy, just, and good. Are we prepared to do this my friend?—I am sure we are not. When we behold the divine perfections, all harmonizing in a plan, so scriptural, so rational, so well calculated to preserve the agency of man, to preserve unspotted the purity of Deity, the extent and infinite value of the atonement, as is that system of theology which we have opposed, to the doctrines of unconditional decrees, absolute election and reprobation, and the irresistible and distinguishing influence of divine grace. I ask, Apollos—who for one moment can doubt its truth? Surely reason, Scripture, and experience, are all on our side.[2]

Apollos.—My dear friend—I have arrived at the end of all my objections. As they have presented themselves to me, either from memory or from authors, whose works we have referred to, I have presented them to you, and now with all the frankness and candour of one, that ardently desires everlasting life, I must say, that I behold so much of truth in the system of christian divinity, which has been embraced by those; who, while they have united with the followers of Augustine, in the doctrine of man's fallen and polluted state, have rejected his notions of unconditional election and reprobation, that from the deli-

[1] Henry, Scott, and Dick, all of whom follow Calvin in this.

[2] Wesley, to whose unanswerable tract on predestination, and the dialogue between a predestinarian and his friend, the reader is referred, with a request that he will give them a calm and deliberate reading, marking carefully the numerous quotations made by that great and good man.

berate convictions of my judgment, I embrace it. I look at the world as it is, lost and ruined, but for the Lord Jesus, who gave himself for all. O! this is the most glorious doctrine of the Bible. Grace, free unmerited grace, is ready to be revealed to all. The blessed gospel, and all its ministers are sent to all the world, and the living God is ready to save all; but if any man will, in unbelief reject this grace, he dashes from his own lips the cup of salvation. I have no more questions to propose, and no more objections to offer. Every difficulty that has occurred to my mind has been presented, and even against the convictions of my own mind, and the decisions of my own judgment, I have presented the objections of others. I am now ready to proceed at any time to any subject which remains to be discussed.

Aquila.—Let me my friend—in the close of our conversations on the divine predestination say, it has fallen to our lot to differ in opinion from some great and good men; men who at this hour are housed in heaven; and also, from some of our brethren now shining in the church of God, of different names, whose piety and devotion to man's best interest, should ever command our most profound respect and christian affection. 'To err is human,' and this may be our frailty, 'to forgive is divine,' and we must believe and confidently expect, that our brethren will readily forgive any indiscretion, into which, in the heat of argument we have been hurried.

Priscilla.—Doubtless they will, 'charity thinketh no evil,' and the good men, who differ from you and from me, and who think for themselves, will most assuredly excuse that liberty in us.

Apollos.—At every interview I am learning something—God grant! that as I improve in knowledge, I may advance in piety.

Aquila.—I pray that you may. We shall commence a new subject at our next meeting. O let us look for the aid of the ever blessed and holy Spirit. Amen.

THE NEW COVENANT.

COLLOQUY I.

THE TRUE NATURE OF THAT COVENANT WHICH GOD HAS MADE WITH MAN, BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST—ITS PRIMARY AND LEGITIMATE RULE IN WHICH ARE SET FORTH THE DUTIES OF MEN—THE NATURE AND PROVINCE OF CONSCIENCE AS A SUBORDINATE RULE OF ACTION.

Aquila.—Polemic divinity is only profitable, my friend Apollos—as it leads to a close investigation, and a proper understanding of the truth. For sometime we have been engaged in the examination of those points in theology, which have for centuries occasioned many and often angry disputations. Indeed, my brother—from the commencement of our conversations, we have had to investigate those points which have been productive of great discussion among divines. At length, I trust in the exercise of perfect good feeling, we have come to that part of our work that bears, in a more specific manner, on practice. We have seen that the Bible is true. We have considered the character of that God who is the author of all things, the God of the Scriptures, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God in persons three. We have turned our attention toward his works: we have looked especially into his purpose or intention in the creation of man, and we now enter on that covenant which, by our Lord Jesus Christ, he has made with our race. Here we may have developed, and open to our view, our entire duty, according to the appointment of Deity, and the solemn obligations we are under, as well as the powerful inducements we have, to love and faithfully serve our God. We are now to consider the new covenant.

Apollos.—I think, my friend—I shall enter on this work with a heart anxious indeed to know my duty, and perfectly willing, when I do know it, to engage forthwith upon its performance.

Priscilla.—Indeed I am happy to hear that you are coming to the consideration of another topic. The subjects heretofore discussed admit of so much speculation. I want to hear more, and I tell you so plainly, of our duty, of the true nature and blessedness of religion.

Aquila.—Well, Priscilla—we have the field of duty before us now, with all its ample and eternal motives: in this we may wander and luxuriate in all that can afford us solid joy here.

Apollos.—I have acquired so much more, since the commencement of our conversations, than I had anticipated, notwithstanding my anticipations were sanguine at first, that I approach this new theme confident I shall come off gainer.

Aquila.—I am glad to find, my brother—that you are satisfied.

Apollos.—Satisfied! Yes! my friend—and gratified to. I find I am improving in the knowledge of my good God, though I am sure I shall never be able to comprehend him fully. I am resolved to press on, not only in seeking to know him, but to understand myself, and ascertain my duty. And as you say this subject involves the whole of it, I approach it, my brother—with delight.

Priscilla.—Well, Apollos—I had thought that you would be tired, by this time at least.

Apollos.—Tired! O no! I hope I shall not be weary in well doing, especially when I am benefitted constantly thereby. Indeed, I think the subjects heretofore discussed have just excited in me that kind of desire that I ought to feel, in regard to the duties of piety, and I am determined, with the blessing of heaven, to reap a harvest, sooner or later, from the labours of my friends, during these winter nights.

Aquila.—In those subjects already considered, we have treated of that method according to which God has decreed to bestow salvation on men, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and from this very point will appear the usefulness and necessity of our duty. We are now to inquire distinctly into the nature of that covenant which God was pleased to make, by his Son, with mankind, agreeably to his gracious decree so often named.

Apollos.—What is the true nature of that covenant, my friend Aquila? I want to understand it. But tell me first the import of the term covenant, as used in the Sacred Writings?

Aquila.—The word which is used in the original of the New Testament for covenant, and which often occurs in the Septuagint, as a translation of the Hebrew word which signifies *covenant,* is rendered in our English Bibles, sometimes testament and sometimes covenant. It is of common use, or is often found in both the gospels of our Lord and in the Epistles, and is there frequently translated testament.[1] The Greek word denotes, according to the best authors, a testament, a disposition, as well as a covenant. And let me inform you that the gospel is called a Testament, because it is not only the signification of the *will* of our Saviour, as sealed and ratified by his death, but also because it conveys blessings to be enjoyed after his death.[2]

Apollos.—I never understood why the old and new Bibles, or books as they are named, were called Testaments until now. The gospel is a Testament, i. e. the will of our Lord Jesus, sealed by his death.

Aquila.—These reasons appeared so striking to the translators of our version of the Scriptures, that they have rendered the original word more frequently testament than covenant. But the train of argument, where it occurs, generally appears to proceed upon its meaning a covenant; and therefore, although when we delineate the true nature of the gospel, the beautiful idea of its being a testament is not to be lost sight of, yet we are to remember that the word testament, which we read in the gospels and the epistles, is the translation of a word which the sense requires to be rendered covenant.[3]

Apollos.—A covenant implies two parties, does it not?

Aquila.—It certainly does, and the new covenant must derive its name from something in the nature of the stipulations between the parties, different from that which existed before. So that we cannot understand the propriety of the name *new,* without looking back to that covenant of which we have often conversed, and which is called the *old* or first covenant.[4]

Apollos.—The old and the new covenant are both mentioned in the New Testament, are they not?

Aquila.—They are. By St. Paul, in more instances than one, the old and new covenants are contrasted. 'And this I say,' declares that apostle, 'that the covenant that was confirmed before of God, in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.' 'God,' saith the same apostle, 'hath made us able ministers of the New Testament,' i. e. covenant, 'not of the letter but of the Spirit, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.' 'This is the covenant

[1] Watson and Parkhurst. [2] Watson. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' 'In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.' By an examination of these passages, and the context of each of them, it will be found that the old covenant, which is here contrasted with the new, means the dispensation given by Moses to the children of Israel, and by the new, the dispensation of the gospel, published by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the object of the apostle is to illustrate the superior excellence of the gospel dispensation.[1]

Apollos.—What is the light in which that dispensation ought to be viewed.

Aquila.—In order to preserve the consistency of the apostle's writings, it is necessary to remember that there are two different lights in which the dispensation of Moses may be viewed. Christians appear to draw the line between the old and new covenant, according to the light in which they view that dispensation. It may be considered, merely as a method of publishing the moral law, to a particular nation; and then, with whatever solemnity it was delivered, and with whatever cordiality it was accepted, it is not a covenant that could give life. For being nothing more than what divines call a covenant of works, as we have shown, a directory of conduct, requiring by its nature entire personal obedience, promising life to those that yielded that obedience, but making no provision for transgressors, it left under a curse every one 'that continued not, in all things that were written in the book of the law, to do them.'[2] This is the essential imperfection of what is called the covenant of works, by which I mean the name given in theology to that transaction, in which it is conceived that the supreme Lord of the universe promised to his creature man, that he would reward that obedience to his law, which, without any such promise, was due to him as Creator.[3]

Apollos.—But Adam, the first man, certainly did break that law.

Aquila.—This has been admitted, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, but you remember that, immediately after his fall, a promise was made of a final deliverance from the evils incurred by that breach of the divine law. This promise, my friend—was the foundation of that transaction which Almighty God, in treating with Abraham, condescends to call 'my covenant with thee,' and which, upon this authority, has received in theology the name of the Abrahamic covenant.[4]

Apollos.—The two parties then in it were God and Abraham.

Aquila.—Yes—upon the one part Abraham, whose faith was counted to him for righteousness, received this charge from God, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.' Upon the other, the God whom he believed, and whose voice he obeyed, besides promising other blessings to him and his seed, uttered these significant words, 'in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.'

Apollos.—Here then, I presume, was the very essence of the covenant.

Aquila.—Certainly, for these were the stipulations of each party. To them was superadded, as a seal of the covenant, the rite of circumcision, which, being prescribed of God, was a confirmation of his promise to all that complied with it, and being submitted to Abraham, was, on his part, an acceptance of the covenant.[5]

Apollos.—Then, one would gather, from the stipulations of the Abrahamic covenant, that it was something more than a covenant of works?

Aquila.—Surely it was, as its benefits were not confined to Abraham, but were extended to his seed, it could not therefore be disannulled by any subsequent transaction, which should fall short of the fulfilment of the blessing promised.[6]

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Watson and Whitby. [6] Ibid.

Apollos.—But did not the law of Moses come up to the terms of that covenant?

Aquila.—No!—it did not. It was given four hundred and thirty years after, and it could not come up to the terms, even with those of his seed who lived at the giving of that law: for in its very form it was a covenant of works, and it conveyed no blessings to any other nation but that of the Israelites: and the covenant with Abraham was, that in *his seed all* the *nations* of the earth should be blessed.[1]

Apollos.—Did the Mosaic covenant then set aside the one made with Abraham?

Aquila.—So far from setting that covenant aside, it cherished the continual expectation of its being fulfilled. For it continued the rite of circumcision, which was the seal of the covenant, and in those ceremonies which it enjoined, there was a shadow, a type, or an obscure representation of the promised blessing.[2]

Apollos.—Does the Bible authorize such a conclusion, my friend.

Aquila.—I think it does. Zacharias being filled with the Holy Ghost, broke forth in praises to the Lord and thanked him, among other things, that he had performed the mercy promised to 'their' fathers, and had remembered 'his covenant the oath which he sware,' saith he 'to our father Abraham.' There is also another view of the Mosaic covenant. The apostle says that 'it was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.'

Apollos.—How is this?

Aquila.—By delivering a moral law, which men felt themselves unable to obey; by denouncing judgments, which it did not, of itself provide, any effectual method of escaping; and by holding forth in various oblations, the promised and expected Saviour, it became a 'schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.'[3]

Apollos.—The covenant made then, with Abraham, retained its force during the dispensation of the law.

Aquila.—It assuredly did, and was the end of that dispensation.

Apollos.—Are there then but two covenants, which God has made with the world?

Aquila.—Upon an examination, it will be seen that the views which have been given, my friend—furnish the ground, upon which may be defended, that established language which is familiar to our ears, that there are only two covenants essentially different and opposite to one another.[4]

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The covenant of works made with the first man, intimated by the constitution of human nature, to every one of his posterity, and which has for its terms 'do this and live;' and the covenant of grace, which was the substance of the Abrahamic covenant, and which entered into the constitution of that covenant made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai; but which is more clearly revealed and is more extensively published in the gospel of our Lord Jesus.[5]

Apollos.—And this last covenant is the one which the Scriptures call the new covenant, is it not?

Aquila.—It is, and this is done in respect to the mode of its dispensation under the gospel. Although it is not new in respect to its essence, it has received, in the language of theology, the name of the covenant of grace, for reasons that are obvious.

Apollos.—What are they?

Aquila.—1. Because after man had broken the covenant of works, it was pure grace or favour in the Almighty to enter into a new covenant with him again.

[1] Watson and Whitby.
[2] Clarke and Watson.
[3] Clarke and Watson.
[4] Watson.
[5] Ibid.

And 2. Because by the covenant there is conveyed that grace, which enables men debilitated by the fall and sin, to comply with it.[1]

Apollos.—It could not, however, be a covenant, unless there were terms?

Aquila.—Surely it could not. There must be something required, as well as something promised or given.

Apollos.—That is, there are duties to be performed, as well as blessings to be received.

Aquila.—It is just so. And the tenor of the covenant, founded on the promise originally made to Abraham, is expressed by Jeremiah, in words which an apostle has quoted, in the epistle to the Hebrews, as a description of it, 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' These are words my friend—which intimate, not only on one part, entire reconciliation with God, but the continued exercise of all the perfections of the Godhead, in promoting the happiness of his people; and the free and full communication of all the blessings that flow from his unchangeable love.[2]

Apollos.—What are the terms of it on the part of his people?

Aquila.—On their part, the surrender of the heart and affections, the dedication of all the powers of nature to his service, and the willing uniform obedience of their lives.

Apollos.—But does not this covenant, still retain its character as a covenant of grace.

Aquila.—Certainly it does: for although there are mutual stipulations, the covenant must be regarded, as having its source purely in the grace of God. For the very circumstances my friend—which rendered the new covenant necessary, take away even the possibility of their being any merit on our part. Besides as we have proved already, the faith by which it is accepted is the gift of God; and all the good works performed by christians, by which they continue to keep the covenant, originate in the change of character which is the fruit of the operation of his spirit; all we have is of grace.

Apollos.—This then is the nature of that covenant under which we live, called the covenant of the New Testament. Having considered my friend—its nature, do if you please consider its stipulations.

Aquila.—The covenant of grace consists of two parts. The first is a stipulation of duty, and the second is the promise of salvation to such as perform that duty, and in connection with this, the threatening of punishment and eternal death to those who neglect it. From this outline of the thing itself, we shall not only be necessarily led to consider it, and all its stipulations, but to notice particularly its precepts, its promises and threatenings.

Apollos.—In its stipulations then, we have, I presume, set forth the entire duty of man.

Aquila.—We have, and in considering that we shall have to notice two things, one is its rule, and the other the obligation of a spiritual worship or the sincere adoration of the Deity. The rule of man's duty has been divided by divines into *external* and *internal:* the former, is simply the divine precepts, and the latter, our own consciences, as they are influenced and directed by the spirit of God, and the light of education.

Apollos.—Are these of equal force or obligation?

Aquila.—They are not, as we shall see in the sequel. The divine precepts are the primary, general and remote, or as it has been called the *exact* rule, for our actions. The *internal* rule or conscience, is the secondary, special and proximate rule, as it is called, which is no farther right, than as it agrees with and is directed by the others.[3]

[1] Watson and Clarke. [2] Ibid. [3] Clarke and Paley.

Apollos.—Do then give me that general, remote, and primary, or most important rule of our duty, as christians, called to be partakers of the benefits of this new covenant.

Aquila.—The precepts of the Almighty God, my dear brother—form the primary rule of our duty. In these, our heavenly Father declares his holy and blessed will to man, and signifies to us what he would have us to do in the diversified relations of human life, in order to the attainment of those benefits contained in that covenant.[1]

Apollos.—Do not these *precepts* admit of several distinctions?

Aquila.—They do. And divines have variously divided them. The first division is founded on the *natural* and *positive* right, according to the views of some, of him who is the author and creator of all things.

Apollos.—What do you mean by the natural right of the Deity?

Aquila.—Simply that right which is founded in his very nature, and requires that such things only shall be commanded to reasonable creatures, as are agreeable to the divine nature, and reason as implanted in the minds of those creatures: moreover that nothing repugnant thereto shall be enjoined.[2]

Apollos.—Then God cannot without doing violence to our reason, and denying the true principles of his own nature command any thing that is unreasonable and unholy?

Aquila.—He most assuredly cannot.

Apollos.—What then is the law of God, as founded on that right which you call natural?

Aquila.—It is either natural, strictly so called, or it is revealed and moral.

Apollos.—What is implied in the former?

Aquila.—It is that law which God implanted in man, at his first creation, and still preserves to us. This I consider as nothing else but right reason, called the law of our nature, which dictates to us what is virtuous and honourable, what is vicious and dishonourable; what it is reasonable and right to do, and what it is wrong and imprudent to perform: and indeed this is accompanied with such a powerful sense of obligation, that those who do otherwise, have in the very law and constitution of their nature, my friend—the sentence of death.

Apollos.—You do not really think so?

Aquila.—St. Paul teaches us so. After describing the fallen and miserable condition of the world, on account of sin, he adds, that men know, 'the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.'

Apollos.—What is meant by a revealed and moral law, as predicated also, in this natural right?

Aquila.—It is simply a law that God has revealed to men, which being derived from, or rather founded in that natural right of the Deity, to rule and govern those created by him, is nevertheless in itself more perfect and complete, than what is called the law or constitution of our nature.[3]

Apollos.—But it is the same with natural law.

Aquila.—I have already said so, by which I mean, that these two laws accord in nature, though the revealed or moral law, is of consequence more perfect than that of nature.[4]

Apollos.—Well—now tell me what do you understand, by the positive right of the Deity?

Aquila.—It is that which depends on or grows out of the mere good will and pleasure of the Almighty: so that by it he may prescribe to men, not only other precepts besides what are already commanded, but he may also enjoin others

[1] Clarke, Paley, and Watson.
[2] Paley and Limborch.
[3] Paley.
[4] Ibid.

contrary thereto: and among these I would add such only as God commands are to be called good, so long as he requires obedience to them, and no longer, and moreover that those are unlawful and evil which the Deity prohibits; notwithstanding, it is apparent, that right reason dictates no such thing, and we are not able to discern why the Almighty requires it.[1]

Apollos.—Then in this sense, the will of God is the rule of right or wrong.

Aquila.—It is thus, and this positive right takes place, and is very apparent, in the injunction of ceremonies, and other external precepts, which may be varied from time to time, according to the good pleasure of God.[2]

Apollos.—The case then is not the same with respect to *natural law*, which being founded on the immutable nature of God, and on right reason, he does not alter or absolve men from observing.[3]

Aquila.—Certainly not, nor much less can he abrogate it, by the prescription of contrary precepts.

Apollos.—It is then an error to suppose that the Deity can command things contrary to those precepts, founded in the very law of his nature, and the infinite purity of his character?

Aquila.—It is an egregious error, and one too into which those have fallen who maintain that God can command things not only contrary to his other precepts; but also contrary to the decalogue itself and in such a case, those things will become good and necessary. Indeed some have gone so far as to suppose that it might in the lapse of successive ages, become admissible, that men should worship with impunity, idols and devils, and even hate, deny and blaspheme the name of God. It is impossible, my friend—that God should implant reason in man, and at the same time command him such things as his reason condemns, and proclaims to be vicious and unholy, and in which it is evident, there is not the least show of probity and goodness.[4]

Apollos.—This is indeed almost self-evident. Are there, my friend—any other divisions of the divine precepts?

Aquila.—There are several. Some consider them, with great propriety, either as *affirmative* or *negative*. By the former, they understand those in which God commands something to be done, and by the latter, or negative, those things which he forbids, and which he charges them to omit and avoid.[5]

Apollos.—What is the true difference between these?

Aquila.—Simply this, that the affirmative are always obligatory, whenever there is an occasion to perform them, and always requires a mind ready to obey them, but should there be no occasion or opportunity for performing them, then the obligation ceases. But the negative are binding on all men, in every place, and at all times. For it is lawful for no man to do what God forbids.[6]

Apollos.—At no time, and on no occasion then, are men absolved from the obligation of obedience to the negative precepts of Deity.

Aquila.—Another distinction or division of the divine precepts is into general and particular.[7]

Apollos.—What are implied in these?

Aquila.—The *general* precepts neither command nor forbid some certain actions, but are only general rules, in which are included the more *particular* precepts which command or forbid such and such actions.

Apollos—Do explain this a little more particularly.

Aquila.—Of this nature are those two great and general precepts of loving God and our neighbour, which are so pressingly enjoined in the New Testament, and in which are virtually contained all the particular precepts of the entire decalogue,

[1] Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Paley.
[4] Whitby and Clarke.
[5] Limborch.
[6] Clarke.
[7] Clarke and Limborch.

and those also which relate to sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, under which the Scriptures comprehend the whole duty of a christian. Thus says our Lord, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the first and great,' i. e. general 'commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,' i. e. they comprehend the whole duty of man. 'And,' says St. Paul, 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.' Here is a duty, Apollos—enjoined in general terms, that embraces the entire course of every real christian.

Apollos.—It is very manifest that these are important distinctions, and ought to be well observed, if we would understand the divine precepts and our duty, taken in connection with the various relations that we sustain in human life. It is therefore necessary that there should be some rules, by which we are to understand and explain them.

Aquila.—There are such rules, my friend—and they should be well observed. For the right explication therefore, and the due understanding of these precepts, we are to recollect first, that under *negative* precepts their contraries, the affirmative are also to be comprehended, for God not only requires that we should eschew evil, but also that we should do good.[1] Again, when some external acts are forbid, it is sometimes the case that in them are included the internal acts of the mind, from whence those that are external proceed. And you will also bear in mind, as I have said, and on another occasion proved, that general acts comprehend those that are particular, all being of the same nature, some more manifest than others, and of consequence some less easily discerned by us. You must also bear in mind, if two precepts cannot be observed at one and the same time, then we ought to consider which is preferable, the precepts of the first table being to be obeyed, rather than the second, and when both cannot be done, the moral instead of the ceremonial. 'For I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings,' says the Almighty. Here then we have what is properly called the primary and external rule, for the government of our conduct toward God, ourselves, and our fellow men.[2]

Apollos.—And what is the *internal* rule of man's conduct, my friend?

Aquila.—It is that monitor, my brother—that God has placed in the bosom of every man. I mean conscience, which will be heard, and whose appeals are often felt, when no other preacher has access to man's heart.

Apollos.—How true is this! But do tell me what is conscience?

Aquila.—It has been defined to be that act of the practical judgment whereby man passes sentence on his own actions, and either condemns or approves the same. But as it is employed in judging our actions, either as future, present, or past, a three-fold office is assigned to it.[3]

Apollos.—But what is that triple office of which you speak.

Aquila.—In the first place, it lays before us what we ought to do, and with respect to this it is called *light*, directing a man, or rather a law dictating and commanding what must be done. But again, by the help of memory, it bears testimony to the actions performed by men, agreeably or contrary to that law, and in this sense it is called *witness*, and thirdly, it pronounces the sentence either of absolution or condemnation, according to the quality of those actions, and upon this account it is called a *judge*.[4]

Apollos.—That would lead us then to the conclusion that conscience is not the supreme but subordinate rule of our actions.

[1] Mr. Wesley's rules for the United Methodist Societies.
[2] Whitby and Limborch. [3] Limborch. [4] Limborch and Wayland.

Aquila.—This is very plain from the fact that it has a law superior to it, by which, as its rule, it is directed.

Apollos.—But what law is it by which the conscience of man is ruled and directed?

Aquila.—The law of God, whether natural or revealed; and the more perfect that law is, the more perfect is the judgment of conscience, which is passed at the time on an action, according to that law.[1]

Apollos.—And on the contrary, I suppose the more imperfect the law, the more imperfect the decisions of conscience on the morality of an action.[2]

Aquila.—It is certainly so: but though the divine law be the supreme rule of our actions, yet it cannot prevail upon us to obey, nor can it be applied to them without the intervention of conscience, which being convinced of the meaning of the law, applies it to all and every action; for a law unknown cannot incline us to obedience, and it prevails upon us only so far as it is known, and consequently only so far as the conscience is endued with the knowledge of the same.[3]

Apollos.—However, there are different sorts of consciences, are there not.

Aquila.—There are. In order that we may have a clear apprehension of the obligation of conscience, we may notice that it may be considered either with respect to its rule, or with respect to the actions of which it judges.

Apollos.—Explain yourself.

Aquila.—I will do so. With respect to its rule, it is either a *right* conscience. when it is conformable to the divine and evangelical law; or an *erroneous* one, when it swerves from that law, or mistakes the true and genuine sense of it, or it is *doubtful*, when it is in an uncertainty in regard to the meaning of the law, and hesitates as to the course of duty, and knows not what must be done, or what left undone. So when viewed with respect to the actions, on which it passes judgment, it is either a good conscience which approves and applauds what is agreeable to the divine law, or an evil conscience, which condemns us as having acted contrary to, and infringed that law; or it is a scrupulous, which is an anxious conscience, because it is uncertain as to the moral turpitude of an action, not knowing its agreement with the divine law, and consequently, whether the action is to be approved or condemned.[4]

Apollos.—What is requisite or necessary for obtaining a true or right conscience?

Aquila.—There are two things necessary. There must be no defect in the law, to which as a rule, it is to be conformable; for if there be an error in the law, the conscience to be directed by it must needs be erroneous. And next, there must be no mistake committed in apprehending the sense of the law, but a due application of it must be made to our actions.[5]

Apollos.—What do you mean by this?

Aquila—That those things which the law forbids are to be considered as prohibited, and those things as necessary which that law commands.[6]

Apollos.—And I presume those as indifferent when the law makes no certain decision in the case.

Aquila.—Surely, and of consequence the conscience must be in all things conformable to that rule, by which its actions are regulated.[7]

Apollos.—But, my friend Aquila—what do you think will entitle a man's conscience to be considered as conformable to its proper rule.

Aquila.—To denominate a man's conscience, conformable to its rule, on whose judgment he may safely rely, it is not enough that it consent to the divine word,

[1] Paley.
[2] Wayland.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Paley, Wayland, and Limborch.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Paley and Wayland.

upon any reason that shall be offered, but such an assent must be grounded on some sound, some solid argument: for if the conscience be carried away by mere opinion, by the custom and number of those who assent, or by some plausible argumentation, not thoroughly weighed and examined, a man ought not to rely on the judgment of such a conscience, though perhaps it may be right. Indeed the action performed, according to its dictates, does not deserve the name of even a virtue, since it is not rational, but a blind and an uncertain act.[1]

Apollos.—This then is the reason why wisdom and prudence, I presume, are so often named in the word of God, and enjoined as a duty.

Aquila.—Yes—we are earnestly admonished to take heed how we hear, lest we be deceived. St. Paul says to the Corinthian church, 'Brethren, be not children in understanding, how be it in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men.' And again, 'see then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,' 'walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds.'

Apollos.—What then is an erroneous conscience?

Aquila.—When the conscience of man is ignorant, of the true sense of the law, it is said to be erroneous, because it makes a wrong application of the law, to its actions; and consequently that law is transgressed of necessity.[2]

Apollos.—But what is the occasion of this error?

Aquila.—By false reasoning or a perverse interpretation of the Scriptures, men are sometimes led into false opinions about some article of faith, then it is an error in faith. Sometimes it may be an error in manners, when one misapprehends, from some cause, the word of God, and of course neglects some precept: for instance, they believe a thing to be lawful and necessary, when it is exactly the reverse, and is not only unlawful and unnecessary; but destructive of all order. And sometimes indeed men are apt to account that to be only lawful, which is necessary, and on the other hand, that which is merely lawful, perhaps indifferent, to be absolutely necessary.[3]

Apollos.—But there is a difficulty here my brother—when a man's conscience is erroneous what is to be done. How ought one in that case to act?

Aquila.—The course I think is easily pointed out. We have observed that conscience is the intimate and proximate rule of our actions; it is therefore, evident, that we must follow its dictates though it should err, otherwise we shall be involved in guilt.[4]

Apollos.—Well—suppose that a man's conscience be not right, and we know it is not, when it wants conformity to the word of God, then it becomes to us a false rule; but as it is impossible for a man to live according to God's word, any further than his conscience admits of this rule; would it not be improper then to follow its dictates.

Aquila.—Certainly it would, could it be ascertained that it was in error. But conscience in itself has the force of the divine will, and whatever it prescribes, it prescribes as commanded by the Deity, so far as apprehended by us.

Apollos.—What then is the nature of the action?

Aquila.—The action is esteemed a sin, not according to the judgment, which God pronounces concerning it in his word, but according to the judgment of conscience.[5]

Apollos.—Then there should be great care taken that the conscience should be better instructed.

Aquila.—It certainly ought to be so, in order that it may accord with that rule appointed by the living God, at least we should see that it is not our fault, that we are not well acquainted with duty, lest we fall into sin, at least into error, and

[1] Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Paley.
[5] Paley and Limborch.

one that may perhaps destroy our souls, at least shake the very foundation of our faith and obedience.[1]

Apollos.—Lest we should be thus situated we ought to be exceedingly careful. For we may be placed as it were between two fires. On the one hand our condition may subject us to sin, indeed we may be hardly able to avoid it; for if we pursue the course, which in many instances from the want of more information, the judgment of conscience would approve, we shall commit an act contrary to the word of God; and should we not follow it, we shall do what we think is repugnant to that word.

Aquila.—It is even so my friend.

Apollos.—Well—then the question is, how may it be corrected. How may a man cure the errors of his own conscience? This is I perceive a very important point.

Aquila.—In reply to this I would say, that in order to prevent the errors of our consciences in matters of *faith,* we should never place such a sense upon obscure places of the Scriptures, or admit of an exposition that is repugnant to plainer and clearer texts: nor are we to admit of such a sense as implies a palpable absurdity in itself, and that cannot be reconciled with reason. We are never to inquire after two contradictory meanings in Scripture, nor are we to attempt to explain proper expressions by those that are figurative only. Small portions of the Scriptures are not my friend—to be taken out of, and separate from their connection with the context.[2]

Apollos.—We must mind what goes before, and what comes after.

Aquila.—Yes indeed—and we should lay aside all prejudice, all passion, all our preconceived opinions, and never bring them into the Scriptures, but deduce all our notions from the Bible, after a close and patient investigation of its contents.

Apollos.—These my friend—are all important duties I do really believe.

Priscilla.—Though all important, yet too much neglected. Many never search the Bible at all.

Apollos.—But what is the best method of curing an error, in point of manners or conduct?

Aquila.—I assure you my friend—it is hard for me to tell what is the best method. I am however, certain of one thing, that a man should strive to ascertain, whether or no he be in error: but let me tell you, it is not the best method of curing an error in manners, to teach that a man should act contrary to his conscience, though it does err; for this would be to teach that one is to throw off all restraint, all respect and awe for God, for acting under a conviction that he is serving 'God he may continue in all good conscience,' that is, he may not feel its decisions of guilt on his conduct. Care must therefore be taken, to clear, by proper instruction, the conscience from error, and enlighten the mind as to the true sense of God's word.[3]

Apollos.—I do not, I assure you, my friend—understand this: how can a man that is obliged to follow the judgment of an erroneous conscience, be guilty of transgression, in the prosecution of the dictates of that judgment?

Aquila.—For some weighty and plain reasons, such a man may be guilty of sin; for although the conscience may decide otherwise, whatever is contrary to God's word is a sin. For as conscience is only a secondary rule, which was proved before, it cannot be called good, strictly speaking, unless it be in harmony or accordance with its principal rule, which is the word of God.

Apollos.—But the degree of the sin and the amount of punishment are not the same, when there is ignorance instead of knowledge.

[1] Paley and Limborch. [2] Clarke and Paley. [3] Limborch.

Aquila.—O no!—for he who breaks a command, of which he is convinced in his conscience, is far more guilty; in that he acts contrary to his own conscience, than is the man who does wrong ignorantly.[1]

Apollos.—But then he who violates a precept who is ignorant of it, does not commit a sin in this at all, does he?

Aquila.—This would depend on the fact of his having had the opportunity of knowing better or otherwise. Many men are ignorant, because they never use the means to be informed. This ignorance is their own fault, and they are therefore guilty of all the consequences resulting from it.[2]

Apollos.—I did not think of this. A man must use every means with which God has blessed him, in order to obtain the light, but if he cannot obtain it, then he is clear.

Aquila.—Yes—if he cannot. But let me say, God will certainly enlighten him, who diligently seeks the light.

Apollos.—Then an erroneous conscience does not afford, I see, security to a man.

Aquila.—It may be secure in one thing. It is this, that it does not condemn its own act; but to say the least, my brother—it is not a good conscience, because it swerves from its principal rule.

Apollos.—But, my friend—you quoted an expression of St. Paul awhile ago, and it does seem to me that it forms an objection to your theory. That apostle tells us, that he 'had lived in all good conscience until this day,' and yet he had persecuted the church of God, inflicting punishment on the defenceless and innocent.

Aquila.—Does the apostle, my friend—here speak of the time that preceded his conversion? I think it doubtful. It does appear to me that St. Paul speaks of the time subsequent to his conversion, as is evident, from several plain reasons. The first is that he had no occasion to clear himself with respect to the actions performed by him before his conversion, for the Jews did not charge him with having done wrong then, but indeed approved of all he then did. But, my friend—they accused him on account of those actions that he did, which followed his conversion.[3]

Apollos.—I did not think of this.

Aquila.—Had St. Paul alluded to the time preceding his conversion, his judges, when he said, that during that time, 'he lived in all good conscience,' might have replied, that they had good consciences in persecuting Paul. For certainly, if Paul could persecute the church with a clear conscience under such aggravating circumstances, the judges of St. Paul, under similar circumstances, might do the same. Besides, St. Paul in reflecting upon the time that preceded his conversion, speaks quite otherwise of himself. So far is he from saying that he lived in all good conscience before God, during that time, he calls himself a 'blasphemer,' a 'persecutor,' 'the chief of sinners,' and unworthy to be called an apostle, because he 'persecuted the church of God.' Thus he says of himself in one of his epistles to Timothy, that he 'was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,' and 'this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,' and also, 'I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.'[4]

Apollos.—I really am, my brother—astonished at your exposition, and still I cannot contradict it, for there is on the very face of it so much of reason. But tell me how can these things be? I have always heard an exposition exactly opposite to this. Besides St. Paul himself says that he 'served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience.'

[1] Paley and Wayland. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch [4] Ibid.

Aquila.—Admit the meaning of the text as it is in the original, and much of the apparent, for there is no real difficulty in the passage, will be removed. We are not informed in the words that it was according as he had been educated by his forefathers, but they may simply denote, which in all probability they do, that he followed in the steps of his ancestors, viz: true believers, so that he does not speak of the Pharisees who preceded him in his family, but of christianity itself. And besides this, suppose that the apostle did speak of his serving God before his conversion, it will appear that his conscience is called 'pure,' because he still retained a love of what was good; so that his sin was not malicious, but ignorant. His conscience then was pure, not absolutely so, but in some measure or degree, because, being untaught in regard to some very important matters, it did condemn him for that which he did; and although he did what was bad, yet he did it not with an evil intent. He 'did it ignorantly and in unbelief.'[1]

Apollos.—This then will lead to a very important interrogatory. Which is the greater sin, to commit a thing contrary to the divine precepts, but according to the judgment of an erroneous conscience, or to do that which is contrary to the dictates of conscience, but agreeable to a divine command.

Aquila.—The best way is to search diligently and ascertain our duty: but generally speaking, that is the greatest sin, which is committed against conscience. For so far as we follow the dictates of conscience; so far may we be said to love virtue, and hate vice: but not so, if by chance, and through ignorance, we do what is suitable to God's word. Indeed, my friend—I have thought that as God has implanted this inward preacher in our bosoms, we do express the greatest hatred toward him and his authority; when not fully understanding his word, we neglect the commands and suggestions of our consciences.[2]

Apollos.—I do not fully understand this.

Aquila.—It may be proper to give a more distinct reply to your question. Let me tell you we must distinguish between the causes of ignorance.

Apollos.—What do you mean by this?

Aquila.—There is sometimes in man, an ignorance that may be called invincible, which is produced either by the want of a revelation or of judgment, and which cannot be conquered, notwithstanding all the care and industry used by us. This then, my friend—when the case excuses us from sin. But there is an ignorance which is vincible, contracted by our own fault, and this is more or less culpable, according to the causes of it.

Apollos.—What are its causes, and what do you mean by according to the causes of it.

Aquila.—One sort of this ignorance proceeds from mere prejudice, and the fondness for an opinion, in which we were educated, without any mixture of malice, and such was St. Paul's ignorance before his conversion. This is certainly not altogether without sin. Some have supposed that a less sin is committed by following the dictates of such a conscience, than if we acted contrary to it: and my friend—as we have already once suggested, it is dangerous to violate the dictates of conscience.[3] However, a man truly honest will not suffer himself to be pressed into the service of any system, without due and proper investigation; and if he shall do this, he may commit a sin that will eventuate in many afflictive consequences, both to himself and others.

Apollos.—Is there any other cause of this ignorance?

Aquila.—There is. Another kind may arise from malice, and such grievous sins as render a man guilty of eternal damnation in the sight of God. Indeed it is even possible for a man to be ignorant of his being immersed in such vices, through that supine neglect, and the want of due and proper examination into

[1] Limborch. [2] Wayland. [3] Limborch.

the state or true condition of the soul: whereas, had a diligent search been made, he might have discovered those sins that lay hid in his bosom. It is evident, that it is a sin much more virulent, not to get a conscience thus wicked, better instructed than to commit such enormities according to its dictates, than it is to abstain from them in opposition to conscience. The crimes originating in malice, are generally so very horrid, and so directly opposed not only to the divine law, or revealed will of God, but also to the law of nature, that, no man can be so grossly ignorant without being guilty of the highest degree of wickedness, is most evident to all.[1]

Apollos.—And indeed, it forcibly occurs to me, that from these two sources, the greater part of the conduct of ungodly men flows.

Aquila.—It does chiefly, I believe.

Apollos.—Well—but the question has been asked, and that gravely, what ought we to think of the actions of those men who are given over to a reprobate mind. Are these to be esteemed as sins or not?

Aquila.—With respect to such men, it may be said, that, either on account of past offences, by the just judgment of God, they are so far deprived of the right use of their reason, that they can make no distinction between virtue and vice: or else, that they do know the difference between one and the other, but through mental error they esteem that to be vicious which is virtuous, and that to be virtuous, which is most grossly wicked, and thus actually 'believe a lie.' If we understand the question, as it is understood by many, then it must be said of such men, that so far as they are given up to a reprobate mind, there is no conscience left, and therefore, their actions, though contrary to the divine precepts are not thought to be formal or express sins, though they aggravate their condemnation. The actions of such men are thought to be like those of savage and wild beasts, or of mad men, under the influence of an all-controlling phrenzy. If they have still some notion left of the difference between good and evil, then they have still, it is thought, a conscience, though a depraved and unenlightened one.[2]

Apollos.—Then the same may be said of them, when in this state, that you remarked of those who are labouring under an erroneous conscience, and whose error proceeds from their own fault and wickedness. But suppose a man should be labouring under a doubtful conscience, what would then be the course to be pursued.

Aquila.—When the conscience doubts in regard to any matter, the action must be suspended, because whatever is performed with a doubtful conscience, is a sin, and this is evident from what St. Paul says, 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin:' for by faith here, St. Paul does not mean in general, confidence and reliance in our Lord Jesus Christ, but that firm persuasion of mind, it is thought, by which an individual is convinced of christian liberty, and knows that what he is performing, is not unlawful nor prohibited by the law of God.

Apollos.—But will this interpretation of the word faith, appear just and reasonable on an investigation of the entire context?

Aquila.—I think it will. For he who has faith, is here opposed to his weak brother, not one, who was destitute of all faith; but one who was not yet fully instructed in regard to all the parts of the christian religion, and consequently doubted only some points.

Apollos.—Then there is an egregious mistake about this text, for some infer from it, that all the works of men before they believe in the Lord Jesus, are sins; but the apostle is not here conversing of wicked and ungodly men?

Aquila.—By no means, but of those only who act under the firm persuasion of the lawfulness of what they do, when it is unlawful and they might know it, or be enlightened on the subject: this to such is sin.[3]

[1] Limborch and Paley. [2] Ibid. [3] Watson and Paley.

Apollos.—But why is it so?

Aquila.—The reason is found to be in this, that whoever does any thing with a doubting conscience has not that reverence for the Deity that he ought to have, especially if it be in his power to suspend the performance of the act to a subsequent period. For it is evident that he who doubts whether what he does is or is not agreeable to the divine will, puts himself manifestly into the danger of doing that which God forbids, which is very far from being the character of one that fears God. And indeed, to do any thing while hesitating or doubting in our consciences, is the next door to the doing an act directly against them.[1]

Apollos.—Do if you please be a little more particular, and give me an illustration of a doubtful conscience.

Aquila.—Well I will do so. You will bear in mind that this doubt, or scruple of conscience may be either in respect to one or both sides of the question in dispute.

Apollos.—Suppose it be with respect to one side of a disputed question?

Aquila.—Then a man may doubt whether it be lawful to omit or to do such a thing, or he may question not whether it be lawful to do, but to omit it. In both these cases it seems to be the safest course to take that side on which the doubt rests or lies.

Apollos.—But how if the scruple be with regard to both sides of the thing questioned?

Aquila.—Then the reasons for both are of equal or unequal force, and if of unequal weight, then reason itself teaches us to incline to that side, which is supported by the strongest arguments.

Apollos.—But is there not in that case still some imperfection in the act?

Aquila.—Certainly there is, because it is performed with some scruple of conscience; and if by our neglect that scruple be not removed, the action cannot be, it is evident, wholly blameless.[2]

Apollos.—Well now—suppose the reasons on both sides be of the same weight and importance, and all too taken out of the Scriptures, how must a man act?

Aquila.—The path of duty then is very plain if a case of this kind can really exist. It must be inquired what is most agreeable to flesh, and what therein most agreeable to the Spirit; and the latter is most assuredly to be made choice of as most suitable to the christian religion, for all that is in that religion, or appertains unto it, is directly contrary to the lusts of the flesh.[3]

Apollos.—But, my brother—suppose that neither favours sensuality, and both are supported by reasons taken from the Scripture. What must be the nature of a man's action?

Aquila.—Again I answer, if such a case can or does occur, then a man will not be altogether blameless, unless he shall for the present suspend his action, for let him incline to which side he may, without being convinced that he is right, he will do wrong. In all such cases, should they ever occur, the judgment must be suspended until we can be assured as to what, under the circumstances, is the line of duty.

Apollos.—But in the meantime, one may lose the opportunity of doing the good altogether. How then?

Aquila.—Then there will be no guilt incurred, if in the interim the mind is occupied in the close and calm investigation of God's word, and if we with sincerity inquire, what the true meaning is, and earnestly pray to our good God for the assistance of his holy and blessed Spirit, to discover to us his true will, which he will never deny to those who ask it in sincerity and truth. Here, I humbly

[1] Watson and Paley. [2] Limborch. [3] Clarke, Watson, and Benson.

conceive, my friend—is the line of duty. 'If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God.' This is a favourite text, and you know I have quoted it more than once.

Apollos.—God is the great source of all light, and all true wisdom.

Aquila.—You have now before you, my brother Apollos—this entire subject: the nature of that covenant which our God has made with man, by our Lord Jesus Christ—a view of the precepts of that covenant, which are the external rule of our conduct, and in which we learn our duty, whether affirmative or negative, whether included in general or particular precepts, whether natural or moral, as they are founded in the natural or positive rights of the Deity. We have also seen the rules for the proper understanding and explication of the commands enjoined of heaven, both through the medium of reason and revelation. This is the external rule of our duty, setting forth the terms on which we may participate in the benefits of that covenant. We have also considered its internal rule: conscience, that internal speaker, which, influenced and directed by the Spirit of God and the light of a religious and good education, and acting in subservience to the divine law, the truths of the gospel, and the dictates of the Spirit, shall aid us in prosecuting the path of duty, and in the performance of the stipulations of that covenant of grace, in which we are offered life and eternal salvation.

Apollos.—You mean that conscience is only a subordinate rule?

Aquila.—I have said so repeatedly, and wish you once for all to remember, that the great law of our actions is the word of God. Conscience, the more it is enlightened, the more is it tenacious of duty, as set forth in that word. In order that this internal monitor may be illuminated to the utmost degree, I have placed before you the plan which I conceive best calculated for the attainment of that end, with an exposition of the errors to which men are subject, and the means of correcting those errors. Indeed, the very means by which all our doubts in regard to duty may be removed, have been placed before you. Having then the true rules of our conduct before us, we must enter upon an exposition of our duty, resolved to ascertain it, as set forth in revelation, and approved of by reason and conscience.[1] This is our ground work. Here we are to hold, and from this position we cannot, we must not for a moment depart. If we do we are at sea, and liable to be overwhelmed and ruined by some dangerous error.

Apollos.—I think, my friend—I will bear this in mind, and in our subsequent conversations, on every point, inquire concerning every principle, is it in accordance with revelation, reason, and an enlightened conscience; a conscience regulated by the word and spirit of the Almighty God.

Aquila.—If we pursue this course we shall do well, and come to a consistent understanding of our duty to God, our neighbour and ourselves. At our next meeting we shall enter upon the nature and obligation of those duties declared in the divine precepts, and consider them, in all our conversations, with respect to their morality and vast necessity. I have thus given you an outline of this new covenant. We shall hereafter consider its several parts more particularly.

COLLOQUY II.

MORAL ACTIONS, BOTH GOOD AND BAD, CONSIDERED—GOOD WORKS—SIN AND ITS VARIOUS KINDS.

Aquila.—Before we proceed, my friend—to that distinct consideration of the covenant itself, and the particular duties which God therein requires of men, it may not be improper for us to consider some things in regard to moral actions.

[1] Clarke and Fletcher.

Apollos.—What do you mean by moral actions?

Aquila.—Such actions as are free and voluntary, not forced, constrained, or necessary.[1]

Apollos.—These then are the actions which are employed about some moral good or moral evil.

Aquila.—It is so, and it will of consequence plainly appear, that those moral actions are either good, bad, or as is thought by some, indifferent, i. e. neither wholly good nor wholly evil.

Apollos.—But what are the moral actions that are called good.

Aquila.—Simply such as agree to their rule, the divine law, whether natural or revealed. This indeed may be considered a definition of good works in general, even those which, without any revelation from God, are performed according to the law and constitution of our nature, I mean right reason. Here however, you must recollect, that we are to consider such good works as are prescribed to us in the gospel, under a promised reward and a threatened punishment.

Apollos.—A work, such as is dictated in the gospel, is called an evangelical work; do pray tell me what are the qualities of such works, what constitutes a work good, what qualifications are necessary to make a voluntary or moral action acceptable to the Deity, and in perfect accordance with the injunctions of the New Testament?

Aquila.—You will remember, my brother—that the law of the gospel is the only rule of our life and manners. It will of course follow, that in a good work, it is especially requisite that it be commanded in the gospel, either expressly and particularly, or else that it be included in some other general command, or such as may be fairly deduced from those that are expressly set down, and ought, with them, to be esteemed as a precept. Moreover, it is necessary that it should be something positive, not a bare cessation from action, for then he who sleeps, or is idle because he ceases from acting, might be said to perform a good work, besides to denominate an action a good work, there must be not only a pious design, but it must be effectual, and upon the first occasion be exerted and brought into action. There must also be a tendency in the action to a good end, for even a laudable action loses its morality by being performed with an evil intent or design, and therefore becomes a sin.[2] This is positively proved by our Saviour, who adduces the giving of alms, prayer and fasting, performed for ostentation and vain glory. On the whole it is plain that there must also be that degree of knowledge by which a man thoroughly discerns the whole scope of his action, and all its circumstances, and is fully persuaded of the probity and rectitude of the same, and its conformity with the word and law of God.[3]

Apollos.—This then is your view of a moral action, properly called a good deed. Now a question arises, and a very important one, in regard to this matter. You have set forth what is an evangelical work, by which I understand, a work done according to the directions of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of these works you have given me the qualities, but I want the true nature of good works in general. You know that about this there has been great dispute in the religious world. Is it essentially necessary, to constitute a work good, that it should proceed from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Some have proceeded so far as to say, that all the works of the unregenerate, or of those who are destitute of true faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are *sins;* and though in the sight of men they may seem to be acts of obedience, yet in the sight of God they are mere hypocrisy. And although they are consonant to right reason, and the revealed will of God, yet without faith in Christ they are only so many illustrious sins.[4] Do tell me what are your views of all this, my friend. Do you think it correct?

[1] Wayland and Paley. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch, Paley, and Wayland. [4] Calvin's Inst.

Aquila.—I have already remarked, that a moral good action, to be evangelical, must be performed in a particular manner, that is, according to the gospel, which is the only perfect rule of our life and manners. But I am not prepared to say, that every action of man, however performed, and with whatever intent, previous to evangelical faith, by which the soul is justified and pardon is obtained, is a sin: for if so, it would then follow, that the sinner who seeks and prays for mercy is, all the time while doing this, committing a sin. This I cannot believe. I will therefore offer some reasons why I cannot subscribe to the opinions you have just named in regard to this matter.

Apollos.—Do if you please, my friend. You seem to distinguish between a good work and an evangelical work.

Aquila.—It does appear to me that the Scripture teaches us plainly, and does hold forth the idea clearly, that every action performed by man before conversion is not a sin. In the first place we have the pious, I think I may call it pious, example of that excellent man Cornelius. Now before he did believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, indeed before he had even heard of him, it is said that he was 'a devout man, one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.' Nay that 'his prayers and his alms went up for a memorial before God.'

Apollos.—Did you say that he never heard of Christ?

Aquila.—We have no evidence that he ever did. One thing is certain, he had not believed in him. Indeed he was, it is possible, no more than a bare proselyte of the gate, as appears, I think, from the whole story. In answer to the prayers of Cornelius, the Lord sent Peter, after miraculously convincing him that he ought not to consider man, the favourite creature of God, common or unclean, to point him to the Lord Jesus, by faith in whom he might enjoy the comforts of God's love and the witness of pardon. That his actions were acceptable to God, at least were not sins, and as moral actions were good, being done with pure and good intent, though not evangelical, is evident from the remark of Peter, who speaking of Cornelius and such as he was; not as some suggest of them that believed, says, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.' Besides, there are other places in the Scriptures that authorize the opinion, I think, and that too plainly, that every action, performed before the exercise of the faith that justifies the soul, is not a sin. Some of these we have already quoted and explained, in our conversations. Such are the texts which tell us that those who performed 'the truth' 'were willing to do the divine commands,' and obey Christ, who 'was sent of the Father,' 'were of God' and 'disposed for eternal life.' Indeed St. Paul tells us, 'that when the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, they having not the law, are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts in the mean while accusing or excusing one another. The publican, previous to his obtaining pardon, prayed 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' was this a sin? Zacheus began by promising restitution, and doubtless performed that promise. Was this a sin, my friend?

Apollos.—I did not think of these things indeed, dor did I think of the difference of a work done, according to the best of our light and knowledge, and a work called an evangelical one, because done in evidence of faith in our Lord Jesus, and when we have an experimental knowledge of him. But it is said, my friend—that this opinion of yours is contrary to reason.

Aquila.—This is not so. So far from this being the case, reason is also on the side of revelation in this matter. It is evident, that in order that any action shall be good, it is enough if it be agreeable to the divine law, whether natural or

revealed, since both are a rule of life and manners, the former when there is no knowledge of the latter, provided the action be performed with a good intention, and an earnest desire to know and do the will of the Deity, and his will alone. Under this view then, the nature of a good work does not precisely require that faith in Christ should be included in it. This could not be the case where men have never heard of Christ: and even where they have heard of him, many are earnestly and sincerely seeking him, according to his word, and often are long in quest of mercy before they obtain it.

Apollos.—A direct intention of honouring and glorifying the Deity may then exist before a man has an evangelical faith?

Aquila.—I think it may, and not only so, there may not only be the intention, but as in the case of Cornelius, there may be the actual performance of good works, pleasing and acceptable to God, before there is the faith that justifies, and although they merit nothing, as often said, and indeed no work of man merits any thing, yet they have a tendency to prepare the heart for a more intimate acquaintance with the gospel plan of salvation, until enabled to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus, who adopts us into his family 'by grace through faith.'[1]

Apollos.—Then a man should ever be willing, and strive to be a servant of God, until that he shall make him a son? or adopt him into his holy and blessed family as an heir of endless life?

Aquila.—Most certainly. Provided a general and sincere design of serving the Deity, shall be in the action and accompanying it: and provided also, that the nature of the action be in accordance with reason, and have a tendency to honour God, and it is performed, without any design to contradict the will of God, or out of vain glory, and above all is done to the best of our knowledge and ability, and according to the best light or rule we have of morality and piety.[2]

Apollos.—Indeed I should suppose that whatever is suitable, or in accordance with this rule is a virtue by whomsoever it may be performed.

Aquila.—If the case of Cornelius be properly applied by us, such an act is in my estimation, because done with the design to the best of our knowledge to please God, a pious action.

Apollos.—I suppose of this nature were the deeds of many heathens, who surely acted correctly according to their best light. You know my friend—there were some who taught, that virtue was to be embraced, purely from the love of it, and for its own sake, was never to be forsaken nor abandoned, no not at the stake. Indeed, I dare not say that many heathens never performed a good work; though I know, they were profoundly ignorant of God's true method of salvation. However, my friend—you know that there are objections to this theory.

Aquila.—I know this well, but I also know that they are groundless, if the Bible be true.

Apollos.—Against all your arguments it is said that the unregenerate have not the holy Spirit in them, without which no good work can be performed.

Aquila.—This I deny. Now I put such men upon the proof that any man is without the spirit of God; I know that no man, without the influence of grace, and God's Spirit can perform a good action, but I also know, and have proved, that this grace is common, and a measure thereof is granted to every man, and a manifestation of God's Spirit, is given to every man, and who dare say my brother Apollos—when, or how that Spirit takes its flight. Who can point to the individual that is not under some operation of grace, and influence of the divine Spirit. We are too apt to think that men are without divine influence, and limit that influence to ourselves, our friends, and associates in opinion. I know that without the Holy Ghost, no saving work can be wrought, but by the assis-

[1] Wesley and Fletcher. [2] Paley.

tance of the common grace granted to all, a work good, because reasonable and in accordance with God's word may be performed.

Apollos.—What my brother—by an unconverted man?

Aquila.—Yes—by an unconverted man. Have you forgot what I once said, that the sinner, in seeking mercy is doing the will of God as much so in his place, as is the believer, who is pressing on, or any other servant of God in earth or heaven, who is doing the will of God?

Apollos.—But does the Scripture admit this?

Aquila.—Certainly it does. How, otherwise could a man become a converted man? 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.' I hope no one will say that the wicked and the unrighteous man here spoken of are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's will that the sinner should every where repent and pray for pardon, and when he begins to pray he is in the performance of a good deed, he is doing the will of God. Let him persevere, and God will certainly bless him.[1]

Apollos.—But brother—it is objected to this that 'without faith it is impossible to please God.

Aquila.—Let me quote all the verse; will you my brother? 'But without faith it is impossible to please him,' i. e. God, 'for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' Now let me ask you, does the apostle here speak of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? I think he does not; but of that faith whereby a man does admit and rely upon the fact that God actually exists, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Now it is manifest, that a man may have this faith, though he had never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ. Several examples of which have been adduced. By the Spirit of God, for all is by grace, the works of God are sanctified, and all the providential surrounding circumstances of life, to lead men to see and feel that there is a God; and in whose existence they must believe, if they would approach and find mercy. I know that this is called by men the light of nature, but we must bear in mind that our nature is averse to godliness.

Apollos.—Well—I forgot again to read the whole text and the context, this is all important.

Aquila.—The case is a plain one, no man need come and ask favours at the hand of God, unless he does believe in him, and no sinner need look for mercy at the hands of the Lord Jesus, unless he shall have faith in him. This last is widely different from the man who never heard of Jesus, but who clearly convinced that there is a God, seeks mercy at his hands, believing in his existence, and in his ability to enlighten and save. There is also my brother, a wide difference between a work being pleasing to God, and a man pleasing him, by that work. For it is impossible, I think, but that some one good work of a man may be acceptable to God, while on account of other sins, the man himself may not be acceptable.[2] Of this we have a very striking example in the repentance of Ahab. Thus, 'seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?' saith the Lord, 'because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.'

Apollos.—There is then no merit in the work to recommend us to God, but at the same time, if done with a proper motive, it is most certainly no sin, you think?

Aquila.—I do think so. As therefore, the action may be acceptable, and the sinner may not be accepted, because of the disagreement between his general

[1] Mr. Wesley, who has a sermon setting forth the difference between a servant and an adopted son of God, that is perhaps the best thing ever written on this subject.

[2] Limborch.

conduct and God's will, yet as the action itself is in accordance with that will, it is accepted. More therefore, is necessary for the salvation of the sinner, and to the best of his light and ability in approaching God for mercy, he must believe and rely upon him.[1] To all this I may add my friend—that St. Paul is here speaking especially of the manner in which that pious man Enoch, is said to have pleased him, and properly it is the commendation of his faith, who in that dark day believed on God, and walked with him for hundreds of years, and was then translated from earth to heaven.[2]

Apollos.—I suppose that the opposite then of all this, is what you call sin.

Aquila.—Sin is an action that is averse to the nature and precepts of the law prescribed by the Deity, for the government of man's conduct. A sin is therefore a moral evil action, and of course, moral evil actions are such as do not accord with their rule, viz: the divine law, whether natural or revealed, and these actions are called sins.

Apollos.—Sin is then as the Scriptures say, 'a transgression of the law.' What are the peculiar qualities of sin. What is the true nature of a moral evil action.

Aquila.—Of course you know, as I remarked before, it must be voluntary. But while it has this in common with good actions called also moral, there are several things that are involved in the true nature of a transgression, in order to make it such, or rather to constitute a sin. There must be something positive, and not a mere privation, this chiefly takes place in sins of commission. The settled purpose of doing that which is evil, as such, and which is forbid of God, is not absolutely necessary. It is enough that what is done, be of itself evil: nor is it necessary always that the action tend to a bad end.[3]

Apollos.—But a bad end certainly aggravates the sin.

Aquila.—It does so most assuredly, but if the action do not accord with its rule, it is evil though it may be done for a good end. So true is it that we ought not and cannot do evil, that good may come, for the very best end will not sanctify the means.

Apollos.—Do tell me how are the several kinds of sins classed.

Aquila.—By the consideration of those several kinds into which it is generally divided, we may have a better idea perhaps of the true nature of a moral evil action. And we ought therefore to consider it with regard to its object, subject, cause, manner and effects, with all the other attendant circumstances.

Apollos.—Well, take up the first named of these and consider sin as divided first with regard to its object.

Aquila.—Well—sin is divided with regard to its object, or the law which is transgressed. You remember that the precepts of the law are some of them affirmative, prescribing a duty, and obliging men to the performance of the same whenever an occasion offers. Others are negative, forbidding some acts as unlawful, and which are always obligatory; hence arises a distinction, or as we have said a division of sins.[4] And we have that variety of classes which we named above. There are sins of *omission,* if any action commanded by the law is not performed when there is an opportunity of doing it. Again, there are sins of *commission,* when what is forbid by the law, as perjury, adultery, murder, &c. is committed. The former properly speaking, is the refusal to do a duty, though it is commonly attended with some action, that directly or indirectly tends to the omission. Whereas, the sin of commission is always done by a positive act, either inward in the intention of the heart, or external of what kind soever it be.[5]

Apollos.—What is the division of sins on account of their subject.

[1] Wesley.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Limborch and Watson.
[4] Clarke and Benson.
[5] Watson and Limborch.

Aquila.—These are distinguished into those of the *Spirit,* which are chiefly committed in the mind and heart of man, to the completion of which the members of the body concur: and also those of the *flesh,* which are performed by the bodily members, such as murder, theft, and especially those whose object is some carnal pleasure, gratifying the sense of touching or tasting, such as drunkenness, uncleanness and the like. Now this division is in perfect accordance my friend—with that common one in which sins are said to be either sins of the *heart,* such as evil thoughts, and the lusting after what is forbidden, or of the *lips* as blasphemy, evil speaking, lying, slander, flattery and the like. Or they are sins of *deed,* i. e. the violation of the rule designed for man's government by some external act.[1]

Apollos.—Is then all concupiscence or desire, which inclines to that which is unlawful in itself a sin?

Aquila.—It is certainly a sin to perform any unlawful act, by which I mean, an act that the word of God forbids. But it must be recollected by us, that concupiscence is three-fold, if by it is meant desire. For instance, there are some first motions of our hearts, which are called natural propensities toward that which is agreeable to our nature, which are certainly nothing else than a general complacency in a thing which is grateful to us, and consequently, seems worthy of our love; or aversion to that which is ungrateful and displeasing to us; provided however, that these proceed no farther. Again, there is a delectation or delight when the mind thinks long, and with pleasure upon an unlawful and vicious object. There is also sometimes a deliberate purpose or design upon every opportunity that offers, of doing what is grateful to the flesh. Now of these two none can question for a moment the sinfulness; for sin consists rather in the acts of the mind, than in the external execution thereof: it is the mind that properly is the criminal, whilst the bodily members, are as so many instruments to execute what the soul resolves upon.[2]

Apollos.—If then a man delights in vain and unlawful thoughts, he is guilty of sin, though he may not as yet come to the fixed resolution of practising that, upon which he meditates.

Aquila.—It is even thus, for such an indulgence is unlawful, and contrary to that purity which is commanded of God, it is a delight that defiles the heart of man, and pinions him down to sensual and carnal pleasure. But the natural motions of the heart raised in us by the representation of the varied surrounding objects of life, by which are excited the first motions, inclinations, and aversion or affection to a proposed object; that is grateful or otherwise; without any fixed resolution, or the taking any delight in them; I do not conceive to be sinful. To admit the reverse it appears to me, would lead to the admission, that a rational creature can cease to think.[3]

Apollos.—What do you mean by this my friend?

Aquila.—You must need know that these are not in the power of men, but often present themselves to our thoughts, whether we will or no. Indeed sometimes the more we resist them the more they come upon us. And again, so far from their being to be attributed to us, or our fault, they form an occasion for exercising our virtue, which consists in omitting what is grateful, and the doing what is mortifying to flesh and blood, from the love and reverence of the divine law, and it would seem that without these first motions, if I may call them so, we do not perceive directly what is grateful or displeasing to theflesh, and carnal appetities and desires of men.[4]

Apollos.—Are not these motions of our nature the result of the fall?

Aquila.—All irregularities in our present constitution and condition are the result, either directly or indirectly of the fall: but it would seem, I think, that our first

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch and Wesley. [4] Limborch.

parents, even before the fall had them, and it would follow that if they are sinful, then there was a sin before the first sin, which is absurd. Indeed it has been thought by some, that in the Saviour himself, there existed a natural aversion to death, disgrace and pain, which led him before his passion, to pray to the Father, that, if it were possible, the cup of affliction might pass from him. In these, I mean the desire of our first parents to be wise, and the manifest aversion of the Saviour to some things. I think, that there are certain motions of thought and feeling, that are interwoven with our nature, by the wise being who formed it, and that the same kept in their proper bounds are not sinful.[1]

Apollos.—It is plain that the Saviour was not polluted by sin, for in the very case you name, he restrained the motions to murmur and repine, and submitted himself entirely to his Father's will, adding 'not as I will, but as thou wilt.'

Aquila.—You must recollect that to wicked thoughts must be referred, not only all absolute desires for an unlawful thing, but even those that are without a specific prohibition in the divine commands, provided the thing itself be evidently and intrinsically evil. For instance, suppose a man should be so exercised, that he would commit a crime, say adultery, if it were not that God does forbid it; is it not evident that such a desire not only shows the propensity to sin, but also, cannot be entertained by a man, without some sort of delight and pleasure, and is consequently criminal.

Apollos.—Well—I have heard of sins of ignorance. What is implied in these?

Aquila.—You must know that sins with respect to their cause, are divided into sins of *ignorance, infirmity* and sins of *malice*. To answer your question then, sins of ignorance, are those of which ignorance is the sole cause, and which would not be committed by a man, were it not that he is ignorant of his duty. Of this nature, as I have showed you, was St. Paul's sin in persecuting the church of Christ, and in some measure, that of the Jews in crucifying our Saviour. I have also shown you already, that these are culpable, as far as that ignorance is attributable to our own neglect of those means, by which we might be enlightened, concerning our true condition, and the great obligations under which we rest to the living God.

Apollos.—What are sins of infirmity?

Aquila.—These have been defined to be such as proceed from the sudden emotion of the sensitive appetite, which by its violence hurries the will to a consent, before reason has made any deliberation on the matter. Of this natnre are sudden fear, anger, joy, grief, &c. All such are called, when unduly allowed or encouraged, sins, if the term be here properly applied, of infirmity, because we are inclined to the act, not so much by the will, as by the frailty of our nature, which is borne down by the violence of passion.

Apollos.—The magnitude then of our guilt, is proportionate to the encouragement or license that we give to passion.

Aquila.—The unrestrained influence and government of passion, is most certainly a sin, and one whose consequences may become very extensive.[2]

Apollos.—What sins then are denominated those of malice?

Aquila.—Those that are committed with a fixed purpose and design: with mature deliberation of mind, and there must be preceding it, the full liberty of acting, and a deliberate choice of that course which we pursue. A man is not only at full liberty, when he has shut his ears to all dictates of reason to the contrary, that being the case but of a few; but also when the will itself allured with the temptations of sin, freely consents to the performance of the deed, though reason has exerted itself long before the act, or in the very act makes some faint strugglings to the contrary. Then it is that the spirit is made subject to the flesh, and

[1] Limborch. [2] Wesley.

the will laying aside and despising the light of reason, voluntarily consents to the sin.[1]

Apollos.—But pray tell me, when does the will directly and fully do this?

Aquila.—When there is a perfect perception of the understanding, which precedes the consent, as when he who sins is not hurried away by a sudden and violent passion, nor wants time to take a full deliberation; or when he not only reflects upon the sensible object which delights or pleases, but also on the moral turpitude of the sin. And again, when the approbation of the will, follows this consideration of the understanding: and this either positively and directly, by consenting to a vicious action; or negatively instead of rejecting the sin at once, it is entertained if not with a delectation or pleasure, it is suffered by its continuance to tempt the will to an assent.[2]

Apollos.—You named something about the manner in which sin was committed.

Aquila.—This is a very important thing to be considered, for indeed, the turpitude of a transgression is to be determined, in a good degree by the manner in which it is performed. Thus sins with respect to the manner of their commission is either against conscience, when the dictates thereof in prescribing what ought not and what ought to be done, are not minded at all, but rather are disregarded wholly, either before or in the very act of sinning, or it is not against conscience, which proceeds not from an invincible, but what is supposed to be an affected ignorance of the law; for though herein the conscience does not condemn it acts, yet is the action a sin, because it is contrary to the divine law; the supreme rule of our practice and even of conscience itself.[3]

Apollos.—How many circumstances are to be taken into the account, in the consideration of a moral action.

Aquila.—A great many in actions both bad and good, but especially in moral evil actions. Thus sin is also said to be sometimes a reigning sin, which by an inveterate habit, has got the dominion over man, keeps him as a slave, and upon every occasion, presses him to the commission of iniquity. By long custom it is often the case that sin has attracted so much seeming sweetness, that a man becomes an unequal match for it, submits to it as his lord and master, and cannot shake off this galling yoke. But again, at other times it is not a reigning sin, but is committed through inadvertency, or a sudden and violent passion, in which a man does not indulge himself, but forthwith tries to resist and part with it as a poison, and does seriously strive to repent of the same.[4]

Apollos.—The individual sinning under such circumstances, is certainly not as guilty as the old habitual offender.

Aquila.—By no means. You must also remember, that sins are said to be either natural or accidental. By natural is meant, that which in its own nature is a sin. When the whole essence of them is evil, or in which there is not only one simple circumstance of action, but the whole act is forbidden, as murder, theft, blasphemy. Again, it is accidental only, by which it is apparent that the action is itself good, but is corrupted by some vicious circumstance which is also forbid. Such for instance as praying or fasting, and alms giving, to be seen of men.

Apollos.—What diversity is manifest even in an action which is offensive to God. You named sin as necessary to be considered in connection with its effects. What is meant by this?

Aquila.—On account of the effects of sin, some transgressions are said to be unto death, some are not unto death. From this arises that notable distinction, between what are called mortal, and venial sins.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

Apollos.—Do if you please take up and consider both those distinctions, and let me see how far they agree and disagree with one another.

Aquila.—Well let us take up the division of sins into mortal and venial, of the meaning of which there has been so much dispute in Christendom. This division of them is contended for, especially by Romanists.

Apollos.—Do give me their views of mortal and venial sins.

Aquila.—In the first place, then the Romanists call those *venial* sins, which in their own nature merit pardon, and do not deserve eternal death. These they distinguish also from *venial* sins by *event*, whose pardon is obtained by a consequent repentance; and from venial sins proceeding from the cause, which are in some measure worthy of pardon, as being committed through infirmity or ignorance.

Apollos.—But this is certainly a very erroneous opinion, is it not?

Aquila.—It surely is: for although we own that there is a great inequality in sins, yet there is none so small but that the Deity, if he deal with us according to the rules of strict and impartial justice, might punish it with eternal death, or an exclusion from that beatific vision prepared for his children, for the very least sin, is a deviation from that obedience which we owe to God.[1]

Apollos.—Do they quote any Scripture for their notions in respect to this matter.

Aquila.—They do. The most specious plea for their opinion is taken from the remark of our Lord concerning anger. 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment, but I say to you whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council, but whosoever shall say thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.' Now the Romanists say that our Lord here takes notice of three kinds of anger, first that of a man who is angry with his brother without a cause, next of him who says to his brother Raca, and lastly of him who says to his brother, thou fool. This last degree of sin, they say, is alone considered and pronounced worthy of eternal death, the first being only said to be worthy of judgment, and the other of the council.

Apollos.—And do you believe this to be correct?

Aquila.—I do not, and for several reasons. The first is, that our Saviour, by these remarks, did not design to show the different degrees of punishment due to each of these sins, because all these belonged to the two former assemblies, wherein the difference of punishment was not considered at all, but only a cognizance taken of different crimes. Again, he that says to his brother thou fool, is pronounced guilty of hell fire. Now according to the explication of these words given by Romanists, the two former are not guilty of it, which is absurd, because in this case the punishment of a murderer, who is said to be only in danger of judgment, would be less than that of him who says to his brother, thou fool.[2]

Apollos.—What then was the object of the Saviour in his remarks concerning these three characters?

Aquila.—Simply this. He would set forth the certainty of the punishment of all and each one of them, as guilty of sin, which punishment could by no means be avoided: just as one condemned by the supreme tribunal has no appeal to make from thence to a higher court.[3]

Apollos.—But others make a distinction you know in the sense of this passage. They say that all sins of the elect are venial, since God pardons them all without exception of his mere grace. And they also say, that all the sins of the reprobate

[1] Wesley. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

are mortal, since they commit none but what God in his severity will enact a punishment for.

Aquila.—But this is an opinion which is shrouded with many absurdities. For admit it, and you will have to admit that sins would not be distinguished by their own demerits, but by the persons who committed them; and the same sin committed by one that was elect would be venial, while committed by one that was reprobate would be mortal. Thus God would not pass sentence upon persons according to their sins, but upon sins according to the persons that commit them, which is highly repugnant to all the notions we have of justice.[1] Moreover, my friend—it is expressly said, that a man may see his brother sin a sin unto death, which is certainly a mortal sin: though perhaps he knew not that it was a sin unto death, and therefore it might be possible for him to fall into it. 'If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life, for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.' Besides it is a very dangerous assertion to make that the elect cannot commit a mortal sin as it is called, as this is evidently an outlet to all manner of sins and enormities, which may, without fear of punishment, be committed by the elect, who ought most of all to abstain from transgression.[2]

Apollos.—Do give me, my friend—the true explication of what are called in theological language mortal and venial sins, and the proper distinction between them, if there be any at all.

Aquila.—I take this distinction, my brother—in quite a different way from either Romanists or Calvinists, and in a sense which I believe to be more in accordance with the Sacred Writings. That is called by divines a mortal sin which God will punish with everlasting death and damnation, unless it be sincerely repented of: for we know of no sin except that against the Holy Ghost, which may be noticed presently, but for which remission, ample and free, may be obtained, and a full pardon enjoyed, upon a true repentance and an evangelical faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.[3] In this sense then, those are mortal sins of which our Saviour declares by an apostle, 'That they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God;' and of which he says, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' You may see then what I would understand by venial sins, if it be right to use such an expression; namely, those which, according to the terms of the new covenant, shall not be expressly punished with eternal death; but the remission of which God will grant, though a man has not fully discharged himself from some of them, or particularly repented of them, provided it be not his own wilfulness and fault that form the hindrance thereof.[4]

Apollos.—In what sense then does St. John say, that 'there is a sin unto death, and a sin not unto death,' as quoted by you just now?

Aquila.—In another and an entirely different sense. This is not said, as is evident, with respect to the demerit of sin or the divine constitution, but with respect to its event. By a sin unto death, therefore, we are to understand that which will be certainly punished with everlasting death, by the peremptory sentence of God, or which he has decreed never to pardon, but to punish with eternal damnation, and which is always attended with final impenitence. By a sin not unto death, is meant of course that which God has not as yet peremptorily decreed to punish with eternal death, but the remission of which a man may obtain upon a heartfelt and genuine repentance.[5]

Apollos.—But without such a repentance it becomes at last a sin unto death, does it not?

Aquila.—Certainly it does, as does every sin that man perseveres in.

[1] Limborch. [2] Fletcher. [3] Wesley. [4] Limborch. [5] Ibid.

Apollos.—But it is said that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost. What is the sin against the Holy Ghost?

Aquila.—This may be considered as another division of sins. For they are said to be either against the Holy Ghost or not against him; which notable distinction is taken from the remarks of our Saviour himself. 'All manner of sins and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men:' and 'whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come.' For a clear apprehension of the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, spoken of by the Saviour, we must bear in mind the name, my friend—by which this sin is called.[1]

Apollos.—What is this—I do not understand you?

Aquila.—It is especially named blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. It will therefore follow, my brother Apollos—that every sin which is committed against the Holy Ghost, as all sins evidently are, are not the sin against the Holy Ghost here named, but one certain sort or kind of sin, which is expressly called blasphemy.[2] This is also evident from the occasion on which the Saviour uttered it. He had just cast a devil out of a man, at which the multitude 'marvelled and glorified God, saying is not this the son of David?' The Pharisees, moved with envy, calumniated this miracle, saying he 'doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of devils.' The Redeemer having showed by several arguments the absurdity of this calumny, goes on to tell us how great a sin that was, and how directly it reflected upon the Holy Ghost, and that remission of it could not be obtained either in this world or in that which was to come. From this circumstance then, it would appear that this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, signifies that particular sin by which the miraculous works wrought by the Saviour, through the power of the Holy Ghost, are attributed to the devil: while at the very same time those who thus blasphemed were either persuaded that such mighty works could not be done by any other power but what was divine, or at least could not, by any experiment or probable argument, prove to the contrary.[3]

Apollos.—And this then is what is called blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Aquila.—I think so; and the reason is most manifest, for he is thereby, in an especial manner, insulted, and is virtually denominated an infernal spirit, in opposition to the blasphemy against the Son of Man, whereby the person of the Son is properly injured when he is rejected, considered as a mere man, of a mean and abject condition, without any kingly splendour, as one that falsely boasts himself to be the Messiah: or as when he is blasphemed by being called a glutton and a wine-bibber. But even this blasphemy must be considered distinct from that whereby his heavenly doctrine, confirmed by miracles, or himself now exalted in heaven, and apprehended by faith is insulted.

Apollos.—In such a case then he would be blasphemed not as the Son of Man, but as the Lord who poured down the Holy Ghost upon the apostles.

Aquila.—It would seem so; which blasphemy, if it be not the same with that mentioned by the Saviour, yet at least appears to be near akin to it.

Apollos.—Well now—under what circumstances can a man now commit this sin?

Aquila.—It does appear to me my friend—evidently from all the consideration given to this subject, that this sin can hardly be committed at this time, a time in which we do not see those miracles with our eyes, and consequently though a man might blaspheme against Christ and his doctrine, yet this blasphemy would

[1] Wesley and Clarke. [2] Clarke and Limborch. [3] Ibid.

not be of the same nature with that of the Pharisees, who were sensible witnesses of those miracles, and yet attributed them to the power of the devil.[1]

Apollos.—But why is it said 'not to be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come?'

Aquila.—From what has been already named, it will be obvious to all who will look into this matter, why this declaration is made concerning the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. In it there evidently is the highest degree of malice and wickedness which display themselves. Not that God cannot pardon this sin, but because the remission of it cannot be obtained, according to the terms of the new covenant. Add to this my friend—that repentance itself, the means preparatory to the remission of sins by faith, is rendered impossible to those who thus blaspheme, by the ordinary grace of God, if I may so speak, contained in the covenant: for he who ascribes to the devil the miraculous works of the Holy Ghost, wrought to prove the divinity of Christ's doctrine, has made the grace of God, whereby he should be converted of none effect to himself.[2]

Apollos.—Then it is manifest from what has been said that all sins are not equal.

Aquila.—They certainly are not Apollos—for from what we have seen of the various kinds of sins, there is a great inequality between them, and it is also evident, both in regard to the destructive nature and immense consequences of sin, that one is more or less grievous than another.[3]

Apollos.—Are there any parts of the Scripture which teach, that there is such a difference as you say exists in sins?

Aquila.—There certainly, I think, are texts which do teach this difference. Thus we hear our Lord saying, 'and why beholdest thou the mote, that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.' As there is a wide difference between a beam and a mote, so is there a very wide difference between sins, considered with respect to all their appendages. So the Lord Jesus said in relation to Judas betraying him, 'therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.' Surely by this expression we learn that all sins are not of the same magnitude, and although it is admitted that all, when viewed with respect to their immense consequences, are of terrible magnitude, still some are 'greater' than others. 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes.' Who does not see the inequality of sin here manifested, in respect to its consequences.

Apollos.—I assure you this is evidence almost positive.

Aquila.—The entire parable of the talents might also be quoted; the conclusion of which is also in evidence to the same point: indeed, if we consider all the various circumstances of sin, on account of its cause, its object, and above all the act itself, this will manifestly appear.

Apollos.—Why on account of its cause is there an inequality.

Aquila.—With respect to the cause a sin committed through ignorance, inadvertency, or sudden passion, is surely less heinous, than that which is committed in contempt of God, with a wicked heart, and what is called *prepense malice.* Again, with respect to the object. It is more grievous to sin against God than man; against a relation than a stranger: against a magistrate than a private person. And with respect to the act itself, there are several degrees in the same kind of sin, one of which is more notorious than another. Thus, adultery is a greater sin than fornication, and incest than adultery. Homicide is a greater sin than causeless anger, parricide than simple murder, and so of the rest.[4]

[1] Clarke and Limborch. [2] Clarke and Watson. [3] Ibid. [4] Limborch.

Apollos.—It is therefore a very foolish argument to say, that because all sins are a deviation from the rule of right, that therefore, all are equal.

Aquila.—It is so, for as has been shown, the deviation out of mere ignorance is not to be compared with a designed and a malicious deviation: nor is he who departs a little from the rule, upon the same level with him who runs, if I may so speak, far away from it.

Apollos.—Do not both swerve from the rule?

Aquila.—Indeed they do, and therefore, both are sinners and guilty before God; but because one has departed farther from it than the other, therefore the sin of one is greater and more heinous than that of the other.[1]

Apollos.—But then you would not allow a man in any sin, because some are more heinous than others.

Aquila.—O no!—I do not say this in order to encourage any man in sin: far from it, for he who commits sin, however small it may be, is evidently not only culpable, but also guilty. Although some sins, may in the judgment of the Deity, be esteemed less than others, yet ought they not to be reckoned small by us, for all that God forbids, we are to shun, as offensive to him, and an attack upon his authority. That reverence which we owe to the divine prohibition, ought to be a sufficient barrier to restrain us from venturing on sin. Besides, my friend—a sin that is otherwise small, becomes grievous when committed with a deliberate mind: since offences are not estimated by the external act, so much as they are by the intention of him that commits them: moreover Apollos—that which seems small to us, is sometimes punished by God severely, as appears by the judgments inflicted on small offences, recorded in the Scripture. Do you not remember the case of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day? Our judgment would have been, that this was a small sin, but when the case was brought before the Lord, he ordered that he should 'be stoned to death.'

Priscilla.—Yes—and do not you also remember the case of Saul, king of Israel, who offered contrary to law, his own burnt and peace offerings, by which he forfeited the divine favour, and also his kingdom.

Aquila.—And look at the case of Balaam, who, had he rejected every temptation, after the Lord had declared to him 'thou shalt not curse the people for they are blessed,' and not thought of the promotion 'to great honour' promised by Balak, he had not endangered both his life and his soul. And how small was the sin in appearance which was committed by Uzzah, who put forth his hand to the ark, but the Lord 'smote him' for his error, 'and there he died by the ark of God.'

Apollos.—O! I perceive that this opinion about a little sin is a very dangerous notion. God sees not as do we, and although there are evidently grades in transgression, as well as in any thing else in morals, yet all sin, which is the violation of some known law, is an act by which we incur guilt, and endanger the best and most blessed interests of our souls. Is it not therefore, my friend—a very dangerous error to inculcate as Romanists do, that many sins are venial, and may be easily cancelled.

Aquila.—It certainly is very destructive to immortal souls to be taught a doctrine such as they teach, concerning venial sins, for by their limitations and restrictions they make almost all sins venial, and further say, that the pardon of them may be obtained by a small pecuniary or corporeal service, as is evident from the writings of their casuists.[2] By this they not only tempt men to sin, through the hope, indeed the certain promise of impunity, but what is worse, shut out the thoughts of a serious repentance, for as pardon may be obtained by the hope of a little money, or the suffering a trifling penance, it is esteemed of no importance to trouble themselves about a deep and genuine repentance, as

[1] Limborch. [2] Calvin and Limborch.

preparatory to the exercise, of a living and an evangelical faith, in the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins: therefore, they rest secure in the satisfaction already made by them.[1]

Apollos.—Can the heart of man be so stupid as to suppose that any thing earthly can buy off the soul, from that depth of guilt in which it is involved by transgression.

Aquila—Thus my friend—we have viewed the nature of moral actions, both evil and good, the former in all that variety of form, and indeed expression, that arrest the attention in the sacred volume. You must not forget that these are distinctions that chiefly originate in the attendant circumstances, and not so much in the nature of the thing itself. All sin is a voluntary violation of a known law, and all sin of consequence brings man under the curse of the law, and exposes his soul to the bitter pains of eternal death. The word of God says 'the soul that sinneth, shall die,' for 'the wages of sin is death.' From its foul spots there is nothing short of the blood of Jesus that can save us, and that blood ought to be applied now, for full and entire salvation, or we may be lost and undone forever. 'Be ye holy, for I the Lord thy God am holy,' is the declaration of the Deity to all his people.

COLLOQUY III.

OF OBEDIENCE IN GENERAL TO THE PRECEPTS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Apollos.—Since you entered my friend—upon the consideration of the new covenant, we have conversed, not only of the nature of that covenant, but of moral actions, both good and bad, as encouraged or forbid in that covenant, and indeed, of moral evil and good in general. I want you to consider particularly those christian virtues or actions prescribed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—This I am ready to do. You must however, remember that the various appellations of our duty as prescribed by the Saviour are not to be inquired into at this time. Indeed I am not sure that it is necessary at all. You will please however remember that two precepts are given in the New Testament, they were preached by the Lord Jesus himself, and are pressed upon us by his apostles, as of vital importance.

Apollos.—What are those my friend?

Aquila.—Repentance and faith.

Apollos.—I have often remarked my brother—that these two duties are largely dwelt upon in the New Covenant, and I have thought I would ask you to show me why our obedience is therein chiefly denoted by the terms *repentance* and *faith.* I do hope you will tell me.

Aquila.—Indeed it will not be amiss for us to examine into this matter. Our obedience is called repentance, with respect to our former state and condition, though really it has regard to what is to come. The very requisition of repentance is also an enactment of obedience, before which disobedience and transgression preceded, and it does virtually signify that he to whom repentance is prescribed was before a sinner. This is intimated by those various expressions and phrases by which it is denoted, or in which is most certainly implied a true and genuine repentance. Thus, when St. Paul reproved certain persons for an attempt at idolatry, he remarked, 'we preach to you that ye should turn from these vanities to the living God.' Here repentance is evidently involved in the conversion of the soul. Again, it is also involved in the renovation of that soul,

[1] Watson and Limborch.

in its new creation and regeneration. And my friend—the same apostle says God 'sent him to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living God, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me.' And 'nevertheless,' says he, 'when it shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away.' 'And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of the Lord.' 'And be renewed,' saith he, 'in the spirit of your mind,' 'by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' In all these expressions it is most manifest that a genuine repentance is involved according to the universal evidence of the Sacred Writings.

Apollos.—I presume that this is the case with all those texts that inculcate the doctrine of a change.

Aquila.—It evidently is. Thus, 'if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are done away, behold all things are become new,' 'for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,' 'ye must be born again.' And indeed all those expressions about 'putting off the old man, and putting on the new,' the 'awaking from sleep and rising from the dead,' include in them repentance as a preparatory means.[1]

Apollos.—It would seem then that this relation to our former state and condition, God was pleased to have included in the stipulation of our duty under the new covenant.[2]

Aquila.—It is so for several reasons. The most important are that the grace of God under the new covenant, might constantly be in our view, since we were unworthy to be called to the participation of those divine benefits; because he who has transgressed the divine law, does not deserve any new favour, and this whole vocation is unmerited. And further that it might appear that our obedience by any efficacy of its own, deserves not the reward of eternal life, but is wholly owing to the divine grace. And besides that thereby might be intimated, that a man ought to press on to the mark of his high calling, fixing on no degree of piety short of a new creation, and a full preparation for eternal life. It is therefore very plainly to be seen, why so much is generally connected with repentance, in the Scriptures, the new covenant particularly, and the reason why it is generally united with a reformation of life and manners, and indeed sometimes put for that reformation itself. Hereafter we shall have occasion to explain it more particularly, at this time, we would only say, that in view of its implying that previous light and instruction, that convinces of sin, that deep conviction of guilt that produces extreme anguish of soul, that frank and honest confession of sin, produced by a sense of our danger, joined with the determination to forsake all transgression, and the practice of that purpose; and lastly, because true repentance terminates in a sound conversion, or the justification of the soul, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, so much value is attached to it in the holy Scriptures.

Apollos.—But while the obedience of the gospel is represented as involved to a good degree in the bare command of repentance, it is also spoken of under the denomination of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—There are also, my friend—several reasons why christian obedience is called faith. The most important, necessary to be noticed at this time, are these. *Faith,* as an instrument is the cause and source of all good works, and consequently of our whole obedience to God, as our Lord and master.[3]

Apollos.—Here then it is a metonomy, of the antecedent for the consequent, or rather the cause for the effect.

Aquila.—It is even so, and again, hereby that the easiness of the condition

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Fletcher.

required, on the part of the Deity for salvation, might be expressed; since it is easy to believe that, to which faith has a more immediate regard and from whence piety itself proceeds.[1]

Apollos.—What do you mean by this?

Aquila.—Simply that a man in a firm reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ, not only obtains the pardon of his sins, but that confidence by which he anticipates a resurrection from death itself, and a possession in heaven, there to enjoy eternal happiness in the fruition of all that is good.

Apollos.—The word faith, then, does not imply that there is equal ability, for the like performance of every duty in all, but only so much as a certain expectation of the divine promises, in an humble reliance upon Christ, does produce in us. Sometimes it is weak as a grain of mustard seed, and then again it is strong and vigorous, according to the action of truth and grace on the mind and heart; that hereby we may also understand, that the obedience to any divine precept does not of itself merit justification, for faith includes the grace by the strength of which this is obtained.[2] How is this?

Aquila.—It supposes that the revelation and vocation of God granted by his mere grace to man, before he could perform any obedience at all, and because the works proceeding from faith in his ability and willingness to aid us, are not so much our works, as those of the grace of God in us: for God works them in us by the greatness of his promises and the power of the Holy Ghost.[3]

Apollos.—Then faith may be considered always as the eye of the soul, which is turned toward the Almighty, as the fountain of our salvation, who is owned by faith to be such.

Aquila.—Yes—and toward our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose offering and atonement for sin, we have the way opened up to eternal life and joy at God's right hand.

Apollos.—I now see why our Lord commanded his disciples to go forth and preach, 'saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' and why they did preach that doctrine, pressing it as of vital importance upon their hearers, saying, 'repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Repentance is that deep anguish, by which a sinner's heart is prepared to throw itself on the Lord Jesus, as the only help and deliverer from sin, and when the soul does thus venture and believe, it is pardoned, changed, and blessed with the comforts of God's love. Repentance and faith are at the very commencement of the christian course, and the latter, is to be interwoven in all our operations. They are not only pressed upon us, as of vital importance, but at the same time as the sum of obedience itself, because they bring into action all other duties.

Aquila.—It is so, for there can be no obedience to the gospel of Christ, which is unconnected with a genuine and a sincere repentance, and a lively and an evangelical faith. Hence it is said, 'except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish,' and 'he that believeth shall be saved,' but 'he that believeth not shall be damned.'

Priscilla.—You know, Apollos—there can be no gospel obedience, that is not predicated on, at least a degree of faith in Christ Jesus. And when a man is pardoned through it, as an instrument, and does become a believer indeed, not an historical but an evangelical believer, he proves to all around, by his works, his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—These are the two great precepts then of the blessed gospel, that involve so much, indeed I may say all the rest. Hereafter, as I have already

[1] Fletcher. [2] Fletcher and Limborch. [3] Wesley and Fletcher.

suggested, we will discuss the true nature of repentance and evangelical faith; but now, when just entering on the duties enjoined in the gospel, it is proper to inform you, that much, as we shall see in the sequel, appertains to these two gospel precepts—repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

COLLOQUY IV.

CHRISTIAN DUTIES—AND FIRST OF KNOWLEDGE, ONE OF THE INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES.

Apollos.—You have placed before me, my friend Aquila—the general precepts of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, viz: repentance and faith. These are the points at which a man starts upon his christian course, but there are many other duties that are connected with them, which are enjoined in the word of God, are there not?

Aquila.—There surely are many, but you may bear in mind, that the particular virtues, wherein the duty of a christian consists, may be reduced to two general heads—some belong to the mind or understanding, others to the will and manners. The former are as it were the eyes of the soul, by which the latter should be guided and directed.[1]

Apollos.—What are the intellectual virtues?

Aquila.—They are particular excellencies or qualities of the understanding or mind, and are named knowledge and wisdom; which two words are often taken in Scripture one for the other, though they are very distinct, as will be seen from the consideration of the same.[2]

Apollos.—What is meant by knowledge?

Aquila.—Science or knowledge is that intellectual virtue or excellence, by which we have a right apprehension, of those things that are necessary to salvation.

Apollos.—Things necessary then to our salvation are therefore the object of this knowledge.

Aquila.—They are, and the Scriptures use a variety of expressions in exhibiting them to us. Thus St. Paul prays for the Ephesians, that he might give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. I write unto you fathers and little children, saith St. John, because that 'ye have known him,' and hereby 'do we know him if we keep his commandments.' 'He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' St. Peter saith, 'If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'For if,' says he, 'after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. 'But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' says the same apostle, and St. Paul says, 'ye have not so learned Christ.' These and similar expressions are used in various parts of Sacred Writ to set before us, the things necessary to salvation, and which are the true and legitimate objects of christian knowledge. But that we may comprehend all these under one head, we say that the objects of true Scriptural knowledge, are those things that relate to eternal salvation, and such are either absolutely necessary to it on the one hand, or on the other such as are conducive thereto.[3]

Apollos.—Which do you call absolutely necessary to salvation?

Aquila.—I call those absolutely necessary, without the knowledge of which, we can neither perform the duty required of us, nor attain to everlasting salva-

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Clarke and Watson.

tion, of which nature are the mysteries of faith to be believed, as the foundation of our religious worship, the precepts to be observed, and the promises to be expected by us.[1]

Apollos.—And what do you mean by the things conducive to salvation, as an object of this knowledge?

Aquila.—These are such as are not of themselves necessary to be known, but when known are of great use for strengthening our faith, and promoting the practice of piety.

Apollos.—What, my friend—are the attributes of this knowledge?

Aquila.—The qualifications or attributes of this knowledge, as described in the Scriptures, are these two—first, that it is spiritual, as owing its origin to the divine Spirit; that it is employed about spiritual things, and renders a man truly spiritual by conquering all carnal lusts and affections. Thus says St. Paul, 'for this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.' 'Howbeit we speak wisdom amongst them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.' And there is also another thing that is in it, a very conspicuous attribute. It is, that it be from above, that is from heaven, descending from God, the Father of lights, that it be employed in heavenly things, and it consequently informs of the manner of leading a heavenly life: it is, moreover, opposed to that knowledge which is earthly, sensual, and devilish.[2]

Apollos.—Tell me, does the knowledge of things necessary to salvation, admit of distinctions?

Aquila.—It does admit of several, for there is but an imperfect knowledge when a man has only some notices of the rudiments of the christian religion, as absolutely necessary to our salvation; or what he does know he knows only imperfectly, without any distinct or accurate perception, or a full persuasion of the solidity thereof: but there is also a more perfect and exact knowledge, when we apprehend and are thoroughly persuaded of those things that tend to the further explanation of what is necessary, and to a more assured belief, if I may so speak of the same.[3]

Apollos.—Is there not a division of knowledge into theoretical and practical?

Aquila.—There is. Knowledge is said to be theoretical, when it tends only to the perfection of the mind, without any regard had to the reformation of manners: this is therefore represented in the Sacred Writings as an ineffectual knowledge. Thus says an apostle, 'And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' 'And some,' says the same apostle, 'hold the truth in unrighteousness.' Our Lord also represents a servant as knowing 'his Lord's will but as not doing that will.' And says St. James, 'To him that knoweth to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.' All this, my friend—is theory only, and it is evident that it is essentially different from a practical or experimental knowledge.[4]

Apollos.—What then is practical knowledge?

Aquila.—Effectual or practical knowledge, as it is called, may be defined as theory so deeply rooted in the mind as to produce an obedience to the divine commands. In this sense are we to understand the words of our Saviour, 'This is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.' For the mere knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, as

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke and Limborch [3] Ibid. [4] Clarke.

having an existence, is not, without a deep spiritual worship of both, sufficient to salvation.[1] To this remark of the Saviour may be also added the parallel texts. 'And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.' And 'whosoever sinneth hath not seen him neither known him.' 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.' For the want of this attainment in practice, St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.' And to the Hebrews, 'Seeing ye are dull of hearing, for when for the time ye ought to be teachers ye have need that one teach you again, which be the principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat, for every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe,' &c.

Apollos.—It would then follow, that a theoretical or ineffectual knowledge, as it is called, is a science that is confused, a general and superficial knowledge, such as does not reach the heart and incline it to obedience.

Aquila.—Yes—and hence it is that we see some men of great science, but of little conscience; who know exactly a great many things but never practise them. As they are not themselves fully persuaded of the divine promises, they are fastened down to this earth and the enjoyments of the same: but on the contrary where there exists a practical knowledge, it being distinct and solid, it becomes effectual, so that the man not only has a clear apprehension of religious truth, especially the precepts and promises of God, with the foundations on which they are grounded, but also embraces this truth as necessary to salvation, at least makes no question as to its certainty, and upon it rests his hopes of heaven.[2]

Apollos.—But what are the signs of that knowledge which you would term ineffectual? How may a man ascertain whether he has a solid and perfect knowledge of the divine precepts and promises?

Aquila.—This is easily done. Let him examine his own life, and the love that he bears on the one hand to sin: and on the other, in an especial manner, his love to those precepts and promises. Thus he will be enabled to form a correct decision on his own state. Those who are but superficially acquainted with these things, according to the quotations made just now, are compared to children, whilst those who experience them in their blessed fulness are represented as men grown up to a full stature.[3]

Apollos.—A love therefore of things less worthy, whilst the more worthy are neglected, and an aversion to things profitable though ungrateful, argues that we are children in knowledge, and like them, idle and careless in our mode of living.

Aquila.—It is so. They dislike the chastisements of parents, though it be beneficial. This want of resignation and conformity to the divine will, proves us to be too often babes in knowledge. They are afraid of the cross, they dread the adversities of this life, and consider them hurtful, whereas they are really beneficial, in that they wean us from the love of the things of this life, and raise our affections to things above. Children you know are fond of trifles, often do they prefer a toy to the most precious jewel, whilst adult persons, throw aside as of no value the toy and prefer the jewel: Thus it is a sign of an imperfect knowledge at least: indeed we are but infants in that knowledge, when we prefer riches and the pleasures of this life to those which are to be enjoyed in that which is to

[1] Clarke. [2] Wesley and Clarke. [3] Ibid.

come. So that it is a strong token of a more perfect knowledge to despise, and cheerfully to part with them, for the sake of God and religion.[1] When children lose a father or mother, and by that loss are placed in a dependant condition, they are often unaffected and insensible, but are incommoded, cry out, and become troubled at the loss of a trifle: and for men to be troubled with the deprivation of worldly enjoyments and pleasures, and not concerned about the more substantial interests of their souls, argues great ignorance of our own danger, and God's infinite and eternal purity. Often are we frightened at the cross and its attendant persecutions, as children alarmed at a phantom, which cannot hurt, while the most dangerous instruments are used with carelessness. Thus in the imperfection of our knowledge, we look at the difficulties as some deadly thing. We do not consider that eternal salvation and life, are of more value than all earthly good, and that the gain of God's service is never to be brought into competition, with the few difficulties encountered in that service. We too often are alarmed at the oppositions with which we shall meet, if we start for everlasting life, but never consider while involved in all the labyrinths of sin, that we are handling the most deadly and effectual poison of the soul.

Apollos.—But suppose that a man, shall upon an examination feel that he has not this knowledge of salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ. Are there not means, which may be used for its attainment?

Aquila.—Surely there are, and these means, if properly used, will certainly terminate in the attainment of that knowledge, which is unto salvation. The first and the most important work in which we must be engaged, for its accomplishment, my friend—is the attentive perusal of the word of God. A frequent and diligent use of the Scriptures, which fully and perfectly contain in them, all things necessary and conducive to salvation; and by the study of which, a man may be fully instructed in all the duties of a christian. Hearing this word preached and expounded by the ministers of the Lord Jesus, whose lives and zeal correspond with their professions. Religious intercourse with those who are piously disposed, and who are pious, especially with those who have the knowledge that is both theoretical and practical. Great, my friend—are the advantages resulting from the conversations and the experience of the pious, in classes, love feasts, religious conversations, where we may acquire a correct knowledge of our privileges, by hearing the christian experience of others. To these must be added prayer; ardent, private, constant prayer to Almighty God, that he may give to us, according to his good pleasure, the knowledge of what does not appear so plain and distinct to us in his revealed will. There should also be a docible or teachable mind, united with that humility, which becomes our dependant condition.[2]

Apollos.—A man should never be puffed up with any vain-glorious thoughts of self and his own wisdom, throwing all these aside he should give up himself absolutely to be taught by the Deity, and to be instructed in his obligations and duties. I know we cannot advance prosperously without his help.

Aquila.—There is one thing more, there must be a right improvement of the knowledge already granted us, by our heavenly Father. We must advance and amend in proportion to the talents bestowed, so that by our proficiency the divine glory may be promoted. For 'to him that hath,' i. e. makes a right use of what he hath, 'more shall be given, but to him that hath not,' i. e. who does not make a right use of what he hath 'from him shall be taken that which he hath.'[3]

Apollos.—How vast how important is this knowledge! How simple the means of acquiring, if we are disposed to obtain it!

[1] Wesley, Fletcher, and Clarke. [2] Saurin and Watson. [3] Wesley and Clarke.

Aquila.—And how important and powerful are the reasons which should induce us to seek after it my friend.

Apollos.—What are they, do name them if you please?

Aquila.—There are various reasons which should excite men to seek this divine knowledge. A few of the most important among them, may be named. There is the excellency of it, as being the eye of the understanding, by which the soul is directed, to walk without hesitation or stumbling, and without which it would be in darkness, and in danger of falling continually. Another reason is that we are called and invited to it, that we may have and enjoy the light. Christianity is represented as the light, and those in the possession of it are not in darkness but in the light, and are said to be 'light in the Lord.' In this is a very important reason why we should seek, and never rest until we obtain it. Besides it is a qualification requisite for all who would know God, from the least or most obscure, to the greatest or most eminent, none can be in covenant as the adopted children of him, but those who do know him as we have said experimentally, in the pardon of sin and the justification of the soul. Moreover this spiritual knowledge brings along with it a spiritual pleasure, a delight of the mind, and a comfort and a happiness of the soul, that is intimately connected with its very perfection. While they who despise this knowledge, are compared to the very beasts who perish; and the contempt and neglect of it, is the cause of condemnation, and the deprivation of it, is most certainly one of the greatest of miseries.[1]

Apollos.—Well then did a man, deeply skilled in divine things say 'let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the rich man in his riches, nor the mighty man in his might; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he knoweth the Lord.'

Aquila.—There are two things opposite to knowledge. The first is represented as in the excess, and the other as in the defect of it.[2]

Apollos.—What is meant by these?

Aquila.—In the excess, as it is called, curiosity is justly to be blamed, when a man neglects what is beneficial and clearly revealed by the Deity, but inquires into such things as are useless and obscure, which the Almighty would have to be concealed from us.

Apollos.—Some curiosity is certainly admissible, in what does that consist, of which you disapprove, and why do you oppose it?

Aquila.—On account of the following particulars. When we covet to know what God has not condescended to reveal to us: when we inquire into those things that do not concern us: when neglecting things necessary, we lay the whole, or at least the greatest stress, upon seeking into such things as are less useful: when we do not acquiesce in the will of God, but are for inquiring into the reasons and causes thereof, and confidently determine what are the causes and ends of the divine judgments, which are sometimes exercised in this world.[3]

Apollos.—O I see that this is like pretending to be in the councils of heaven. It is to make ourselves judges of the sincerity or hypocrisy of other men's actions and hearts, and to pass sentence upon secret and hidden things. This is certainly wrong.

Aquila.—Yes—and this is often done as if we could see and understand clearly, that which the Deity has ever hid from man. The opposite to knowledge in point of defect, as it is called, is ignorance, viz: of the things requisite to salvation; whether absolutely necessary or only conducive thereto. This is usually distinguished into what is called simple ignorance, and the ignorance of a depraved disposition.[4]

Apollos.—What do you understand by these?

[1] Watson and Limborch. [2] Ibid [3] Limborch. [4] Watson and Limborch.

Aquila.—The former is when a man is ignorant barely of saving truth, occasioned either by the want of a due revelation, as is the case of the heathen, who have not heard of Christ; or through the defect of the understanding, as is the case with children and idiots; that is, those of non compos mentis The latter kind of ignorance named above, is that which embraces error instead of truth, and is either in infidels who believe idols to be the true God, and reject the gospel when announced to them, or in those persons notoriously in error, who do not apprehend the meaning of the Scripture, though of the highest moment to their everlasting salvation; or in those apostates, who turning from the faith embrace their former infidelity. Again, my friend—this ignorance is either affected or unaffected. By the first, is meant that which proceeds from man's own fault, either in a wilful affectation of ignorance, or in what is the same thing, the neglecting the means of acquiring knowledge, that more securely, and with less remorse of conscience, he may give loose to his extravagant lusts.[1] That which is unaffected, though it be not altogether without a man's fault, is not so heinous and wicked as the other. The reason is that it proceeds not from a wicked mind and a malicious disposition; but from mere negligence in not using all that care, which a man desirous of everlasting life could and ought to use, in order to be delivered from this state of darkness and ignorance, in regard to his spiritual and eternal happiness.

Apollos.—O how diligently ought every man to search his own heart.

Aquila.—He ought, and it is possible if it were done by all, all would find out that the darkness of the world is attributable to its own neglect, of a most important and delightful duty. At our next interview, I propose to consider a subject directly connected with this. Good night.

COLLOQUY V.

THE TRUE NATURE AND VALUE OF THAT WISDOM OR PRUDENCE, WHICH, AS ONE OF THE INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES, IS INVOLVED IN THE CHARACTER AND COURSE OF EVERY GOOD MAN.

Apollos.—You observed when we were about to part last evening, my friend—that at our next interview you would take up a subject intimately connected with the one last discussed. Pray! tell me what subject is it?

Aquila.—One that is often named in Scripture, and which also is often taken for knowledge, of which we conversed at our last meeting. I mean wisdom or prudence, one of the intellectual virtues of the good man, by the aid of which he is enabled wisely to conduct himself, and honour and glorify him who called us to endless life.

Apollos.—What is the meaning, or rather what would you define this virtue to be?

Aquila.—Wisdom or prudence is that intellectual virtue, by which a man having proposed a good end to be prosecuted, may truly find out for himself and others the proper means tending to that end; and upon observing the circumstances of times, places, and persons, may apply them for the attainment of the best end.[2]

Apollos.—What are its requisites?

Aquila.—The very first is to propose a virtuous end to itself: for if that be vicious, the means tending thereto cannot be proved to be virtuous. Now these ends are either general, viz. the glory of God and the good of our own souls, and

[1] Watson and Limborch. [2] Clarke and Watson.

the everlasting salvation of our fellow men, or they are particular, which are various, all included under the general and ultimate end, and conducive thereto, either naturally or accidentally. There is also another thing necessary.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—That a choice be made of the proper means for the attainment of that end, and several things are here also required. They must be virtuous, for we usually judge of the nature of an end by the means; and if these be vicious so also is the design of the agent supposed to be. They must also be adopted to the sustaining of that end which it is the proper business of wisdom or prudence to take care of.

Apollos.—Surely it is so, for a good man will pitch upon no means but those that are virtuous.

Aquila.—And a wise man must select none, but those that are best suited for obtaining the end. And there is here also another very important point to be observed. A wise man carefully makes use of the means made choice of, being ever on his guard to omit nothing that is profitable to be done, nor commit or do any action that is incompatible with his duty as a man, and as one that would be a christian in deed and in truth.[1] 'See then,' says St. Paul, 'that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.'

Apollos.—A man then should direct all his actions to the best end: when after mature and deliberate consideration he has once fixed on it, he should lay aside every thing that would come in opposition.

Aquila.—Most certainly, seeking the attainment of this and this alone.

Apollos.—Are there no distinctions or divisions of this intellectual virtue, my friend?

Aquila.—There are. This wisdom, or prudence as it is properly called, is divided by some into religious and civil. The former is that which properly belongs to our work, the business in which we are now engaged, and which we are to investigate, although it may well consist also with the latter.

Apollos.—What am I to understand by religious prudence?

Aquila.—It is that which teaches a man to make choice of the means proper for attaining everlasting salvation, and that manner in which he ought to demean himself as a man engaged in the vast business of a religious life.

Apollos.—Then it must have some particular offices?

Aquila.—It has, and these offices of prudence are various. There belongs among others to it, duly to ascertain and weigh the value of every thing, and upon the discovery, to bestow our highest love and esteem on things most excellent, but a less or greater degree of love upon the rest, according as they have more or less relation to the former.[2]

Apollos.—Since then eternal salvation and the enjoyments of future life are incomparably beyond those of this, it would seem to be the part of prudence to propose to itself eternal life as the sole and chief end, and if it cannot be otherwise obtained, to part with all the enjoyments, and suffer all the miseries of this life for its sake.

Aquila.—If this were required in the providence of God, it should be done most cheerfully, and wisdom or prudence would dictate it. Viewing it in connection with christianity, it would suggest that the good man ought diligently to survey all the dangers that threaten his salvation, and as far as possible decline them, lest being overpowered he fall short of his proposed end.[3] Such a circumspection and watchfulness as this, is almost every where in Scripture recommended to us, and is of infinite necessity, considering the subtlety, policy, and diligence, as well as force and strength of our three spiritual enemies.[4]

[1] Limborch. [2] Mon. Saurin. [3] Limborch. [4] Clarke.

Apollos.—You mean the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Aquila.—Yes—I do! and called in the divine providence to be exposed in a manner more than ordinary, to any one or all of those dangers, we must arm ourselves with the entire spiritual armour of the gospel, in time against them, that we may be able to resist these powerful enemies of our souls.[1]

Apollos.—I remember St. Paul thus advises his Ephesian brethren. 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.'

Aquila.—And since the devil is always active in opposing our happiness, we ought therefore at all times to have our spiritual weapons in readiness, whereby we may be able to withstand his assaults, especially when the hour of temptation approaches; lest, being unprovided against his attacks, we be defeated in our spiritual warfare, and miss of everlasting salvation, the great end that true wisdom proposes.[2]

Apollos.—And ought we not to take care of the salvation of our neighbour as as well as of our own?

Aquila.—To be sure we ought; but as in this duty we have to do with other men, and therefore some inconvenience may befal us, on account of the variety of tempers with which we have to deal, there must necessarily arise another act of prudence.

Apollos.—What is that, my friend?

Aquila.—It is this, that when we undertake any thing relating to our own or the salvation of other men, and our own temporal good or detriment is concerned, even then we omit no part of our duty, nor neglect our neighbours' welfare; yet at the same time that we take care to avoid the inconvenience, so far as is consistent with the discharge of our duty.[3]

Apollos.—When then does this prudential rule chiefly take place?

Aquila.—When for professing or propagating the truth of christianity, we are in danger of loosing our estates, credit, or lives: or when some ungrateful truth must be told our neighbour, and his vices plainly reproved, and for which office we must sometimes at least expect his displeasure. And here also is another act of it under this very last head of duty, my friend—I mean that we very nicely consult our neighbours' advantage, and frame our actions after such a manner as may be most likely to do him the greatest good.

Apollos.—Give me, if you please, an illustration of this part of man's duty.

Aquila.—I will. For instance, we must inform the ignorant of the truth and weight of the christian doctrine, and convince them with strong and solid arguments, and above all, have a more particular regard for those who are purely ignorant of the truth, than to those who have an utter aversion to it, rejecting it in the malicious enmity and rebellion of their hearts.[4]

Apollos.—As the Saviour says, 'We are not to cast pearls before swine lest they turn again and rend' us; nor 'to give that which is holy unto dogs.'

Aquila.—But even then we are, without respect to these despisers of the truth, not to look upon them as desperate, and give over all care for their souls; but such methods ought to be used, and such convenient opportunities to be laid hold on, as may be proper to incline them by degrees to hearken to the truth, and to win them step by step, till at last they come to obey the saving truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.[5]

Apollos.—And do you think, my friend—that this is possible, I would rather say practicable?

Aquila.—Certainly I do. Does it not appear plainly from the example of those publicans and harlots, notorious sinners, sinners emphatically so called with

[1] Clarke. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

respect to others, who believed in the preaching of God's servants, while the Pharisees, a more righteous sect than their neighbours, rejected him and his doctrine? And there is a great deal of prudence to be exercised, my friend—by the pious christians, who own, embrace, and profess the truth of christianity, but whose lives are not conformable thereto, these are to be reclaimed, and as it were, snatched from the flames of destruction by earnest and serious admonitions.

Apollos.—I should suppose that in this, great prudence and discretion are required.

Aquila.—Certainly, if in nothing else, in giving every admonition in its proper time, and the tempering our reproofs in such a way as may be most likely to work upon the hearts and the lives of those whom we advise or reprove. Indeed, my brother—in all the cases named, whether we would inform the ignorant, convince the obstinate, or reclaim the sinner from the error of his ways, special care is to be taken that we, by our example, give them a full demonstration of our being perfectly convinced of the truths that we would inculcate on them.

Apollos.—This is most manifest, for if our lives do not correspond with what we profess to believe, and if our conversation and demeanour is incompatible with our belief, and unsuited to the same, we can never successfully press those things on others which we do not practise ourselves.

Aquila.—We need never expect success from the instructions, admonitions, and reproofs that we give, under such circumstances; indeed we shall be like the man that beats the air or talks to the wind.

Apollos.—I perceive, my dear friend—that this is a virtue that is not easily obtained. Do, if you please, point out the means by which it may be acquired.

Aquila.—The means of attaining what we have called prudence or wisdom, are various. It has been supposed by some, and is true perhaps, that goodness of nature is a step toward it, but as that is not equal in all, and since the very best nature or temper is not in itself sufficient to attain it, and the most unhappy temper may, by the application of the proper means, arrive at it, we must therefore use those, and those chiefly, which are derived from the divine assistance, that must and ought to be carefully sought after.

Apollos.—Tell me the chief of these, if you please, for I am sure that I shall never get on, and do as I ought to do until more prudent. I do not, my friend—mean politic, I mean prudent; christian prudence is a rare virtue. I must, I will try to obtain it.

Aquila.—Well my friend—from all the observations that I have made, it seems to me, that this virtue is to be sought first by earnest and most ardent prayer to Almighty God. You remember the favourite text I so often quote.

Apollos.—I do, 'if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not.'

Aquila.—I will mention again that the Scriptures must be read diligently and closely, for they are designed to enlighten and instruct the mind and deeply impress the heart of man. These 'make wise the simple,' these are able to 'make us wise unto salvation,' and 'make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.' You must, however, mind one thing, my brother—care must be taken to apply what we read to ourselves, this being properly the wise and prudent man's part, who would convert all to his own use, and reap a benefit from every page he reads.

Apollos.—Indeed I have noticed that, for he who reads without applying it to himself, fills his head with notions, whilst his heart is empty, and his soul in a starving condition.[1]

[1] Clarke, Watson, and Limborch.

Aquila.—There is another point, we must lay aside our own wisdom, and seek for that alone which comes from God.

Apollos.—It has been said that the perusal of history and especially biography, are beneficial, in that they place before us the vicissitudes that have happened in human councils and affairs.[1]

Aquila.—These may be rendered subservient, it is possible, to some good end, especially the history and biography of the Bible, but you may notice both in yourself and on others, the divine operations; you may consider the judgments of God upon ungodly men, and being cautioned by their example, we must beware of falling into the same calamities with them.

Apollos.—Well now—I want the motives. You know, that it is desirable to have all that regards every truth or principle in the christian system; that I may behold it in all its bearings.

Aquila.—Surely we ought to be excited to this virtue, not only by the excellency thereof, which in some degree resembles the divine Providence, in making choice of such means, as are proper for the acquisition of the best end; but also by the immense usefulness of the same, since it teaches us to avoid what is hurtful, and indeed to be wise, my brother—at another's experience and cost: and especially as it brings forth such fruits, as of themselves tend to life and salvation. You remember the description given by Solomon at large of it.[2]

Apollos.—What is this my friend?

Aquila.—'When wisdom,' saith that great man, 'entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.' 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding, for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.'

Apollos.—O! these are immense motives.

Aquila.—Indeed, they are high as heaven itself, and all the glorious consequences of seeking it, should ever my friend—be before us.

Apollos.—I am convinced of this.

Aquila.—The two extremes, as they are called, lie as I said of knowledge, in the excess or defect thereof, though upon the strict view of the same, it will be found that both are defective, and may be comprehended under the general title of imprudence and folly. The extreme therefore in excess is craftiness or cunning, when a man proposes to himself a bad end, but pursues it with proper means. This is called carnal wisdom, and regards only the conveniences and profits of this world, and rather than not attain them, the man postpones his concern for his chief good or eternal happiness, and the means which conduce thereto.

Apollos.—Then this must be the case of all those, who propose to themselves either riches or pleasures, or any other worldly enjoyment as their main end.

Aquila.—And it is most evident that all this is mere folly, because it neglects the best and ultimate end of man, and pursues that which tends to destruction.

Apollos.—Surely such men are not anxious for a destructive end?

Aquila.—No! indeed, not considered as such, for no man can be supposed so foolish, as to propose eternal death and misery as the scope of all his actions. But as it is gratifying and pleasing to enjoy the pleasures of sin, they have no greater knowledge, or at least, not a just esteem for any higher good.

Apollos.—Then the folly of wicked men must consist in this very thing.

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke and Watson.

Aquila.—It surely does, as might be made evident by all the instances of those, who court and hunt after the pleasures, the riches or honours of the world.

Apollos.—But it does appear to me that there is something of cunning in the actions of such men, because they can designate and select the means proper for the attainment of the end proposed, however diabolical it may be.

Aquila.—This is not all my friend—they can use fraud and tricks, whereby to circumvent and impose upon the pious and sincere man; and the more skill they have, the greater mischief can they do.

Apollos.—This is not the worst of all; for you know that such men, by their outward acts, put on the semblance of religion, and thereby insinuate themselves into the affections of the simple and superstitious, and enrich themselves with their gifts and presents, if they do not by downright deception and fraud.

Aquila.—This is often the case, and such in the word of God are said to make 'gain' their 'godliness,' to 'enter into widows houses, leading captive silly women, laden with sins,' like the Scribes and Pharisees of old 'who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers.' All this is craftiness, or as it is called an extreme, or the excess of prudence or wisdom, of which we speak as worldly and vain.[1]

Apollos.—Well—do tell me what is the other extreme?

Aquila.—The other extreme is folly, which neither proposes to itself a due end, nor knows how to use the proper means for attaining that which is proposed, nor even to ward off what is prejudicial to itself.[2]

Apollos.—Does not this sort of imprudence branch itself out into many particulars?

Aquila.—It does, and this is most manifest when a man has not the right knowledge of the means tending to the best end: In which condition are the superstitious, who lay a greater stress on the observance of outward ceremonies and rites, than on the intrinsical parts of religion, the soundness of faith and holiness of life: and thus it is when a man knows his duty, but does it not, and so misses his chief good. Such an one our Lord compares to a foolish man, who built his house upon a sandy foundation, which fell with the first storm that beat upon it. So also when a man not duly considering the inconstancy of earthly enjoyments, relies upon them, as if they were certain and lasting, as did the foolish rich man in the gospel. The former, built his house upon the sand, and only in his folly calculated for prosperous times, the latter considered his foundation so sure, as to be immovable, and called upon his soul to take its ease, in the possession of what he supposed to be permanent delight. So my friend—when a man knows not how to avoid the inconveniences and dangers which threaten him, but runs headlong into them: It is folly in the extreme not to look forward but only to be affected with what is present, and like blind men to fall down those immense steeps, which they might have shunned had they duly and properly respected their dependence.[3] Thus we have passed through what are called the intellectual virtues, and shall next proceed to consider those that are entitled the virtues of the will.

Apollos.—Let me see, my friend—if I fully understand this subject. The wisdom of which you speak is sometimes put for prudence and discretion, because it enables a man to perceive what is fit to be done, according to the circumstances of time, place, persons, manners, and the end of doing a thing.[4]

Aquila.—Yes—it was this sort of wisdom that Solomon entreated the Lord to bestow on him, and for which he sought with so much earnestness, and which God granted him with such divine liberality.

Apollos.—It therefore implies all that quickness of invention, and dexterity in

[1] Clarke. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch. [4] Watson.

the execution of the several works, which require not so much strength of body as industry and labour of mind.

Aquila.—This is so, for you remember, doubtless, my friend—how the Lord informed Moses that he had filled the two Hebrew artists with wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, to invent and perform several kinds of work for completing the tabernacle.[1]

Apollos.—Did you not say that, as a term, it is used sometimes for craftiness, cunning, and stratagem?

Aquila.—This is the case, for it is said that Pharoah dealt *wisely*, that is cunningly and artfully, with the Israelites, whom he opposed in Egypt. So, it is said, of Jonadab, the friend of Ammon, and nephew of David, that he was 'very wise,' that is very subtle and crafty, and the Scriptures say that 'God taketh the wise,' i. e. the cunning and prudent, 'in their own craftiness.'

Apollos.—You have suggested that it is used sometimes for doctrine or learning, and experience.

Aquila.—One says, 'with the ancients is wisdom, and in length of days understanding,' and I have also named that it is put sometimes for true piety, or the fear of God, which is spiritual wisdom: for it is said, 'so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom;' and 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

Apollos.—The extremes of this are the height of folly.

Aquila.—They are, for you must bear in mind what I remarked once before, that knowledge and wisdom, or prudence, are sometimes put for each other. The former is the proper apprehension of those things necessary to our salvation, the latter acknowledges that salvation is the best end a man can propose to himself. It therefore prudently selects the surest and safest means for the accomplishment of our salvation, the best end that immortal man can aspire unto. Thus it will be proper to remember that these two must run all through our christian course. The good man, properly exercised, discerns the best end, and prudently and wisely selects the means by which he may secure that end.

Apollos.—These two virtues of the mind or understanding, then should always go together.

Aquila.—I remarked that they were our eyes in spiritual things. They must be ever in exercise, and it must be borne in mind that every good man is indeed a wise man. You see his course. One eye of the mind is that by which he sees and is impressed with the obligations of duty to himself, his God, and his neighbour; the other is that by which he prudently and wisely selects that course by which he may discharge with punctuality and fidelity these his duties, and secure to himself, and as far as possible to others, an eternity of blessedness, the very best end that man can obtain.

Apollos.—And this too by the most appropriate means.

Priscilla.—Now I see why wisdom and knowledge are so often and so highly spoken of in the word of God. They are interwoven in every religious action, because they point out the means, and expose to view the end, after which every christian pursues.

Aquila.—By knowledge, the effect of grace, we see our state and the necessity of repentance, faith, and obedience, as the only means of endless life, and wisdom or prudence says we must perseveringly seek after it.

[1] Watson.

COLLOQUY VI.

A SCRIPTURAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE VARIOUS PARTS OF A HOLY LIFE—THE VIRTUES OF THE WILL—PARTICULARLY REPENTANCE.

Aquila.—We have proceeded just far enough, my friend—in the christian system, for you to see that men may have the light and understand their duty, and yet proceed no farther. How many stop just where we are. We have considered the two intellectual virtues, by which there is placed before a man his duty. God's spirit and grace, and the gospel, and his ministers, are made the instruments in imparting information on divine subjects. He sees the way that leads to heaven—he is awakened to behold his own danger. He is called upon by every consideration that is connected with his eternal interests, to select the right way, and use the proper means for his salvation. Now theory ends—now prudence selects the means—here practice commences, and the sinner must no longer be 'a hearer but a doer of the work.' Wisdom cries, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,' and at the same time tells him his dependent condition, 'for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.' Now comes in the gospel injunctions, and now is heard the voice of the Son of God, 'If any man *will* do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.'

Apollos.—Just then at this point, I suppose we are called upon to determine and shape our course accordingly for vast eternity?

Aquila.—It is even so; and now there lies before us a life of holiness and devotion to God. For next to the two intellectual virtues which have been discussed follow those of the will or manners, which comprehend holiness of life in general, and all the parts of it in particular.

Apollos.—These virtues or duties respect, I presume, either all men in general, or only some particular persons, according to the diversity of their ranks and stations in the civil society, of which we are members.

Aquila.—They do, and again those virtues which affect men are either about things necessary, wherein properly and truly holiness consists, or about things indifferent. Of the virtues or duties of the will, that relate to things necessary, some are general, and others more particular or special.

Apollos.—What are the general virtues of the will?

Aquila.—They are those that comprehend summarily the whole duty of a christian, as I once already named to you, or which the rather in our obedience cannot be dispensed with.

Apollos.—What are they, my friend?

Aquila.—Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. These will have, according to our promise, to be considered more at large, than the bare notice of them the other evening.

Apollos.—I am pleased to hear this. You have distributed the several virtues, as they are called, of the will, and of course, the duties of the christian into their several classes; I want you to give me a more particular view of them.

Aquila.—This I will do, and indeed we can proceed no farther, according to our arrangement, without doing so. It is important that we should take them up, as they would naturally arise and present themselves in christian experience. We have seen how the untaught and ungodly man, who wanders far from the Deity, though blind, is led by a way that he knew not into the light. Awakened to see and feel his obligations, he begins to inquire, 'what must I do?' By the Spirit, and the means appointed of God, he is led on, until his mind is impressed by the divine grace with the value and danger of his soul. Then he begins to pray for divine help. The more he prays the harder his heart appears to be, and in the

anxiety of his mind to save his soul, he determines to seek eternal life at all events. This is the point at which wisdom or prudence comes in. Now he selects the most appropriate means, and that willingly, of accomplishing the best end. He inquires, and on finding out that it is required of him that he should heartily repent of sin and truly believe in Jesus, he seeks to use those means by which this blessed end, his acceptance with God, may be obtained. Now he prays, and now too, the great work of repentance is commenced.

Apollos.—What is repentance?

Aquila.—Repentance, one of those virtues, as it is termed, of the will, wrought in the heart by the grace and spirit of God, is sometimes used generally for an entire change of mind and heart, and an earnest wishing that something were undone that has been done. Of this we have sundry examples in the Scriptures as will be seen in our notices of this subject. Taken in a religious sense, it signifies conviction for sin, and sorrow on account of it.

Apollos.—But this is not always the meaning of the term repentance, is it?

Aquila.—It is not, for there is a partial or worldly repentance, wherein one is grieved for and turns from his sin, merely on account of the hurt it has done, or is likely to do him: so a malefactor who still loves his sin, repents of doing it because it brings him to punishment. Again, there is an evangelical repentance, which is a godly sorrow wrought in the heart of a sinful person, by the word and spirit of God, whereby from a sense of his sin, as offensive to God, and defiling and endangering his own soul, and from the apprehension of the mercy of God, with grief and hatred of all his known sins, turns from them to God as his Saviour and Lord. This is called 'repentance toward God,' because therein we turn from sin to him, and 'repentance unto life,' as it leads to spiritual life, and is the first step to eternal life. Hence John preached saying 'repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' And St. Peter 'repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' These general remarks will show, what we are to understand as implied generally in gospel repentance.[1]

Apollos.—But my friend—before you enter on the nature of this duty fully, I want you to explain to me its various acceptations, and the several names by which it is called in the Scriptures, for you have suggested that there are different appellations of the same grace.

Aquila.—Well—we will consider these. Repentance in the Scripture is taken in a three-fold sense. First in a general and wide sense, comprehending that whole change of life, whereby a sinner is converted from a state of sin to righteousness; and forsaking the old, enters upon a new course of life, in faith and obedience to the divine commands.[2] This does appear to me to be implied in several texts where it is named. Thus, 'and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' In the text quoted just now, 'repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,' and in that other text, 'him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins;' and also says St. Paul, 'I shewed first unto them at Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Apollos.—This sense is a very wide one indeed.

Aquila.—But in a strict sense, it is used to denote that special change, by which a man upon the notice of any one sin, committed by him after his conversion, recollects himself and amends his error. Thus in the Revelations, the

[1] Watson. [2] Clarke and Limborch.

Lord says unto the church at Ephesus, 'remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly; and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.' And the entire address to the church of Sardis, closing with these words 'be zealous therefore and repent:' all prove this acceptation of the term repentance. But in a sense still more strict, it may be considered as used to signify that act of the sinner, whereby having a just sense of his sins, and a dread of the punishment due to them, he is so far changed, as to be weary of his state, grieve on account of his sins, long for deliverance, and resolve upon a new and better course of life. In this way it appears that the repentance preached by John the Baptist, and our Saviour, is to be taken: thus 'repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.' It is in this first sense as taking in the whole duty that we would explain repentance, wherein all the acts mentioned in the third signification of it are included.

Apollos.—Is the duty itself, always and only called repentance?

Aquila.—O no!—in Scripture it is expressed under various, and sometimes metaphorical names or expressions, being so used, as we have already seen, as to have included in it a genuine repentance. I mean such terms as 'conversion,' or 'renovation,' 'a new creature,' 'regeneration,' 'an eschewing evil and doing good:' all of which evidently embrace and imply repentance.

Apollos.—But these various phrases do not denote a different, but represent to us one and the same thing in a different manner, according to the various circumstances under which the case of the penitent is presented to us.

Aquila.—It is actually so; for they all agree in this, that a man must forsake his old, and enter upon a new course of life, and this, as we shall see, is the very essence of repentance.

Apollos.—Do not the two words by which repentance is generally named in the original represent to us a different meaning; μετανοια, METANOIA, and μεταμελεια, METAMELEIA: the former denoting an inward, and an actual change of the mind, while the latter represents the externals of repentance, and is only outward.

Aquila.—I believe it would be easy to evince, both from the Scriptures, and from the use of them in the writings of the fathers, that these two words are equivalent, and promiscuously used, the one for the other; but such criticisms are uncertain, and in most instances, unprofitable. Our object is experience, and we ought so to consider repentance, so that it may tell not only on our own, but the experience of others.[1] There are several things in it that must be noticed particularly.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—The nature, subjects, causes, effects, and the contraries of an evangelical or gospel repentance.

Apollos.—Well do give me an exposition first of its nature.

Aquila.—I will try, my friend—to do so, with pleasure. Repentance, with regard to its nature, appears to be that anguish and sorrow of soul which arises from a clear sense not only of the deep depravity of our nature, but of sins committed, and a vicious habit contracted by the custom of sinning, as also from the conviction of guilt and the fear of punishment, which produces not only an ardent desire for deliverance, but a serious and sincere struggle after a change of heart, and a firm determination to obey the commands of God, as revealed in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is that brokenness and contriteness of heart, which a sinner, enlightened by grace, feels on account of his lost and wretched condition, as the result of sin. In his own heart he has the sentence of death,

[1] Parkhurst and Limborch.

and thoroughly awakened, not only to see but to feel his wo, he cries out in his distress, without fear or shame, as from the 'belly of hell,' 'God! be merciful to *me* a sinner,' 'Save Lord or I perish,' 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? O! wretched man that I am,' 'O! Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me.' It is not merely a godly sorrow, for 'a godly sorrow worketh repentance.' It goes beyond this, and is that indescribable anguish of soul which the poor sinner feels, while beholding, clearly revealed before him, an angry God, the gospel and all its grace slighted: within, a polluted and guilty conscience, and before him a gaping hell.

Apollos.—From this definition it is then plain that repentance, properly so called, is preceded by a habit of sinning, and a mind, if not altogether, yet in some measure averse to virtue and enslaved by vice.

Aquila.—It is so, and it is also evident that all sorrow on account of sin, as already suggested, is not properly repentance; but that which, after a continuance in sin, is occasioned by a deep, clear, and pungent conviction of the virulence and demerit of our crimes.

Apollos.—I do not still understand exactly its nature, though my heart responds to all you have said in regard to it. You know, while a man may have an experience of a thing, he may not be able to describe it.

Aquila.—This is very true. Therefore, for the more distinct apprehension of the nature of repentance, let us notice and try to explain first its *cause*, which produces this extreme anguish or sorrow of soul, next that *sorrow* itself, and then the *effects* produced by it.

Apollos.—Well then—the cause first.

Aquila.—The cause of this sorrow, I have already suggested, is the deep conviction of our misery, and therefore this is the very first step toward repentance. In which conviction, several things appear to me to be involved. The first is a knowledge of the divine law, that rule of what is just and holy, which promises rewards and denounces punishments, according to the revealed will of God. This knowledge is imparted in different ways. It is the product evidently of the divine grace. The Spirit of God, the gospel of Christ, an evangelical ministry, the providential circumstances of human life, are all made subservient to this great end, and by one, or all of them, the poor wretched sinner, fast asleep in transgression, is awakened from his slumbers, convinced of the infinite purity of the divine law, which thunders its anathemas on his guilty soul. Now he begins to see himself, now he is convinced of sin, now for the first time his eyes are opened to see that he cannot save himself, but must perish forever without he is rescued.

Apollos.—His conscience too is awakened, is it not?

Aquila.—It is so. This conviction for sin is not a bare work of the understanding. A second thing implied in it is, that conscience, whom I would compare, previous to that period, to a slumbering lion, is now awakened, and thunders its decisions on his past conduct: while by the assistance of memory, the poor wretch is enabled to recount and examine the deeds of former years, and in this way calling to mind his ungodly actions, and applying to them the rule, the divine law, sees his numerous sins, now by the light of the Holy Spirit, exposed fully, his sins of commission, and his omissions of duty. He feels, deeply feels in his soul how vast his guilt is in consequence thereof.

Apollos.—Now he stands not only guilty in the sight of God, but self-condemned, his heart condemns him.

Aquila.—Yes—and he knows that 'God is greater than his heart, and he will also condemn him.' Now, he begins to see that he has stood 'all the day idle,' and turning his attention to his condition, he thinks it time for him to do something and he resolves to do.

Priscilla.—Ah! but how vain is this sometimes—how often do men at this

very point form resolutions in their own strength, and seek to reform their own lives, and amend their own ways. Sometimes they will determine to read, to be serious, to quit the world, and go to church, to give to the poor, and try to do good, in order to undo the evil they have done.

Aquila.—These things are all good and right in themselves, but the remark of Job is true in respect to such a man, though 'I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me. For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.' Many a man will try to repair his injury, and pay off his debt by trying to do good.

Apollos.—And is not this right, 'to cease to do evil, and learn to do well?'

Aquila.—Certainly, and I will add, that restitution must, as far as practicable, be made to every man, and every injury and breach, as far as in us lies, repaired, and every work of piety, as far as we are able, at once commenced; but my friend—there is one thing here which you have no doubt noticed, and it is another thing too implied in this conviction for sin. I mean that there is a deep conviction of our infirmity and a painful experience of our weakness. There, is the habit of sin, and the immense difficulty of a contrary practice, these receive no small addition of strength, and make a much more powerful resistance than they otherwise could or would do, by the continual opposition of the deep depravity and lusts of our nature, to the divine prohibitions. We are prone to wander from the Deity on the one hand, and on the other there is an evil heart of unbelief. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit,' 'and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.' Helpless as infancy, only enabled by grace, now to purpose that which is good, the disconsolate transgressor begins to bewail his state. Already he is convinced: already he is awakened, now he feels his danger, now he sees his condition.

Apollos.—O! I know where you are now. Then comes anguish indeed. Never shall I forget when, in the distress of my soul, I cried out, I am blind! be my sight and my guide—I am sick, O! heal me—I am lost, O! save me. As a distressed penitent, I had sorrow before, and it was, as you say, a godly sorrow, but I had, at this stage of my experience, anguish extreme. O! I cannot describe it.

Aquila.—No! you cannot, Apollos—I expect. For after such a conviction comes that deep distress, which properly constitutes the act of repentance. A man may go as far as we have just carried him, and yet not be converted to God and justified by faith. He is not constrained to go on. This is but the first step.

Priscilla.—O yes! many stop just here, there ends their sorrow, and they think that all is well, and this too passes for repentance.

Aquila.—This is so indeed, but their sorrow is, if they advance in the divine life, but just begun. This depth of distress has been called contrition; while it is the same in nature with godly sorrow, it surpasses it in degree. It is a brokenness and contriteness of heart, an anguish and distress of soul, which is generated by divine grace, in the same ratio as we yield to its heavenly and glorious operations.

Apollos.—How does it operate.

Aquila.—Grace sanctifies and uses the gospel, or its ministers, or some other instrument, as afflictions or blessings, out of that multiplicity which are in the hands of the Almighty, to place before the sinner those truths in which are beheld his real condition. Hence the sinner's sorrow, as it respects its secondary causes, may be considered as arising in these.

Apollos.—Grace then, as manifested in the gospel, and all God's dealings with man, is the prime cause, and the truths it reveals by which a deep impression is made upon the heart, are the secondary causes.

Aquila.—It is so, and then they seem to form a part of this sorrow. Thus it presents to the mind, as already shown, the deep depravity and helplessness of the soul. It shows man his heart, all foul, all polluted with sin, as 'a nest of vipers, and a cage of unclean birds,' sin, wholly and solely sin and corruption, and as a sepulchre filled with dead men's bones. Heretofore he has thought that he was clean, he now knows that he is wholly unclean. And next to this, is the consideration of the act, or rather acts committed, or duties omitted, all of which have been but the violation of God's laws, and these crimes have been perpetrated with an abhorrence for those laws. Now they stare him in the face. Sins of thought, word, and deed, are brought up by the memory, that often makes a faithful record of our offences; sins remembered, and many that have been obliterated from the mind, all of which have united to produce the habit of sinning, until our transgressions are as the sands, and as the drops of the ocean in number, they cry aloud for vengeance at the hands of God.

Priscilla.—Poor self-condemned wretch! how I felt when I had this experimental view of my own true state.

Apollos.—I remember very well, when I was just there. 'In the morning I said, O! that it were evening, and in the evening, O! that it were morning.' In my distress I cried out, 'O Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me;' and my sins seemed to pass as it were before me, numberless transgressions demanded the just judgment of Almighty God.

Aquila.—There are also the consequences of our sins. Their influence and effects, on not only ourselves, but also on others; our companions and associates, our friends, neighbours, and fellow-men. O! the influence of example. Who can tell but that at this very hour, the penitent exclaims, there are souls beyond the reach of mercy, that I have helped on to that their wretched and ruined condition. Another thing presents itself, and is an important ingredient in his cup of bitterness: the fear of that punishment which is due to sin, and which cannot be avoided without a change of heart and amendment of life. The dread and fear of death and hell are notable consequences of transgression; and indeed, the very sting of death itself is sin, and then it kills beyond the grave. The sinner trembles lest he should be damned.

Apollos.—All this accords with my own experience, I assure you, my brother.

Aquila.—To render his sorrow complete, if I may so speak, there is resting on the mind a deep sense of the immense distance that there is between God and the awakened sinner, now trying earnestly, to repent. He bears in mind that he has sinned against, and has offended a most gracious, powerful and just God, and by his offences an immense distance is placed between the Deity and him, and no salvation can be obtained until that distance is removed, and his soul adopted into the favour of the living God. Such a consideration as now enters, not only of the infinite purity, but the vast benevolence and goodness of the Deity, that while the sinner, thus enlightened, is constrained to acknowledge the matchless goodness of God, he also abhors himself for having offended a being of so much compassion the kindest and best of Fathers.

Apollos.—I remember now the language of a penitent, 'I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes.' But will not such a sorrow be manifested by the outward acts?

Aquila.—Surely it will. Such anguish of soul as is the result of a deep conviction for sin, that repentance which is an act by which the soul revolves within itself its own actions, and ponders in its own mind the wretchedness of its own case, cannot be concealed. O no! he might as well attempt to cover up the fires of Etna, it cannot be. It expresses itself by outward signs, such as tears, sighs, groans, the fervent and ardent supplications for mercy, in private and in public, the fire may be smothered for a while, but it must break out, it cannot be con-

cealed by any means, if we go on to pardon: the pain is too extreme, his sorrow is not to be hid, this is next to impossible. These, my friend—are some of its effects.

Apollos.—My case was like the one mentioned in the Scriptures, 'I roared from my disquietude.'

Aquila.—Such external signs, it is true, are not essential by any means, or absolutely necessary to this sorrow, which is chiefly an act, or as it may be called, an effort of the mind to disburthen itself. It is the grieving inwardly on account of sins. It is the returning to a sense of the soul's duty to God, and the exercise of the power, now granted by grace, to purpose and then put into action the determinations of the will, to seek a change of our nature, and the renovation of the soul from its lapsed and ruined condition. And now, my friend Apollos—the effects of repentance begin to show themselves.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—Prayer has already been used, at least occasionally, by such a man. Now the penitent, in the distress of his soul, commences the great work of prayer aright. Assured of his guilt, his dependant and ruined state, without help from on high, he makes, in his supplications, a frank *confession* of all his guilt.

Apollos.—Not of course such an auricular one as is generally made by Romanists to their priests, in order to absolution, which is contended for by them, as necessary to the pardon of sin.

Aquila.—Surely no! But that whereby the sinner, with sighs and tears, or other expressions of sorrow, lays open his heart, and confesses his sins before God, without which confession it is in vain for any one to expect the remission of them. Until willing and ready, openly and frankly to acknowledge all our sins there is no hope of being able to believe for their pardon.

Apollos.—Must not a man also forsake sin?

Aquila.—That he must. Whilst there is a serious and stedfast purpose of amendment of life and manners, for such a resolution is involved in an evangelical repentance, there must also be the practice of that resolution in the breaking off from sin at once, and forsaking the same; 'Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;' 'he that confesseth and forsaketh, shall be forgiven.' The soul of the penitent then, is not only sick on account of sin, but sick of it; weary of its ways of sinning, it is ready to do as far as possible, what God requires.

Apollos.—But how can we know when a man has the determination, and is thus not only broken on account of sin, but broken off from it, and determined to resist the devil, and part with iniquity.

Aquila.—A true sign of such a resolution, is when a man, upon the first opportunity that offers, really puts it into execution, and amends his life; for a bare intention, an idle and an inactive resolution, is no part at all of repentance, and that for several plain reasons.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The most prominent are, that this work is one that is not ascribable to our own labour, or industry, nor to some external help to virtue, such as education, or good example, which beget in the minds of men, some love of virtue, that is not wholly extinguished, unless in those that are desperately wicked. No! no! it is, my friend—the work of divine grace enlightening the mind, and influencing the heart of the sinner; and as he is making efforts to improve the talents bestowed, that grace works the holy boldness by which the penitent is ready to let go and give up every sin, even the one that 'does most easily beset him.' Hence we say, that idle wishes form no part of a work of grace; and this is still more manifest, if we consider that they do by no means

make us better; for after all these empty desires, and after all these fair resolutions are made, the man is not yet changed and converted to God. They do not, and cannot determine him to the pursuit of virtue, and the surmounting the difficulties which lie in his way. You must ever bear in mind, that not only the resolutions, but the fair promises of a man to reform his life, when made in his own strength, and without fervent prayer to God for help, and a deep conviction of his dependence on grace to help his infirmities, will be easily and with little ado broken. Here then my friend—you have the penitent in his distress, asking, 'what must I do to be saved;' and permit me to say, that another principle must be brought into exercise before that he can obtain comfort. Repentance, we have more than once affirmed, is only a means, which prepares the heart to venture on Jesus: it is that by which it is prepared to exercise the only absolute condition of salvation—I mean faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; which although in a degree, is in exercise, all through, or in every stage of that distress which is felt by the penitent, is not that trust which justifies the sinner, and brings with it our pardon and comfort, felt and exercised by us, until the heart, sorrowing on account of the bitterness of repentance, seeks comfort only in our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, as the only medium of obtaining the same. At this stage therefore, of our remarks on evangelical repentance, we must stop and prepare the way for the comfort of the penitent, by a description of that faith by which he is justified and pardoned. We cannot advance farther in experimental theology, without the consideration of this point.

Apollos.—I now see the position in which the sinner is: guilty, self-condemned, helpless, and above all miserable; he asks and most earnestly prays for relief.

Aquila.—See the penitent publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' He knows his state; he feels that he is 'a sinner.' Mark his humility; he stands afar off; he 'smites upon his breast;' he will not so much as 'lift up his eyes to heaven;' he cries out for mercy. He goes to God, and him alone, not to the world; mark how he implores mercy at the hand of heaven! How my friend—he obtained mercy, is the point; that we must consider.

Apollos.—Some say that repentance changes the relation, legally speaking, of the offender, and thus renders him a fit subject of pardon.[1]

Aquila.—This is a fallacious notion, and is apparent from many considerations. It assumes, that in a case of impenitence, there is no moral fitness which allows of a pardon, even from mere compassion; that the penitent fits himself for this pardon; that the prerogative of the Deity, whereby sin may be pardoned, must be delivered up, and indeed that repentance itself, creates that moral fitness for the exercise of an act of grace whereby the sinner is pardoned. Now, to admit this moral fitness for pardon, as the result of repentance, would be to deny that the death of Christ is a necessary atonement for sin.[2]

Apollos.—But have you not virtually admitted, that repentance changes the legal relation of the guilty, to God, whom they have offended?

Aquila.—No! I have not at any time that I know of; for though they are penitents, they are offenders still. The sentence of the law is directed against the transgression; and I aver, that the whole law nowhere admits of pardon for any moral offence, on the sole ground, or for the sake of repentance, much less does it teach that repentance so changes the relation of the offender, as to entitle him to pardon.

Apollos.—The law then, knows of no remission, only on the ground of satisfaction.

Aquila.—On that ground, and that alone. The sentence of the law is directed

[1] Watson. [2] This is done by Socinus, in the admission of all these errors as truths.

against the transgression, and repentance does not annihilate, but on the contrary acknowledges the fact of that transgression.

Priscilla.—O! I see it plainly; the charge lies against the offender, whether he be obdurate or penitent. In either case, he is equally criminal, of all of which he stands truly charged.

Aquila.—It is just so; and how then can his relation to the lawgiver be changed by repentance?

Apollos.—I behold it! Nothing but pardon can change that relation.

Aquila.—Truly; for nothing but pardon can cancel his crime; and it is clear, my dear brother—that repentance is not that pardon. I appeal to your own experience.

Apollos.—I see this will not do.

Aquila.—By no means will it do; for though men are now under a dispensation of grace, yet, after long continued obstinacy and refusal of grace, the Scriptures represent repentance, as incapable of turning away the coming vengeance of Almighty God; 'because I have called and ye refused;' 'when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall ye call upon me, and I will not answer; they shall seek me early, and shall not find me.' All these are acts of repentance which are of no avail, and produce no change in the relation of the guilty sinner, not only because the time for pardon has passed, but repentance cannot cancel sin, and they are punished accordingly.[1]

Apollos.—According to the theory of the Socinians, this ought not to be.

Aquila.—Look for a moment at the order of Providence, and you will see that repentance is not indeed an arrest of judgment, nor does it so change the relation of the penitent as to entitle him to a pardon. Repentance does not prevent the penal consequences of sin, as every day manifests in the world. Repentance does not, my friend—restore health that is wasted and injured by intemperance. It does not bring back the property that is wasted and lost by prodigality and profusion, much less does it restore a character that is dishonoured by an evil practice. It is therefore evident that the moral administration under which we live shows that indemnity is not necessarily the effect of repentance in this life, and we have consequently no reason to conclude that it will be in another.[2]

Apollos.—I perceive this, for if the justice of God required that sin should be pardoned upon repentance only, which cancelled its guilt, then that repentance must of necessity obtain the pardon whenever it was exercised.[3]

Aquila.—Assuredly, and therefore the true nature of repentance is not merely, as has been supposed, a sorrow on account of sin, because of the dreadful consequences to which it exposes the offender, unless it shall be pardoned, but, my friend—a clear perception of the evil of sin, and an entire dislike or abhorrence to it as such, with real remorse and sorrow as we have shown, that the authority of God has been contemned and slighted, and that his goodness has been abused.[4]

Apollos.—But why do you suppose that it is not merely on account of the consequences of sin?

Aquila.—For the plain reason, that to give pardon to such a repentance would be tantamount to the absolute abrogation of all law, and virtually the annihilation of all order and government, since every criminal, when convicted, would, as he finds himself in danger of punishment, necessarily repent, and this sorrow, according to the Socinian principle, would render it fit and right that forgiveness should be exercised, and consequently wrong that it should be refused.[5]

Apollos.—And in no case then, could the penalty of the law be fulfilled and enforced. But the repentance, my friend—of which you speak as an abhorrence

[1] Watson. [2] Butler's Analogy. [3] Watson. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

of sin, and dislike to it, arising from the perception of its evil, is a repentance, of which it does seem to me, man is wholly incapable, in his present fallen state.

Aquila.—I admit this, my dear brother—and it is the very reason why it is a scriptural one, 'For of myself I can do nothing.' It must not be forgotten, that such is the fallen and corrupt state of man, that he is incapable of a repentance of this kind, unaided by divine grace. This follows from that account of human depravity which is every where set forth in the holy Scriptures. And in conformity with this view of repentance, is said to be the gift of Christ, who 'as a prince and a Saviour was exalted to give repentance to Israel,' as well as 'the remission of sins,' a gift altogether superfluous, if men could repent of themselves.

Priscilla.—If it had been in the power of mortal to repent without grace, I had done it, I think; but to suppose man capable of repentance, which is the result of genuine principle, is to assume human nature to be what it is not.

Aquila.—Indeed, the whole turns on that very point: for if men be totally corrupt, the only principles from which that repentance and correction of manners, which are supposed in the argument can flow, do not exist in his nature.[1]

Apollos.—And if we allow, according to the ideas of some, no more than that the propensity to evil in him is stronger than the propensity to good, it would, I suppose, be absurd to suppose, that in opposing propensities, the weaker should ever resist, and especially overcome the more powerful.

Aquila.—You are certainly right, Apollos—and if the justice of God be considered with reference to government, the impossibility of exonerating a penitent offender because of his repentance, as a mere condition, and the upholding at the same time a righteous administration, is most apparent. Death is the penalty of transgression, and not to execute it on the pentitent as well as impenitent, would be, as we before said, virtually to annul that authority. In this awful dilemma, a question arises in the mind of the poor penitent, 'What must I do to be saved.'

Apollos.—There is the point of difficulty, I plainly perceive. Remission of sins, or pardon, is the object in view. How is it to be obtained is the great question of difficulty with the man in quest of mercy.

Aquila.—As the principle therefore laid down by the adversaries of the atonement, and vicarious offering of Christ for sin, is fallacious, and as repentance does not render it morally fit in God to pardon sin, we must look for its remission in another way. And while we say that it is a preparatory means, as is prayer, &c. for the exercise of a lively and evangelical faith, it must ever be borne in mind that it is no condition of pardon.

Apollos.—The whole subject is clear and distinct as to the fact that repentance cannot cancel crime, or wash away guilt.

Aquila.—No! my friend—and let me tell you, that this very point in christian experience is perhaps the most important one in all the christian's course. How apt is Satan, how apt are men, especially the half-hearted, the carnal, and the formalist, to persuade the penitent, when at this stage, the highest point of his anguish, either that all is safe, or to despair of mercy forever. Here many a soul has been wrecked and ruined. Satan tells him, you have wept and sorrowed enough, or it is too late; the carnal professor and formalist say, why such unnecessary efforts about salvation? you need not be thus concerned, there is no danger.

Priscilla.—And if one does not take care, he will be persuaded that he has sorrowed so much, that his tears and griefs will cancel his guilt, and he will thus

[1] Wesley and Watson.

rest in the arms of carnal security, or perhaps he will be ready to conclude that all is lost, it is too late, he cannot be saved, there is no hope, he has wept and prayed, but has found no alleviation of his sorrows. O! how hard it is to join issue when so much is at stake, put in the plea of guilty, and yet confidently expect pardon.

Aquila.—We will leave the penitent, my friend—just where he is, to weep and mourn until to-morrow evening, it will do him no harm. Then we propose to show how he may have a free and full pardon, without money and without price.

COLLOQUY VII.

VIRTUES OF THE WILL CONTINUED—FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY NECESSARY CONDITION OF JUSTIFICATION—ITS NATURE IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITS SEVERAL ACTS.

Aquila.—Well, my friend Apollos—we came, I think, deliberately to the conclusion at our last interview, that sin is not pardoned by the mere prerogative of the Deity, nor is it to be purchased by the repentance of any man, as repentance cannot cancel transgression. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we ascertain the ground on which it may be cancelled, and man be restored to the divine favour. This is the great question, what is the consideration on which the penalty due to offences is delayed, or forever averted?

Apollos.—This is the very point, and the one too where we halted on the last evening.

Aquila.—We have elsewhere shown, that the death, and propitiatory offering of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only foundation on which we may predicate our hopes of pardon, and of restoration to the divine favour.

Apollos.—I am fully convinced of this, and I further know, that both the Old and the New Testaments agree in this one fact, that for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, and him alone, sin is pardoned. In the provision of that sacrifice made by him, there is a manifestation of the only method of love, wisdom, and justice, by which a merciful God justifies the ungodly. But my friend—the point of difficulty is as to the means or medium by which the atonement that the Lord Jesus Christ has made, may be applied for the pardon of sin and a change of heart. Now, you know that some have taught that repentance itself is that change.

Aquila.—I have all along admitted that repentance is involved in the regeneration of our souls, as one of the means used by divine grace to prepare the heart for the lively and active exercise of an evangelical faith; but that repentance is not this change of heart or regeneration is very plain, for you know that regeneration actually begins with repentance, for if the regenerate state is only entered upon at our justification, then all that can be meant by repentance in the Scripture is, that preparatory process which leads to regeneration, as it leads to the pardon of sin, commencing as we have shown with conviction and contrition, and going on until there is a repentant turning unto the Lord.[1]

Apollos.—In the order which God has established regeneration does not take place then without this process.

Aquila.—Certainly not. Conviction of the evil, and danger of an unregenerate state, must be felt, prayers are to be offered, blessings are to be ardently sought after in God's appointed way; men have to confess, and feel too their own inability, and the sentence of death in themselves; the destructive nature, the viru-

[1] Watson.

lence and tremendous consequences of sin. All these are means preparatory to the full exercise of evangelical faith for pardon,[1] and I hope you will not suppose, my friend—that a man can be regenerated without being pardoned and justified. Why does he repent, after what does he sorrow, for what does he seek?

Apollos.—O! it is for pardon and mercy at the hands of God.

Aquila.—Yes—and the fact that this is the case, shows that repentance is not the regeneration for which he is in quest.

Apollos.—But is not repentance of grace?

Aquila.—I have said so more than once. It is true that a deep and serious conviction for sin, the struggles against the corruptions of an unregenerate heart are all proofs of a work of God in that heart, and of a great moral reform, but it is not the change itself, because regeneration is that renewal of our nature which gives us dominion over sin, and enables us to serve God from love, and not merely from fear; and it is yet, while the man is a penitent, confessedly unattained, being still an object of search and eager desire. Look now, I will again say, at your own experience, my brother—and tell me what is its testimony?

Apollos.—I must admit that it does tell me, when yet but a penitent, I was not 'created anew unto good works.'

Aquila.—Certainly not; for this is a special and instant work, attending our justification, and for this very reason is not obtained before the pardon of sins, and always accompanies it.[2]

Apollos.—The penitent sinner then has done all that he can do, in order to obtain this pardon and regeneration, and grace too has helped him all along, how then does he obtain it, and in what manner can his guilt be cancelled?

Aquila.—I have said, that the wrath of God is averted by the death of Christ, which as a propitiation avails in our behalf. I now say that the efficacy of that atonement is applied by faith, which, as mentioned above, is the only absolute or necessary condition of pardon and regeneration.

Apollos.—But tell me, my brother—before you advance in this subject, is not the doctrine of justification and pardon only by faith, a doctrine wholly Calvinistic?

Aquila.—Certainly, my friend—it is not. Writers of limited reading, and perverted ingenuity, have attacked it under this mistake, but it is not so: for the doctrine of faith, as the only absolute condition of pardon and restoration to the divine favour, is a doctrine of the church of England, as well as the Lutheran church. It was the doctrine of Arminius and the Dutch Remonstrants, at least the early divines of that party, and though among many ministers of the church of England the errors of popery on the subject of justification, have had their influence, and indeed some who have contended for justification alone by faith, have lowered the scriptural standard of believing; yet has the doctrine itself been ably maintained by many of that denomination, who have ever resisted Calvinism. As we have seen more than once, my friend—the doctrine of justification by faith alone, a faith which excludes all works, both of the ceremonial and moral law, all works performed by Gentiles under the law of nature; all works of evangelical obedience, though they spring from faith, has been defended by Whitby in his preface to the notes on the Epistle to the Gallatians, who you know was a decided anti-Calvinist. Indeed the same may be said of many others.[2]

Apollos.—But I mean as an entire church.

Aquila.—Yes—an entire church, indeed churches. For there are the Wesleyan Methodists in England, the followers of that learned and holy man, the late Rev. John Wesley, whose writings and preaching were a constant testimony to

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid.

salvation by grace, through faith. God made him and his followers, the instruments in reviving by their preaching and writings, the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith alone. They have clearly and ably established this truth in England, in connection with the doctrine of a general redemption by our Lord Jesus, and God's universal love to all mankind [1] Moreover, the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in North America, the brethren of the British Methodists, and followers of the same founder, Mr. Wesley, have proclaimed this blessed and most comfortable doctrine of justification by faith alone, in almost every part of the vast western continent.

Apollos.—But by affirming that faith is the condition of justification and pardon, do you mean that there is no justification without it?

Aquila.—The word of God is explicit on this point, 'he that believeth not is condemned already,' and so long as he believeth not, that condemnation cannot be removed 'but the wrath of God abideth on him.' So my friend—as long as we are without this faith 'we are strangers to the covenant of promise, we are aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and without God in the world.'[2]

Apollos.—Whatever virtues then, as they are called, a man may have, I speak of those to whom the gospel is preached, and whatever good works as they are accounted such may have, they do not transfer man from under this curse, he is still a child of wrath. He must believe in order to be saved.

Aquila.—Yes—and what have we to do to judge those to whom the gospel is not preached. Faith therefore is not only the *necessary* condition, but my friend—the *only necessary* condition thereof. This is a point that must be clearly and well understood and observed; that the very moment we are enabled by grace to believe, for faith is the gift of God, that faith is accounted to the poor ungodly sinner for righteousness.[3]

Apollos.—He hath no righteousness at all, antecedent to this, not so much as a negative righteousness or innocence, has he?

Aquila.—No! but faith is imputed to him for righteousness, the very moment that he believeth.

Apollos.—But God does not think that he is, what he is not, righteous when he is not so?

Aquila.—Surely he does not. But as he made Christ to be a sin offering for us, that is, treated him as a sinner, and had him substituted as a victim, and punished in our stead for our sins; so he counteth us righteous, from the very time we believe in him; that is, he doth not punish us for our sins; yea, treats us as though we were guiltless and righteous.[4]

Apollos.—But there appears to be a difficulty in assenting to the proposition, that faith is the only condition of justification.

Aquila.—This difficulty then must surely arise from not understanding it.

Apollos.—What do you mean by it?

Aquila.—Simply that it is the only thing without which no one is justified. The only thing that is immediately, indispensably and absolutely necessary, in order to our pardon. For instance, admit that on the one hand a man should have every thing else, without faith, yet he cannot be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak or do good, and his absolute meetness for hell fire: suppose this sinner helpless and hopeless, cast himself on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, which indeed he cannot do as we have shown, but by grace assisting him, who can doubt but that he is forgiven in this very moment? who will affirm that any thing more is indispensably required before that sinner can be justified, for as although a man should have every thing else, without faith he

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid and Wesley. [4] Watson.

cannot be justified; so if he lack every thing else and have the faith, he is freely pardoned and accepted of God for Christ's sake, for we are saved through faith.[1]

Apollos.—But is not salvation by grace, through faith, as the only condition a doctrine unfavourable to morality?

Aquila.—Certainly not, and no man but one who altogether misapprehends it, can possibly admit such an idea. This doctrine I admit has often been abused, by those, who Antinomian in their principles, have sought to cover their unrighteousness, while actually living in sin, by the righteousness of Christ; but you must remember, my friend—that truth is ever liable to be perverted and corrupted by men, under the influence and love of sin. There is one short answer to your objection. It is this, that although we are justified by faith alone, that faith which justifies the soul is not alone, in that heart which exercises it.[2]

Apollos.—How is this?

Aquila.—In receiving Christ, say the reformers, faith is sola, yet not solitaria. It brings into lively exercise all the virtues and graces which are commanded in God's word and especially that love which is the fulfilling of the law.[3]

Apollos.—I wish you now, my friend—to explain the nature of this mighty principle, by which a sinner, already condemned, is so freely pardoned and blessed of heaven.

Aquila.—The true nature of justifying faith, we will proceed to notice and explain presently, my friend. It may be proper here to say, that it is not every act of faith, that is justifying faith: or faith in the general truths of revelation, which is imputed for righteousness, though it supposes them all, and is the completion of them all. We understand then that it is not faith generally considered, that is imputed to us for righteousness, but faith that is the trust in the atonement, offered for us by another, our Lord Jesus Christ, by which trust in something without ourselves, we acknowledge our own insufficiency, guilt, and unworthiness, and directly ascribe the merit to that in which we trust, and which is not our own, but the propitiation of the blood of Christ.[4] Without therefore taking notice of the various acceptations of the term faith in the Scriptures, and the perfection or imperfection of it, according to the degrees of revelation granted to men; let us notice, my friend—generally that sort of faith, which is called christian faith.

Apollos.—There are various degrees of it then.

Aquila.—Certainly there are, and as stated above, various acts of it. Now in order to set forth what we conceive to be implied in faith, you must bear in mind that we are to notice it generally. As assent to the truths of God, and especially the christian system—and then particularly, as the faith by which the penitent soul is justified and pardoned, the believer sanctified and ultimately saved. In order to do this in a way which may assist us in coming to a deliberate conclusion, in regard to its true nature, let us include its several acts under three distinct heads. The first is that which we would call the antecedent act of faith, and is represented by divines as knowledge. The second is its formal act, in which we ascertain its true nature, as not only assent of the understanding to truth and consent of the will to be influenced and governed by it, but a full persuasion of the virtue of the atonement, and a firm reliance upon its efficacy for the pardon of sin, which reliance brings with it an assurance and evidence of that pardon. We may then notice its consequent act, namely obedience, which is not only a constituent part of faith, but an immediate effect of it, and that which proves it lively and active.[5]

Apollos.—Well—what would be a general exposition of the faith of the gospel.

[1] Wesley.
[2] Wesley and Watson.
[3] Watson.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Limborch.

Aquila.—Faith does appear to be not only a knowledge and an assent whereby we are persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the only Saviour of all who live according to the gospel rule; but likewise the confidence and assurance that we put in him as our prophet, priest and king, by which we are fully persuaded, if we obey his doctrine, that we shall by him obtain not only the pardon of our sins, but everlasting life. This produces a serious and an effectual purpose to perform that obedience which he requires of us. This I would call belief, and it would seem to embrace the whole christian system and christian course. As before said, the faith that justifies is an act separate, if I may so speak, but embraced in this faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which we call general.[1]

Apollos.—From this definition it would appear then that faith is not a single habit or act, but consists of several parts and comprehends several acts.

Aquila.—I think so, and have already alluded to some of its various acts.

Apollos.—Tell me then my brother—what is that antecedent act of faith of which you spoke of just now?

Aquila.—This I have said is knowledge, on which it does appear to me self-evident that faith is founded, and which being taken away, is effectually destroyed; for how says an apostle 'shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard,' i. e. how can a man believe a thing of which he knows nothing. Hence it is my friend that by a synecdoche of a part for the whole, faith itself is sometimes described by the word knowledge. 'And this is eternal life to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' 'They profess that they know God,' i. e. believe on him, 'but in works they deny him.' I might quote other texts to prove this.

Apollos.—What, my friend, is the object of this knowledge?

Aquila.—Simply all those things that are necessary to be known in order to salvation, such as God, his attributes and works, Jesus Christ, his person and offices, with the divine precepts, promises and threatenings.

Apollos.—Surely you do not include as an object of this knowledge, and as things necessary to be known, those points controverted in schools?

Aquila.—Most certainly I do not. I only mean those things without which there can be no true faith in God, and in our Lord Jesus, as our deliverer and the foundation of all our hope; and without which faith, all our observations on the divine precepts and belief of the promises can be of no avail.

Apollos.—And even if I do credit all that is contained in the apostles' creed, and exhibited there as a summary of the christian system, it will be but belief, and only one act of faith, called the persuasion of knowledge.

Aquila.—This is surely the case, and although we would not discourage, but to the reverse, press the value and importance of knowledge: still, as I before remarked, it must be borne in mind that it is not the act of faith by which the sinner is pardoned. This is only its antecedent act, that is knowledge. Whatever may be the progress that any christian may make, in this knowledge of divine things; and, however it is not my intention to discourage a close investigation of all the great principles of the christian system, it must be borne in mind, that many only know and believe the things necessary to salvation, and live according to that knowledge and belief: these are really of the number of the faithful, though they may be ignorant of many truths, which though useful, are not absolutely necessary.[2]

Apollos.—But do you mean that every one who professes christianity ought to know and understand the doctrines and truths of the same?

Aquila.—I think all ought to try to understand all things necessary to salvation, and in order to this, they should not only hear, converse, and read, but closely study to know those things at least.

[1] Limborch. [2] Wesley.

Apollos.—But why may not they receive them upon an implicit faith?

Aquila.—Indeed, this is the very reason why I say that every man should be able to give a reason, of the hope that is in him. So far from taking it upon an implicit and blind faith, as do Romanists, we ought to oppose light and knowledge to the darkness and ignorance, by which the man of sin sustains his superstitions, and keeps in a state of complete vassalage and spiritual bondage, thousands who know not the right hand from the left in matters of religion. O! that is a dreadful superstition, that a man is obliged to believe as the church believes, though he knows nothing himself. An implicit faith places a man, as it were, under a cloud, by which a thing is believed in general, contrary to that explicit faith by which one receives a thing distinctly and particularly.[1]

Apollos.—But there must be some implicit faith in divine things; must there not? I do not understand this knowledge as a remedy against an implicit faith. Do give me your views of it, will you?

Aquila.—An implicit faith may admit of a two-fold sense. Thus, as it relates to the holy Scriptures and all the things contained therein: so when we explicitly believe in general, that the Scripture is divine, and consequently all and every thing contained in it must be credited, we likewise implicitly believe all the histories and doctrines delivered therein. It being enough to show that they are in the Scriptures, in order to create belief. But it is to be recollected that this cannot become saving faith, until the particular things necessary to salvation are believed distinctly and explicitly. But as it relates to the church of Rome an implicit faith is joined with an ignorance of the doctrines of religion and of things necessary to be believed in order to salvation; this is another sense in which it is used. So in the popish sense it is that whereby the laity, who either know not, or as yet, do not understand the articles of faith, do believe implicitly in this general proposition, that all things are true, which the church of Rome believes and holds as true.[2] In such a sense implicit faith is intolerable. For in the first place, it is not a divine, but a human faith, built upon a rotten foundation, viz: the authority of men subject to error, and consequently so fallacious, as that no man who values his salvation would rely upon it. And secondly, we are commanded in the word of God to procure knowledge for ourselves; 'to try all things, and hold fast that which is good;' that so we may 'beware of false prophets, that come to us in sheep's clothing' while they are but 'ravening wolves.' We are told not to believe every spirit, 'but try the spirits whether they be of God,' to 'prove all things and hold fast that which is good,' 'to search the Scriptures,' and we have the example of the noble Bereans, 'who did search,' though apostles preached to them, and confirmed their preaching by miracles.

Apollos.—This I see, my friend, is an indispensable duty, and no excuse, is admissible or will acquit us at the bar of God, if we are negligent of it. It is plain that every man ought to 'meditate' in the law of God 'day and night.' But my brother Aquila, there is an objection. It is said by Romanists that the priests of their church stake down their own souls for the truth of their doctrine, and it is therefore inferable, at least that it is true.[3]

Aquila.—This consequence I do not admit; besides there is no safe reliance, that can be placed on such a security: is it possible that such a surety, already indebted so far to the divine justice, on account of personal sins, from the guilt and condemnation of which they cannot discharge themselves, will undertake to be responsible not only for the errors, but the sins of others? Besides, God refuses to accept of any such security or surety; but will reward 'every man according to his own works,' and every man 'must give account of himself to God.' Moreover it is no certain evidence that any doctrine is true, because a teacher pledges

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

his own soul for it. It is evidence, and that very good, that he himself believes it, but not, my friend—that it is in itself true.

Apollos.—I had never thought till this moment of this very important difference. I see how a man may prove his own sincerity, and suffer to attest his own belief in a thing, while at the same time the thing itself may not be true.

Aquila.—And tell me Apollos, what superior claim has the church of Rome over other churches on this account? Is not every christian teacher bound to lay down his life for his doctrine? Have not many done so, and indeed, have not many been constrained to do it by the church of Rome itself, whose inquisitorial authority, has used the hand of oppression and tyranny, to force the consciences of thousands, whom in cold blood it has slaughtered?

Apollos.—But it is said by Romanists, that the understanding ought to be brought into captivity, which cannot be where men are left at liberty to acquire knowledge as they please.[1] They quote this text, 'casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

Aquila.—Well, but my friend—the contrary of this is true. For because the understanding is brought into captivity, therefore a knowledge is required of those things which the understanding ought to be subjected to, else this captivity, it is evident, would not be rational, but a blind and brutal one. Thus the understanding of man is brought into captivity, when relying on divine revelation, it searches for true wisdom in that alone, laying aside its own wisdom, which it finds no true guide to the supreme good. It is therefore after this manner that the apostle would bring every understanding into captivity to the obedience to Christ, drawing men to the christian faith by the efficacy of the doctrine, and the power of his miracles, that denying their own wisdom with which they were puffed up, they might yield themselves the willing disciples of Christ the Lord.

Apollos.—Thus we are to learn, through the medium of this gospel, whether read or expounded from the pulpit, that true wisdom which is for the salvation of our souls.

Aquila.—Surely it is so, my friend—and not that the doctrine is true because a man has died for it, for the worshippers of idols annually die for their idolatry. This does not make it true, though it may prove their sincerity. We are to search for ourselves, and when we are rationally convinced of the truth we are to embrace it in the belief thereof. Here is true christian knowledge the antecedent or rather first act of faith: an act which, in a greater or less degree, is exercised by every man who is justified. This is a first act of faith, if I may so speak, an act that precedes justifying faith, and is therefore called by us its antecedent act. This knowledge is often imparted in a very short time, by the Spirit, word, or ministers of God, and sometimes indeed by all combined.[2]

Apollos.—What then is that formal act of faith which succeeds to it?

Aquila.—The formal act of faith must necessarily have a close connection with knowledge, since without it, knowledge is assuredly unavailable for salvation is assent and reliance.

Apollos.—How, my friend—can this be proved?

Aquila.—Simply by the fact, of which the Scripture furnishes abundant testimony, that both wicked men and devils know, but still have not faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' 'They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.' Here are wicked men, knowing God and his will, but they do it not. So it is said of devils,

[1] Limborch. [2] Wesley and Clarke.

'And in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' And the damsel possessed with a devil followed Paul and his associates many days, and cried, saying, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.' Here also is evidence that devils know, yet they have not faith, only belief.

Apollos.—And this is the reason why it is said that the devils also believe and tremble. I see now the difference, and it is a very important one indeed. Knowledge will produce, as in wicked men and devils, belief not faith. This belief in man may evidently exist without faith, and knowledge will not justify and save.

Aquila.—And yet every assent or persuasion, as we shall see, is not sufficient. That which is truly an act of faith must be solid and firm, founded on the rational judgment of the will, produced in us not only by a serious and an accurate meditation on those things which render us fully persuaded of the certainty of what we are to believe, but the spirit and grace of God bringing near and applying those things in such a way to the heart and to the soul, as that they enter into a full persuasion, most cheerfully, of the truth of all that God declares, in regard to man's condition, and his willingness to save, only for Christ's sake.

Apollos.—Any other persuasion or assent, predicated on slight grounds, cannot be effectual or lasting, I presume.

Aquila.—By no means. It is rather opinion than faith, it is an obedience that is rather blind than rational, a sort of brutal impetus of the mind, rather than an act of the judgment, founded on a deep conviction of the truth of all that God has said. Here then we have the Spirit of God pressing most urgently the truths of the gospel on the mind, with all their high and important motives, not only convincing of sin, but persuading the sinner that a glorious remedy may be found for transgression, in the bleeding wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—What is the object of this faith?

Aquila.—Generally speaking, the object of faith ought to be first, the truth; for no man can be expected, nor is he obliged to believe a lie, and God himself, who is faithful and holy, nay, who is the truth itself, cannot enjoin it on man to believe a falsehood, for this would be incompatible with his nature: and of course, secondly, those things are only to be believed which the Deity in his word declares to be true, for faith is an assent that relies on the testimony of God, but he neither does nor can declare what is false to be true. Again, the divine law does not command us to err, because every error is repugnant to the divine rectitude, and the perfection of its nature; but to believe a falsehood is to err, and indeed to err capitally. It would therefore follow, if the object of faith can be a falsehood, divine faith might then sometimes be an error, viz. an assent to that which is false, which is, most assuredly, egregiously absurd.

Apollos.—You must however know, my friend—that it has been taught that the reprobate are bound to believe that Christ died for them, though he did not.[1]

Aquila.—I know that some divines have taught this, and have not been ashamed openly to assert that God can, nay sometimes does, oblige a man to believe what is false. Indeed, some have gone so far as to invent reasons, as they are called, to justify this notion.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—They say that Adam was obliged, in his state of innocence, to believe that he should obtain eternal life, which was false. Now, my friend—it is plain,

[1] Limborch.

and even so beyond a contradiction, that Adam was not bound to believe this, if any requisition of this kind were made at all, absolutely, but only conditionally if he persevered in that state: else he could not have believed in the divine threatening, that in the day wherein he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should surely die.[1]

Apollos.—I see this, and the force of your answer, but it is urged, you know, my friend—that Abraham was bound to believe that God was willing that he should sacrifice his son, and that this was false.

Aquila.—My brother—do you not remember that this order of the Deity is expressly called a temptation, and consequently is of quite a different nature from the rest of the divine precepts; unlesss men will be so inconsistent as to say, that God, when he commands the reprobate to believe in Christ, only means to tempt them. Besides, properly speaking, Abraham was not commanded to believe that God was willing that he should really kill his son, but only that he should sacrifice him.[2] This latter he did believe, and accordingly prepared himself to obey the command; but it was not his business to inquire whether God intended that he should really kill his son, or whether he commanded it only to try him, he did not hesitate.

Apollos.—The inference then is, that the true object of christian faith is every truth necessary to salvation?

Aquila.—It is every object necessary to be believed, in order to eternal salvation. You must, however, remember that this is comprehended under one single truth, viz. that Jesus is the Christ; therefore, that in Scripture is most commonly said to be the object of a christian's faith, as it is required of us to believe nothing else.

Apollos.—But this is expressed, is it not, under various terms therein?

Aquila.—It is, but all amount pretty much to this, that Jesus of Nazareth, who preached the gospel in Judea, and excelled in miracles, was crucified, rose the third day from the dead, and ascended into heaven, that he was the Christ, the Saviour promised by the prophets, and is to be owned as such, and that the offering which he thereby made for sin is now available with God personally for me, in the pardon of sin, the justification and adoption of the soul into his family, as his child.

Apollos.—Do you think that the Scriptures sustain this position?

Aquila.—I do. Thus our Lord said to Peter, 'But whom say ye that I am?' And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' So he said to doubting Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God. Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed' So to the Ethiopian prince, 'Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest' be baptized. 'And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' Thus says St. John, 'whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.' And St. Paul, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. And to the inquiring and penitent jailor, who asked, 'What must I do to be saved?' the answer was, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.' Indeed, my friend—a great part of the third chapter of John is to show that by faith in the Son of God a sinner is to be saved, and that he who does not believe in him, has not that salvation from sin here, and everlasting life hereafter, but must surely perish.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid

Apollos.—I should like for you to inquire more distinctly what is necessarily required for believing that Jesus is the Christ.

Aquila.—This proposition, that Jesus is the Christ, which is the object of the faith that justifies, comprehends, it appears to me, two things, the subject and the predicate as they are called. The one denotes the person and the other the office of the Saviour, of which there must evidently be, a full persuasion or assent in the mind.

Apollos.—How is this, and what do you mean by it?

Aquila.—I mean by the predicate, of the proposition here set forth as Christ the Son of God, which according to the usual style of the writers of the New Testament, signifies the Messiah promised to the Jews, by whom salvation was to be obtained. Who not only directs us in the way to eternal life, but also by his accursed death, delivers us from the curse, being made as has been proved a propitiary sacrifice for us, strengthens us by his spirit against all the insults and temptations of the devil, and at last by his almighty power will raise us from the dead, and bring us to eternal life and glory.[1]

Apollos.—The dignity of the character as a matter of persuasion or assent in the mind, is sometimes expressed by the word Christ, and sometimes by the Son of God, which are synonymous terms, or rather equivalent in the Scripture phrase.

Aquila.—It is so. The words of David seem to have given rise to this title 'thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee,' and again, 'I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son.' These expressions are evidently applied by the apostles to the Messiah, in a most sublime and mystical sense, and were so understood by the Jews. Thus says an apostle, and we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm, 'thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. So in Hebrews, St. Paul, says 'for unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?' And again, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.'

Apollos.—I remember very well that there are many places in the New Testament, where this truth, the fact of the Saviour being the Christ, i. e. the anointed for our salvation is set forth, and that this is to be received and believed by all who would be saved is authenticated by those texts.

Aquila.—There are many texts to this effect: and this is evident from the acknowledgments of Nathaniel. He 'answered and said unto the Saviour thou art the Son of God the King of Israel.' So, also, the confession of Peter, quoted above, and that of the other disciples, when Jesus had walked on the sea, these 'came and worshipped him, saying of a truth thou art the Son of God.' This we have seen was the confession also of the servant of Candace, and we may add that the greatest of all the testimony, is that which Jesus himself gives us of this truth when he was examined by the high priest, who said 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God.' Jesus saith unto him 'thou hast said, nevertheless, I say unto thee that hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man setting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' This he also confirms in another place. So 'Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said ye are God's. If he called them Gods to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God.'

Apollos.—To believe then that Jesus is the Christ, or the Son of God, signifies no less than to be fully persuaded that he is that extraordinary Saviour, promised

[1] Limborch.

so long before, to whom the office of saving men was committed by the Father, in which office he was inaugurated, being anointed by the Holy Ghost.

Aquila.—To this the entire volume of inspiration agrees. And as to the subject, as it is called, of the proposition, the full and perfect knowledge thereof, does not seem to be absolutely necessary, for the truth and evidence of it. True it is the person to whom the office of a Saviour is committed by God, ought to be apprehended, who is denoted by the name Jesus; which name signifies a certain one, regularly installed by God the Father into that office. But whether this person consists of two natures, one eternal and divine, the other human, both united in one person, it is thought by some does not appear to have direct reference to the truth of this proposition, but ought to be inquired after in other parts of Scripture.[1]

Apollos.—But we must believe that this person is the Son of God.

Aquila.—Yes! my friend, and not only on account of his miraculous conception, but also the eternal *filiation*; but whether the eternity of this be the object of the christian's faith is the question. Some think that this cannot be concluded from the proposition, but must be proved from other parts of Scripture, others think to the reverse. This is the reason, indeed, why I have pursued this course in the discussion of this point. Some have thought that there is no test, wherein the union of the divine with the human nature, the former as eternal in its duration, is the necessary object of christian faith, but that the office of Christ is, to be believed and accepted, which is simply Jesus a Saviour. This is a truth owned and acknowledged by the church of God every where, but the question which has arose, is whether in the act of faith by which pardon is obtained, it is necessary thereto, that the eternal sonship of our Lord Jesus must be embraced.

Apollos.—I have heard several objections to this.

Aquila.—Yes—it is thought that because this doctrine is full of niceties and obscurities, which the learned and wise after all their pains acknowledge they cannot comprehend, and of course are ignorant of, that therefore, in the act of assent this is not embraced as necessary to salvation, and that it is not likely that the Deity should annex pardon only to such an admission, or rather persuasion, the thing itself being obscure and intricate, and as admitted by all, not to be distinctly or clearly apprehended. Again it is said that without a special knowledge of the two natures in Christ, and the manner of their being united, we may believe that Jesus is the Christ; that is, we may have a right apprehension of the office, though we have not a full and clear knowledge of the person of Jesus, as he is the God man, and especially the son of God by an eternal and an ineffable generation.[2]

Apollos.—Some you know have carried this matter so far, as to teach that in order to constitute saving faith, we should believe that the eternal Word of the Father was made flesh, i. e. that the very divine essence of the WORD, was changed and transubstantiated into flesh.

Aquila.—But the Scripture does not inform us of any such manner of our Lord's incarnation, and although we were to grant this, which we do not, that even some things are contained in the Scriptures which favour this opinion, yet it would not from thence follow, that in it consists the essence of saving faith. And besides this, it is argued that this faith is not necessary for acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ, or for believing and obeying him, and that it does not seem to have special respect to piety or obedience to the divine commands, since justifying faith produces this of itself, being that which overcomes the world; thus says St. John, 'and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' And it is farther said, that it would be prejudicial to piety, since it tends

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

to the destruction of that great principle which is set forth in the Scriptures concerning the resurrection of the dead; for since his resurrection is the foundation of ours, and according to this idea, the flesh of Christ is of another nature than ours, what hope can we have of being raised again, from the consideration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? And being deprived of such a hope, piety itself must sink in despair.[1] I place before you the views, my friend—which are entertained by some on this point, that you may have, in order, the whole before you. We shall notice this point again, before we close our examination on faith.

Apollos.—It would seem then at least, that in the object of christian faith, there is special regard or respect had to the offices of Christ.

Aquila.—I think so, for by them Christ reveals himself, and the knowledge of them is most intimately connected with that worship which we are required to perform before God. These offices are those of a prophet, priest and king, to which faith must be applied.

Apollos.—How can there be an application of faith to these.

Aquila.—By faith as it respects the prophetical office, we are to believe that Jesus was a true teacher sent from God, by whom alone, or by whose gospel alone, the full knowledge of the divine will is to be sought for and whose doctrine is to be received, with a full persuasion of mind, that if we obey his precepts, we shall obtain the salvation promised to us by him.

Apollos.—How is it applied to his priestly office?

Aquila.—As it respects his sacerdotal office, we are to believe that by his own blood shed for us, for the remission of sins, he has entered into the heavenly sanctuary, there to present himself continually and intercede for us, which oblation and intercession avail to such an immense degree, as to expiate all our sins. In the exemption of all other mediators, we are to rely on this one single sacrifice for pardon, restoration to the divine favour, peace with God here, and eternal life hereafter.

Apollos.—And can it also make Christ's kingly office an object of faith.

Aquila.—It can, for as it regards this, we must believe that he has risen from the dead, was taken up into heaven, where he has power over all things both in heaven and earth. That he governs by his word and spirit, protects and defends against all temptations and adversities, and at last, if we persevere in faith and obedience, will advance us into eternal felicity.[2]

Apollos.—Now my friend—I want to have every difficulty removed out of the way that I may understand the very act itself, as far as I can, by which the soul is adopted into the divine favour. May not a man err in some points of doctrine and yet be a true believer, and have communion with God?

Aquila.—Many things are often inquired into about the offices of Christ which are not necessary to salvation; and so it is often in regard to some of the doctrines of the gospel, still, where the Lord Jesus Christ is worshipped, as co-equal with the Father, indeed where the Trinity is adored, and there is the faith in Christ which produces pardon, such an one is a child of God, though he may not be exactly right in regard to every point in theology.[3] Now if any one with sincerity admits that the God of the Scriptures, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is the true God, and as a poor penitent sinner is persuaded that the sacrifice of Christ is the only propitiation for sin, and shall wholly rely on it for salvation, as we shall proceed to show, though he may err in other points of doctrine, yet is he, though he errs in his belief, in the possession of the faith that justifies and saves.

Apollos.—What then do you suppose, on the whole, to be contained in this assent?

Aquila.—In this outline which is attempted, my friend—chiefly to set forth the

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

theory at present of faith, it appears that in it there are two things particularly embraced. The first is, those truths which God affirms to us, and to which he requires our assent; and the second, some duties which he enjoins on us, under a promised reward and a threatened punishment. From hence it is thought by some, that these two acts of faith arise, the one is an act applied to the Deity himself, who affirms such things as we are fully persuaded may be credited, and another act, by which we are fully persuaded that those things which we know may be credited, and ought to be believed, we should look upon to be most certain, and obey them. Hence it is easy to solve a question that is usually started whether or not faith be, as it regards its act, an operation of the understanding or will. It is certainly not a mere act of either the one or the other separately; but rather a mixed action, partly of one and partly of the other.[1]

Apollos.—This is not the only principle, which is supposed to be involved or implied in faith is it?

Aquila.—O no!—It is always supposed that this assent or persuasion is followed by the consent of the will, to be guided and influenced by what the understanding is persuaded of as true, and being thus influenced, has an assurance, as some have called it, by which it confides in and relies upon Christ for salvation. This then is a kind of adjunct flowing from this persuasion, which is not only a strong hope, but confidence, whereby we experience the divine favour, according to the promise of God. It has been represented as nothing else but the firm assent of one who, aided by grace, relies without dispute on the divine promises.[2]

Apollos.—This then is simply a personal application of Christ's merits by faith for salvation to our own souls. But it has been maintained that it is a sort or kind of special mercy of God, whereby he has irrevocably elected some persons to salvation, without any regard had to this their faith. That Christ was sent, who made satisfaction for their sins, and the righteousness of Christ, as performed for the elect and them alone, is made an object of faith.

Aquila.—But this is an opinion which is extremely absurd, since in the first place there is no such special mercy in God, the promise annexed to the divine covenant being as is plain, universal, and under the condition of faith and obedience: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Nor could such a privilege be granted to man, only on condition of this faith, for the idea of this special mercy as it is called, destined for certain men from all eternity, by virtue of the divine decree, we have proved to be fallacious and incompatible with the economy of the divine grace. This would appear, also, to be a mercy, if there were such a thing, as happens to the elect, not for the sake of Christ: and indeed no blessings conferred on the elect, according to this view of it, as we have proved rests on this foundation; but Christ was granted to the elect for the sake of that mercy.[3]

Apollos.—O! my friend—I have made up my mind long since, that such a faith is destructive of piety, because it takes away the necessity thereof, in order to our attaining the glory and salvation of God. And what necessity is there of believing and obeying, in order to the attaining a happiness which is irrevocably destined for them, without any consideration of faith or obedience.

Aquila.—It is plain, my friend—that in this whole act, of which we have been speaking, the object both of persuasion and reliance is the universal mercy of God, offered to all men, provided they believe in Christ, and live according to the rule

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

that he has prescribed to them. So that they include in them as an act, an assurance, if I may so speak, whereby we steadfastly depend on God, not only for present pardon, but for everlasting life, which he has promised to every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and perseveringly continues in his faith, daily obeying his precepts. This reliance, as we shall see by an experimental application of this theory, appears to be the direct product of assent or persuasion, for in the moment in which the believer gives his assent to the doctrines of Jesus Christ, whereby eternal life is promised to all men on the condition of faith and obedience, and being fully persuaded of the truth of all that Christ has done and promised, he throws himself on the Lord Jesus, by an act of faith called reliance or confidence, then he experiences the truth of that doctrine which he has already embraced, as it regards the ground of hope, Christ Jesus the only Saviour.

Apollos.—Persuasion and reliance then are the two important ingredients in justifying faith?

Aquila.—I think so, my friend. Assent or persuasion may be separated from reliance or confidence; but it is certain that the latter cannot exist without the former. We have proved that faith, or rather belief, in the sense of an intellectual assent to truth, is allowed to devils. A dead inoperative faith is declared to be possessed by wicked men, professing christianity, and our Lord represents persons as saying to him, at the last day, 'Lord have we not prophecied in thy name,' &c. to whom he will say, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.'[1]

Apollos.—I have noticed that the change in this place does not lie against the sincerity of their belief, but against their conduct as the workers of iniquity.

Aquila.—As, therefore, this distinction is taught in the Scriptures, my friend—so it is also observed in experience. Assent to the truth of revealed religion may result from examination and conviction, while yet the spirit and conduct may remain unrenewed and sinful.[2]

Apollos.—Well—does the faith which is required of us as a condition of salvation, always include confidence or reliance, as well as assent or persuasion?

Aquila.—I think it does. That faith by which 'the elders obtained a good report,' was of this character, it united assent to the truth of God's revelation, with a noble confidence in his promises. 'Our fathers trusted in thee, and were not confounded.' We have a farther illustration in our Lord's address to his disciples, upon the withering away of the fig-tree: 'Have faith in God.' He did not question whether they believed in the existence of God, but exhorted them to confidence in his promises; and when called by him to contend with mountainous difficulties, 'Have faith in God, for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe,' i. e. trust that these things which he saith shall come to pass, 'he shall have whatsoever he saith.' It was certainly in reference to this simple trust in Christ's power, that our Lord so highly commended the centurion, and said, 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.'[3]

Apollos.—It just now occurs to my mind, that all the instances of faith in the persons miraculously healed by Christ, were also of this kind: their faith was belief in his claims, and also confidence in his goodness and power.[4]

Aquila.—Yes—and that faith in Christ, my brother—which in the New Testament is connected with salvation, is clearly of this nature; that is, it combines assent with reliance, and belief with trust. 'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name,' i. e. in dependence on my interest and merits, 'he shall give it to you.' Christ you know was preached to both Jews and Gentiles, as the object of their trust, because he was proclaimed as the only true sacrifice for sin, and they were

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

required to renounce their dependence upon their own accustomed sacrifices, and to transfer that dependence to his death and meditation, and 'in his name shall the Gentiles trust.' He is set forth as a propitiation 'through faith in his blood,' which faith can neither merely mean assent to the historical fact that his blood was shed by a violent death, nor mere assent to the general doctrine that his blood had an atoning quality; but as all expiatory offerings were trusted in, as the means of propitiation both among Jews and Gentiles, that faith or trust was now to be exclusively rendered to the blood of Christ, heightened by the stronger demonstrations of a divine appointment, as the only sacrifice for sin, and the only refuge of the true penitent.[1]

Apollos.—I plainly see this, my friend—and I think it must be obviously plain to all, that the faith in Christ which is required of us consists both of assent and trust.

Aquila.—So I think, Apollos; and the necessity of maintaining these inseparably united will be still more apparent, if you consider that it is not a blind and superstitious trust in the sacrifice of Christ, like that of the heathens in their sacrifices, which leads to salvation; nor the presumptuous trust of wicked and impenitent men, who depend on Christ to save them in their sins; but such a trust as is exercised according to the authority and direction of the word of God; so that to know the gospel in its leading principles, and to have a cordial belief in it is necessary to that more specific act of faith, which is called reliance; or in systematic language, *fiducial assent*, of which cometh salvation. The gospel, as the scheme of man's salvation, supposes that he is under law; that this law of the Deity has been violated, and that every man is under sentence of death.[2]

Apollos.—And then the question arises, what must be done to avoid the execution of that punishment, which is the penalty of sin?

Aquila.—Now we see that a serious consideration of our ways, confession of and a sorrowful conviction of the evil and danger of sin, as we have before named, will follow the gift of repentance, and a cordial belief of the testimony of God.

Apollos.—Thus we shall turn to God with contrite hearts, and earnest prayers or supplications, as in the case of the penitent which you named, that would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast and cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

Aquila.—Then he seeks mercy. This we have seen is called 'repentance toward God,' and repentance being the first subject of evangelical preaching, and next the belief of the gospel, it is plain that Christ is only immediately held out, in this divine plan of redemption, as the object of trust in order to forgiveness, to persons in this state of penitence, and under this sense of danger.[3]

Apollos.—The degree of sorrow for transgression, upon this discovery of our danger as sinners, is no where fixed in Scripture, is it?

Aquila.—It is not, only it is supposed every where, that it is such, as will lead men to inquire earnestly, and anxiously, 'what must I do to be saved?' And moreover to use all the appointed means, as those who feel that their salvation is at issue; that they are in a lost condition and must be pardoned or perish. To all such persons, Christ, as the only atonement for sin, is exhibited the object of their trust, with the promise of God, 'that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.'[4]

Apollos.—Nothing then is required of such but this actual trust in, and personal apprehension, or taking hold of the merits of Christ's death, as a sacrifice for sin; and upon their thus believing they are justified, their faith is counted for righteousness. This is indeed answering the question 'what must I do to be saved.'

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

Aquila.—This appears to be the plain Scriptural representation, my friend, of this doctrine, and we may infer several things from it that are of vital importance.

Apollos.—What are those, my brother?

Aquila.—The first is that the faith by which we are justified, is not a mere assent to the doctrines of the gospel, which leaves the heart unmoved, and unaffected, by a sense of the evil and danger of sin, and the desire of salvation, though it supposes this assent. Nor again is it that more lively and cordial assent to, and belief in the doctrines of the gospel touching our sinful, and lost condition, which is wrought in the heart by the spirit of God, and from which, as we have seen springs repentance, though this also must precede it. Nor is it only the assent of the mind, to the method by which God justifies the ungodly, by faith in the sacrifice of his Son; though this is an element of it, but it is a hearty concurrence of the will and the affections with this plan of salvation, which implies a renunciation of every other refuge, and an actual trust in the Saviour, and a personal apprehension of his merits. Now there is the consent of the will, as well as the assent of the understanding, and such a belief of the Gospel by the power of the spirit of God, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into his hands in humble confidence in his ability, and his willingness to save us.[1]

Priscilla.—O! this is faith, living, evangelical faith. This is the faith that justifies and saves the poor culprit, ready to perish, from the tremendous consequences of his sins.

Aquila.—Yes, this is that qualifying condition to which the promise of God annexes justification. Without it justification cannot take place, and in this sense it is, my friend, that we are justified by faith. Mark this! not by the merit of faith—not for the sake of our faith, but by faith instrumentally, as a condition.[2]

Apollos.—Its connection with the benefit arises from the merit of Christ's death and the promise of God then?

Aquila.—If Christ had not merited, God had not promised; if God had not promised, justification had never followed upon this faith. So that the indissoluble connection of faith and justification is from God's institution, whereby he hath bound himself to give the benefit upon the performance of the condition.[3]

Apollos.—Yet is there not an aptitude in this faith to be made a condition?

Aquila.—Certainly, for no other act can receive Christ as a priest propitiating, and pleading the propitiation, and the promise of God for his sake, to give the benefit. As receiving Christ and the gracious promise in this manner, it acknowledges man's guilt, and so man renounces all righteousness in himself, and honours God the Father, and Christ the Son, the only Redeemer.[4]

Apollos.—It glorifies then God's mercy and free grace in the highest degree.

Aquila.—It does, and acknowledges on earth, as will be perpetually acknowledged in heaven, that the whole salvation of sinful man from the beginning to the last degree thereof, and of which there shall be no end, is from God's freest love, Christ's merit and intercession, his own gracious promise, and the power of his own Holy Spirit.[5]

Priscilla.—Here is the faith that justifies and saves with a present salvation, the heart-broken sinner. This is the medium of deliverance from sin.

Aquila.—It is in the use of this, the appointed means or condition of salvation, that the mourner is comforted. This faith, which is the entire trust and reliance of an awakened and penitent sinner, in the atonement of Christ alone, as the meritorious cause of his pardon, is the ground upon which, considered as an

[1] Bunting on Justification. [2] Lawson. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

instrument, peace and salvation flow to the soul. In the exercise of this the poor penitent publican named more than once, goes down to his house 'justified.' The trembling jailor is saved at once, the sinner is converted at once, and now rejoices in the 'times of refreshing,' which come from the presence of the Lord. Now the language of the soul is, 'Come unto me,' and 'I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul.' 'As far as the east is from the west so far hath he separated my sins from me.' 'O! Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.'

Apollos.—I remember well, when sinking almost in despair, when ready, as I thought, to perish, helpless I sunk at the footstool of mercy. A friend pointed me to Jesus, saying, 'if thou canst but believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' By faith I looked to him. Hope began to spring up in my soul. I claimed the Lord Jesus by faith, as the price of my redemption. My confidence was increased, this confidence assumed the character of a settled trust in him, as the foundation of all my hope, and as you say, comfort, peace and joy, at once sprung up in my soul.

Aquila.—And these my friend—are the natural results of a living faith. Your own experience, as well as mine, and indeed I may say of all born of God, may be adduced as evidence, that while there is the assent of the understanding, or the full and entire persuasion of the mind, as also the consent of the will, to all the truths of God, there must be one act, one simple act, called by some the venture of faith, which is a sure trust in the mercy of God, that he hath for Christ's sake, pardoned my sins. Now the poor penitent rejoices in God; now he is ready to leap as an hart; now his soul is filled with delight, and now his language is that Jesus shall be the burden of his song, by night and by noon. His doubts have fled, his fears are dissipated, his sorrow now ceases and is gone, his sins are pardoned, God's spirit testifies to it, he has peace within, the tide of his affections are turned toward God, he has victory over sin, he has communion with Deity himself, his heart is now regenerated, he is justified freely and adopted into the family of heaven as a child of God, and he rejoices day by day in hope of the glory of God.

Priscilla.—This is short work. It is a work of God, and he does it like himself, when the heart is prepared by repentance, and seeks it only by faith; a moment is enough. O! I have often thought of it Apollos—Paul was awakened, convicted, repented, became a believer, and was happily converted to God, and above all, joined the flock of Christ and became a gospel preacher in three short days. It was a work of grace and the Deity did it at once, as a God.

Apollos.—Indeed I have often thought of the case of this jailor, who has been named, he was awakened after Paul and Silas were singing at midnight, repented, believed, was pardoned, baptized and become one of the flock of Christ, between that hour and day-break.

Aquila.—But both these cases, my friend—bear no comparison with the one named in the Acts of the Apostles, while Peter was preaching, thousands were cut to the heart, turned to God, believed on Jesus, and were saved at once.

Priscilla.—O! if men would only give up the soul when God calls, and not only assent to truth, being fully persuaded thereof, but trust the Lord Jesus as the price of redemption, and the ground, the sure foundation of salvation, they would find directly peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Apollos.—This brings to my mind a fact in my own case. It was but a short time, when I began to seek aright, before I found mercy and peace to my soul.

Aquila.—If we take into consideration that this work, my friend—is not only by grace, but by faith, that is, a sure trust in the Lord Jesus, as the price of salvation, it will be easy to perceive, that one hour is as ample for it, as seven years. It is God's work to awaken, convict, and lead a sinner to see his

danger, when that sinner betakes himself to prayer, improves the talent bestowed, and uses all diligence in seeking mercy at the hand of God, his heavenly Father, not only enlightens his mind, but by grace, so works upon the heart, as to produce in him an utter abhorrence of sin and all his sinful ways, and their delights. Broken up on account of sin, he returns as the penitent prodigal, to his father's house. See how he improves the talent bestowed on him. He does not set down, and say I can do nothing. O no! I can but perish if I approach him: 'I will arise and go to my father;' he comes, now he begins to trust, if he will not place me in the house as a son, let him make me as a 'hired servant.' 'Father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy son,' 'make me as one of thy hired servants.' Here is confidence, here is trust. God hears, God sees, and in abundant mercy, pardons and accepts, alone for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, at this moment, the penitent is justified or pardoned, regenerated or born again, and comforted, to all which God's spirit testifies and clearly manifests to him his adoption, as the legitimate and direct effects of faith in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—Do explain these effects of faith, if you please, or rather those blessings which are obtained through the instrumentality of faith.

Aquila.—I will do so, on another evening when we will enter on this subject, and give you our views of these several blessings obtained by faith. It becomes us solemnly to examine our own hearts, that we may see, if we have thus approached God, and have been saved by faith in the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen its antecedent act, we have noticed how the soul is required to rely on Christ for pardon and obtains it freely; let us before we proceed farther, look at it, as it involves obedience. We have said that it produces a serious and an effectual purpose, to perform what God requires of us, and I am disposed to notice this here, because it does appear to me, to be mingled with all its operations and with all that progress that we make in the faith of the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Apollos.—How is this, my friend?

Aquila.—We are not here to notice the effects of faith generally, as justification and regeneration, nor that particular obedience that the soul yields to the divine precepts, but rather that disposition of soul, that faith begets even in its embryo state, if I may so speak, to obey God, by turning our feet to his testimonies. This is perhaps, the reason why some have spoken of faith as a habit, rather than as a combination of acts, through the medium and instrumentality of which, a condemned sinner is freely justified and saved.

Apollos.—What then is the true nature of this consequent act, as it is called?

Aquila.—It has been admitted by us, that in proportion to the degree of light which has been poured upon the mind, as the result of grace, is the amount of that conviction, that those who obey God will attain to eternal life. In the same ratio also as the light received is improved by us, so also according to the economy of heaven, is our own belief strengthened and confirmed by grace, until we are enabled by it, and by it alone to rely for pardon on our Lord Jesus.

Apollos.—As then one talent is improved, another is granted.

Aquila.—It does seem so, and the first thing that I have noticed, when divine light is poured upon the mind, both in my own and the experience of others, is the desire to obey God, and I believe that one of the legitimate fruits of both belief, or assent and persuasion, as well as confidence and reliance, is the disposition to do the will of God. Hence, men when they are enlightened, feel a desire to hear, to read, to pray, and it is right that they should, for faith cometh by hearing, and a prayerless penitent would be an anomaly in experience. Now because when regenerated by faith it shows forth itself in such an obedience, this

is called the life of faith, without which it is ineffectual to salvation, nay is accounted no faith at all. 'He that saith I know him,' i. e. believe on him 'and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him.' Indeed I believe that the result of faith, as it tends to justify and change the heart, is obedience to Christ. Hence it is said he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and although the antecedent act of faith or persuasion, does not produce justification, yet is it not to be considered as of no value, for we have said there can be no reliance without it.

Apollos.—Has this its foundation in the nature of faith?

Aquila.—I think it has. Let us look for one moment at the true nature of faith more thoroughly, and we shall perceive it. The apostle Paul tells us that faith is υποστασις UPOSTASIS 'the substance,' foundation, persuasion, confidence of things hoped for; and ελεγχος ELENCHOS, the evidence, proof, demonstration of things not seen; because by its certainty and solidity, it bestows a sort of present being on future things, and brings them into lively exercise, and places them as it were before the eyes of the believer. Faith, you must remember, takes it for granted, that not only future good things, will at one time or other be present, and by this representation renders them efficacious, as if they were now really here, but it acts as said, even in its embryo state, in such a way as to produce an effort for moral action. And thus an awakened sinner has a degree of faith, so also has a true penitent, but yet there must be another degree or act to have the soul justified, and there is, as we shall see, a state even beyond this, where in the exercise of a still greater degree of faith, the soul is sanctified and made meet for the master's use, in the kingdom of eternal life.

Apollos.—Then this faith not only produces pardon and peace, but also brings into view, and manifests the christian's clear and undisputed title to the future blessings of eternal life, the beatific vision, and all the enjoyments of the other world, in opposition to eternal death, that misery and torment in another state of existence.

Aquila.—If then faith does this, and I am sure it does, if it be so efficacious as to make absent things, as it were present, and applies the blood of Christ in such a way as that it brings demonstration of our acceptance, and bears with it that glorious witness of pardon, it must in its very nature produce obedience to Christ's call, and acceptance of his invitation.

Apollos.—That is, he who believes the testimony of God's word and Spirit, does also, in the commencement of his seeking the way to eternal life, have with that belief a conviction that leads to certainty in his own mind, in regard to the importance of obeying the calls of the gospel; and indeed he is led to it by the grace of God, in such a manner that he seeks to know his duty, convinced that if he is disobedient to the divine calls, he must suffer eternal death, and he compares with this misery, that state of blessedness and joy which God promises to all those who seek his face.

Aquila.—The reason of all this is very plain, there is no comparison between the enjoyments of this world, whereby we are tempted to sin, and the happiness of a future; nor between the pain we may suffer in restraining our appetites, and the eternal torment of hell fire. All the things of this life are of an inconstant and transitory nature, they perish even in the enjoyment of them, but eternal life is a solid, lasting and perfect happiness. The awakened sinner asks himself what can be compared to it? He finds out that all earthly things perish in their very using, that the pleasures of this life have in themselves an alloy, which renders them unsatisfactory, and by no means competent to the thirst of an immortal soul. What, he is ready to ask, are the evils attendant on a life of piety, when compared with eternal glory, which is ready to be revealed?

Now he finds out that men are most affected with those objects, that are present, and that strike more immediately at the senses. This he sees is the great cause, why so many walk by sight not by faith, and are carnal and mind worldly things. On the other hand, he sees that those future enjoyments, may and ought to be brought closer to himself, he feels that he ought to behold them as present, and that he ought to be more strongly affected with this view, than with all the allurements offered him by the false and glittering appearance of this world. Now he begins to feel that he ought to obey Christ. He hears it, 'except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' He commences prayer, he seeks, he hears, he reads, if he can read at all. Now he has the faith of one who is deeply convicted.

Priscilla.—This is only a belief. Here many stop.

Aquila.—Yes! indeed—many, very many stop here: but the soul that is in earnest, cries out for help. It cannot help, it cannot save itself. If it should stop the fire is extinguished, but it feels that all is lost, if it does not advance, and as it is found improving these talents already granted, God's spirit and grace divinely aid, until the great deep of the heart is broken up. Grace alone can help the sinner to repent. Now he is sick of sin, now he abhors himself, he has knowledge, but this will not save him, the world persuades, and so do Satan and his own corrupt heart, to go back, but he cries out, 'ah! whither shall I go?' These cannot relieve me, I know too much of them already. I am 'burdened,' I am 'sick,' I am 'faint.' Tell me to whom shall I pour out my sorrows, on whom shall I call for relief.

Apollos.—Now he has the faith of a penitent, and there is the full persuasion of the truth as it is in Jesus. Now I see it, he cries from the disquietude of his soul for help. Save! Lord Jesus save! or I perish.

Aquila.—Yes—in private—in public, he seeks now for mercy, determined not to give over the struggle. Perhaps he inquires of all those who, he supposes, have experienced religion, and his faith, though not the faith that justifies and pardons, does point him to Christ. He hears the Redeemer say, 'ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' He does ask, and that importunately, he does seek, and that by day and night, in and out of the church, determined to find or die in the attempt, saying 'though thou slay me, yet will I put my trust in thee.' Just now he is a fit subject for pardoning mercy. Now, he begins to feel the precious drawings of divine love, and a ray of hope begins to dawn upon his darkness.

Apollos.—O this brings to my mind the description that one gives of his return to the Lord. 'By night on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth. I sought him but I found him not. I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways. I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not; the watchmen that go about the city, found me; to whom I said, saw ye him whom my soul loveth. It was a little that I passed from them before I found him, whom my soul loveth. I held him and would not let him go.'

Aquila.—What an appropriate description this is, of the awakened sinner's course, if he seek the Lord until he finds him. When in comparative darkness he commences seeking Jesus, and though disappointed he repairs to the church, and in the use of the ordinances of God's house, he continues to seek, being diligent therein he is soon found by the ministers, the watchmen, and not long after he passes away from them, he finds the Lord, and confidently holds and will not let him go. Such my friend—is the case of the sincere penitent, persuaded that he can only be saved by Jesus; and having approximated to a state, in which he is ready to renounce, his own both righteous and unrighteous deeds: despairing of salvation, only for the sake of Jesus, he leans, he relies upon, he trusts him. Here is the act, the blessed act of faith, which God's grace enables him to exercise. All the power was of grace, having improved the

ability bestowed, and having gone on from one degree to another, in the midst of all his anguish and distress seeking the Lord, he is now enabled by grace to believe. Faith is the gift of God, the act or exercise of the gift is the duty of man. All is now calm and peace. Now the sinner knows his sins are pardoned, the spirit testifies to his acceptance with God, and in the enjoyment of that peace which this world cannot give, he praises and blesses the name of God.

Apollos.—It will then follow, my friend—that from first to last, faith is obedience to God, so that he who does not believe the gospel, ought to be esteemed an enemy to righteousness.

Aquila.—This I think is plain, very plain. That faith which is evangelical, which as it is a persuasion or assent to truth, is also an act of dependence and reliance on Christ, and thus while it produces pardon and joy in the Holy Ghost, also apprehends the future good proposed to all God's children, is solid and strong, and cannot be barren or destitute of good fruits.

Apollos.—It will therefore follow also, that a neglect of what is good, and a customary doing of what is evil, is a certain and an infallible sign of a man's having no true and sound faith in him, as the word of God says, 'faith without works is dead.'

Aquila.—I have made those remarks, my friend—on obedience, as it is connected with faith in Christ, which seems to be involved in it, in order to place before you that disposition that grace implants in us to do the will of God, at that moment when it does enlighten the human mind. And in proportion as a man improves what is bestowed, as we have said repeatedly, God mercifully increases his light, his gifts and strength to resist sin, until at last he is enabled by grace, not only to repent, but to believe on the Lord Jesus, so as to obtain pardon and find redemption in his blood.

Priscilla.—O! is not this plain, from the very fact that God never converts a prayerless, careless man? The seeker is the one that finds, he that asks receives, and the mourner is the one that is comforted. And besides, if a man do not continue to prove his faith, after it is sufficient for justification and pardon, by good works, he will soon lose the witness of that pardon, and sink again into the mire of transgression.

Aquila.—All this evinces what I have advanced to be true. That as the conviction of God's grace may be resisted by man, and finally lose all its effects on his hard heart, so by obedience to the call we encourage its operations, until we are enabled to exercise the faith that produces pardon. It does appear to me, as I remarked before, that there is involved in faith, in its every degree, whether it be persuasion or reliance, a disposition to yield to grace that gives this call. This will be more apparent when we come to consider the effects, which naturally flow from it. It is now late and we must retire. Good night.

COLLOQUY VIII.

THE VIRTUES OF THE WILL, CONTINUED—A FURTHER INVESTIGATION OF THE SUBJECT OF FAITH—AND A CONSIDERATION OF THOSE VARIOUS DIVISIONS OF IT, IN WHICH ARE INVOLVED THE BLESSED EFFECTS THAT MANIFEST THEMSELVES IN ITS COMMENCEMENT, PROGRESS, AND CONSUMMATION.

Aquila.—We have seen, my friend—that the primary and efficient cause of faith is God, from whom as the 'father of lights every good and perfect gift cometh.' His gifts are various. We have already seen that some are bestowed on men absolutely, and without any co-operation on our part at all. Of such are creation, preservation and redemption, besides numerous other blessings that flow

from these. Others are given by the Deity, but then the labour of man is necessary for obtaining them. Thus God gives corn, but the industry of the husbandman must be used in sowing the grain in the earth and reaping the harvest: others again, are commanded by God, for the performance of which he bestows upon us sufficient helps; but the exertion of man is required, whereby he yields with divine assistance to the commands of God, and so obtains the gift offered to him; so that while all are of grace, none are enjoyed in their full consummation and entire benefits, without the co-operation of our wills, and an effort on our part for moral action.

Apollos.—All the ability proceeds from grace, but this ability is to be exercised by us.

Aquila.—I think so, and of this nature it appears to me, are repentance and faith.

Apollos.—Although faith then is the gift of God, it is not such an one as is wrought in us without our co-operation, nor a habit as it were infused by the Almighty in us, independent of ourselves.

Aquila.—I would rather think that as it respects its exercise, it is an act of obedience proceeding from the will, while as it regards the cause, it is evidently the product of the direct and immediate influence of divine grace, by which men are excited and assisted to throw their poor perishing souls on the Lord Jesus for present and everlasting salvation.

Apollos.—What are your reasons for this view of faith, my friend.

Aquila.—I am led to this conclusion by the consideration of the following particulars. The first is that faith is commanded us by our heavenly Father, with the addition of a promised reward and a threatened punishment. Thus, 'he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.' But habits infused by the Deity without the co-operation of man, cannot be prescribed to him as a condition, for the plain reason that they cannot be reckoned as his acts. We are also informed, my friend—that faith comes by hearing the word of God, but a habit without co-operation proceeds not from hearing, but from the divine omnipotent power wholly independent of man. And it would seem if faith be thus infused without our co-operation, that men would be believers before that they actually believe, which is absurd.[1]

Apollos.—Is not faith according to the Scriptures, presented to us as an act of obedience?

Aquila.—It is so. In its Scripture acceptation it is certainly an act of obedience, as being commanded: but an infused habit is not so, being produced by an external power. Now if this were the case, the will would be wholly passive, which is repugnant to the nature of a free and unconstrained action. Moreover, Apollos—faith according to this view, both as it regards the ability to believe, and the exercise of that ability, would be wholly the work of God, man would have nothing to do in it, and in a sort of sense, God might be said to believe for us. To all this we might add, that unbelief could never be attributed to man, or charged upon him as a transgression, for the reply to all the reproofs of infidelity would be, if God wishes me to be a believer, why does he not make me so? Now in opposition to all these erroneous views, St. Paul says, 'if *thou* shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hast raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' We are to use and improve all the grace given, becoming co-workers together with God.[2]

Apollos.—You do not mean then that faith considered as an act of the will, is either at the commencement or in any of its subsequent operations, an act inde-

[1] Limborch and Watson

[2] Wesley and Watson.

pendent of divine grace, and that its action is by its own natural faculty alone, but is a principle or power of assenting to the truth, and of trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation, generated by divine grace, which prevents and assists us, working in us a good will and rendering us capable of believing in that sacrifice provided for sin. So that our salvation is of grace through faith.

Aquila.—This is the true state of the case, and therefore it becomes a sure trust, as it is wrought in us by grace, through the instrumentality of repeated efforts, or the constant exercise of it on our part, by which it becomes perfect, God working in us according to the good pleasure of his will, and although without him we can do nothing, yet in the improvement of the light and grace from time to time bestowed, we are not only enabled to see ourselves, repent of sin, but also to be persuaded fully of the truth, as it is in Jesus, and rely on him for everlasting life, as well as present pardon, peace and love.[1]

Apollos.—But it is objected to this, my friend Aquila—that if faith be an act of the creature, as it respects its exercise, then the difference between a regenerate and an unregenerate man, is to be found in our own actions, which are not permanent but inconstant, and besides, it is said that it must then follow, that even in a dormant state, or a condition of physical inactivity, as in sleep, men would not be in a state of grace, because faith would not be in lively exercise.[2]

Aquila.—There is no force at all in this objection, in any of its parts. And if any is to be found in it, it will be solved by a single reply, which is this. All our actions contribute toward a habit, and every first act is the beginning of that habit, especially if that first act be not single, but compounded of many other acts, which concur in the production thereof.

Apollos.—Such acts then in the beginning tend so far to perfection, that in a short time by some subsequent acts, there is the fixed and settled exercise of that trust through which we are justified by grace.

Aquila.—It does appear that faith is somewhat of this nature. For the exercise of which several concurrent acts are requisite.[3] According to that view which we have had of it, there is the *knowledge* of the divine will, a judgment passed after a nice inquisition, into the reasons and grounds for faith, and an inclination of the will in assenting to those reasons. All of which is accomplished by grace, without which no one act of faith can be performed. The first though complete in itself, may be incomplete as it respects the exercise of that constant dependence on Christ for salvation. But by subsequent efforts and struggles even in an agony, and in all the ardour of fervent and effectual prayer, it settles into a firm reliance on Christ, as the price of salvation now, and with that reliance comes our pardon and comfort.[4]

Apollos.—The difference then between the believer and unbeliever, is not in the reception of the doctrines as true, so much as in the fact of reliance on, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—Here is the essential difference, the believer receives and relies on Christ, the unbeliever, perhaps, receives his doctrine, but rejects him. The heart of one is subjugated by grace through faith, but that of the other, resists and refuses the sacrifice provided. So that in the exercise of this constant trust in Christ, whether asleep or awake, we partake of that care and protection, which are the portion of them that trust in him.[5]

Apollos.—It seems then that this faith taken as a great whole is a kind of complex act of the mind, by or through which the soul is justified and saved.

Aquila.—The acts or exercises of this faith, which we have set forth distinctly, seem all to be included in that effort of the soul, aided by grace, in which there is

[1] Watson.
[2] Limborch.
[3] Watson on Justification.
[4] Ibid and Limborch.
[5] Limborch.

the concurrent exertion of all its powers, to rely on Jesus for deliverance.[1] While, as we have said, there is the assent of the understanding, to the truth of the testimony of God in the gospel; and especially to that part of it which concerns the designs and efficacy of the death of Jesus, as a sacrifice for sin; there is, as also remarked, the consent of the will and affections to this plan of salvation; such an approbation and choice of it as imply a renunciation of every other refuge, and a steady and decided preference of this.[2]

Apollos.—And this is the very reason why unbelief is called the disallowing of the foundation laid in Zion, whereas faith includes a sincere and hearty allowance of it, and a thankful acquiescence in God's revealed method of forgiveness.

Aquila.—From this assent of the enlightened understanding, and consent of the rectified will, to the evangelical testimony concerning Christ crucified, results the next thing, which is supposed to be implied in justifying faith, namely an actual trust in the Saviour, and the personal apprehension of his merits.[3]

Apollos.—O! I see how obedience is interwoven in this faith from its very commencement.

Aquila.—If you refer to experience you will perceive it still more plainly. When under the promised leading and influence of the Holy Ghost, the penitent sinner thus confidently relies, and individually, in the exercise of the ability granted by grace, lays hold on Christ, then the work of justifying faith is complete, then, and not till then, he is immediately justified.[4] On the whole then, my friend—it may be said, that the faith, to which the privilege of justification is annexed, is such a belief of the gospel, by the power of the spirit of God, as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into his hands, in humble confidence in his ability and willingness to save.[5]

Apollos.—The grand doctrine of the reformation, was justification by faith, was it not?

Aquila.—It was my friend, and is therefore held by all the Lutheran and reformed churches. The Papists assert that man's inherent righteousness, is the meritorious cause of his justification; many Protestant divines have endeavoured to unite the two, and have held that men are justified by faith and good works. Others have equally departed from the opinions of the reformers on this subject, by representing it as the result of an imputation of Christ's righteousness, both active and passive, to those that believe, instead of confining the imputation to the moral consequence and effect of both.[6]

Apollos.—In other words that which is reckoned to us, in our justification for righteousness, is our faith in Christ's merits.

Aquila.—Yes, and that not for any intrinsic value in, or as before said, for the sake of our faith, but only for the sake of those merits that are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—I have seen, my friend, that all this is the product of divine grace on the heart of man, who uses, in obedience to God's calls, the ability granted for the attainment of this blessed end. I wish you to set forth if you please, the means or instruments used by grace to produce this faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—I have already suggested that these are various. The spirit of God is always at work, and it crieth in our hearts with groanings that cannot be uttered, and while there is 'the same spirit, there is a diversity of operations.' All the surrounding circumstances of life are sanctified by this spirit, to lead us from the

[1] Watson on Justification.
[2] Watson.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

world to the living God, and by man, the Deity calls man to seek his face, so that even the experience of every christian may be made a blessing, and become instrumental in producing assent to truth and trust in Christ, in others. Prayer, constant, humble, sincere, ardent prayer: prayer, that is importunate must be used, and God's spirit, if we obey it, will lead to this. But the chief instrument that God uses to produce faith in us, is his word, whether spoken by him, or committed to writing, and read and expounded by men, which is always attended in a greater or less degree by the spiritual influence of the Holy Ghost.

Apollos.—This word requires faith.

Aquila.—Not only so, but it contains many reasons, and many tokens, by which a man may not only be convinced of the divinity of that word, but have his faith, though it be but as a grain of mustard seed, augmented. Indeed, my friend, the Scripture says, as we have quoted before, 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' In this word are arguments that press themselves on the mind of the sincere inquirer after eternal life. He looks at the sanctity of the doctrine, he beholds the excellency of the promises, he weighs the miracles of every kind for the confirmation of that doctrine. He sees that the divine authority is to be established in the heart, if the Bible be true: and while the Holy Spirit is pressing these things on his mind, he has first assent, and then the consent of his will, until as a poor penitent, seeking for Jesus, he is at last enabled to trust and be saved by the mercy of him who died for the world.

Apollos.—You have said that the exercise of evangelical faith is in itself a voluntary act, and that it has involved in it obedience, as the glorious result of that consent of the will to be governed by Christ. Tell me are the arguments offered, such as will produce this disposition of soul in him that is, a sincere inquirer after the truth.

Aquila.—They are I think, and this will be apparent if we look, my friend—at them as they are presented to us, and moreover admit that there are present the spirit and grace of God, by which all are brought to bear on the mind for the production of that faith, which we cannot beget in ourselves. Whoever rightly considers the nature of faith, that it is in its exercise, an act of obedience, will be very far from expecting, on God's part, such arguments for the production of it, as are mathematically demonstrable and self-evident, but only such as are convincing to sincere and teachable minds, and against which nothing can be urged.[1]

Apollos.—It is very important that our faith should be fixed on a solid foundation, else it would be no cause of wonder if all men were infidels, and the hope of salvation cannot rest on a ground work that is laid in the sand.

Aquila.—O no! but while it is true that there are things which seem to be absurd to the carnal reasoner, as that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by the Jews, is the Christ, in whom we ought to believe; that the cross and afflictions are the direct road to eternal life, and that the rough and thorny way is the path to endless rest; all which seem mysterious, and not to be comprehended by those who are at enmity with God; yet when led by the spirit under the influence of divine grace, the mind is turned to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and his ascension into heaven, it finds in them abundant evidence to satisfy the candid inquirer, into the truth of his doctrines, and so convinced is he, that no room is left for doubt. It would, however, seem that the nature of faith, my friend, does not require such evident arguments as shall remove all difficulty from the mind; for then it would be by constraint, not trust, nor consequently could it claim the promised blessing.

Apollos.—God then does by an application of his word, through the medium

[1] Limborch.

of the spirit of divine grace so work in us, as that, at the same time is preserved, not only our own agency, but there is begotten in us a teachable disposition.

Aquila.—And not only a teachable disposition, but a disposition to the obedience of faith, that the operation of divine grace may become effectual in us.

Apollos.—Do the Scriptures authorize this opinion?

Aquila.—I think they do. In St. John's gospel the Saviour recommends this, as of vital importance. 'For every one,' saith he, 'that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.' And again, 'if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' 'He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God.' 'My sheep hear,' i. e. obey, heed, 'my voice and I know them, and they follow me.' And St. James says, 'whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.' Here it is very plain, my friend—that while there is inquiry, there is action, 'he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work.' So that as I said, the exercise of faith is obedience.

Apollos.—Every obstacle, is to be dismissed from the mind.

Aquila.—Yes, the gospel requires that the mind should be free from passion, prejudice and malice, three main obstacles in the way, of a living and evangelical faith. Passion disturbs and draws a veil over the mind in such a way that it cannot discern the truth: prejudice has such a prepossession in our minds, and so strong a bias on our judgments, that so long as we are swayed by it, we cannot but think, and judge, just as it directs and inclines us.

Apollos.—But malice is the greatest hindrance of all, is it not?

Aquila.—It is, my friend.—For the doctrine of Jesus Christ, to which we are by faith to assent, is diametrically opposite to the lusts of the flesh, prescribing the denial and mortification of them, and requiring that our righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees; with the promises of eternal life, and future enjoyments annexed to it. These precepts are ungrateful, these promises unknown to flesh and blood, we cannot tell how to hope for such things; desire is bent upon present enjoyments, which man sees, and feels, and tastes, and is sensible of. The soul must let go all hatred, it must be at peace with all men, it must not know an enemy and grace alone can effect this.

Apollos.—No wonder then that the carnal mind is averse to all this.

Aquila.—It is besotted, if I may so speak, with sensual pleasures, it has no relish for the christian religion, no knowledge of spiritual things, and no inclination to believe in a future state of existence, where rewards are granted and punishments inflicted on a principle of stern and inflexible justice, according as men shall be found to receive or respect Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Apollos.—Hence originate the several branches into which faith is divided by some, do explain them?

Aquila.—There is a division which has been called a vulgar or common distinction of faith, which may be noticed here, only to put you in possession of the different views of divines in respect to this mighty principle, which as a vast lever sets, under grace, the whole machine of christianity into operation.

Apollos.—What is this distinction or division, my friend.

Aquila.—It is into an historical, a temporary, a justifying faith, and the faith of miracles.[1]

Apollos.—Is this division admissible?

[1] Limborch.

Aquila.—It might be admitted, if the several parts of it are said to differ not in kind, but in degree. The difference between an historical and a temporary faith, as they are called, and the faith that justifies, we have shown to be that the latter includes in it confidence and reliance. It would appear that though they partake of the same nature, yet to say the least they differ widely in degree, and although without historical, there cannot be justifying faith, for this last includes in it the other, yet a man may believe the whole history of the Bible, and yet not so rely upon Christ as to be saved from the guilt of sin. As to temporary faith, it is not a scriptural term or expression. It appears to be introduced by those who use it, to represent only the faith of some temporizing or time-serving men, who fell away when persecution arose for the gospel's sake. Thus saith our Lord 'but he which received seed into stony places, the same is he which heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet he hath not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.' Now it does appear that they had a degree at least, of faith, or rather they had a belief, a persuasion of the truth. And this faith, though not the faith that justifies the soul, is nevertheless of great value, as appears from several reasons.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is that men are threatened with a sorer condemnation, if they do turn away from this their faith, though it may be small, even as a grain of mustard seed, and may not be the degree necessary for justification, 'for to him that hath, shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.' What occasion can there be for a penalty so severe and a punishment so grievous and extreme, if the first degree of light, and consequently faith was not of immense value, and designed to lead to the justification of the soul? And you will also notice that though men may turn, and that speedily from their convictions and the degree of faith they have, it is no evidence that it is of no value. For perseverance itself in the path of piety, is not essential to true faith, for a man may turn away from this, and the 'holy commandments' also 'delivered to him.' This is plain from the fact that it is only a remote consequence of faith, if it were not so, no man could be a believer until he died, his perseverance until death being essential to his faith.

Apollos.—And you say another division of it has been into the faith of miracles.

Aquila.—As it regards the faith of miracles, I confess that this is a distinct kind of faith, and such as does not affect all men, and at all times. This is a peculiar gift of working miracles, which is not communicated to all. However it is plain that this is neither without an historical or justifying faith, but is a most eminent degree of that mysterious principle by which the soul is united to God. This faith has been supposed to be two-fold in its acts. The one is active in itself, by which a man relies steadfastly on God, for that power by which some miracle may be wrought by him, at his entreaty and according to his desire. Thus our Lord said 'verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.' And St. Paul says, 'though I have the gift of all prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity I am nothing.' The other act of this faith is that which is passive, by which one believes that a miracle will be wrought in himself, by the means or instrumentality of another person, whom he fully believes to be sent of God. This was a condition, which the Saviour frequently required of those on whom, and for whose sake he wrought his miracles: as appears by those expressions recorded in the gospels, when he says, 'dost thou believe that I am able to do

this.' 'According to thy faith, be it done unto thee,' &c. So you see my friend—what faith is required, both in the person performing a miracle, and that person on whom a miracle is performed. When the performance of miracles was necessary to the confirmation of the gospel, God granted the gift of faith, by which those miracles were performed, and perhaps if we lived up to our justifying faith, and were wholly sanctified by grace, so as to be ever devoted to God and him alone, we might still see those extraordinary operations of divine grace, with which the church was once so signally honoured. As the division we have presented of faith, includes all that is contained in those just named, except the faith of miracles, which was a gift of God, peculiar to those times wherein they were wrought, we may notice those distinctions or divisions of it, which are often alluded to in the Scriptures

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—According to that acceptation of faith in the Scripture, it is presented to us either as a *lively* or a *dead* faith.

Apollos.—What is implied in a lively faith?

Aquila.—A lively faith is that which obtains justification and adoption into the divine favour, and consequently produces good fruits. While a dead faith is destitute of works, never having been effectual for the producing of justification. The former is merely sentimental, for all faith is dead unless it be put into lively exercise, and thereby produces good fruits, so that there is a constant distinction to be preserved between what is mere persuasion, and that which is trust or reliance on Christ for pardon and salvation.

Apollos.—Faith then, or belief which does not produce good fruits, in the absence of its legitimate effects, is called dead, it is fruitless and avails not for eternal life.

Aquila.—It is so, a body without a spirit, which neither justifies nor saves.

Apollos.—Do not the Scripture speak of faith as sometimes strong, and then again as weak.

Aquila.—They do, and here is another division of it, founded on its degrees. This takes place in its several acts, whether we view them as assent or persuasion, including knowledge, or as reliance or trust, including the consent of the will, and implying, as we have suggested, obedience to Christ, or the reception of Christ.

Apollos.—Well. How may faith be weak with respect to these?

Aquila.—As it respects knowledge, that is a weak faith which knows only the rudiments and first principles of christianity, and which as yet does not thoroughly apprehend some one doctrine, which is of moment in matters of religion; on the contrary, those who have made a considerable proficiency in the knowledge of the gospel, who to their knowledge of things necessary, have added that of things useful, and being fully persuaded of the certainty of them, can give, and that confidently, a reason of the hope that is in them, and stop the mouths of gainsayers. If we view it with regard to assent or persuasion in general, a weak faith is either backward, or rash and injudicious in assenting to those things which God has revealed to us in his gospel, whether promises, threatenings or any thing else that is remote from our senses, and as it respects confidence, it is with difficulty brought to rely at times on God and Christ, especially in adversity.[1] The mind is fearful, and does not fully acquiesce in the will of God and his providence. As in the case of the disciples when Christ was asleep in the ship, and it endangered by a storm, they waked him up, being afraid and said 'Lord! save us, we perish.' And he saith unto them, 'why are ye fearful, O! ye of little faith?' Or, as Peter, when attempting to walk on the sea, and ready to

[1] Limborch and Watson.

sink, was filled with fear, but 'Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, 'O! thou of little faith wherefore didst thou doubt.' 'Lord I believe, help mine unbelief,' said the distressed father of a son possessed with a devil, when he came to our Lord to heal him. He had weak faith he prayed that it might be augmented, so that he might rely on Jesus to heal his son. And lastly that faith is weak, which does not produce that lively, active and swift obedience in claiming the full and complete enjoyment of all our privileges as christians. How often is it the case, that when we ought to be strong in faith, giving glory to God, we are as yet babes, being weak, and have need that some one teach us, them which be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. And now that all of us ought to be sanctified and filled with divine love, years have passed in our experience, and we are yet but babes in Christ. Our faith is weak, perhaps; at least, this is true when it does not bring a bright and a clear evidence of our acceptance with God.

Apollos.—And a strong faith is exactly the opposite of all this?

Aquila.—It is. It assents not only readily, but also with judgment, to all the truths of the christian religion, though many of them be above our comprehension, and cannot be discovered by natural reason, but are to be known by a divine revelation alone. It depends steadfastly on God, expecting a completion of the divine promises, it overlooks all obstacles and difficulties, and does not cast away its confidence, though no natural means appear, by which the end hoped for may be possibly obtained. It 'hopes even against hope,' as did Abraham, being 'strong in faith giving glory to God.' It therefore pays not only a willing but an extraordinary obedience, if I may so speak, to God, i. e. it relies upon him under all circumstances, and does not hesitate to perform duty, not only in things that are hard to be borne, and unpleasant to flesh and blood, but also in those things which seem to thwart an expectation of the promises of God.

Apollos.—Well, my friend, as the acts of faith are subordinate to one another, the first being connected with those that follow: do not the weakness and imperfection of the antecedent act, render the subsequent acts also weak and imperfect?

Aquila.—I do not know that they would, for a man may not have much knowledge and yet may depend on Christ; for instance, if weak in knowledge, and unable exactly to apprehend a doctrine, it does not follow that he may not confidently rely on Christ, and obtain and enjoy all the comforts of religion. But this is to be understood chiefly of points in doctrine. In proof of this, one who is ignorant of many things, may and often does assent to the fundamentals of religion, which he understands, as taught of God's spirit, and is thereby excited to obey, by believing in Christ, being aided by grace.

Apollos.—And this is the very reason why we see so many souls who are ignorant, excel in true piety, because they take God at his word, firmly believe the divine precepts, and cheerfully embrace his promises, without nicely inquiring into, or clearly apprehending the particular doctrines of the christian religion.

Aquila.—They rely, my dear brother, on Christ, and him alone, confidently for pardon and eternal life.

Apollos.—Is not faith sometimes divided, and are there not distinctions made, in view of that progress which we make in the divine life?

Aquila.—With respect to the idea suggested, of its being in its very nature an act of obedience, and taking in the consent of the will, as well as the assent of the understanding and reliance on Christ, it has been divided by some into initial, progressive and consummative or matured faith. These are terms which are used, it must be borne in mind, my friend—simply to represent the different stages of christian experience, as it is connected with the exercise of a living, and an evangelical faith.

Apollos.—Do tell me what is meant by *initial* faith?

Aquila.—We are not *born* in the faith, or with faith, my friend. It does not grow in nature's garden, it is a work of grace. There must therefore be a time when grace does commence this work. *Initial* faith, then, is the faith of beginners, by which they mean not mere assent or persuasion, but also reliance, for until a man has this, it is most evident that he has not saving faith, and is not even at the threshhold of christianity. He does not only consent to the truth of the gospel, but by grace he has parted, and that most cheerfully, with the lusts of this world, and is now seeking after a holy and devoted life. He has forsaken all his old inveterate habits of sin, and although he has found nature reluctant to let all go for Christ, and has hard struggles to give up the world, to resist the flesh, in extreme anguish he has sought until ready to despair: now by faith he realizes the love of God, his sins are pardoned, he has peace with God, he is adopted into the divine family, he relies on Christ, and God's spirit answers to the blood of Jesus, and tells him that he is born of God. Now he feels, he knows, that he is a believer, and has the well grounded hope of eternal life, a fair title and claim, though but a babe in Christ, to his father's estate, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here is initial faith, or the faith that justifies the soul, and by which it is now adopted into the divine favour.

Apollos.—Like a little child, which has a fair title to his patrimonial estate, though he may not yet be of age, he is but a minor, a babe, but when he becomes a man strong in faith and in the Lord, of mature years in christian experience, he will not only be better qualified to serve God here, but to glorify him hereafter.

Aquila.—Certainly, and although his faith is the same in nature, as we have proved in the beginning, or at the time of justification, that it is in its more perfect state, it is not the same in degree. It is the faith of a babe, whose moral powers are weak, through sin and the corruption of our nature. But as faith is augmented, so also are all the graces of God's spirit proportionably augmented in us, faith being the mighty lever, as we before said, by which the whole under grace are set into action.

Apollos.—And now comes in what you call progressive faith. What is this?

Aquila.—It is the faith of those who retain their first love, and grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the truth, daily advancing in the divine life, and who by the benefit of that faith, which is in constant exercise, are enabled, not only to retain the evidence of their acceptance with God, and live daily in the enjoyment of God, but also to accustom themselves to a stricter course of life; so as not only to abstain from sin, but to know that sin has no dominion over them, for they are not under the law but under grace, and by that grace, they curb, and bring under the reluctant tempers of the heart, denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Jesus day by day. Still they feel the strugglings of the flesh, the remains of the carnal mind, 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit and these are contrary one to the other:' the enemy is bound but he is not wholly cast out, they have victory over the world and the devil, but O! the tempers of their hearts so often manifest the corruption of nature, and now comes in that consummative act of perfect or matured faith, by which the soul is sanctified and made whole, being filled with love.

Apollos.—Did you say perfect faith?

Aquila.—I did, and mark, I now say again, not as it regards its nature for all evangelical faith, is perfect in its nature, but as it regards the degree, and that too in respect to its subject, I mean the man that exercises it. At first he was a babe, but has progressed until matured.

Apollos.—What then is this act of faith?

Aquila.—It is that degree of faith which a christian has and exercises, who has

not only persevered in piety, and has retained his first love, but who, also, while he has felt an unspeakable delight in the service of God, and has had his piety corroborated by a perseverance therein, by the assistance of his faith, which is not dead and inoperative, but lively and powerful, to enable him to lean on Christ, has so resisted sin by grace, and abstained from it, that he not only now has as in the beginning the victory over it, but is so enabled, as we shall hereafter see, when we touch on the privileges of christians, to believe in Christ, that he is saved from the defilement and the pollution of sin. Now he loves God with all his heart, with all the mind, soul and strength, now he loves him perfectly, with an undivided heart, with a clean heart, a heart saved from pride, and every temper opposed to Christ. So that he constantly and ardently loves and depends on Christ, a constant intercourse is opened up between his soul and heaven, and he is perfect as a christian in love, and his 'perfect love casteth out fear.' These are called 'perfect' not because they are saved from all the infirmities of nature, as errors in judgment, &c. but because they love God pre-eminently, with all their ransomed powers, are saved from the defilement of sin, and have Christ formed in their hearts the hope of glory, so that although they are subject to mistakes as heretofore, to infirmity, inadvertency, and even sudden and unexpected excitement, especially under hard and sore temptation, still there is the absence of those unsanctified tempers which remain, though curbed, in the heart of the justified man. This faith is that act by which we most perfectly rely on Christ.

Apollos.—These are all of them believers, and all in a state of salvation and acceptance with God, are they not?

Aquila.—They are, and as it regards the first, or babes in Christ, if called to die, they have a fair title to eternal life, and that God who freely justifies, will freely qualify them for an incorruptible inheritance at his right hand. But if life be spared, they must progress and grow in grace. You know *from* your own experience, my friend, that after becoming a believer in Christ, there are tempers seen and felt in the heart, which although they do not conquer us are there, and often plague us. There are things, as I will prove to you hereafter, if spared, in a justified state, that in a sanctified one, we are clear of, and the Scripture authorizes this assertion.

Apollos.—I know this well.

Aquila.—Well, if the justified man does not progress, he backslides from God, and turns away from the Lord Jesus, making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Apollos.—This many have done.

Aquila.—If he does progress, he is constantly approximating toward that maturity as a christian, that God would have him attain to. There is 'first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.' Now both these like the perfect christian, are inclined to do the commands of God, the latter more promptly than the former, and with a more perfect reliance on Christ. Each strives to practise piety but there are different degrees of it.

Apollos.—Should one who is merely converted to God, die before he has had opportunity to exercise and improve himself in piety, he is accepted and saved, being qualified by grace for eternal life. However should his life be spared, he must press on toward perfection, else he will not discharge his duty, but forfeit the divine favour.

Aquila.—Thus we must grow in grace, in the knowledge, the fear, and the love of God. But by keeping our faith constantly in lively exercise, we not only progress, but arrive at a state, wherein we are enabled to say, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live, I live by the faith of him who loved and gave himself for me.' God grant us this faith. Amen.

COLLOQUY IX.

THAT JUSTIFICATION AND ITS CONCOMITANTS ARE BLESSINGS, WHICH UNDER THE NEW COVENANT, ARE RECEIVED THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF FAITH, IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. AN EXAMINATION INTO THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION.

Aquila.—A variety of opinions, my friend, have been asserted and defended, by theologians, concerning the nature of justification, its extent, and the mode in which it is attained. We have, I think, definitely set forth one or two facts in the discussions of the nature of faith and elsewhere, by which we are prepared to consider that great blessing and its concomitants, which are received through the instrumentality of faith. We have perceived that this faith is a kind of complex act, involving in its very nature, obedience to the command of Christ. By this, you must bear in mind, that we allude to the act itself in its complex parts, and not to that attention which is paid to the institutions of christianity, as a ground for justification, for until a man is justified, and his heart changed, there is no work of evangelical obedience, by which he can be justified or accepted of God, the only condition is faith in the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the act then of believing that involves in it the obedience of which we speak, and this is that obedient act, by which Christ's merits are applied for justification as we have seen.

Apollos.—It is not for the sake of this act, but for Christ's sake, whose merits are apprehended by faith for the justification of the soul?

Aquila.—This is I think correct. The act of faith itself, is an act of obedience to God by men, who, exercise the grace bestowed, by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake alone we are justified and accepted of God.

Apollos.—I perceive this now, the obedience is in the simple act of receiving Christ and trusting his merits for justification, the fact that we obtain justification, and its concomitants is satisfactory evidence, to ourselves, that we do evangelically believe, and our obedience afterward to the precepts of the gospel should be sufficient proof to others, that we are justified and adopted into the divine favour.

Aquila.—You must ever bear in mind that the faith of which we speak as the great instrument of justification, while in itself, it is as we have stated more than once, an act of obedience, it doth not formally include works of righteousness. This is evident from the consideration of that plain distinction, which the Scripture puts between faith and them, when it informs us that faith works by love, which is shown forth by our works, and exhorts us to 'add to our faith virtue, knowledge,' &c. And, moreover, it is not reasonable to conceive, that Christ and his apostles would make use of a word which had a known and fixed import, and at the same time mean more by this word, than was in the common use of it signified thereby. And this would have been the case if they had included in its meaning the whole of evangelical righteousness.[1]

Apollos.—The apostle Paul always opposes faith and works to each other, does he not?

Aquila.—He does, and this is another point which we adduce in evidence that faith, though in itself an act of obedience, however complex in its parts, does not include as a prerequisite to justification, the evangelical works of obedience. And this, whether we view it in regard to the ceremonial or moral law, their perfection or imperfection, they are alike excluded, simply as works; that salvation may be by grace, through faith, 'not of works lest any man should boast.'

Apollos.—Justifying faith then, while it does not include in itself obedience to the moral law, nor so appropriate the merit of Christ, as to make up the imperfection of our obedience, according to some, nor is the root, as it is called by others, of obedience, itself, or so great an act, as to include in itself the idea of a

[1] Whitby.

converted or regenerate state of the man, it is nevertheless *a fiducial act* of the soul, or confidence in the merit of Christ, by which that soul is justified from all things from which it could not be saved by the deeds of the law.[1]

Aquila.—These things will be apparent, if you consider that faith is an act which precedes justification, and that a regenerate state of the soul succeeds that justified state. Now while faith in Christ however complex in itself, as an act of obedience to God, considered in all its parts, is acceptable to the Deity, it is evident that as justification is obtained through its instrumentality, and precedes a change of heart, works of righteousness or evangelical obedience, that can only spring from a heart renewed by grace, cannot be included in it. The obedience which we have said is involved in faith, is the due and proper improvement or exercise of that grace which is granted, to enable us to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am thus particular, my friend, that you may not mistake in regard to this important matter. With these preliminary remarks on faith as the instrument, and as that act of the soul, by which justification and its concomitant blessings are communicated, let us proceed to consider them in that order in which they are experienced in the soul of the believer.

Apollos.—What are its concomitants?

Aquila.—They are regeneration and adoption. These it will be seen, my friend, accompany justification, and are acts of the divine mercy and grace which as it regards our experience of them are attained unto through that same faith, by which we are justified: and when we affirmed it as our opinion, in our arrangement of the subject of faith in Christ, that the immediate effect thereof was obedience, by which it was proved to be lively and active, we did not mean to say that the faith originated the obedience to the moral law, but that it is instrumental in the attainment of justification and a change of heart, and is thus the remote cause of good works under grace, which works of obedience immediately follow our justification and regeneration, as these follow our faith in Christ, and thus faith which without works is dead, is proved by them to be lively and active. So that while in itself, it is an obedient act, it does by being instrumental in our regeneration, become the remote cause, under grace of those good works which flow from a heart regenerated by that grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Apollos.—Give me then, my friend, your views of justification.

Aquila.—Upon a consideration of this subject, I think it will appear clearly to you that the word justification as well as righteousness, admits of several significations in Scripture. It is contended by some that it is used to represent the law of God, which teaches us righteousness, and sundry texts are quoted to substantiate this opinion: it is also affirmed to mean the acquisition of righteousness, by which, he that was unrighteous before is made now truly righteous.[2] And St. Paul is quoted as authority for this view. 'And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.' So it is said in the Apocalypse, 'He that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy let him be holy still.' But the term justification is a forensic one, and in a judicial sense, denotes a declaration of righteousness, that is absolving a man from guilt, and treating him as one that is righteous. Thus it is said, 'He that justifieth the wicked,' i. e. declares the wicked righteous, and this is the more evident, because it is put in opposition to another part of the verse, and 'he that condemneth the just,' i. e. declares the just or righteous guilty. So it is said in Isaiah, 'which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.'

[1] Watson. [2] Limborch.

Here it is evident that to justify, is used judicially, and means to acquit, and declare righteous. And so it is said of the lawyer, who came to our Lord that, he, 'willing to justify himself' to declare or show himself righteous, said, &c. It is also used to represent the acceptance by God of one, who is, and who confesses himself guilty.[1] There are several figurative meanings which it is unnecessary for us to notice, and we may, therefore, my friend—consider this as it is presented in the New Testament, simply as that act of the Divine Being, whereby he, upon the exercise of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, by us, though we are guilty, does account, consider, and deal with us as relatively righteous, notwithstanding our actual unrighteousness, by absolving and releasing us from all guilt and the penalties consequent on past transgressions, all of which are pardoned for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.[2]

Apollos.—Do not the Romanists represent justification, as the acquisition of righteousness, independent of this direct act of pardon, and salvation from guilt, so as to make a man righteous inherently?

Aquila.—They do not exclude all ideas of absolution from the guilt of sin, and a consequent justification, which they say will be of force in the other world, but that act of justification which is experienced by us in this life, they say is an infusion of righteousness, by which he makes men actually, and inherently righteous, who were unrighteous.[3]

Apollos.—But the Scripture is explicit that the justification therein offered to the unregenerate, is offered on the sole condition of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila.—Yes—and that act of justifying, as an act of the Deity, is a judicial one, and this is manifest from several reasons.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is that justification is coincident with the remission of sins, which is a judicial act. Thus it is said, 'be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.' Here it is most palpable that the judicial act of pardon, and the act of justification are substantially the same.[4] But, secondly, justification is opposed to condemnation as we have before seen. Thus, Solomon said in his prayer at the consecration of the temple, 'then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked to bring his way upon his head, and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.' 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' says St. Paul, 'it is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?' To condemn is not to make, but to declare a man guilty, and to deal with him as such.

Apollos.—By parity of reason therefore to justify is to declare a man, righteous, not inherently so, but to treat him as such, pardoning all offences for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ in whom he believes for justification.

Aquila.—And the very same thing, I am confident, my friend—is confirmed by all those expressions wherein faith is said to be imparted for righteousness, that is that a man is esteemed as righteous, or is justified upon his exercising faith in the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.[5]

Apollos.—Forgiveness of sins then is evidently implied in it.

Aquila.—Yes—it is: for justification appears to be that merciful and gracious act of God, whereby for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, he fully absolves from the guilt of sin, all them that truly and evangelically believe in him, or it is that gratuitous act of God, whereby for the sake of Christ, he remits the sins of all them that have faith in him, imputing their faith to them for righteous-

[1] Watson. [2] Watson and Limborch. [3] Ibid. [4] Bunting. [5] Ibid.

ness. From this definition it will appear, my friend—that however they may allude to the same state, there are two things at least implied in this justification.[1]

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is the remission of sins, by or through the instrumentality of faith, and the other is the imputation of that faith for righteousness.[2]

Apollos.—Do be more explicit and explain yourself, if you please.

Aquila.—Remission of sins is nothing more than the not inflicting the merited punishment on the sinner. So that through the instrumentality of faith, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, his guilt is cancelled, his offences remitted, and he is declared in a judicial sense, exculpated from his offences for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, this act of his faith being imputed to him for that justification or righteousness.

Apollos.—Is the doctrine of the remission of sins a part of this justification promised in the Scriptures.

Aquila.—It is frequently promised in the Acts of the Apostles, and while against the Novatians, who declare that there was no remission of sin, for those who transgressed after baptism, we hold the opposite doctrine, my brother—it is because it forms such a conspicuous part in our justification before God. The other point which we named as implied in this justification, is that by this act of the Deity, while our sins are pardoned, the faith which fastens upon the propitiation of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which we rely for pardon and acceptance with God, is imputed to us for righteousness, so that according to the gracious judgment of God, for the sake of what Christ has done, that man who has heretofore lived in sin, is now upon his believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, not only pardoned, but also accepted into the divine favour as though he had not sinned, his faith 'being accounted unto him for righteousness.'

Apollos.—Not that he is actually or rather inherently righteous, but of grace all his transactions are freely absolved, and the act of believing is the very act by which the merits of Christ's death are so appropriated to his own peculiar case, as that he is not only pardoned, but in a state of reconciliation and favour with God, as though he had not transgressed, and had always obeyed the divine laws.

Aquila.—This is the true state of the case. We are not to fancy, my brother—that the righteousness of Christ, by which I mean his perfect obedience to the moral law, is imputed to us to supply our defects, and hide our filthiness. No! By faith our guilt is cancelled, our sins being freely pardoned, and by that judicial act of God upon our faith, we are justified, declared pardoned and accepted for, or on account of faith.

Apollos.—This is a doctrine most consolatory indeed, and full of comfort.

Aquila.—It is, and the more we consider this subject, and inquire into the principal cause of this justification, and the means which God is pleased to have us use, in order to partake thereof, the more shall we feel our immense indebtedness to the grace and mercy of our God.

Apollos.—What is the principal cause to which you allude.

Aquila.—I had reference to the great efficient cause, I mean the grace of God, in this the mercy and bounty of our heavenly Father, we find the origin of this glorious economy. For since we were all sinners, and guilty of punishment, if he had been so extreme, as to mark our iniquities and make no provision for remission, 'no man had been justified in his sight,' we must have endured the punishment due to our offences. But although our justification originates in grace, it is not brought about without means, these are two-fold.

Apollos.—What do you mean by there being two-fold, did you not say that faith was the only condition?

[1] Limborch. [2] Bunting and Watson.

Aquila.—And so it is on our part, but yet the means are two-fold viewed in regard to this whole work. One of which is without ourselves, and the other is of an internal nature as it respects us. The former is the death of Christ which is termed the meritorious cause of our justification, and faith the internal work or instrument of that justification. Hence it is said that we 'being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus.' The instrumental means is, as we have seen, faith in Christ.

Apollos.—Does the Scripture sustain this view, my friend Aquila?

Aquila.—I think you will conclude with me that it does, when I quote a few texts. In the first place, to prove that this work of justification, as including pardon of sin, and the imputation of faith for righteousness, originates in the grace of God. We see the view David had of it, which I adduce as proof of the fact itself: 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul, he hath smitten my life down to the ground, he hath made me dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.' To relieve one in such a case is grace indeed. St. Paul says, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' yet are we 'justified freely by his,' i. e. God's 'grace.' 'Among whom also,' says the same apostle, 'we all had our conversations in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God who is rich in mercy for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved,) and hath raised us up, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus; for by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.' And says he of God's goodness, 'Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' And to Titus the same apostle says, 'For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another: but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.'

Priscilla.—O! what an immense fountain is the grace of God, from whence springs all our good. But for his grace where should we now have been?

Aquila.—We see then that the great efficient cause of man's justification is the unparalleled mercy, the abundant grace of our God.

Apollos.—Well, next the meritorious cause of our pardon.

Aquila.—I have said the death and merit of Christ Jesus, 'in whom,' as quoted before, 'we have redemption in his blood,' and 'whom,' says St. Paul, 'God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.' 'He was,' says he, 'delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification.' 'For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.' 'By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life,' 'and by the obedience of one,' namely Christ, 'shall many be made righteous.' To all this may be added that the very circumstance of Christ being the object of faith will present him to us as the meritorious cause of justification.

Apollos.—And in this too, there is displayed the great grace of our God.

Aquila.—Yes, my friend—and if we review for a moment the instrument used as the only means of justification, and see how efficient it is in effecting this blessed work, we shall have still greater cause to magnify the grace of God.

Apollos.—How is it applied?

Aquila.—We have distinctly kept in view, in all our remarks on faith, that it fastens upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and his infinite merit as the glorious God-man, the prophet, priest, and king, who not only propitiates our offences, but promises us pardon and eternal life, without money and price, on the simple terms of faith in him. Faith then, I mean the faith that justifies, looks at Jesus, Jesus the 'first and the last, the author and finisher' of both faith and salvation, as the great meritorious cause, and glorious captain of our salvation, and in all its varied exercises it cries out with humility, yet confidence, 'I the sinner am, but Jesus died for me.' And we behold again the grace of God manifested in it, if we but turn and review for a moment also its nature. We have said that in itself it is an act of obedience. God calls, invites, intreats us to believe in Jesus. When we do come, and in the exercise of that grace granted, accept Jesus as our Saviour, we do obey him though we have never thought of the moral law, much less felt its obligations, and obeyed its precepts. That to believe is to obey God, as we have said, is evident from the fact that God commands it; thus says the good apostle John, 'and this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment.'

Apollos.—This is a very plain text, and much to the point.

Aquila.—Moreover, to this commandment is annexed a promised reward, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' And everlasting damnation is denounced as the portion of infidelity, which could not be if there were no command to believe, and the obedience of faith was not involved in its very exercise. 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' And for this very reason the Scripture always represents it in the light of an act of obedience to God, reproving those who believe not, as those who will not come to, or receive Christ when he comes to them. Commending those who do believe on him, as they who receive him and become the sons of God. 'He came to his own and his own received him not, but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' This is the faith that now, this moment receives and lays hold on Christ, of which we speak, and this the faith that justifies the soul.

Apollos.—It is not then a faith that is our own work, and no meritorious and efficacious act of ours, which, independent of divine grace, is exercised by us and by its own worth, obtains remission of sins, and is imputed for righteousness, as if it were formal righteousness of itself, and could stand the just judgment of Almighty God?

Aquila.—No such thing, my friend—do we mean. Justification is an act of God's free mercy and grace, it is that which God does for us, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, and faith is not the meritorious cause of it. It is only the medium or instrument by which the benefit is obtained. And this faith though often imperfect in itself, and weak only like 'a grain of mustard seed,' because it relies on Christ and him alone for salvation, God out of his abundant and great mercy does graciously accept, and account it for righteousness; and upon its exercise for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, remits the sins of past life, and accepts us into his favour of his free and unmerited grace.

Apollos.—Now upon the exercise of this or the performance of that complex act called faith, which is persuaded of the truth, consents to yield to it, and relies on Jesus confidently, pardon is obtained, and the soul is justified.

Aquila.—An apostle has said so, 'Be it known therefore unto you men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.' 'But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And says the same apostle, 'Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.'

Apollos.—O! I see it, the only condition of salvation is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and of course the only damning sin is unbelief. From all this, therefore, it would appear that justification implies the acceptance of one by God who is, and confesses himself to be guilty. His sins being pardoned by the act of justification.

Aquila.—In common language it signifies a vindication from any charge which affects the moral character, but in a theological sense it does mean, as you say, acceptance with God of him, that not only confesses himself guilty, but is actually guilty, upon his believing in Jesus. Hence when justified he is accounted and considered relatively righteous, and God in great mercy deals with him as such, notwithstanding his past actual unrighteousness, by clearing, absolving, and discharging him from the various penal evils, and especially the wrath of God, and the liability to eternal death, which by that past unrighteousness, the sinner had deserved; and accepting him as if just, and admitting him to the state, the privileges, and the rewards of righteousness.

Apollos.—So that, as you have said, justification and the remission or pardon of sin are substantially the same thing.

Aquila.—These expressions do evidently relate to one and the same act of God, to one and the same privilege of his believing people, and this is the reason why St. Paul uses, as we have seen, justification and forgiveness as synonymous terms, whose reasoning is this: 'To him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'

Apollos.—It does appear from this that the justification of the ungodly, the accounting or imputation of righteousness, the forgiveness of iniquity, and the covering and non-imputation of sin, are phrases which, though they have their various shades of meaning, express the same blessing under different views.

Aquila.—They do in this way, that by this act of God sin is pardoned, and our faith is imputed to us for righteousness.[1]

Apollos.—But this act of pardon does not in the least degree alter or diminish the evil nature and desert of sin?

Aquila.—It surely does not, else there would be an imputation upon the spotless and holy character of the holy God. And we know 'it is God that justifieth.' He can never regard sin on any consideration, or under any circumstances, with less than perfect and infinite abhorrence.

Apollos.—Sin is not then changed in its nature, so as to be rendered less 'exceedingly sinful,' or less worthy of wrath by the pardon of the sinner?

Aquila.—It is not, the penalty is remitted, and the obligation to suffer the penalty is dissolved, but it is still naturally due, though it is remitted.[2]

[1] Bunting on Justification. [2] Watson.

Apollos.—It would appear then that we ought to confess and lament even pardoned sin, with a lowly and contrite heart.

Aquila.—Yes—though released from its penal consequences by an act of divine clemency, we should still remember that the dust of self-abasement is our proper place before God, and should temper our exultation in his mercy, by an humbling recollection of our natural liability to wrath. Hence, 'I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.'

Apollos.—I think I now see the error of the Romanists to which you alluded, and of the divines of that school who suppose that to be justified, is to be not reckoned, or treated as righteous, but to be actually made righteous by the infusion of the sanctifying influences, producing a positive and inherent conformity to the moral image of God.[1]

Aquila.—If the account which we have given be correct, it is easy to see where their error originates. It is in this, that it confounds the two distinct though kindred blessings of justification and regeneration. Justification, in a scriptural sense, is an act of God, not in or upon man, but for him. An act which, considered in the abstract, respects man only as its object, and translates him into another relation or state; but the inherent principle or righteousness, is a consequence of this act of God, connected with it but not formally of it.[2]

Apollos.—This justification extends to all past sins?

Aquila.—Yes—and to all the guilt contracted previous to our pardon, or the time in which the act of justification takes place. So that, while in a justified state, the individual has a most full, perfect, and entire absolution from wrath. All manner of sin is then forgiven, the pardon of which as granted is a justification, not merely from some things, from many things, from most things, but 'from all things,' says the word of God. And he does not pardon our innumerable offences by degrees, but at once, as by the law of works he is cursed who continueth not 'in all things' which that law enjoined, so he who is truly absolved by the gospel is cleared from all and every thing which before stood against him, 'and there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'[3]

Apollos.—Well may that gospel which reveals and offers such a benefit be termed 'a great salvation,' my friend. But it is an act of God also, which of course, does not end our probationary state.

Aquila.—However effectual it may be for the remission of past offences, it must ever be remembered that it still recognizes man as a probationer for eternity; and this is not all, it is not irreversible any more than it is not eternal: for as he who is now justified was once condemned, so he may in future come again into condemnation, by relapsing into sin and unbelief, as we shall hereafter see, although at present he may be 'accepted' in the Lord Jesus.[4]

Apollos.—Just as Adam before transgression was in a state of favour, but as he had not then fulfilled to the end of his probation, the righteousness of that law under which he was placed, his ultimate and final acceptance was not absolutely certain. His privilege, as one accepted of God, might be forfeited, and was actually forfeited by his subsequent transgression.[5]

Aquila.—This is a fair representation, my friend—of the matter. Our justification or pardon only places us, as to this point, in similar circumstances. Though we may be clearly and fully pardoned, we are yet on trial for eternity, 'and should look to ourselves that we lose not the things which we have gained.'

[1] Watson. [2] Dr. Barrow. [3] Watson. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

Priscilla.—It is very plain that justification may be forfeited and reversed. Do you not remember our Lord's parable of the two debtors, in which one who had obtained the blessing of forgiveness, is represented as incurring the forfeiture of it, by the indulgence of an unforgiving spirit towards his fellow servant.

Apollos.—I remember it. 'And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him.' O! what necessity for constant watchfulness.

Aquila.—We have already suggested, my friend—how in a merely moral sense a man's sin or righteousness is imputed to him, when he is considered as actually the doer of sinful or righteous acts. A man's sin or righteousness is imputed to him in its legal consequence, under a government of rewards and punishments as elsewhere remarked. To impute sin or righteousness in a legal sense then, implies to reckon and account it, to acquit and condemn, and forthwith to punish, or to exempt from punishment.[1]

Apollos.—God then setting as judge, upon the faith of the repenting sinner declares him pardoned and remits his punishment, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he believes. And this faith is so imputed, as that he is delivered from punishment.

Aquila.—It is even so. Take the case of Shimei and David. The former entreats the latter, that he would 'not impute folly to him,' i. e. that he would not punish his folly. In this sense too, David speaks of the blessedness of the man whose 'transgression is forgiven' and to whom the Lord 'imputeth not sin,' that is, whom he forgives, so that the legal consequence of his sin shall not fall upon him. This non-imputation of sin, is expressly called 'the imputation of righteousness without works,' the imputation of righteousness, then is the not punishing the sinner, or rather the pardon and remission of his offences; for if this text be read in connection with the context, it will be seen that by 'imputing faith for righteousness,' the apostle meant precisely the same thing, thus 'but to him that worketh not' as quoted before, 'but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,' even as David also, describeth the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin. Here pardon and the imputation of faith for righteousness are clearly set forth.

Apollos.—This is a very comprehensive passage of Holy Writ.

Aquila.—Yes—it is, and the quotation from David would have been nothing to the apostle's purpose, unless he had understood the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of righteousness, and the non-imputation of sin, to signify the same thing as counting faith for righteousness, with only this difference, that the introduction of the term faith, marks the manner in which this inestimable blessing is obtained.[2]

Apollos.—And after all to have faith imputed for righteousness, is nothing more than as you before said, to be justified by faith.

Aquila.—I am sure it is so. St. Paul meant this, when he spoke of 'being made righteous,' that is, being placed by an act of free forgiveness, as was before affirmed, in the condition of righteous men in this respect, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that the penalty of the law does not lie against such, and these are the acknowledged objects of the divine favour.

Apollos.—Well—I shall not forget that justification is an act of God, by which our sins are pardoned and our faith in the Lord Jesus so imputed for righteousness, that we are saved from wrath, and accepted into the divine favour.

Aquila.—There is a daily justification founded on the continuance in a regene-

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid.

rate state ever exercising faith in Jesus, and also our justification or acquital at the bar of God, in the day of eternity which we may notice at another time. At our next interview, we will consider the concomitants of justification. In the mean time you must bear in mind, that this great work of declaring a sinner righteous, or exculpated from the penalty of his offences, proceeds not on the ground that the law is abolished. O! no, my friend—neither is it abolished or its penalty, for that would be to imply that the law was unduly rigorous, either in its precepts or in its sanctions. But it rests, my brother—on the ground that the law has been vindicated, and that by penalty and sufferings, which were fully equivalent to its demands in a moral point of view, when the dignity of the sufferer is considered, who became our voluntary substitute.[1]

Apollos.—Thus 'grace reigns through righteousness,' not at the expense of righteousness.

Aquila.—By no means, for says the apostle, 'now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, being justified freely,' as before quoted, 'by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' And this merit as we have shown, does not act in such a manner as to produce our pardon as an immediate and unavoidable effect thereof, but through the instrumentality of faith.[2]

Apollos.—We are not justified by grace without the exercise of faith, but by grace, through faith, as the instrument.

Aquila.—Yes—and 'that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.' A present faith, not a faith that is foreseen, or on to-morrow, for that would lead to the Antinomian notion of an eternal justification, nor by the faith of yesterday, for that would make justification irreversible, but a present reliance on Christ, carrying out the principle that we have laid down, that faith is obedience to the gospel call, i. e. to receive Christ, that it does now this moment receive him, and the poor soul is justified or pardoned. Now he cries out with triumph, 'O Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou dost comfort me.'

Apollos.—Now I see it, the justification offered in the Scripture, is a justification upon believing, in which we are never savingly interested, until we do believe, and which continues in force only so long as we continue to believe.[3]

Aquila.—Yes—and on all unbelievers the wrath of God abides. The atonement of Jesus was accepted at the time in which it was offered, as from him, but it is not accepted, as for us, to our individual justification, until we individually believe, nor after we cease to believe.[4]

Apollos.—Then at the time of justification, the faith by which it is obtained, must make the sacrifice of Christ's death its especial object.

Aquila.—As I have before said, my friend—the object of justifying faith, may be inferred from what we have proved of man's restoration to the divine favour, only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. It fastens on his sacrifice in an especial manner. Nevertheless, it has respect in general to all that Christ is set forth in the gospel, as doing or suffering, by the gracious appointment of the Father, in order to our redemption and pardon. But it looks particularly to the atoning sacrifice, as exhibited in the Scriptures, by divine authority, and as attested to be accepted and sufficient by his resurrection from the dead, and by his mediatorial exaltation at the right hand of the Father.[5]

Apollos.—O what a plan to effect our salvation. Christ dies that the sinner may be saved, faith in his merit brings our pardon, and now we stand absolved from all our sins, declared as believers in the Lord Jesus, righteous in his sight.

[1] Watson.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Bunting on Justification.
[4] Watson.
[5] Watson.

Aquila.—Yes—sins of every kind, of commission and omission, of thought, word and deed, the follies of childhood, the transgressions of our riper years, and the matured and habitual sins of age, are all pardoned upon our faith in Jesus Christ.

Priscilla.—Well may the gospel be called, the 'glad tidings of great joy to all people.'

Aquila.—But these are not all the blessings consequent on an evangelical faith. Justification has its concomitants, and as we shall not have time to consider them this evening, we must take them up at our next meeting.

COLLOQUY X.

REGENERATION AND ADOPTION, BLESSINGS WHICH ACCOMPANY THAT JUSTIFICATION OR PARDON OF SIN, WHICH IS RECEIVED BY FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Aquila.—We have seen, my friend—and I trust we have experienced in our own hearts the fact, that there is a cordial for the sorrows of the poor penitent. Struck down as it were by the power and spirit of God, all anxiety about his spiritual state, he falls before the mercy seat and asks for pardon. In the moment we have also seen in which he believes, that is trusts Jesus, as a sufficient ground for hope, he finds a pardon free and full. But it is evident that a pardon for past sins, would not enable him to contend with the present deep depravity of his nature, and the force of habits formed in sin. He would soon again become guilty, if left thus in his natural state. There are other blessings that accompany this blessed work of justification, all of which are the product of that atonement which our Lord Jesus Christ has made for sin, and these also are received through the instrumentality of faith.

Apollos.—What blessings are these, my friend?

Aquila.—They are the glorious works of regeneration and adoption.

Apollos.—Are not these blessings the same as justification?

Aquila.—O no! my friend—they are not the same blessings, though they are so united with justification or the pardon of sin, as to appear to many who do not consider the subject well, as the same blessing. They are concomitants of justification, and we may say generally as it regards them, that although we must distinguish between them as being different from each other, and from justification, yet they are not to be separated from it, for they occur generally at the same time.[1]

Apollos.—That is they all enter into the experience of every christian, so that the man who is justified, is the man that is regenerated and adopted into the family of God.

Aquila.—They all unite in the experience of the believer, and whenever they are mentioned in Scripture, they do therefore involve and imply one another.

Apollos.—I will bear this very thing in mind, it may help me much, and I may use it to prevent error in others. But do the Scriptures authorize this view of these blessings, and connect them together.

Aquila.—They do, for our heirship and consequent title to eternal life is evidently grounded on our justification. 'For,' says St. Paul, 'we are justified by his grace, that we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life,' but in Peter, this is connected with our regeneration. Thus 'blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the

[1] Watson.

dead unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.' But by St. Paul again, it is founded on adoption. Thus, 'if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.'[1]

Apollos.—Well—I never observed this particularly before.

Aquila.—These texts are a sufficient proof that justification, regeneration and adoption are not distinct and different titles, but constitute one and the same title through the gift of God in Christ, to the heavenly inheritance.

Priscilla.—And as you said, they are attained to by faith, for St. Paul says, 'we are justified by faith, and we are the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.'

Apollos.—Does the Scripture any where unite them all together, and then show that they are received through the instrumentality of faith.

Aquila.—They do, 'but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

Apollos.—Sons of God here include our adoption, and being born our regeneration.

Aquila.—They do, and it will therefore appear that this regeneration is a change wrought in man, by the agency and power of the Holy Ghost. So that the dominion which sin has over him in his natural state, and which he deplores and struggles against in his penitent state, is broken and abolished, so that, with full choice of will, and with the energy of right affections, he serves God freely, and 'runs in the way of his commandments.'[2]

Apollos.—This is an important point. Has he dominion over sin, and does he successfully resist it, my friend?

Aquila.—The Scripture says, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,' 'for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.' And 'now being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' The distinctive characters therefore of this state are deliverance from the bondage of sin, and the power and will to do all things that are pleasing to God, both as to inward habits and outward acts.[3]

Apollos.—This regeneration then must imply a change, and a very important one, as man is naturally in the bondage of sin.

Aquila.—It does so, hence it is called a new birth, the second birth, or the being born again. It is that work therefore of the Holy Spirit by which we experience a change of heart. Thus, 'Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' 'Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.' St. Paul represents it as the quickening the soul, whose powers were lapsed by the fall: 'And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins,' 'Christ being formed in their hearts.' A 'partaking' of the divine nature: 'that by these ye might be,' says St. Peter, 'partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.'

Apollos.—The efficient cause then of this work is the holy and blessed Spirit?

Aquila.—It is, for man is not the author of it, which is evident not only from the fact of his being incapable of changing his own heart, but also from the direct testimony of God's word. Take that text quoted above, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' 'He gave' it, they had no power in themselves by which to accomplish this work, hence it is added, 'which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

Apollos.—This new birth then is a work of God?

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Aquila.—Nicodemus saw the impracticability of a man's being born naturally a second time, and he said, 'How can a man be born when he is old?' Jesus informed him by saying, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit,' 'the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' You see, my friend—that the efficient cause is the Holy Spirit. And St. Paul says, 'for by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast, for we are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.'

Apollos.—What is the special instrument that God used to accomplish this work? How does he effect such a wonderful change?

Aquila.—The glorious instrument that God most generally uses is his precious word. Hence it is said by St. James, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.' And St. Peter also says, 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.' And St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' So you see that the word of God's grace, the gospel of Christ is the instrument generally to bring about this change.

Apollos.—Well—tell me now in what does this change chiefly consist?

Aquila.—The change in regeneration chiefly consists in the recovery of the moral image of God upon the heart, that is to say, so as to love him supremely, and serve him ultimately as our highest end, and to delight in him superlatively as our chief good. The sum of the moral law is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. This is the duty of every rational creature, and in order to obey it perfectly, no part of our inward affection, or actual service, ought to be, at any time or in the least degree, misapplied.[1]

Apollos.—Regeneration must consist then in the principle of holiness being implanted, obtaining the ascendency, and continually prevailing over sin, its eternal opposite.

Aquila.—It is observable, that the inspired writers use various terms and modes of speech, in order to describe this change of mind, sometimes calling it conversion, regeneration, a new creation, or the new creature putting off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new man, and 'the walking not after the flesh,' but 'after the Spirit.' Yet is it all effected by the word of truth or the gospel of salvation, gaining an entrance into the mind, through the divine teaching, so as to possess the understanding, subdue the will, and reign in the affections.[2]

Apollos.—This is a great work.

Aquila.—It is—take it altogether it is faith working by love, in the whole man, that constitutes the new creature, the regenerate man. Thus says St. Paul, for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, 'but faith which worketh by love.' And St. John says, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that is begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.'

Apollos.—I see then that this work is to be distinguished from justification.

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid.

Aquila.—It certainly is, though it is directly connected with it. For as we have already suggested, the justified person is also regenerated, but while the one, justification places us in a new *relation*, the other, regeneration, places us in a new *moral state*. The one is a work which God does for us, the other a work which God does in us. By an act of pardon or justification, we are placed in the relation of friends instead of enemies, and by the regeneration of our souls we are so renewed by divine grace as that the lapsed powers and affections of the man are rendered capable of that moral exercise by which God is glorified, and his laws respected and obeyed.

Apollos.—But does not regeneration mean the progress of grace in the heart of man, including its commencement and completion?

Aquila.—We have already suggested that some divines have entertained this view of it, and that others have represented repentance as regeneration, the fallacy of which idea has been shown. That regeneration commences with repentance will not bear an argument, but this is not in the Scriptures taken for the work itself. The Scriptures generally use it to represent the new birth, or a change from a state of nature to grace. 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature,' so that, upon our justification, being also regenerated, while there is a change in our condition, as being in a state of life not death, of safety and acceptance not condemnation, so also is there a change in our disposition as regenerate new creatures, 'having put off the old man and his deeds, and being created anew unto Christ Jesus.' It is true that the Scriptures do speak of a sanctified as a regenerate state; but St. Paul makes a distinction even between this and the being 'sanctified wholly,' excluding the existence of the cause as well as the practice of an inward habit, which regeneration itself cures, so that it has no dominion over us, inasmuch as faith unites us to Christ, and thus by the holy and blessed Spirit we are brought into his favour, being regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the operation of his grace. So our Lord uses in one instance regeneration for the resurrection state, as implying that renovation of man, from a corruptible to an incorruptible condition. Thus, 'Ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, shall also sit upon twelve thrones,' which may be rendered, at the renovation when the Son of Man shall be seated on his glorious throne, ye my followers sitting also on twelve thrones, &c. Men are accustomed to apply the term wholly to the conversion or change of individuals, though its relation is here at least to the general state of things.[1] Taking this view of the subject, it may embrace the whole progress of christian experience, and the restoration of man entirely, and altogether to the image and glory of God, the principal completion of which, shall be in the general resurrection, when there will be, in the most important sense, a renovation or regeneration of heaven and earth, when all things 'shall be made new.' And this is the reason why regeneration is used in reference to the resurrection.[2]

Apollos.—Here then is the order of the divine operation in individual experience. A conviction of our sinfulness, helplessness and danger producing that utter abhorrence of self, which is manifested in a deep repentance, and which leads the sinner to ask, 'what must I do to be saved?' then comes in the act of faith, that reliance on Christ by which as an instrument we are justified, and then regeneration. Hence to be in Christ is to be justified, and regeneration follows it immediately.[3]

Aquila.—Yes—and it will appear that the entire man is the subject of this regeneration, so that it is the whole man, as we have said, his understanding,

[1] Campbell. [2] Watson. [3] Ibid.

will and affections, are all brought under the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost.

Apollos.—Explain yourself if you please?

Aquila.—The understanding previous to this change, was comparatively dark. It was deprived of that saving knowledge of the divine law, and groped, as it were, in the dark; but now it is illuminated and filled with the knowledge of the divine will. Now it understands the path of life, and comprehends the obligation to serve God. So also it sees and understands the rule of moral action, according to which, it decides on its own deeds. As to the will it is so far regulated as to follow the dictates of an illuminated understanding, desiring and seeking only what is fit to be desired, and what God allows to be used, hating and resisting whatever is hateful, because repugnant to the divine nature and will, and opposed to godliness.[1] The affections are the servants, if I may so speak, of the will, and these changed by grace, excite man in the pursuit of that which is virtuous and good. Being regenerated they are placed on proper objects, not on things on the earth, but on heavenly things, on things above, God and heaven, eternal happiness, and above all, on the Lord Jesus, who died to procure that happiness for us: and my friend—it will follow of course, that the external actions as founded on the affections pretty much, are their attendants generally, and are also regulated according to that principle of grace, which predominates in the whole man, and which therefore assimilates his conduct to the divine law, and consequently, agreeably to the motions of a sanctified will. By this means, there is a change effected throughout the whole man, one that is complete, and it is called a new creation.[2]

Apollos.—So that there is no partial reformation in the man, but he who took pleasure before in sin, does now hate it, and delights in piety. He is a new man.

Aquila.—Yes—'if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.' He is not the same, he is a new man, 'born again,' 'born from above.'

Apollos.—There is therefore a restoration of amity and intercourse, between the pardoned sinner and a pardoning God.

Aquila.—This, my friend—is one of the immediate results of our justification. For upon the reception of our pardon, and the regeneration of our souls, it is evident that the very cause of all our sorrow is removed. I mean the guilt of our sins which pressed us down. They are pardoned, and 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,' and consequently unforbidden access to God. The judge himself has become our friend, and we are now begotten anew by him in Christ Jesus.[3]

Apollos.—The matter and ground of God's controversy with us, being removed by this act of gracious absolution, we are now become the objects of his friendship.

Aquila.—It is so, for thus it is written 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness,' that is, justification, the righteousness of faith; and the next thing we hear is, 'and he was called the friend of God,' and so are all those who are justified by faith: hitherto they were enemies, now they are the 'friends of God.'

Apollos.—But this change does not absolutely deliver them from all the evils which transgression has entailed on man, I presume?

Aquila.—The reconciliation and change of heart, of which we speak, does not extend to their instant and absolute deliverance from them. They are still liable for a season to affliction and pain, to temporal suffering and mortality. These are portions of the original curse, from which their justification and regeneration do

[1] Limborch. [2] Wesley. [3] Watson.

not as yet release them. But they entitle them to such supports under all remaining trouble, and by such promises of sanctifying influence with it, as will, if embraced, turn the curse into a blessing.[1]

Apollos.—'Whom the Lord loveth, he' may still 'chasten,' and in very faithfulness afflict them.

Aquila.—Indeed he may, but these are acts of salutary discipline, rather than of vindictive displeasure. His friendship, not his righteous hostility, is the principle from which they all proceed, and the salvation, not the destruction of the sufferer, is the end to which they are all directed.[2]

Apollos.—And now as servants of God they proceed on their way.

Aquila.—Not merely as servants of God, as sons, as children of God, for this is another concomitant of justification. The adoption of the persons justified into the family of God, is an immediate result of our pardon, and also, of course, directly connected with our regeneration, so that there is the consequent right to an eternity of life, for both body and soul.[3]

Apollos.—What do you mean by adoption?

Aquila.—Adoption is a word used in civil law, and was in great use among the Romans, in the days of the apostles; when it was the custom of persons, who had no children of their own, to prevent their estates from being divided or descending to strangers, to make choice of some one or more persons, agreeable to them, who were received into the political relation of children. Although the case of Joseph's two sons, substituted by Jacob, might seem to warrant the idea, yet there is no evidence that a law for the adoption of children, existed among the Jews, but it was common among both the Greeks and Romans, and Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses. Adoption in a spiritual sense, is that act of God's grace whereby men are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of sons of God. God condescends to become not only their friend, but their father, they are the objects not merely of his amicable regard, but of his paternal tenderness: and admitted to the relation of children, they become entitled to the children's inheritance, 'for if children, then heirs,' 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.' This is the state, that seems, my friend—to be simultaneous with our justification and regeneration.[4]

Apollos.—It may then be defined as an act of grace, by which upon our being justified by faith in Christ, we are received into the family of God. Tell me, is this really an act distinct from justification.

Aquila.—It does not appear to be so much a distinct act of God, as involved in and flowing from our justification, so that at least the one always implies the other. The apostles appear to have had before them, the simple view, that our sins had deprived us of our sonship, the favour of God, and the right to the inheritance of eternal life; but that upon our return to God and reconciliation with him, our forfeited privileges were not only restored, but greatly heightened through the paternal kindness of our heavenly Father.[5]

Apollos.—They did not then borrow the idea of adoption, as some think, from the laws of the Romans and the surrounding nations, and apply them to the condition of the justified and regenerated man?

Aquila.—I do not think they did, and indeed by the best theologians, such a comparison is not thought judicious. The writers of the Old Testament, taught this doctrine, from one of whom St. Paul quotes the most forcible passage that sets forth the privileges of adoption. Thus 'wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I

[1] Watson.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Watson.
[4] Watson and Bunting on Justification.
[5] Watson.

will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty. And the prodigal son, my friend—was a display and a true exposition of this adoption that could not be easily forgotten by the apostles.

Apollos.—The formalities of the nations in which existed the laws of adoption, do not then illustrate this doctrine.

Aquila.—I think not, and where is the necessity of it, when in the New Testament, we have, clearly set forth, all that is implied in that gracious act, which is simply this, that those who were alienated and enemies, being disinherited, are made the sons of God, and heirs of his eternal glory, as we before said. It will therefore be seen, my friend—that this privilege then, is not one of right, nor in the right of any work done in us, or which we ourselves do, though it should be an evangelical work, that we become heirs; but jointly with Christ, and in his right.[1]

Apollos.—Do point out the privileges that belong to this state.

Aquila.—The first thing that presents itself is freedom from a servile spirit, for we are not servants as I said before, but sons, and therefore have the special love and care of our heavenly Father, and also a filial confidence in him, and we have free access to him at all times and under all circumstances, a fair and undisputed title to the heavenly inheritance, and the spirit of adoption, which is the foundation of all the comfort we can derive from those privileges, as it is the only means by which we can know that they are ours: and this merits, my brother—our special attention.[2]

Priscilla.—O! this is one among the most important points in christian experience, the witness of the Spirit to our adoption.

Apollos.—Do, my dear friend—point this out as explicitly as possible.

Aquila.—You have seen how a man is justified, regenerated, and adopted, simultaneously, or so much so as that they are by many considered the same work, and indeed they do, all combined, form our title to eternal life. You have also seen what is the true nature of this adoption, a translation upon our pardon and regeneration into the glorious privileges of the sons of God, a work effected by divine grace. You have also seen the blessed privileges connected with this sonship, but the question arises, how may I know that I am a son, a child of God?

Apollos.—O! that is the very point, and the one I want explained.

Aquila.—I answer, by the testimony of God's Spirit, that inward witness of the Holy Ghost to the sonship of believers, and from which flows the comfortable persuasion or conviction of our present acceptance with God, and the hope of our future and eternal glory.

Apollos.—Now I do know this to be true experimentally, but I want the arguments, especially the Scriptural arguments, by which it is substantiated. Do give them to me.

Aquila.—Indeed there are so many that I cannot recollect them, and if I could I cannot take the time to repeat them. I will quote only a few, which clearly establish this truth. The apostle Paul says to the church at Rome, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.'

Priscilla.—Do you not see this, how plainly it sets forth this very experience. See how the Holy Spirit takes away fear from the heart of man, by proclaiming liberty to the believing soul.

Aquila.—Yes—it sets forth the fact that the Holy Spirit destroys that servile

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid.

dread which the guilty sinner feels, and by removing his fear, at once inspires into his soul confidence in God. Not only a general, but that Spirit inspires a special, rather a filial confidence, and enables us to call God our Father, by *witnessing*, i. e. bearing testimony with our spirit 'that we are the children of God.'[1]

Apollos.—But some have asserted that the Spirit here mentioned is the spirit or genius of the gospel personified.

Aquila.—This is not so, my friend. The text says the spirit itself, or himself, and hence he is called in the Epistle to the Galatians, 'the spirit of his Son,' which cannot mean the genius of the gospel.[2] Thus, 'when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and because ye are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.' Do you not see here, my brother Apollos—that the means of our redemption from under the curse of the law, are the incarnation and sufferings of Jesus Christ. 'God hath sent forth his Son at the appointed time, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' You may also notice that the adoption of sons follows upon our actual redemption from that curse, or in other words, upon our pardon. 'That we might receive the adoption of sons.' And there is also another thing plainly set forth in regard to the very point on which we now are. It is this, that when we are pardoned and thus adopted, the 'spirit of the Son' is sent forth into our hearts, producing the same effects which have been stated already, a filial confidence in God, for when thus pardoned, 'the Spirit' is represented as 'crying' in our hearts, 'Abba, Father.'

Priscilla.—And every text which expresses the joy and confidence of christians might be added to these.

Aquila.—There are many in the New Testament which represent their union and communion with God, and then intimate a friendship with him, their confident access to, and their entire union and delightful intercourse with him in spirit, all of which establish this self-same truth.

Apollos.—O! this is a glorious truth, and one that brings with it so much consolation; for a soul to be enabled to say, 'my God is mine,' and I am his, I know, I feel that he is reconciled to me, and I to him; I have the witness of my pardon in my own soul. O! the day I first felt this was surely the happiest in all the year. But tell me, is not this what some call assurance?

Aquila.—This has been generally termed the doctrine of assurance, and perhaps the expression of St. Paul, 'the full assurance of faith,' and 'the full assurance of hope,' may warrant the use of the word. But as there is a current and generally understood sense of this term, implying that the assurance of our present acceptance and sonship implies an assurance of our final perseverance, and of an indefeasible title to heaven; the phrase a comfortable persuasion, or a conviction of our justification and adoption, arising out of the spirit's inward and direct testimony, is to be preferred and ought to be used.[3]

Apollos.—I did not think of this.

Aquila.—There is also another reason for the sparing and cautious use of the word assurance. It is this, it seems to imply, though not necessarily, the absence of all doubt, and shuts out all those lower degrees of persuasion which, it is evident, may exist in the experience of christians; for our faith may not at first, nor at all times, be equally strong: this we have proved, and you must remember that the testimony of the spirit has its degrees of clearness also.[4]

Apollos.—But is not the fulness of this attainment to be pressed on every one?

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

Aquila.—Certainly, the apostle says, 'Let us draw near with full assurance of faith,' and this is the exhortation to all christians, even babes in Christ.

Priscilla.—But, my husband—do you think that this blessing is of the essence of justifying faith?

Aquila.—It may serve to remove an objection sometimes made to the doctrine, and to correct an error which sometimes pervades the statement of it, to observe that this assurance, persuasion, or conviction, whichever term be adopted, is not of the essence of justifying faith; that is, justifying faith does not consist in the assurance that I am now forgiven through Christ. This would be obviously contradictory. For we must believe before we can be justified; much more before we can be assured, in any degree, that we are justified. This persuasion, therefore, follows justification, and is one of its results. But though we must not only distinguish but separate this persuasion of our acceptance from the faith which justifies, we must not separate it, but only distinguish it from justification itself.[1]

Apollos.—We should then ever remember that there is an order in the experience of a christian, which renders it, as it regards its blessings, virtually the same in every case: faith, justification, regeneration, adoption, and then the witness of that state or title to eternal life.

Aquila.—This is correct, only it must also be remembered that these blessings are simultaneous, and that there may be a variety as to the degree of evidence, and of course confidence.

Apollos.—With justification come in also its accompanying blessings, adoption, the spirit of adoption, and our regeneration I perceive plainly.

Aquila.—They assuredly do, and O! my friend—is not this a privilege beyond description, a privilege of the utmost value and importance, to have the habitual indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Thus says the Scripture, 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Or, as we quoted before, 'because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.'

Priscilla.—An indwelling God!

Aquila.—With the remission of sins it also connects, as an immediate result, as a distinct, but yet a simultaneous blessing, 'the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Thus, 'Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' And the Scripture is definite as to this point, that the Holy Ghost is given to those who are justified by faith.

Apollos.—Into what a state of peace and joy these blessings introduce the soul.

Aquila.—They certainly do, and one of the immediate consequences flowing from this adoption and state of favour with God, and this indwelling of the Holy Spirit is peace of conscience. We represented conscience, when the sinner is awakened, as a roaring lion, now it is tame and quiet. The Spirit of God testifies and manifests to those in whom it dwells their free justification and gracious adoption. This Spirit, received by all God's children, is 'not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father,' as already quoted; 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'[2]

Priscilla.—And the soul has confidence in God, there is 'therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' All is peace within.

[1] Watson. [2] Bunting on Justification.

Aquila.—Yes—and accompanying this also is the power over sin, for there is not only a prevailing desire to shun sin, as a deadly poison, but there is power to contend with the adversary, and ability granted by grace, with these blessings, to walk before God in holy obedience. For justification, regeneration, and adoption, bring with them, the power to yield obedience, to the evangelical precepts of the moral law. Before this there was no power, and although there has been the obedience of faith, as we have taken the liberty to call those acts of the persuasion of truth and reliance upon Christ; yet faith does not look at the law, moral or ceremonial, it looks at Jesus, and the unregenerate man might as well undertake to make a world as to obey all the evangelical precepts of the moral law, until his heart is changed by grace, until he becomes a new man. But when he does believe, and is regenerated, he has the ability bestowed by the Spirit of grace to walk in the ways of the Almighty. His faith, as the instrument of justification, becomes, as we once before remarked, the remote cause of an upright life; but the proximate and direct cause is the regeneration of his heart, while the power to do so is granted by the Holy Ghost that dwells within.

Priscilla.—And Apollos—no sooner is the Holy Ghost enthroned in the heart, than he makes all things new.

Aquila.—Yes—in his general work, my friend—purity is always connected with consolation. For he enables those to whom he witnesses their freedom from condemnation, 'to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.'

Priscilla.—O! the joy of such a state.

Aquila.—Surely there is joy, 'a joy that is unspeakable, and full of glory,' and this is connected directly with this adoption also. I mean a joyous hope of heaven. Their title results from the fact of their adoption, and their power to rejoice in hope, from the spirit's testimony of that fact. Hence, says the apostle in a strain of joy and triumph, which you have doubtless noticed 'we through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith,' and 'abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' And now also the love of God, the very essence of religion is shed abroad in our hearts, and so diffuses itself that it is ready to be exercised, and extended to all the creatures of God.

Apollos.—I know a man cannot love God until he is born of God.

Aquila.—O! no—christian love is not to be found with the man who is living in sin.

Priscilla.—How can he love God that knows him not? The unregenerate heart is a stranger to divine love.

Aquila.—And if we apply it to the creatures of God, although we should admit that a man may love his friends, as he ought to do, yet what unregenerate man will love his enemies? But the moment he is born of God, being adopted into his family, he can, yea he does love his worst enemies, and his neighbour as himself.

Apollos.—O! when I experienced this change, I cannot tell you what love I felt, not only to God, but all his creatures, especially his children.

Aquila.—'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' 'he that loveth is born of God, for God is love,' but this love cannot be felt, so long as we are sensible of God's wrath, but the moment in which we are justified, regenerated and adopted into the family of God, and by the divine Spirit receive the evidence, not only of God's love in Christ to us, but of our undisputed title to eternal life, love begets love, and overwhelmed with joyous gratitude to God, the regenerated soul falls at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, and claims him as his own Saviour, and looks up to God as his Father, whom he loves and that most ardently.

Apollos.—Are all these blessings connected together in the gospel plan?

Aquila.—They are. That experienced christian minister, St. Paul, thus, my friend—unites the whole. 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace

with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access, by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.' Till this moment the man cannot feel the love of God, but when this change takes place, he does feel and exercise it too.

Priscilla.—Then and not till then, he does love his veriest enemy.

Aquila.—Yes—it is easy for him to do it. His heart is now changed, he is a new creature. Yesterday he was perhaps a drunkard, a swearer, a sabbath breaker, a debauchee, an enemy to God and man, and also to godliness—look at Saul of Tarsus, now he is in his right mind, saved from his sins, received into God's favour, adopted into his family—his love is shed abroad in his heart, he is ready to take his enemies to his bosom, and as a new man, he starts fair for eternal life.

Apollos.—How wondrous the change!

Aquila.—He has now but just begun to be a christian, all the fruits and graces of God's spirit, are now to be brought into lively exercise, and these we will notice in their proper order. I pray, my friend—that as the adopted children of God, we may never forfeit but ever enjoy the comforts of that state.

COLLOQUY XI.

ERRORS CONCERNING REPENTANCE, FAITH, JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION AND ADOPTION AND THEIR CONCOMITANT BLESSINGS EXAMINED.

Aquila.—In our remarks, my friend—on the great experimental subjects of repentance, faith, justification, regeneration and adoption, and on the blessings that accompany these last, I mean the witness of the spirit and consequent comfortable assurance of present acceptance with God, and the enjoyment of the divine peace, we had occasionally to notice the errors of others, respecting those points. As a mistake here in first principles, and indeed in matters of such vital importance, as those that involve practice, must endanger our soul's salvation, I have thought that we cannot spend an evening better than to examine some of those views, which are presented in regard to these experimental subjects, that our own opinions may not be the result of an ex parte view, of those interesting and all important doctrines.

Apollos.—Indeed, my dear friend—I am delighted that you have thought of this. Some things presented themselves to me, while you were on these several subjects, which I felt disposed to name, but could not tell where to present them, and I have also thought of several things since our last meeting, which can be brought in appropriately during an evening's discussion, intended for a work of so much importance.

Aquila.—Above all things men ought to be right in their experience. And my friend—I have thought if we all understood the terms used by each other as christians, to represent those different states of feeling, or rather experience, which we have, there would be less disputation on theological subjects. However, in this I may be wrong. At least it will do us no harm to set forth to each other, those opinions which are held by others, as far as we understand them, in regard to these points, and examine them fairly and frankly in order to see whether they accord with reason and revelation or not.

Apollos.—This is the very thing that I desire, and while it may correct my

errors, it will give me an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the views of others.

Aquila.—Well—we will take them in that order in which we named them, beginning with repentance first.

Priscilla.—But one would hardly suppose that in a subject like this, of which all christians ought to know so much, there could possibly be a mistake, at least of any magnitude or importance.

Aquila.—There is your own mistake, Priscilla. I alluded to one the other evening, wherein repentance was represented as regeneration, and I may now add, that two other errors occur at once to my mind.

Priscilla.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is that repentance is an act performed by man independent of divine grace, and the other is, that as a gift of God's grace, it is only bestowed on the elect.

Priscilla.—These are errors indeed, and such as endanger salvation.

Apollos.—Examine the first, my friend—if you please: I mean that repentance is the act of man unassisted by grace.

Aquila.—On this point it is not necessary that much should be said, for the fallacy of such an opinion is evident from the fact, that repentance is a gift which comes from on high, and is not by any means within ourselves. 'Him,' says the Scripture alluding to Christ, 'hath God exalted at his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins.' Now I might ask, my friend—why all this display about Christ having by his sacrificial acts procured this blessing for man, if he were capable of repenting of himself? And if 'every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning,' it will follow, either that repentance is not a good and perfect gift, or that it may be numbered among the fruits of the divine operations on our hearts. Another thing also occurs to my mind. We have represented repentance as a sorrowful conviction wrought in the heart by the spirit of divine grace. Now this conviction must be produced by something either within or without us. But it is evident that men being fallen and wholly depraved, the means are not to be found within them. If we look for them without, we find the means used to enlighten and convict the sinner, are the spirit and the word of God, the latter being ever attended by the former, they unite in placing before the sinner such a view of his condition, as to produce that conviction of which we speak, and that godly sorrow which worketh a repentance not to be repented of.[1]

Apollos.—How does it do this?

Aquila.—By placing before the sinner the wrath of God against sin and sinners, especially the obstinate and finally impenitent. Thus, 'then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, saying wo unto,' &c. 'for if the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.' And that which is true of cities, we know is true, of course, of individuals, and the spirit and word of God, apply all the denunciations against impenitence to his heart and conscience, and he trembles while he hears 'except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' The spirit makes the appeal to his conscience 'despiseth thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.'

Priscilla.—And this text proves, by the way, that repentance is the product of divine goodness, and not from within the man, or of himself.

Aquila.—It does so. And as the Spirit applies the question, 'After the hard

[1] Wesley and Watson.

and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' He feels it in his inmost soul: he thinks of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, the rebellious city, and notwithstanding the divine goodness, after all is constrained by justice to give it up. It is applied to himself, and he seems to hear, 'Behold thy house,' thy poor soul is left unto thee desolate. Thus does God's Spirit apply the word, and this proves it to be a work of grace, and not of self.

Priscilla.—Yes—and I have known some who have had placed before them either by the ministers, aided by the Spirit of God, or in reading have had applied in such a way, those tremendous examples of the severe judgments of God exercised over impenitent and incorrigible sinners, as to be almost afraid to sleep. The mind has rested on the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the utter dispersion of the Jews, until in despair they have been ready to give up all for lost.[1]

Aquila.—And they would have given over all hope had it not been that the Spirit presented and applied the precious invitations of the gospel of grace, which woo and draw the sinner to Jesus. Then he sees that repentance is the very work that God would have him be engaged in, and although he cannot repent of himself, he finds that grace is ready to help him. He sees and feels that God has been good only to 'lead' him 'to repentance.' He sees that the very 'end of the commandment' for repentance 'is charity,' i. e. love founded on a new heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith. He hears Jesus say, 'Come unto me ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' and is encouraged to do so by the reception with which a penitent David, Menasseh, a returning Peter, the Ninevites met, and thousands of others, some of whom he has known: all which when applied by the Spirit of God, have the tendency to produce conviction, and lead him as a penitent to seek Jesus.

Apollos.—While it is evident, from what has been said, that repentance is a work of the divine Spirit, wrought in the heart by the convicting influence of divine grace, it is not carried on without ourselves. There must be voluntary action on the part of man, and he must concur in this work.

Aquila.—Most certainly he must, God does not work repentance by an irresistible power, and none of the texts which we have quoted, and none in the Scriptures go to show that divine grace constrains men to repent, though they cannot repent of themselves. As I said before, we are co-workers together with him. This leads us to notice this second error concerning repentance, that it is a gift granted by grace only to the elect, and that these can alone repent.

Priscilla.—Then all are elect, for the Scripture says, 'The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth he all men every where to repent.'

Aquila.—Indeed this is a full refutation of the error—for the very fact that all men are called on to repent by a merciful God, proves that the gift of repentance is for all, and that all are therefore, as you say, of the elect or that the gift of repentance is only to the elect.[2]

Apollos.—I believe I remarked to you some time since that I was convinced that this was an error.

Aquila.—I have already suggested, when on the subject of repentance, that some had fallen into the error that repentance was the new birth. I will now add, that some have also made repentance a condition and indeed the only absolute condition of the remission of sins.[3]

Apollos.—O! we know by experience that this is an error.

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid.

[3] This is the error of some of the German divines, and is positively affirmed by Limborch. Indeed, in the writings of most of the divines of that day there is an evident indistinctness on the subject of justification or pardon.

Aquila.—In our remarks on faith, we have shown that it is the only condition of justification or pardon, and it will follow, if the only condition, that repentance, which does not cancel the guilt of the offender, and if it did, would destroy all order and government, is not a condition of pardon. It is only, as remarked again and again, among those means used by the Spirit and grace of God to prepare the heart of man for the exercise of that faith, by which the soul is justified and restored to the divine favour, and that not on the ground of merit, for remission of sin is the gratuitous act of divine grace, extended to man for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the instrumentality of faith.

Priscilla.—The Scriptures are positive on this point, 'A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.'

Aquila —It will follow, as repentance is not a condition of justification, and as we are saved alone by faith, as the absolute condition of eternal life, that there is no necessity for a lengthened repentance, to render our hearts better before we can believe. No! the moment a man is convinced of sin, and is cut off from all dependence on self, and looks to the Lord Jesus by faith only for salvation, that moment he may be saved from the guilt of his sins, and be restored to the divine favour.

Priscilla.—The jailor and Paul, and the three thousand did not repent long.

Apollos.—No, nor the woman of Samaria, and her friends and neighbours, before they believed on Jesus.

Aquila.—The three thousand were cut to the heart under one sermon, and at once believed, were pardoned, received the Holy Ghost, and joined the infant church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—O! I do think if this doctrine could only get hold on man, thousands would be converted in a day.

Aquila.—Yes, if all the English divines had only held to the great doctrine of the reformation, justification by faith alone, we should long since have seen popery falling, and crumbling into dust. There certainly is too much of works indirectly preached as the condition of justification. We do not preach it and press it as we ought, that faith in Jesus is the only ground of pardon.

Priscilla.—This is the precious gospel doctrine.

Aquila.—This leads me to notice some errors into which men have fallen in regard to faith.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—We have already, when on that subject, considered several which presented themselves, my friend—as you will recollect. It is only necessary now, after what was then affirmed and proved concerning faith, from the Holy Scriptures, to notice one or two that are conspicuous. The first is that a mere belief of the Scriptures, or rather the truth, has been taken by some for evangelical faith, or the faith that justifies the soul. It certainly is notorious, that this theory has had great influence in the church of England, and at this day is asserted by many of her divines and prelates.[1]

Apollos.—This is a radical error.

Aquila.—It is so, and it is manifest in that it acknowledges, that provided faith, i. e. belief, be understood to be sincere and genuine, men are justified by faith only, but then they take this faith as a mere belief or assent to the truth of the gospel and no more.[2] Some, for instance, have demonstrated beyond a contradiction against the Romanists, that justification is not by works, either natural, mosaic, or evangelical, but by faith, and then a mere assent to gospel truth, is defended as the faith by which a soul is justified.[3] This faith is described to be a full assent or

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] This is certainly the case with Whitby.

firm persuasion of mind concerning the truth of what is testified by God himself, respecting our Lord Jesus Christ, and in particular that he was Christ the Son of God. This is said to be the view of many of the national clergy of Great Britain, and especially of some high in ecclesiastical authority, who are not called evangelical, some however leaning toward and mingling their own opinions with those of Bishop Bull.[1] That any one who has read the word of God can suppose that a mere assent intellectual, much less baptism, can justify the sinner, is indeed marvellous. The error of this whole scheme lies in not taking into consideration the very essence of justifying faith, which is a sure, a lively trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, as our sacrifice for sin, for surely we are not called on to make the death of Christ a mere matter of opinion, a belief in his death, a ground for pardon and restoration to the divine favour; but we are personally to trust its efficacy, to rely on it in such a manner as to have that pardon secured. Here is confidence, and this is the act by which the soul is justified. And in connection with this, is the idea of obedience to the evangelical precepts of the moral law, as a direct result of faith, and a condition of salvation, which is also another error.

Apollos.—But it is said that, as faith is productive of obedience to the moral law, this obedience is also a condition of justification.

Aquila.—We have admitted that it may become a remote cause of obedience under divine grace as an instrument, in that it is the absolute condition of justification, upon which our hearts are regenerated, and we are adopted into the divine favour. But that obedience to the moral precepts of the gospel is not a condition of this justification, nor a fruit directly of faith, is evident from the fact that many, as the thief on the cross, have no opportunity for obedience, and the examples of the Scriptures, if closely investigated, will be found to be against this whole scheme of obedience to the moral law as a condition of justification.[2] This is the more evident, if you will consider that good works can only be performed by the regenerate man, the unregenerate being actually incompetent thereto; and surely a man is not regenerate before he is justified, my friend.

Apollos.—But did you not say that obedience was involved in faith.[3]

Aquila.—Not an obedience that is either legal or ceremonial, or an obedience to the evangelical moral precepts of the gospel, but the obedience of faith, by which I meant and said, the exercise of that power or ability granted of grace, in obedience to God's command to receive or trust Christ. This is the act, the solitary, yet complex act, as was avowed, because it involves several, by which the soul relies on the Lord Jesus for salvation, and the direct fruits thereof, as produced by grace in the heart, are pardon, regeneration and adoption, while the remote fruits of it, considered as the instrument of justification, is obedience to the moral precepts of the gospel. And, my friend—the idea of faith being in its exercise, an act of obedience to the gospel call was the more readily advanced, because as we said, God had commanded it and men might, yea, often did refuse to exercise that ability, and were damned for unbelief.[4]

Apollos.—But does not St. James say that faith without works is dead?

Aquila.—It is admitted, and I have quoted this passage again and again. But he certainly does not mean that justifying faith, by which a sinner is pardoned, is a faith which is dead, or is without works, at least, when considered as the instrument of justification, the remote cause of them. The whole argument of St. James is this, if a dead faith, by which he means assent to doctrine, is no evidence of a justified state, it cannot therefore be justifying, which is certainly as conclusive an argument as possible. St. James does not deny faith to him who

[1] Mr. Watson quotes elaborately from British divines in proof of this fact, to whose excellent arguments in refutation of it the reader is referred.

[2] Watson. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

has faith without works; and if then he has faith, the apostle can mean by that faith nothing else certainly than assent or belief. Hence, he says, 'thou believest there is one God, thou doest well,' and as this faith according to him is 'alone,' by it he evidently means mere assent of the intellect, which as proved does not justify. And this will expose the error of those who make justification the result of assent to the evidence of gospel truth or doctrinal belief.[1]

Apollos.—I think this a fair conclusion indeed.

Aquila.—And as it respects obedience to the precepts of the moral law, if faith justifies only as it produces obedience to those precepts, it will follow, as before said, that it does not justify alone, but that the justifying efficacy lies in the virtual or actual obedience proceeding from it. The only sense then in which St. James could say that Abraham was justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his son upon the altar, evidently is, that his works manifested or proved that he was justified, that he was actually justified too by faith, or in other words that the faith by which he was justified, was not dead and inoperative, but living and active. So far is St. James from denying that Abraham was justified by the imputation of his faith for righteousness, long before he offered up his son Isaac, that he expressly allows it, by quoting the very passage itself, in which this is said to have taken place twenty-five years before, and he makes use of his subsequent works in the argument, especially to illustrate the vital and *obedient* nature of the faith, by which he was at first justified, 'seest thou,' saith he, 'how faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made *perfect*, and the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, 'Abraham believed God,' in a transaction twenty-five years previous, 'and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.'[2]

Apollos.—What is the Scripture that St. James alludes to?

Aquila.—The passage in Genesis where it is said of Abraham, 'and he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness.'

Apollos.—This text just brings to my mind the different views in regard to justification. You mentioned the Romanist view of justification on the ground of inherent righteousness. Explain this view if you please?

Aquila.—The theory of the Romish church, as we once before said, confounds sanctification with justification. In other words they make the regeneration of man's nature, necessary to his justification. The influence of this theory may be seen in the writings of many of the English divines also, who make regeneration the precurser or rather a condition of justification. This is certainly an error.[3]

Apollos.—In what does it originate?

Aquila.—From a loose and confused notion of regeneration, and the confounding, as I said once, the change which true evangelical repentance doubtless implies with regeneration itself. In the established order of things appertaining to experience we have seen that God effects this mighty work, the renovation of our nature, by awakening the sinner from his state of sleep: alarmed at his condition he betakes himself to inquiry and prayer, he hears, reads, in fine uses the means that lie before him, and often seeks until the great deep of his heart is broken up by repentance. But my friend—this is not regeneration, nor is it justification its precurser.

Apollos.—O no! it is only the painful discovery of his own lost state without salvation.

Aquila.—Certainly the fruits of repentance, the effects of an alarmed conscience and of a corrected judgment; the efforts to be right, however imperfect; which are the signs we also grant of sincerity, prove no more than that the preparatory process is going on, under the influence of the Holy Spirit.[4]

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

Priscilla.—How many in this state of mind, have been persuaded that they were justified and regenerated.

Aquila.—Others may endeavour to persuade a person in this condition that he is pardoned and adopted into the divine favour, but the absence of the love of God, the dominion of sin, and the successful opposition of his own heart, will prove, if he be honest, that he is still in a condemned state. That at best he is but a struggling slave.[1]

Apollos.—But when he believes in Christ the scene is changed.

Aquila.—O yes! then he has the 'oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' Love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, faith, temperance, as well as his justification, regeneration, adoption, and the direct witness of God's spirit, to define and set forth his true state. While then all these things preparatory to the exercise of faith in Jesus are necessary, as hearing is necessary, for 'faith comes by hearing,' they are not only not justification, but they are not faith. They are only preparatory means. The justification then of which we speak, viz: the pardon of a sinner, and his restoration to the divine favour, is a justification, not by any internal or inherent righteousness, but by faith and faith alone. Faith being alone the proximate condition of it, whatever other things may be remotely necessary for its exercise.[2]

Apollos.—There is another theory my friend—in regard to justification, which is this, that it is by works, but that these works must be evangelical and spring from faith, being done by the assistance of the divine spirit, but while they are not meritorious, they are necessary for justification.

Aquila.—I am aware, my friend—that this is the view of some, but I am also aware, that in order to give it even the appearance of truth it became necessary for those who embraced it, to avoid the force of the apostle's words, that a man is justified by faith, and contrary to the usual custom of commentators, to reconcile St. James and St. Paul on the doctrine of justification, virtually to set them at variance, or rather to represent the doctrine of St. Paul as a thing 'hard to be understood,' and then justify men by works as is said in the epistle of St. James.[3]

Apollos.—But this is a manifest perversion of the intent of the Scriptures.

Aquila.—It is bringing, my friend—the wicked ungodly man to pay off his debts, and discharge his insolvency by doing better hereafter. Indeed this is a sufficient answer to the whole scheme. But let us look at the doctrine of St. James a little.

Apollos.—Do if you please?

Aquila.—To interpret St. Paul by St. James involves this manifest absurdity, that it is interpreting a writer who treats professedly, and in a set discourse on the subject in question, the justification of a sinful man before God, by a writer, who if he could be allowed to treat on that subject with the same design, does it incidentally. This makes it clear, that the great principles of this doctrine must be first sought for in the writer who enters professedly and by copious argument into the inquiry.[4]

Apollos.—This is very obvious and is certainly correct.

Aquila.—Well, my friend—the two apostles do not engage in the same argument, and for this reason, that they are not addressing themselves to persons in the same circumstances. St. Paul is addressing the unbelieving Jews, who sought justification by obedience to the law of Moses, moral and ceremonial; he proves that all men are guilty, and that neither Jew nor Gentile can be justified by works of obedience to any law, and that therefore justification must be by

[1] Watson. [2] Wesley.

[3] The reader is respectfully referred to the elaborate and well written remarks of Mr. Watson on this very important and interesting subject. [4] Watson.

faith alone. On the other hand, St. James having to do in his epistle with such as professed the christian faith, and justification by it, but who erred dangerously about the nature of faith, affirming that faith in the sense of opinion or mere belief of doctrine would save them, though they should remain destitute of a real change in the moral frame and constitution of their minds, and give no evidence of this in a holy life, it became necessary for him to plead the renovation of man's nature, and evangelical obedience, as the necessary fruits of real or living faith.[1]

Apollos.—The plain state of the case then is this. The question discussed by St. Paul, is whether works will justify, that discussed by St. James, is whether a dead inoperative faith will save.[2]

Aquila.—Yes—the mere faith of assent. And therefore St. Paul and St. James do not use the term justification in the same sense.[3]

Apollos.—Do you think so.

Aquila.—I do, the former uses it as we have seen for the pardon of sin, the accepting and treating as righteous, one who is guilty but penitent. But that St. James does not speak of this kind of justification is most evident from his reference to the case of Abraham, 'was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar?'

Apollos.—St. James could not mean that Abraham was justified in the sense of being forgiven, for that was done long before.

Aquila.—Certainly not, for St. Paul when speaking of the justification of Abraham, in the sense of his forgiveness before God, by the imputation of his faith for righteousness, fixes that event many years previously, even before Isaac was born, and when the promise of a seed was made to him, for it is added by Moses when he gives an account of this transaction, 'and he believed in the Lord and he counted it for righteousness.' If then St. James speaks of the same kind of justification, he contradicts not only St. Paul, but Moses, when he gives an account of this transaction, by implying that Abraham was not pardoned and received into God's favour, until the offering of Isaac.[4]

Apollos.—But no one will be so senseless as to maintain this.

Aquila.—Then the justification of Abraham mentioned by St. James it is plain, does not mean the forgiveness of his sins, and he uses the term in a different sense from St. Paul.[5]

Apollos.—What then is the sense in which St. James does use it.

Aquila.—The only one in which he can take then, the term justification, when he says that Abraham was 'justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar,' is that his works proved or manifested that he was justified, or as we have shown before, in another place, proved that he was really justified by faith.

Apollos.—That is that the faith by which he was justified was not dead and inoperative, but living and active.[6]

Aquila.—And this is abundantly proved by what follows. So far is St. James from denying that Abraham was justified by the imputation of his faith for righteousness, long before he offered up his son Isaac, that he expressly allows it, by quoting the passage where this is said to have happened years before, as related by Moses in Genesis, and in the argument he makes use of the subsequent works of Abraham to illustrate, as I said before, the *vital* and *obedient* nature of faith, even that by which he was justified.[7] 'Seest thou,' says he, 'how faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect, and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness,' i. e. justification 'and he was called the friend of God.'

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Watson. [4] Ibid. [5] Watson. [6] Ibid. [7] Watson.

Apollos.—What is meant by this 'the Scripture was fulfilled.'

Aquila.—This whole subject deserves our notice, but to answer your question, doubtless by 'the Scripture was fulfilled,' is meant the text quoted above 'and he believed in the Lord and he counted,' i. e. imputed it 'unto him for righteousness,' i. e. justification, and by this being fulfilled, is simply meant that it was established and confirmed by the offering of Isaac, that he was in truth a man truly justified of God, and that the faith by which he was justified, was living and operative.[1]

Apollos.—And as St. James does not use the term justification here in the sense of forgiveness of sin, when he speaks of the justification of Abraham by works, so neither can he use it in this sense, in the general conclusion which he draws from it, 'ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only.'

Aquila.—This is truly so, and the ground on which he rests this general inference is the declarative justification of Abraham, which resulted from this his lofty act of obedience, in the case of Isaac and was eminently itself an act of *obedient* faith, and the justification of which he speaks in the general conclusion of the argument, must therefore be taken in the same sense.[2]

Apollos.—This is very plain, indeed, he does not speak of the act of being justified before God, and the means by which it is effected, but of being proved to be in a manifest and scriptural state of justification.

Aquila.—As though he had said 'ye see then that by works a man is' shown to be in a 'justified' state, or how his profession is confirmed as sincere and scriptural by his deeds of piety.[3]

Apollos.—O this is all-important to a correct understanding of this epistle.

Aquila.—It is, and it reconciles too, perfectly, these apostles. For when considered properly, it will be found that they agree both as it regards faith and works. St. James declares that man cannot be saved by mere faith, meaning not the faith to which St. Paul attributes so much efficacy, but only a persuasion or belief of the gospel, and his arguments prove this, for he speaks of a *dead* faith which is *alone*, St. Paul of a faith which is never alone, though it alone justifies, or is the instrument of pardon.[4]

Apollos.—There is then no foundation in the epistle of St. James for the doctrine of justification by works.

Aquila.—Certainly not: this doctrine is no more taught by him, or any of the apostles, than that the mere belief in Christ, or the persuasion of his truth is the instrument of justification.[5] There is an error, the opposite of justification by works, which we have often noticed casually, and it may be proper, my brother—to inquire into it here. I mean the transfer or imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for justification. The notion of Calvin and others seems to be, that the entire obedience of Christ to the will of the Father called his righteousness, as manifested both in doing and suffering that will, is upon our believing, imputed or accounted to us, or accepted for us, as though it were our own. This has been most shamefully used to encourage sin.

Apollos.—I do not understand this imputation.

Aquila.—By such it seems to be admitted, that there is a kind of transfer of the righteousness of Christ to our account, and that believers are considered so to be in Christ, as that he should answer for them in law, and plead his righteousness in default of theirs. This is certainly calculated to prevent an effort for moral action.

[1] Watson.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Watson.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Watson.

Apollos.—And if a man living in sin, should take hold on this idea, he may put it to a very bad account.

Aquila.—He may indeed, my friend. If Christ's righteousness be considered as imputed to us in the sense of its being accounted of God, the valuable consideration, satisfaction and merit, (attaining God's ends,) for which we are (when we consent to the covenant of grace,) forgiven and justified against the condemning sentence of the law of innocency, and accounted and accepted of God to grace and glory through the medium of faith: then it will be found that God justifies a believer for the sake of Christ's righteousness, and not for any righteousness of his own. Such an imputation of Christ's righteousness as this, is not denied, but zealously supported by evangelical Arminians and by some of the best and greatest men professedly Calvinistic.[1]

Apollos.—I am sure it has been proved that all blessings are bestowed for Christ's sake.

Aquila.—Yes—and the Scriptures no where affirm, as we have once, you know, proved, that Christ's active or passive obedience, is so imputed to us, as that either is considered to be ours. And indeed such a manner of speaking, is not, I think, agreeable to the language of the Holy Ghost, for in the Scriptures, whenever the term imputing is used, it is only applied to or spoken of something, of the same persons to whom the imputation is said to be made, and not to or of any thing of another's. That is his own believing, not that the acts of another is imputed to him.[2] Thus, 'Abraham believed God, and *his faith* was *imputed* to *him* for righteousness,' i. e. justification. And in another sense, 'but to *him* that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is *imputed* to him for righteousness.'

Apollos.—It is very plain that to attribute Christ's righteousness by a transfer to our account for justification is a palpable error.

Aquila.—That faith is accounted or imputed for justification, is a doctrine so clearly taught by the express word of Almighty God, that no one, my friend—can deny it, this we have proved, and surely what that is, which is imputed for righteousness in justification, all the wisdom or learning of men is not so fit, or able to determine, as the Holy Ghost, who speaking in the Scriptures, has affirmed, 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.' 'We say that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, and it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.'[3]

Apollos.—And the testimony of the apostle being so express on this point, the imputation of faith for righteousness or justification, must be taken to be the doctrine of the New Testament.

Aquila.—And of course, an imputation of any thing else for justification, must be an error. And the best divines of almost every name, from Tertullian and Origen, to this day, including Luther and Calvin themselves, have taught that faith is imputed for justification. Indeed the Commentary of Calvin on the third and fifth verses of the fourth chapter of Romans, is remarkable, in view of his doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation. His words are, 'wherefore Abraham by believing, doth only embrace the grace tendered unto him, that it might not be in vain. If this be imputed unto him for righteousness, it follows that he is no otherwise righteous, but as trusting or relying upon the goodness of God, he hath boldness to hope for all things from him.' And again, on the fifth verse, 'faith is imputed for righteousness, not because it carrieth any merit from us, but because it apprehends the goodness of God.'

[1] This is clearly proved by Mr. Watson, who quotes largely from those who have written on the subject, and this very allusion is made to Baxter, Goodwin and others. The remarks here are substantially quotations from their works. [2] Watson. [3] Ibid.

Apollos.—It is obvious that he took the texts in their plain grammatical signification.

Aquila.—We have alluded, my friend—to the error of some, in supposing that repentance is regeneration, and as it has been disproved, it is unnecessary to reconsider it, there are, however, some other errors respecting the regeneration of man, that it may be proper for us to notice here, as this is a work without which no man can inherit eternal life. These are simply errors which respect either the possibility of it, or by which its true nature is misapprehended. As it respects the possibility, there is an error founded in the ignorance of the fact, that this is the work of God, and not man. The question is stated in connection with the condition of the subjects of this work. 'Can the Ethiopian,' it is said, 'change his colour,' or the 'leopard his spots' and how can a man accustomed to sin, cease to do evil and learn to do well.

Apollos.—I have heard this often. Many say, who will believe that drunkards, swearers, indeed sinners of every description, can be regenerated and become religious at once?

Aquila.—It is easy to answer this question, my friend. They could not become religious at all of themselves, but the change effected is one of divine grace, the power of God is interested in its accomplishment, and that which man could not do, 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh,' that the 'excellency of the power might appear to be of God, and not of us.' Besides, the same question might be asked in regard to Saul of Tarsus, the jailor, who in such an inhuman manner, 'thrust' the feet of the apostle and his companion into the stocks, and of hundreds of others who have been changed by the divine power, in a few days, from nature to grace. Who effected this change in them?

Priscilla.—O how often have we seen some of our neighbours converted to God, who have lived almost three score years, in every sort of sin, when the heart was given up to God at once, reformed, and ever after lived to honour their heavenly Father. Really, I have thought that the moral man is among the hardest cases. He holds to his morality, and does not give up all as lost, without Jesus shall help. But the open sinner most generally reasons thus, I have nothing to hope for, or hold to, if Jesus does not save me I am ruined and undone, and the moment he falls at the feet of Jesus, and trusts him alone for mercy, he feels that mercy extended to him.

Aquila.—Yes—and that which he could not do himself, God does for him, changes his heart, and he becomes a new creature.

Apollos.—But many oppose this spiritual influence.

Aquila.—They do—and this is another error that regards this matter, though I assure you it is not a new one. It is as old as Nicodemus, who said, 'How can these things be? Can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born again?' They do not consider that this is not a natural but a spiritual birth. And when men ask how a man of a loose and an immoral character can be born, 'born again,' 'born from above and regenerated,' being old in sin. We answer, it is a work effected by the divine spirit, it is a spiritual not natural work. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Religion in its commencement, progress, and completion, is a spiritual work. And closely assimilated to this is the error that regeneration consists in mere reformation, as it respects the external conduct.

Priscilla.—O! this is a very prevalent error. How many have been awakened, and after reforming their lives have settled down in some branch of the church,

without ever having obtained the pardon of sins and the regeneration of their souls.

Aquila.—This error originates in the want of a proper consideration of that order in which regeneration is effected. It is never by such taken into consideration that repentance, deep, genuine, heart-felt repentance, a living, an evangelical faith, and the pardon of sins or justification of the soul, precede and do not follow regeneration. And this with many is a ruinous mistake.

Apollos.—What, a man be regenerated and never repent, a man be born again and know nothing about the pardon of his sins? This is strange indeed.

Aquila.—Yes—passing strange, yet many think so, while others take an external attention to the ordinances of God's house for their regeneration.[1]

Apollos.—This is worse still, my friend.

Aquila.—It is so, for in this there is generally so much show of piety as to excite on the one hand the praise of men, and on the other that self-complacency and gratulation, that such are rocked in the arms of carnal security, while daily attending to external means. This was, most certainly, the case with the Pharisees, who made clean the outside, but in heart were filled with 'all manner of uncleanness.'

Apollos.—How true is this. Some having been baptized and received into the church, take the sacrament of the Lord's supper, attend on and support the ministry of the word, regard the Sabbath, and do many other good deeds, and therefore infer that they are christians, and without pardon take it for granted that it is so.

Aquila.—This is not all, too often do ministers become instrumental in lulling to sleep such formalists. They cry 'peace and safety,' they 'build up with untempered mortar,' they are standing on the walls of Zion, and with a holy boldness, and an independence that ought to characterize the man of God, even at the hazard of life, should cry aloud and spare not these 'whited sepulchres,' which are 'filled with dead men's bones.'

Apollos.—And of course closely allied to these are all the errors about adoption.

Aquila.—They are, the chief of which may be barely named, in order that we may see their inconsistency, if it has not been already exposed. It has been contended by some, we have seen, that a man may be unchanged in heart, and yet be a justified and a regenerate man, of course all these are spoken of as the children or sons of God, the inconsistency of which is apparent, simply from the consideration of the true nature of things: for can it be supposed that God will delight in and abide with a man, a sinner, unclean, unholy, unregenerate, whose heart is as 'a nest of vipers and a cage of unclean birds,' 'filled with all manner of uncleanness,' until it is changed? and he too, be a God supremely holy, that abhors sin in all its forms? It cannot be.

Apollos.—No, my friend—this cannot be!

Aquila.—And again—the ideas of others about an adoption founded on the eternal decree of God's election, irrespective of faith, has been amply refuted, and concerning it we need only say that those who would claim to themselves this adoption, ought to inquire first, have I repented and believed, have I been justified and regenerated? do I know it, and above all, have I the witness of God's Spirit, by which I plainly see and feel my adoption?

Apollos.—But many do not believe in the witness of the Spirit, or mistake its nature.

Aquila.—I know this, and therefore will proceed to notice the errors in regard

[1] Several of the divines of the English church have written elaborately to prove that water baptism is the new birth.

to it. In the first place, men mistake, in regard to this matter, by esteeming the operations of their own minds as God's spirit that testifies to their adoption. This error will be corrected by a proper understanding of this subject. If we inquire into the matter as before suggested, we shall find that, while there is consciousness there is also the direct testimony of God, by the Holy Ghost, in our hearts. The correct view doubtless is, that this testimony is two-fold. A direct testimony to, or inward impression on the soul, whereby the *Spirit* of *God* witnesses to *man's* spirit that he is a child of God, that Christ hath loved him and given himself for him, and that he is reconciled to God. It is also indirect, arising from the work of the Spirit in the heart and life, which St. Paul calls the testimony of our own spirits; for this is inferred from his expression, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our Spirit.' This testimony of our spirit, or indirect testimony of the Holy Spirit, by and through our own spirit, is considered as confirmatory of the first testimony, or the witness of the Holy Ghost.[1]

Apollos.—Explain this if you please?

Aquila.—How can a man, for instance, be assured that he does not mistake the voice of the Spirit? The answer is clear, even by the testimony of his own spirit, or as the Scripture says, 'by the answer of a good conscience toward God,' and hereby he knows, that he is in no delusion, that he has not deceived his own soul. The immediate fruits of the Spirit, ruling in his own heart, 'are love, joy, peace, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long suffering.' And the outward fruits are the doing good to all men, and a uniform obedience to all the commands of God.[2] This, my friend—appears to be the true state of the case, and to this view of it agree not only the great reformer Luther, but some of the greatest lights and best divines of the English church.[3]

Apollos.—O! I remember, it is said, that Luther was strengthened by the preaching of an Augustine monk, on the certainty that we may have our sins forgiven.

Aquila.—Yes—and assured of the witness of the Holy Spirit in his own heart, that his sins were pardoned, he was comforted and strengthened in the hour of temptation. And as Bishop Pearson says, 'it is the office of the Holy Ghost to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God toward us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance.' 'The love of God being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.'

Priscilla.—Such are 'born again,' 'born of the Spirit,' and 'renewed' 'by the Holy Ghost.'

Apollos.—I see very plainly that the direct witness of the Holy Ghost is most certainly the privilege of the christian.

Priscilla.—Yes—of every christian, and not as a minister who, when asked by a sick lady if it were the christian's privilege, replied 'it was the privilege of a favoured few, as Paul and such appointed for a special work, but not of ordinary christians.'

Aquila.—It is not only the privilege of every christian, but the plain fact is, we know nothing of adoption, nor indeed of experimental religion until we have this direct evidence of pardon and regeneration, as well as adoption in our hearts. We dare not, my friend—in matters of such vast and infinite importance, leave to inference what ought to depend on direct evidence.[4]

Apollos.—But it is said that we have the testimony of God in his word, that

[1] Wesley and Watson. [2] Ibid.
[3] Bishops Andrew, Hooper, Hooker, and Brownrigg, Archbishop Usher, and Dr. Barrow.
[4] Wesley and Watson.

when repentance and faith exist, God has infallibly connected pardon with them, from the moment they are perceived to exist, and so it may be *surely* inferred we are pardoned.

Aquila.—This I deny, we have no such testimony, we have the promise of pardon for all who repent and believe; but repentance and faith are not pardon, they are only its prerequisites.[1]

Priscilla.—And who but God has a right to pardon?

Aquila.—True! I may ask this very question. The sin is committed against God. The repentance and faith are necessary, but they surely are not the pardon itself, and above all, as the precursors of pardon, it would be absurd to make them the evidence of it.

Apollos.—I see this, we can never know when our repentance and faith are accepted until God's Spirit shall testify that we are accepted, and unless we have the witness, we must be sorrowing always. This is clear to my mind.

Aquila.—Or rather be a penitent for life.

Apollos.—But it is said that such have the fruits of the Spirit, and these are sufficient evidence of our adoption.

Aquila.—But, my brother—you will surely not make them have the fruits of the Spirit until they have the Spirit. Now the Scriptures say, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c. but can there be love, much less joy and peace, until the Spirit shall beget them; and shall testify to the poor soul that his sins are pardoned. You will surely not have an effect removed until the cause producing it is taken away?

Apollos.—No! surely no! I would not; but it has been said that *love* to God is produced from the consideration of his general love to all mankind, especially the elect.

Aquila.—Here again you mistake, my friend—for the Scripture says it 'is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' How many hear every Sabbath of the general love of God to man, and have it pointed out in the most lively colours, and yet do not love God? And although many speak of their hope, as predicated on this love, it is to be remembered, my friend—that neither can exist without the operation of the Spirit in our pardon. So that this witness is not only necessary but it is direct, producing knowledge not mediately, but, by its powerful operation, immediately and certain, assuring us most conclusively, that all our sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus.[2]

Apollos.—But you do not exclude the testimony of our own spirit.

Aquila.—Surely not. Some have supposed that the text, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits,' was simply a declaration that this was the mode of communication or action. That the Spirit acted on spirit as matter on matter, and that in this way we arrived at the knowledge of our state. Now, although we admit that it is fair and logical, and indeed the only just and proper conclusion, that Spirit can and does act on spirit, yet if it be intended to obviate the force of the argument for the direct witness of the Holy Spirit on that of our own, we confess we do resist it. God can and does act on our spirits, and what of this? It would only show the possibility of evidence from on high in regard to our true state, and also that by divine action a man's spirit might be renewed and sanctified. But the text to which we allude sets forth not only the fact that God's Spirit does testify to our adoption, but also that our own spirits bear testimony to the same effect. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness,' here is one witness to this adoption, and the other is 'our spirits,' which also testify to the same fact.[3]

Apollos.—That is, while our own spirits testify that we are regenerated and adopted, God's Spirit also testifies to the same thing.

[1] Watson. [2] Wesley and Watson. [3] Wesley.

Aquila.—The testimony of our own spirits is properly that second testimony of which we speak, and which has been defined a consciousness of our having received, in and by the spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God as belonging to his adopted children, that we are inwardly conformed by the Spirit of God to the image of his Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy, and truth, doing the things that are pleasing in his sight.[1] But let it be observed that this testimony of our own spirit is not to the fact of our adoption directly, but to the fact that we have received the spirit of adoption, and that we are under no delusive impressions.

Apollos.—And this is supporting the evidence of the first witness, the Holy Ghost.

Aquila.—Not as to our actual pardon, for the Holy Spirit, which only knows the mind of God, can testify to this, and of course by him only can it be testified to us. It cannot, therefore, according to some, be as well for us to have recourse to our own spirit, for it can have nothing to testify on this point of pardon. But our own spirits are competent witnesses that such moral effects have been produced in our hearts and character as it is the office of the Holy Ghost to produce.

Priscilla.—They prove that the Holy Ghost dwells in us, and thus we are enabled to see and know that we are regenerated by grace.[2]

Apollos.—I see consciousness then is not the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Aquila.—By no means, my friend. A man may be conscious of his sincerity from the time he is first convicted until he is done with this state of being, and yet never be able to say, I know my sins are pardoned, until by faith he approaches God the Father, in humble trust on the merits of Christ Jesus, when he obtains that 'new name,' that 'white stone,' that 'secret of the Lord,' which 'is with them that fear him,' that blessed testimony that all his sins are pardoned for Jesus' sake. Then he hears indeed the spirit of adoption, and then can he sing, 'My God is reconciled.'

Apollos.—How immediately does this correspond with my own experience. Till that moment my heart, i. e. my conscience, condemned me, afterwards all was peace.

Priscilla.—And I will add that my own experience agrees with all that has been said on this subject.

COLLOQUY XII.

THAT THE REGENERATE MAN IS NOT UNDER THE DOMINION OF SIN, AND TO SUPPOSE HIM THE SUBJECT OF IT, IS AN ERROR—AN EXAMINATION OF THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS.

Apollos.—I must say, that thus far I perceive the consistency of that view which has been presented of the experimental doctrines of the gospel. But you made some remarks, when discussing those several subjects, selected at our last meeting, in regard to the dominion of sin, that I want reconsidered. You know it has been contended that sin must remain in the regenerate, and indeed it has been argued that regeneration itself may be and is so imperfect in this life, as that a man is always under the necessity of sinning, in a greater or less degree, while in this state of probation.[3]

Aquila.—It has been maintained by some, that the faculties of man are not the

[1] Wesley and Watson. [2] Watson.

[3] The view of Scott, Henry and others is, that 'he cannot help it.' Of course are necessitated to it.

subjects of this regeneration, but that in him his innate concupiscence, strengthened by habits of transgression, are such that, even after the habits themselves are destroyed, his propensity to transgression is so great that he must, on account of its struggles against the Spirit, frequently fall into sin, which is often the cause of withdrawing us from the love of God, but that in the other world this will all be destroyed.

Apollos.—Of course they make our regeneration only a kind of initial work here, which is to be completed in another world.

Aquila.—Yes—this is the case, and a death, purgatory, or some other one is to supply the place of the blood of Christ. Strange inconsistency!

Apollos.—Some go further than this, and say that sin in believers is actually profitable, that it humbles a soul, and that it leads man to feel his entire dependence on God.

Aquila.—Then, as I once before said, the greater the sinner the more his humility. But, my friend—to the point, the christian course is a warfare, there are certainly degrees of piety, and we freely acknowledge that it is very difficult, at least in the commencement, to break off bad habits and walk uprightly, but it is not so hard to do this as one would think, when the heart is changed by grace, and God's Spirit is working in us, helping our infirmities, and applying that grace which 'is sufficient' for us. That the regenerate man does not live in sin is clear from both reason and Scripture.

Priscilla.—O! yes—the Lord saith, 'he that sinneth is of the devil.' The unregenerate, in or out of church, will sin.

Aquila.—The fact is, the Scripture always describes to us a man that is regenerated as a new creature, as renewed in his understanding, his will, his affections, and consequently, as we have proved when on this subject, in his actions, his state is manifest by his upright walk. And, Apollos—if it be said that there is the necessity of sinning left in the regenerate, then it must be either because he is not a new creature, which would contradict the Scriptures, or because God will not give him power over sin, which is to make God its author, since by the refusal of that which he alone can give, we are necessarily drawn into sin. Or, as some do, they must make the believer have two wills, one to sin, and one not to sin, which is absurd.

Priscilla.—Yes—and it supposes that the flesh has the mastery over the Spirit, instead of being subjected by it. Is not this repugnant to the very nature of that blessed work?

Aquila.—It truly is, and is not the worst of it, for this very opinion is destructive of all piety.

Apollos.—How so, my friend?

Aquila.—It maintains that sin, contrary to the word of God; daily sins, according to some, in thought, word and deed, are consistent with a state of grace, and contrary to the word of God, that it is necessary for a regenerate man to fall into sin, and that this produces no condemnation but rather humility, especially if there be some struggles of reason against the concupiscence of his nature. Now, my brother—I ask, is not this an inlet to vice, an encouragement for slothfulness and neglect of duty, that is inadmissible, if God be holy and the Scriptures true. 'He that is born of God doth not commit sin.'[1]

Apollos.—But, my friend—it is objected to this, that St. Paul, who was a regenerate man, says in the seventh chapter of Romans, that he was 'carnal,' 'sold under

[1] Is it not a fact that Dr. Scott, Henry, Burkitt, Dick, and others, admit the necessity of sin in believers: and even Limborch, who opposes the necessity, admits that 'the habit of sin' 'cannot be *shaken* off at once.' But surely God's grace, changing the heart at once, can and does conquer it, in us.

sin,' that he 'did the evil that he would not,' that 'sin dwelt in him, and in his flesh,' and by this that he was captive to the law of sin.

Aquila.—My friend—the apostle does not here speak of himself, nor does he describe the state of a man who is regenerated, but under his own person, as was usual with him, perhaps to avoid pride, or envy, or it may be both, to personate others, and thus represent to us the true state of an unregenerate man, in fact, the state of a Jew, as before and under the law.[1]

Apollos.—And was St. Paul thus accustomed thus to personate others under his own proper person?

Aquila.—He was, thus we hear him in this very epistle, 'if the truth of God hath more abounded through my life unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?' And again, 'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful unto me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.' And using in another place almost the same declaration, he adds 'All things edify not.' So in that memorable chapter 13, 1st Cor. he uses the very same style, 'though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' Who, my friend—ever supposed that St. Paul did not here, under his own person, actually represent or speak of others? I could give you numerous instances of this very thing from the writings of the same apostle.

Apollos.—And you think this chapter presents the condition of an unregenerate man? A Jew?

Aquila.—This is evident from the whole drift of the same, and from the description given of the person set forth in it; which last is far from being the character of a regenerate man, such an one being described in terms quite contrary to these in the word of God.[2]

Apollos.—Do you say so?

Aquila.—I do, and I will quote some of them. 'But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, against such there is no law, and they that are Christ's have crucified the world and its affections and lusts.' Here is a regenerate man.

Priscilla.—And who will believe that St. Paul came short of this, who said, 'I am crucified with Christ,' and 'Christ liveth in me.'

Aquila.—To the reverse also of what is said in the seventh chapter of Romans, St. Paul says in the next chapter, 'therefore we are debtors not to the flesh to live after the flesh.' And in the preceding chapter, describing the regenerate man, he

[1] The reader is referred to the excellent comment of Dr. Clarke on this chapter, indeed to the whole exposition of the Epistle to the Romans by that learned man. He may also consult Dr. Macknight on this chapter, who has some judicious and candid remarks on the fact that St. Paul is not speaking of himself, and his experience after regeneration.

[2] I cannot forbear giving the reader the words of Dr. Macknight on this very point, when commenting on this chapter. 'How such a habit of doing evil and neglecting good can be attributed to any regenerate person, and especially to the apostle Paul, who before this epistle to the Romans was written, told the Thessalonians, 'ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblameably, we behaved among you,' I confess I do not comprehend.' After other remarks the Doctor adds, 'now not to insist on the impropriety of applying words, which denote outward actions to the motions of evil desire in the mind, I ask what sense is there in the apostle's telling us that his concupiscence did not practice in his mind, what he inclined,' 'but he always did the evil which his sanctified will did not incline.' Is not this the clearest proof that evil desire was the prevailing principle in his mind; and that his sanctified will had no power to restrain its workings? 'Now,' adds the Doctor, 'could the apostle give any plainer description of an unregenerate person than this?' And who will believe that Saul of Tarsus was unconverted. This is honest and it deserves to be written in letters of gold.

says, 'but God be thanked, ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' And may I not ask, were converted Romans superior to Paul the aged, in piety?

Priscilla.—And do you not remember, my husband—what our Lord says, 'verily, verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,' 'if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'

Aquila.—Indeed this is an appropriate quotation, Priscilla—and well describes the true character of the regenerate man. I want, however, to show by the description which St. Paul gives of a regenerate man, that the person personified in the seventh chapter of Romans, is not a regenerated person. Thus to the Philippians, he says, 'it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' So to the Romans in the preceding chapter, he describes thus the regenerate man, 'knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'And in the first part of the next chapter, he says, 'for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death.' And as was quoted before, in his epistle to the Galatians, he says, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' And to the Ephesians, for 'we are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.'

Apollos.—I confess, my friend—I am in amazement how men of learning and piety, could ever have supposed that St. Paul alluded to a regenerate man, much less to himself, in the seventh chapter of Romans, I cannot tell.

Aquila.—Nor I, my friend—besides you know, Apollos—that the character which St. Paul gives himself, in other places, bears no similarity to that set forth in the seventh chapter of Romans. So far from admitting that he was 'carnal,' 'sold under sin,' he represents himself as one 'walking worthy of the gospel of Christ,' and as 'able to do all things' through divine strength, and he sets up himself, doubtless in humility, as an example to his brethren, saying 'be ye followers of me,' 'and mark them that walk so, as ye have us for an example.' And he tells us, as just now suggested, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.[1]

Apollos.—Dear me! What a different character is this, from that which some men would fasten on that great apostle, who pretend that in this very chapter he speaks of himself, and that too, in a regenerate state.

Aquila.—Yes—my friend, it is strange, but let me tell you, there are in man some strange propensities to inconsistency.

Apollos.—But still, my brother—there are those who urge several passages out of this chapter, and who say that the person herein described, is said to 'will that which is good,' which the unregenerate will not.[2]

Aquila.—The will of doing good attributed to this person here described, has been considered, and indeed named by some an incomplete will.[3]

Apollos.—What is meant by this?

Aquila.—Simply the ability to will, but not the strength to do, or put its purposes into practice. The true state of the case, however, appears to be this, that the *Jew* here described by the apostle, is awakened to see his dangerous state, but

[1] Macknight.

[2] Most Calvinistic divines comment in this way on the seventh chapter of Romans.

[3] Limborch. Dr. Clarke has some observations on thewill of man of a somewhat similar import.

while grace enables him to will that which is good in itself, and while he beholds sin as repugnant to the divine law and the dictates of natural conscience, he would avoid it and do good; but he knows not from whence to derive the ability, he is borne down by the corruption of his own nature, by the sweetness of sin and perhaps too by vicious habits, so that the flesh bears the sway over the spirit. He is yet ignorant of the means of recovery.

Priscilla.—And surely such a character cannot, in any tolerable sense, be applied to the apostle Paul, or to any other regenerated person, who can do 'all things through Christ strengthening them.'

Apollos.—But do you not notice that the person here named is said to consent to and delight in the law of God?

Aquila.—I know this, and it simply means to acknowledge that it is 'holy, just and good,' which surely the unregenerate may do, as well as those regenerated, else would they not be guilty of sin, even against conscience, for there must be knowledge in order to transgression, my friend—and to delight in the law, is the same as consenting to it, by a metonomy, the consequent, being put for the antecedent, yet delighting itself in the law, is not a sufficient argument for regeneration, for even 'Herod heard John the Baptist gladly,' and the Jews too, who rejected Christ rejoiced in his light. Thus, 'and when he heard him he did many things and heard him gladly.' 'He,' John 'was a burning and shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light.' We have also seen how they that 'endure for a time,' hear the word of God and 'immediately receive it with joy, 'yet none of these can be said to be regenerated.

Apollos.—All this seems reasonable, but my friend—it is declared that the apostle speaks of an inward and an outward man. How is this?

Aquila.—This is all true, but he does not speak of a new and an old man, that is of a man regenerated, and an unregenerate man. There is certainly, my friend—a great deal of difference between these two appellations.[1]

Apollos.—I did not think of this.

Aquila.—The old and new man denote the qualifications of the subject, the one signifying his old course of life before conversion, the other, his new one after it, whereas the inward and outward man are only parts of the whole, the former denoting only mind the other the body or habitation of the soul, both of them the constituent parts of the man.[2]

Apollos.—But it is said that the apostle bewails his misery, and earnestly desires to be freed from it.

Aquila.—St. Paul only intimates the prayer that is suited to such a state, and declares the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, to be the only means of obtaining a deliverance from it. And, my friend—this very prayer only argues that the person who makes it is unregenerate, for how can a regenerated man freed from 'the death of sin,' pray to be delivered from the body or power of that death?[3]

Apollos.—Well—leaving the epistle to the Romans, does not the apostle teach that the regenerate do sin, in his epistle to the Galatians? 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

Aquila.—But, my friend—the apostle does not here say that the flesh always

[1] Macknight and Limborch.

[2] The words of Macknight are, 'here the apostle considers man as composed of two parts, flesh and spirit, each of which has distinct volitions, affections and passions. And because the influence of these on men's actions is very powerful, he calls the one the law of the *members*, and the other the law of the *mind*, and like the ancient philosopher, he considers these two principles as distinct persons.'

[3] Ibid. and Clarke.

resists the Spirit, in the regenerate, by an actual lusting, for the contrary to this appears, in another verse in this chapter, when the apostle, says, 'they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' Now his meaning appears to be this, that the nature of the flesh in man's fallen state, is such that it lusteth against the spirit; and therefore he admonishes the Galatians to walk no longer in the lusts of the flesh, wherein they had walked before their conversion, since these are contrary the one to the other.[1] But suppose, my friend—that this resistance, should, upon our regeneration, last for a time by reason of the depravity of our nature, and the inveterate customs of sin, is this any reason why it should overcome and bring us into sin? I think not. By grace the christian is kept, and is enabled, though a babe in Christ, to war a good warfare, and the resistance of sin becomes weaker and weaker, until it is wholly subdued, and the matured christian, who loves God with 'all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and all his strength,' has the mastery over the flesh, and loving God perfectly serves him 'without fear,' being enabled by grace to say, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live, I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'[2]

Apollos.—But, my brother—it is said in opposition to all this, that you admit, after a man is regenerated or born anew, there are the remains of the carnal mind, or the inbred corruptions of his nature, that these are sins, especially as there is concupiscence or desire in man. And moreover it is said by the apostle Paul, 'I had not known lust had not the law said, thou shalt not covet.'

Aquila.—But stop, my friend—there is not in a regenerate man such a remainder, if I may so speak, of concupiscence, as to lead him actually and always to covet evil, indeed this act itself would be sin. True, there is a certain natural power or faculty in our flesh whereby a man apprehends what is grateful or ungrateful to him, and without which he cannot tell what to desire or what to avoid. But as this is curbed and subjected, not only by the voluntary efforts in prayer, of the individual; but is kept down and subjected by the power of divine grace: so that, while there remains our natural and corrupt dispositions, there is not sin in the believer, he never willing or submitting to the sway of passion, but rather resisting and conquering it. But that concupiscence which is properly a sin, and which is called a sinful desire or temper, is an act whereby the man takes delight in and encourages a carnal desire or temper, or does not resist them steadily and perseveringly in the faith, doing all in dependence on divine grace. Now the former is no sin, a man cannot help the corruption of his nature. But the latter is, because he does not 'mortify the deeds of the body.'

Apollos.—Yes—but how about the text used by the apostle, 'I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.'

Aquila.—However it may be explained or used in connection with the context, it is evident that the same lust is there spoken of that is forbidden in the tenth commandment. Now that commandment was not given in view of the natural and legitimate desires of man, but those that are unnatural and opposed to holiness, which are immediately stifled by the regenerate man, and with the assistance of grace kept under. It is that encouragement of evil desires that is, and that constitutes the sinful temper, and often produces a sinful act, as in the case of a man's desiring his neighbour's goods against his will.[3]

Apollos.—Such was the case of Ahab, who desired Naboth's vineyard, and those who, desiring that which properly belongs to another, would create a difficulty in order to possess the same.

Aquila.—Yes—all unholy desires are, when voluntarily encouraged, sinful in

[1] Benson and Limborch. [2] Ibid. and Wesley. [3] Limborch.

us.[1] Such is the deep corruption of our nature, such the impurity of our very constitution and make, that our inclination to things grateful to the flesh are ever at hand. Hence, so soon as an object presents itself, calculated to excite those inclinations, and often do both the devil and the world present them, there is at once the disposition to encourage that propensity at hand, interwoven in our very existence, inherited from parents accustomed to sin, and from whom we have derived a corrupt and a polluted nature. There is not only a physical or natural, but a moral corruption. To feed, encourage, and strengthen this is sin, sin that will lead to apostacy and death.[2] To resist the first motions of that unclean nature is not only to exercise what is called virtue or fortitude, but to resist it steadfast in the faith, is to grow in grace and progress in piety. To overcome by grace, and be washed from the very pollution of sin is to be sanctified and made holy.[3]

Priscilla.—So that a man may not only have his sins pardoned, but he may retain the love of God, his first love, grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, live in the sunshine of God's favour, die to the world, be made holy here, and at last, dying in the arms of Jesus, go off to eternal life.

Aquila.—We might enter more largely, my friend—on this subject, one which ought ever to interest the christian, but believing that we have authority in God's word for our views, of the privilege of the regenerated man, we should ever not only behold this high and glorious privilege, but walk accordingly. Salvation, we must not forget, has its degrees, and when regenerated we are saved as we have seen from the guilt of sin, it being all pardoned and washed away in the blood of Jesus. But as we are regenerated we are saved from the power and the dominion of sin, and as we are adopted into the number of God's dear children, we are saved from fear, the fear of death and hell, and have not only a title to eternal life, but also a claim through Jesus Christ to all that will qualify us for its possession. As we proceed in the service of God, 'kept by his power through faith unto salvation,' we are preserved from sin, having the victory, as we constantly, ardently, and in faith pray for the sanctification of our natures, until, in answer to prayer, our God cuts short the work and sanctifies our souls, by extracting as it were every root of bitterness from them.

COLLOQUY XIII.

IMPENITENCE AND UNBELIEF.

Aquila.—It will not be improper, my friend—as we have seen the high privilege of the soul disposed to return to God; before we advance farther to consider those two things by which the attainment of this privilege is precluded.

Apollos.—What are they, my friend?

Aquila.—Impenitency and unbelief. You perceive that repentance and faith are intimately, and indeed directly connected, the one as a part of the means preparatory to the proper exercise of the other. And moreover, we have seen that the faith at least of persuasion or assent must be in exercise in the mind of every true penitent, as must also the antecedent act of faith called knowledge. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is. It will therefore follow that impenitence and unbelief are closely allied. The impenitent man is an unbeliever, and I cannot but think that, in a greater or less degree, the whole course of impiety may be resolved at least into these two great sins.

Apollos.—What do you understand as implied in impenitence and unbelief?

[1] Limborch and Wesley. [2] Wesley and Clarke. [3] Ibid.

Aquila.—Take the former first. It is the opposite of repentance and unbelief or infidelity, the contrary of faith. Impenitence is that obduracy or hardness of heart, whereby, in the absence of all contrition for sin, a man obstinately continues in unbelief. And this has been divided by divines into that which is hypocritical, or that where no amendment is specifically proposed, and this is properly impenitence.

Apollos.—What do you mean by that which you call hypocritical?

Aquila.—You will bear in mind that this is professedly repentance, but because hypocritical and delusory, it is only its contrary. As when a man pretends to be touched with a sorrow for the commission of sins, and to be willing to amend his life when he really does neither the one nor the other.

Priscilla.—Such a repentance as that of Pharaoh, when he called Moses and said, 'entreat the Lord that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.' But he did not let them go, however he sorrowed over those plagues.

Aquila.—Or like the repentance of Simon Magus, and many others, for Peter preached repentance to him, notwithstanding his professions of it, and we hear of this professor, 'thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity,' and he said, 'pray that none of these things' 'come on me.' And besides this, there is another hypocritical repentance that is daily practised, and which is virtually but impenitence, certainly a contrary of gospel repentance.

Apollos.—What is this, my brother?

Aquila.—It is that whereby a man, without a true amendment of his faults, supposes that, by the performance of some external acts, not required of God, nor working any change in the heart, he has performed the part of and is a true penitent. Of this kind are the thousands of papists, who think that they have sufficiently atoned for their sins, and truly repented of them, if they have but performed some outward acts of penance enjoined on them by their priests. Indeed, in this sense also all those who content themselves with the outside of piety, though upon that account they suppose themselves in the divine favour, are pursuing a course that is, their professions notwithstanding, the opposite of gospel repentance.[1]

Apollos.—And because 'they honour God with their lips while their hearts are far from him,' they may be called hypocrites.

Aquila.—That impenitence which we have defined as properly the contrary of repentance, is that state of soul which a man has when he does not grieve for the sins he has committed, nor propose to amend his life. And this is either temporary, as when a man perseveres in his sins, without any concern or dread of the divine wrath, but at last awaking as it were out of this lethargy of sin, he turns himself to God with his whole heart. Now of this temporary impenitence there is a striking instance in the case of Menasseh, king of Judah. 'The Lord spake' unto him, 'and he would not hearken; but when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.' Or again, this *impenitence* is sometimes *final*.[2]

Apollos.—That is, when a man perseveres to the end of his life, and dies in his unbelief.

Aquila.—Yes—and as no amendment of life succeeds, it is immediately followed by a condition of eternal condemnation and banishment from God into a state of punishment that is extreme.

Apollos.—But, my friend—there must be some causes for such a course of unreasonable obstinacy. Do, if you please, point them out.

Aquila.—There surely are causes, and a variety of them, for Satan offers a

[1] Limborch. [2] Wesley and Limborch.

thousand motives, and sin too has its numerous reasons and excuses. All these press upon the mind and induce impenitence.[1]

Apollos.—Do point them out?

Aquila.—A most secret, hidden cause my friend—is unbelief, in this men reject the truth, I do not merely mean that they reject the christian system, but I do believe that thousands question even the existence of a God, and go even beyond unbelief, they are atheists in fact. And how can he who does not believe that there is a God to take care of the affairs of men, grieve for sins as provoking his anger or forsake them to recover his favour.

Apollos.—I see this will have its effect.

Aquila.—And even if men believe that there is a God, an incorrect view of his mercy, as if it never could be exhausted, is another cause of impenitence. They consider it contrary to the nature of God, to punish sin. They never reflect that as God is merciful, so he is just, and that it is no infringement of his mercy, to exclude the impenitent from its participation. To this, is sometimes added an abuse of those examples, which are set forth in the Holy Scriptures, where men are said to have obtained pardon for sins of an enormous character.[2] How often do wicked men plead the case of David, and others, and because they repented and found pardon, they infer, that it is also easy for themselves to repent when they will.

Apollos.—This is foolish, unless they will imitate the example of such altogether, and as they follow them in sin, so remember at once to return to God, and pray for mercy as did David. I am sure of one thing, they will never find pardon until they do so.

Aquila.—No! they will not. Others are led on in sin from the hope of impunity, and indeed this is a cause of their impenitence. They do not expect God, will punish them, and therefore in this, they will find something that takes off the force of the divine threatenings, and they fancy that after all they will pass unpunished.

Apollos.—What contrary to the express declaration of God? Surely God will not lie. How unreasonable!

Aquila.—Others are persuaded by the devil to continue in sin, on the ground that their case is hopeless. They despair of pardon, to drink the bitterness of repentance, to sink into self despair, and return and ground the weapons of their rebellion at the feet of Jesus, some cannot, no! they cannot consent to do this, hence they never pray God to give them that 'repentance that needeth not to be repented of.'

Apollos.—This is saying that God will not do what he promises. Has he not said 'unto that man that is of a broken and a contrite heart, and that trembleth at my word will I look.'

Aquila.—An inveterate custom of sin is another cause of impenitence, and this seems to be admitted on all hands.[3]

Priscilla.—Yes—habit is said to be second nature.

Aquila.—Therefore sin is almost inseparable from many. Hence it is that God says, 'can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, who are accustomed to do evil.'

Apollos.—What a dreadful consequence there is of sin.

Aquila.—But this is nothing compared with its entire results. God has said, 'except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' And let me tell you that involved in the word perish is a great deal. It includes punishments of all kinds, as the effects of impenitence. Such as temporal punishments inflicted in this life, and of which we have a large account in Scripture, as I mentioned some time since,

[1] Wesley and Limborch. [2] Limborch. [3] Wesley and Limborch.

a long list of them is set forth in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, and the twenty-eighth of Deuteronomy, so that as is represented by Ezekiel, the Lord has said 'how much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast.' Besides all these, the effects of impenitence are also spiritual. Thus even in this world there is blindness and hardness of heart, the being given up to a reprobate sense to believe a lie. St. Paul says, for 'this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.' 'Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness,' 'because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved.' And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'

Apollos.—And there is the punishment of the other world.

Aquila.—Yes—there is the spiritual, and sooner or later, the temporal death of the impenitent man, which are only the beginning of his sorrows.' 'Sin kills beyond the tomb.' In the next life the world to come, there is eternal condemnation and death, where the impenitent are ever punished: hence St. Paul says, 'or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself, wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' It will be seen, however, my friend—that as faith, at least its antecedent, by which I mean knowledge, is certainly involved in that repentance which is evangelical, so also is unbelief mingled in all our acts of impenitency. Indeed this, as we have shown, is its very foundation.

Apollos.—Unbelief then is the opposite of faith.

Aquila.—It is, and of it there are various degrees, most of which have by theologians received their appropriate names, and are clearly definable, when viewed in opposition to experimental godliness.

Apollos.—Do name them?

Aquila.—The opposite of faith, we have said, is unbelief, but then again this is considered as it regards faith in general, and then as it more particularly respects that branch of it, which has been called by some, assurance, and which is not only a confidence but a sure trust or reliance in the Lord Jesus Christ. The names by which these grades of unbelief are called, are somewhat significant of that degree of infidelity which they contain.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—There is first what is called by some *doubting*, which has been named an imperfect act of unbelief, as it is a suspension of the assent to truth, or a hesitation in the mind about divine things.

Apollos.—This is certainly not a mere defect of the understanding, which arises from an equal weight of arguments, brought upon both sides.

Aquila.—O no! for then it would be faultless, so long as the balance is kept at even poise, and no greater weight is added, to sway it on either side. This is not the case, my friend—it is chiefly the fault of the will, when a man does not give his assent to a thing, unless convinced by demonstrative arguments, though there is sufficient evidence to render the matter credible to a sincere and teachable mind.[1]

Apollos.—But how is this?

Aquila.—Faith, my friend—as we have shown, does not pretend to demonstration, this belongs only to what is called science. Faith is claimed, where there is credibility.[2] So that a man after all the arguments used, proper to per-

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

suade him that a thing is credible, will not believe it, but withholds his assent. He is guilty of that doubtfulness or that scepticism, I dislike to use this hard name for it, which is opposite to faith, and will, if persisted in, lead him directly to infidelity.[1]

Apollos.—This then is an opposite of faith, considered in the general, as assent, and I plainly perceive that it is dangerous.

Aquila.—*Incredulity* is the next degree of unbelief. It has been called by some divines, a perfect opposite of faith, because it is the act of a man who will not assent to truth when he has the opportunity to do so, and his judgment is convinced that he should assent at once.[2]

Apollos.—Did you say when he has the opportunity to do so?

Aquila.—I did, and this was done because I wished to except those, who never heard the gospel, and to whom Christ has not been revealed, and who having no opportunity to believe, must be excepted. And moreover, it was said, will not assent, to intimate my friend—that this incredulity is chiefly an act of the will, in not assenting to a truth, when rendered credible to him by proper arguments. And this incredulity itself is two-fold.

Apollos.—In what way.

Aquila.—First, it is that degree of unbelief which precedes, or rather excludes faith, when they to whom the gospel is preached, and who have an opportunity offered them of believing, still reject it. But again there is a still greater degree of unbelief called incredulity, which follows sometimes after faith, when they who once assented to the gospel, become its opponents, and when there has been in such cases, a degree of faith that amounts to trust, this incredulity is augmented to a higher degree, and is then called the defection of apostacy, or the backsliding from God. Now when a defection of this kind, originates in the denial of some part of the christian religion, or some doctrine necessary to be believed, in order to salvation, though it does not destroy and subvert all religion, yet is destructive of salvation, it is commonly called heresy, but if it consist in the denial of the whole or the principal part of the christian truth, upon which the whole fabric of religion depends, it is then called apostacy.

Apollos.—I see the distinction clearly.

Aquila.—We have shown that faith considered in itself is an act of obedience to God's call, and that this very act, especially of trusting in the Lord Jesus, is obedience, not to the precepts of the moral law, but to the command of God, that we believe on his only begotten Son. It will therefore follow, that the ceasing to trust in Christ, the abandonment of a pious and christian course, and the relapsing into our former habits, the defilement of sin, is this departure from the faith, and is apostacy from God.

Apollos.—This is plain, for a man can never lose what he has not. A believer then, and one that is regenerate, may depart from the faith?

Aquila.—He may, in several ways. Sometimes by being seduced into false opinions, and hearkening to the doctrines of false teachers and deceivers, at others by the allurements of the world, and the deceitfulness of sin. All these bring on their degrees of unbelief. There is a coldness and a want of charity, or an omission of some duty, next a commission of some act contrary to piety, the commission of smaller sins, as they are called, first, and then those that are more gross.[3]

Apollos.—How necessary to watch.

Aquila.—Yes—and to pray too, for by some great and sudden temptation, often repeated, which by its violence bends and forces the mind to that which is pro-

[1] This has often been the case. [2] Limborch. [3] Wesley.

posed to it, and by frequent assaults, the will is swayed, and then the deed is done.[1]

Priscilla.—Yes—the purpose in the heart is virtually the commission of the crime, as it respects the actor.

Aquila.—Persecution for the gospel sake is sometimes the cause of departure from the faith, especially if it be more grievous and painful than ordinary. History affords numerous instances of individuals, who have departed from the faith, and have returned to the world on account of persecution, and several facts, so well authenticated in the word of God, as well as our own observations on men, unite to prove it too true.

Apollos.—You say that there are degrees by which men depart from God.

Aquila.—I do. It is not always at least the case that men depart from God at once, much less that they cease to yield assent to divine truth, though sometimes it may be so. The feelings of religious obligations are broken by vicious inclinations insidiously creeping in, until they form a habit of sin. As we suggested on another occasion, that faith, which is called assent to divine truth, is sometime forfeited and lost by men, and they proceed to a great degree of unbelief, and although there may still be knowledge, and they sometimes may be excited to seek divine strength; yet impiety having possessed, till the habit is formed, they are led captive by the devil at his will: all remedies become ineffectual, and the man is at last deserted of God, who in his justice gives him over to strong delusions, that he should believe a lie, and be delivered up to Satan as an executor of divine wrath.

Apollos.—This incredulity is properly then infidelity?

Aquila.—It is, and of course its direct effects are an exclusion from all the hopes of eternal life, in a state of constant condemnation and punishment. Thus says the Scripture, 'He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' 'He that believeth not shall be damned.' But the effects of apostacy as producing a greater degree of unbelief, is a still sorer punishment. 'For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' Therefore says St. Paul to the Hebrews, 'Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?' Our Lord compares apostates to a man out of whom a devil had been cast, and on re-entering whom again, he was accompanied by seven other spirits worse than himself, and the 'last state of that man is worse than the first.'

Apollos.—Yes—but some men are not so incredulous, indeed they seem the reverse of this.

Aquila.—And this is the reason why some divines have represented the opposite of faith in the excess, as it is called, as too great credulity.[2]

Apollos.—How can this be?

Aquila.—When a man, without passing a previous judgment, and examining the reasons offered, is forward to assent to any doctrine, and by this means embraces human inventions and errors, instead of divine truth. This usually proceeds from the want of true wisdom, and a proper trial or experience of things,

[1] Wesley. [2] Dr. Gill and Limborch.

for when men are ignorant they are easily imposed upon by the bare appearance of credibility.

Apollos.—O! this is the case with thousands, who depend and rely wholly upon the sayings and the opinions of their teachers.

Aquila.—And such, even in matters of opinion, are inconstant, carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the cunning craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive. On the other hand, they are sometimes obstinate in adhering to an opinion the truth of which they think they have sufficiently learned, though blindly led on and wedded to it, by the authority of those who taught them, not by the word and Spirit of God.

Priscilla.—And such are many of those hearers, no doubt, who attend the different churches.

Aquila.—What has been said on unbelief especially as it respects the rejection of truth, may be construed as that degree of it which is directly opposed to that act of faith called assent or persuasion, especially to its antecedent act as already suggested, that is called knowledge. But when we look at unbelief, as it is opposed to faith, considered as trust or reliance in the Lord Jesus, we find a degree of it manifesting itself in what is called a want of confidence in God and the verity of his promises, which, considering all the circumstances, ought not to be done. But then there is what is called diffidence in direct connection with this, which is, when one wholly relinquishes that confidence, and declares against divine goodness. This distrust is an affront offered to the power, goodness, wisdom, and veracity of God, and puts no confidence in the express promises of Deity: as if he were either unable, unwilling, or faithless, it rejects his proposals to accept and support them.

Apollos.—But may not diffidence, or a distrust of divine goodness, proceed from a pious cause?

Aquila.—It is hardly to be supposed, my friend—that unbelief can proceed from a good source. However a soul anxiously engaged for salvation, looking at its own defects and inconstancy, may hesitate to trust a God of whom it has formed opinions sometimes which lead them to view him, not as reconciled in Christ to man, but as an angry judge. A correct view, however, of the new covenant will remove every difficulty. This too may originate not only in the want of a proper understanding of the plan, but the due and proper consideration of our privilege. 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward,' should be an exhortation to every inquiring soul, though the degree of his faith may be small.

Apollos.—But while diffidence, however it may partake of the nature of unbelief, may be pitied, there is presumption, which is certainly to be condemned.

Aquila.—It surely is, for as we have shown, this certainty is unbelief—it is a degree of confidence unauthorized, and not of grace, my friend. Such is the condition of many who, while they are living in sin are, still hoping and expecting eternal life, constantly repeating and claiming the promises of God. Promises which are made only to those who do believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, and who, changed by grace, evince it in their lives.

Apollos.—Such should attend to the words of John, 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'

Priscilla.—It is 'not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

Aquila.—Alas! many say, 'peace and safety when sudden destruction' is at hand. 'But there is no peace saith my God to the wicked,' 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.' And the end of all this unbelief is eternal banishment from Almighty God, into the lake that burns with

fire and brimstone forever, even forever and ever. Thus, my friend—we have passed through the consideration of that faith set forth in the new covenant, and its opposite. We have seen that faith in the Lord Jesus is the only absolute condition of justification, and that the heart is prepared to exercise this, by grace, through the medium of an evangelical repentance, and its attendants. We considered the contraries of repentance and faith, which have been named virtues of the will, because, though wrought in us by grace, they are not without the co-operation of man We have also been led to notice the great and the inestimable blessings to which we are introduced, through the medium of faith, even our pardon or justification, our regeneration and adoption, with the blessed outpouring of God's precious Spirit, and a freedom from the guilt, the dominion, and pollution of sin. When a man shall have obtained these, he has just commenced his christian course.

Priscilla.—He is no christian at all, until he is thus converted to God.

Aquila.—And then he is only a babe in Christ, a beginner, his whole course is now before him, he has a race to run, a warfare to be engaged in, and the world, the flesh, and the devil will ever oppose him. Indeed, my friend—he has to discharge his duties to his God, his neighbour, and himself, and he must not think, until he shall have these qualities of a justified man, that he is a believer.

Apollos.—I perceive these truths, and hope yet to improve them for my own benefit and that of others.

Aquila.—God! grant that you may, my friend. Good night.

COLLOQUY XIV.

THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS UNDER THE NEW COVENANT—AND FIRST OF GODLINESS, OR THE WORSHIP OF THAT DEITY, WHO IS THE TRUE OBJECT OF PIETY.

Aquila.—We have already seen, my brother Apollos—that when a man is regenerated by divine grace, and adopted on the exercise of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, into the family of our heavenly Father, that he is just at the threshold of christianity. He has but commenced his race, it lies before him entire. He is called now of God to 'war a good warfare,' to 'fight the good fight of faith,' and 'to lay hold on eternal life,' by seeking to make 'his calling and election sure.' A variety of duties are to be discharged, he is to honour his profession, and cannot do it but by pursuing that course which God requires. Now he is a believer, and as such he must 'glorify God in his body and spirit, which are his.'

Apollos.—He must 'add to his faith,' if he would retain it in lively exercise.

Aquila.—Yes—all the fruits and graces of the Spirit are to adorn and beautify his character. Duty is to be discharged at all events, and he must press on to perfection.

Apollos.—But how may he do this? What are the duties that God calls him to perform?

Aquila—The several distinct duties of a christian are branched out into three parts; such as relate to God, our neighbour, and ourselves, comprehended under that summary of the christian religion given by an apostle in these words, 'The living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' So that godliness, righteousness, and sobriety comprehend all the duties of a christian, and according to this view let us, my brother—consider them. Piety then is included in the faithful discharge of these several duties.

Apollos.—What is godliness, my friend?

Aquila.—It is that virtue or duty, founded on a reverence for the divine charac-

ter, which leads man to pay such a due and suitable worship to the Deity as is required in his revealed word. This word simply implies the worship of the true God, though it is sometimes taken in a more extensive sense, and then means true religion.

Apollos.—But what is requisite to this?

Aquila.—There are two things necessary to it, the first is that such an honour or worship be paid to the divine being, as is answerable to his greatness and sovereignty over all, as well as to all his attributes, and the second is that it shall be offered up or paid *to him alone*. This will lead us, my friend—to notice the object of divine worship, and of course the several parts of it.

Apollos.—Godliness, considered as true religion, may be taken as the sum of piety, its true object is the worship of the living God, and in order to understand it, we must consider its several parts. We must know who this God is that ought to be worshipped, and then the worship he requires.

Aquila.—This is correct, my friend—and God has so clearly manifested himself in his word by the several works of creation, preservation, and providence, that whoever reads may know his true character. This we have already, you know, considered, and all who will investigate it may ascertain for themselves who he is that is called 'the true God.' But for the clearer manifestation of his essence, he was always willing to manifest himself by some extraordinary and fresh blessing, in distinction from those who were falsely called Gods. Thus, in the old world, when the work of creation was fresh in men's memory, he was called the 'Creator of heaven and earth.' Afterwards, upon the covenant with Abraham and his posterity he was called 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;' when the children of Israel were delivered from captivity in Egypt, he says of himself, 'I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;' and in the last place, my friend—under the gospel dispensation, and the new covenant made with man, he is usually styled 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' He it is who, under these several denominations, is the object of our religious worship, which is required by the terms of the first commandment, 'thou shalt have no other Gods but me.'

Apollos.—But can it be expected that every man has an adequate and correct notion of the divine essence?

Aquila.—In this world we see, my friend—as 'through a glass darkly,' and consequently, no man can have a perfect and an adequate notion of the divine essence; therefore there must be, in all men, an imperfect knowledge of God, which indeed may be tainted by some error. It does appear enough, if we ascribe the divine essence, however incomprehensible to us, to that Deity alone, which has so clearly manifested himself by his illustrious works; and if we believe all those things of God which the Scripture prescribes, as necessary to be believed of him, and of which, in order to pay the worship due to him, we ought not to be ignorant.[1]

Apollos.—Since God has, under the new covenant, my friend—revealed his essence to us, as communicated to the Son and the Holy Ghost, are the Jews, who think that this essence belongs only to the one true God, whom we style the Father, to be esteemed as idolaters, or as worshipping another God?

Aquila.—Some have charged the Jews with such a crime, and they have, consequently, been treated most shamefully in some places, especially by Romanists; but you will, my friend, remember that they acknowledge no other God than the Creator of heaven and earth, who brought their Fathers out of the 'land of Egypt and the house of bondage,' and we dare not say that they reverence or worship a fictitious Deity; for they acknowledge the same divine essence that christians do,

[1] Limborch.

and are only ignorant of its communication in the three persons of the ever blessed trinity.[1]

Apollos.—They, therefore, are the peculiar and proper transgressors of that command, who either deny God and his providence, or form to themselves any other God besides him who 'brought the children of Israel out of Egypt.'

Aquila.—Certainly, for the design of this precept was to forbid the worshipping of false gods, which then prevailed in the heathen world. Many of the Gentiles had formed superstitious deities to themselves, idolatry had by degrees crept in, and had arrived at a height in which, it almost overran the world.

Apollos.—Did you say by degrees?

Aquila.—I did—they first worshipped the sun, the moon, with all the hosts of heaven, on account of those favourable influences they had received or expected to receive from them. Then they began to idolize princes and great men, especially warriors, that had done them or their country a service, and these they likewise placed among the stars, calling them at first heroes, and then made them gods. These the Scriptures style *other gods*, not because they are real divinities, but because the Gentiles, though falsely, ascribe to them the divine essence.[2]

Apollos.—But an apostle said to christians, 'little children keep yourselves from idols.' How is this?

Aquila.—Because, if by any act the divine benefit is disowned and falsely ascribed to others, without taking notice of the true Author of it, it is on this account idolatry, and God prohibits it as sin. 'I am the Lord saith he, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.' Now to have 'another' God implies several things. First, to conceive or esteem in our minds any thing besides the only true God to be divine, or to pay a reverence to it in our judgments as to a deity, for by this means it is evidently esteemed a God. But secondly, to worship any thing with any religious fear, hope, trust, or love; and thirdly, to express such a judgment or affection, by any external act, such as that of honour, worship, adoration, invocation, sacrifice to, or erecting temples or altars in honour of, all these are evidently treated as idolatrous acts in the word of the Almighty God.[3]

Apollos.—This of course does not extend to the great God man, the Lord Jesus Christ?

Aquila.—Certainly not, my friend—for although we have excluded all creatures from being the object of the divine worship, yet this is not to be extended to our Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and man, who is crowned with glory and honour, and exalted to the right hand of the Father. And on account of this exaltation and his mediatorial office, he is not only so far advanced that religious honours should be paid to him by all men, as to their Lord, but especially as the second person in the adorable Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.

Apollos.—The worship due Jesus Christ then, may be considered as founded in the fact of his being the Son of God, partaking of the same nature with the Father, and adoration to him is worship paid to the Father, and also on the fact of his being the mediator between God and man, who ever lives to 'make intercession for us.'

Aquila.—This is so, and the worship we pay to him as our Mediator, and the Son of God, by an ineffable generation, though subordinate to the Father as the first named in the Trinity, and which tends to promote his glory as the one true God, in union with the holy and ever blessed Spirit, consists of all those religious acts which are set forth and enjoined in the holy Scriptures.

Apollos.—What are these?

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Aquila.—They are *adoration, invocation,* the *believing* or *trusting* in, and *thanksgiving* to God. All these are acts of piety, as we shall hereafter see, and they are acts of piety too which are paid to the Lord Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man.

Apollos.—That are paid, do you say according to the Scriptures, to Christ as the Mediator ?

Aquila.—I do. When on the subject of the unoriginated divinity of the Lord Jesus, I remarked that, by a divine command, all the angels of God as well as men were enjoined to worship him. And that he is to be thus honoured and adored will appear from several texts in Holy Writ. Thus in St. John's Gospel, the 'Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.' And farther, 'hath given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man.' And St. Paul says, 'When he bringeth in the first begotten he saith, let all the angels of God worship him.' The same apostle says, 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

Apollos.—This is a very positive declaration, my friend.

Aquila.—It is, and in this passage are several things worthy our notice. We learn that the Lord Jesus is to be adored, since at his name every knee must bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord of all. Not only so, but he is to be adored as Mediator, and the foundation thereof is his exaltation at the right hand of the Father, and for the sake of his suffering the ignominious death of the cross. And we see that this whole adoration, as already suggested, is subordinate to the adoration of the Father, and terminates in him, as is plain from these words, 'to the glory of God the Father.'

Apollos.—I think the texts quoted makes out these things clearly.

Aquila.—We also learn another thing, my friend—from the Scriptures. It is, that Jesus, as a Mediator, is to be called upon and trusted in, and this I think evident from the promise that he made of answering those who called upon him. 'And whatsoever ye shall ask,' he said, 'in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it.' Again, my friend—'Because he is our high-priest, to whose throne we are to fly 'to obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.' Thus says St. Paul, 'Seeing then that we have a great high-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto a throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.'

Apollos.—This is a precious text.

Aquila.—Indeed it is. And, my brother—we learn from the examples of the apostles and holy men of old, that the Lord Jesus is to be trusted in: in their distress they poured out their supplications to him, as the source from whence comfort should come.

Priscilla.—I recollect well how St. Stephen, who died for the sake of christianity, cried out, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.'

Aquila.—Yes--and St. Paul, when buffetted by the messenger of Satan, prayed

to the Lord thrice, 'that he might depart from him;' and St. John uses such expressions as evince the trust that christians may repose in him. I will give you one, 'Even so come Lord Jesus,' and to all this may be added the invocations and prayers at the beginnings and endings of the epistles, wherein they pray God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to bestow peace and grace on believers. These all prove how saints of old trusted in Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—And did you say that thanksgiving too is given unto him.

Aquila.—I did, and to him as our great Mediator. This is manifest from that passage in the Apocalypse, where the four beasts and four and twenty elders are said to have sung a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue.' And again, 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' And yet again, 'Blessings, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb forever and ever.' And indeed, my friend—the celebration of the holy Eucharist is a solemn act of thanksgiving, wherein we commemorate the death of Christ, and the benefits we receive thereby.

Apollos.—And men ought to bless his holy and blessed name, for without him what could we do?

Aquila.—In regard to this too, my friend—there are in the Lord Jesus all those attributes requisite for the exciting such a religious worship; so that we may not only adore, but with full assurance call upon him as our deliverer and friend. I have once before alluded to this point, and will only now, in order to show how the Lord Jesus is to be trusted, point out to you the attributes exercised by him for the protection and support of his church. Thus he has the sovereignty and dominion over all things, both in heaven above and earth beneath, being Lord over all, and there is nothing that is not subject to him; for, says he, 'all power is given unto me in heaven and earth.' He 'lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father the hour is come: glorify thy Son that thy Son may also glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.' 'For being,' says St. Paul, 'in the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.' 'Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.' And says he to the Ephesians, 'He hath put all things under him, and gave him to be the head over all things in the church.' But why should we quote so largely, my friend—to establish the fact that as sovereign Lord we are to worship him. The Scriptures abound with testimony to this important fact. And if it did not, I would be of the first to say, it is idolatry to worship him.

Apollos.—O! it does every where testify that Jesus is the Lord of all.

Aquila.—And equally pointed is the testimony as to his omniscience. He knows all our necessities, hears all our prayers wherever they are made, and can tell with what intention they are made. Such knowledge was attributed to him while on earth, thus says the evangelist John, he 'needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.' And St. Peter said, 'Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' How much more, my friend—shall this knowledge be ascribed to him since his exaltation into heaven, himself indeed assuring us of it, in so many parts of the Apocalypse.

Priscilla.—Yes! he knows us altogether.

Aquila.—This is not all. We are called on in worshipping him to consider his power. For in the exercise of omnipotence there is that power whereby he is able to succour us in all our distresses, however great and numerous they may be. He has the ability to free us from all afflictions, and to bestow on us all manner of blessings. St. Paul speaks of this immense power, when he says, 'Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue *all* things unto himself.'

Priscilla.—And O! he is a God of love.

Aquila.—Yes—and this is an argument that ought to have a controlling influence on all our actions, but especially our worship. He bears an affectionate love towards us, by which he is willing to exert his power and authority for our good, he can tell how to help our infirmities since he died for us, was tempted in all things as we are, that 'he might become a merciful and faithful high-priest;' 'and being tempted himself, he is able also to succour those that are tempted.' 'For we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, but without sin,' and he 'is faithful that promised.'

Apollos.—O! this is a comfortable doctrine, but it will not please all sorts of people, my friend Aquila.

Aquila.—I am sensible of this, my brother—there are some who admit that Christ is to be called on as a Mediator, but not to be worshipped as God. Others deny that he ought to be called on or supplicated at all, much less adored, since they do not acknowledge him as a king that actually reigns in heaven at all.

Apollos.—This is too true. I have heard it affirmed that the command mentioned in Deuteronomy, and urged by our Saviour to the devil who tempted him to fall down and worship him; 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,' does positively forbid his being worshipped, at least as a Mediator.

Aquila.—I admit that God alone is to be adored, since he himself, in his own nature, is worthy only of such an honour, and it is not lawful to apply this adoration to any other, except by his express command. But it does not from hence follow that God cannot communicate this honour to his Son, sent by him into this world as a Mediator, on account of his office; especially since, as already argued and elsewhere proved, it is an honour rendered to God himself, who is thereby glorified.[1] And besides, here is meant honour to that person whom the Mediator himself is represented as paying homage unto, I mean God the Father, beside whom Christ as Mediator owned no other superior, and this superiority we have alluded to more than once: first the Father, then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost, one God in persons three. So far from the glory of the Father being eclipsed by that of the Son, it is the reverse; for as one the glory of each must likewise be one.[2]

Apollos.—It would be as much as to say that the acknowledgment of the priority of the Father would destroy the glory of the Son, or that the order in which the Trinity is named would destroy the glory of either.

Aquila.—The whole objection is against not only the doctrine of the Trinity, but also against the fact that Christ as a Mediator, the God-man, was exalted to be adored and worshipped by men and angels.

Apollos.—And this is the reason why they so strenuously oppose even the truth itself, as revealed in God's word. But, my friend—it is said that the divine

[1] Watson and Limborch. [2] Limborch.

declaration is, 'I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.'

Aquila.—But God here speaks to the exclusion of the Gentile idols, for it is added, 'neither my praise to graven images,' so that the meaning of the words is plainly this: I will not suffer the Israelites to go unpunished, if they give my glory unto another. And what is this to the purpose of worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ. Idols are distinct things from the Deity, and the honour paid to them is an affront to the divine glory: but Christ is not a different being from God, but his Son, his messenger, one with the Father, and the honour paid to him is the honour paid to the Father. Thus saith the Lord, 'I and my Father are *one*.' 'And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are *one*.' 'He that hath seen *me* hath seen the *Father*, and how sayest thou shew us the Father.' 'Whosoever denieth the Son,' says St. John, 'the same hath not the Father.' Here then we see that all the worship paid the Lord Jesus Christ is worship to the Father the true God, whom we are called upon to adore as the proper object of all piety.

Apollos.—And he is our hope for endless bliss.

Aquila.—He is, and while to put our trust in an arm of flesh would be to bring on ourselves the curse of that man 'that trusteth in man;' to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator, exalted into heaven, who is not flesh and blood but a quickening spirit, having dominion over all things, endued with omniscience and power, is indeed to trust the living God. Whoever, therefore, trusts in him, my friend—relies not on an arm of flesh, and casts not away his confidence in God, but depends on and obeys him alone.[1]

Apollos.—I am convinced, my friend—not only from the word of God, but from my own experience, that no man can ever obtain the comforts of religion until he shall thus approach the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the acknowledgment of him as Lord of all, confidently seek salvation at his hands.

Aquila.—This is most certain, and he that does thus worship him shall daily find his grace ready to support him.

Apollos.—I have thought, my friend—several times, that I would ask an examination into the notions of Papists respecting the worship of saints and angels, and perhaps this will be an occasion as suitable as any for this inquiry. I want to understand it. Believing it to be unscriptural and unreasonable, I abhor the very idea of such a worship, yet I wish to have the argument for and against it, that I may be able not only to understand the grounds assumed by them, but also by reason and Scripture to show the fallacy of such a worship. What are your views of the worship of saints and angels, as practised by Romanists?

Aquila.—I have often, as occasion served, reverted to its inconsistency, and showed that it is forbid in the word of God. But in order that we may judge correctly of this subject, it will be proper that we understand what sort of worship they do pay to saints and angels.

Apollos.—I see this is important to an understanding of the subject.

Aquila.—The Romanists distinguish between the words LATRIA and DULIA, the former they say is the worship to God alone, whilst the latter, being of an inferior degree, may be paid to saints and angels. In truth, this distinction is not to be admitted, since it has no foundation in Scripture, for the words *latria* and *doulia*, anglicized into *dulia*, are promiscuously used for the worship paid to God.[2]

Apollos.—But they say that the invocation made to saints and angels is not for the obtaining remission of sins, eternal life, or any such favours.

Aquila.—I know they say this, and add that only as saints and angels are the

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

near and intimate favourites of heaven, they may present the petitioners prayers to God, as those who offer them are themselves unworthy to have a direct and an immediate recourse to him, and thus need the intercession of saints to carry up their prayers. The learned among the papists will not pretend that this invocation is necessary, yet by condemning those who do not join with them in it, and by their whole practice in having more frequent recourse to departed saints than to angels or to God himself, they virtually avow the necessity thereof.[1]

Apollos.—This is most positively denounced in the Holy Scriptures.

Aquila.—Let us, my friend—consider this subject first as it regards the worshipping of angels. You will observe that there is no command in Scripture for any such thing, nor any token of its being pleasing to God. There is no promise of a reward to any that perform it, no threatening of a punishment to any that neglect it. Nor is there, Apollos—one instance to be found of such an invocation, and it therefore cannot be concluded a worship that is acceptable to Almighty God. On the contrary it is sinful, since it cannot proceed from any solid conviction of mind that it is well pleasing to the divine Being. Besides, my friend—angels are not always present with those who pray to them, and consequently cannot always hear their requests. Nor are they searchers of hearts, and therefore cannot tell whether the petitions offered to them proceed from a pious or hypocritical breast. And surely Papists themselves will not ascribe omnipresence and omniscience to angels, by which they will make them Gods; for unless they do they can have no assurance or faith that their supplications will be heard. And moreover, the worshipping of angels is positively forbid in Scripture. St. Paul prohibits it thus, 'Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.' What can be more positive?

Priscilla.—And angels themselves, you know, have declined such a worship.

Aquila.—True indeed, for St. John says, 'I fell at his feet to worship him, and he said unto me, see thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.' O! my friend—it is an awful thing to introduce that which God has most positively forbid. You know the curse pronounced in the last chapter of the Bible on that man who adds to, or takes from the word of the living God.

Apollos.—But to all this it is objected by Romanists, that in the Old Testament we read of angels being worshipped by Abraham, that Lot bowed to them, and Jacob entreated a blessing of an angel, and that Joshua worshipped one.

Aquila.—In addition to what was once before said on this subject, you will remember, my friend—that the same personages that appeared to Abraham, are those, who it is to be presumed appeared to Lot in Sodom. Now it is said positively, that 'the Lord appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre,' 'and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo! three men stood by him.' Read the account, and you will plainly see that Abraham, according to the custom of the country, ran and 'bowed himself.' This he did on another occasion to the sons of Heth, before whom he bowed down himself. So Jacob and his family bowed themselves before Esau, prostration being the common mode of obeisance and of civility in the eastern country. Who does not see how characteristic was the conduct of that hospitable, amiable, and holy man, the father of the faithful. Any after act of adoration was evidently founded on the character of his guest, and the knowledge of that character, for when he intercedes with him to spare the city of Sodom, he asks, 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right.' All this time it is said that it was the Lord who conversed with him, and well might

[1] Limborch.

he worship him, the angel of the covenant. Abraham had educated Lot in hospitality, and for the same reasons already assigned, as founded in the custom of the country, he bowed himself. Jacob expressly says, of the angel that appeared to him, 'I have seen God face to face,' doubtless the 'angel of the covenant,' or as he calls him the 'God of Bethel,' and who would blame him for supplicating him. And in the case of Joshua, who is the 'captain' or 'leader of the Lord's hosts,' but the Lord Jesus, the angel of the covenant? I have made these remarks, my brother—in addition to some formerly made on this very subject, to show the idolatry of worshipping, that is adoring, instead of God, angels who are created. But admit that, on the appearance of those heavenly strangers, those patriarchs did worship them, when unacquainted with their character, they being present, pray tell me does this authorize us to worship them when absent. What evidence have we that this was ever done by them, or any other patriarch, prophet, or apostle?[1]

Apollos.—I had not thought of this?

Aquila.—They appeared in the name of God, as his messengers, and represented his person, but now all power in heaven and earth belongs to the Lord Jesus, whom we are to adore and worship, and angels also worship him, whose ministering spirits they are.

Priscilla.—Yes—and when an angel appears to Romanists, as one did to Joshua, or to any of those holy persons of old, then, and not till then, may they afford to worship them.

Apollos.—Well—but they also pray to saints.

Aquila.—They do, and you must bear in mind that they form to themselves and worship a great many of these who never had so much as a being in the world, such as St. Christopher, St. Longinus, and St. Roche, with abundance of others to be met with in their *golden legend.*[2]

Priscilla.—And many of these, so far from being saints, that is holy people, were among the worst men living.

Aquila.—O! yes—there was the cruel and inhuman St. Dominick, the author of the inquisition, and some of them were both ignorant and foolish, for example St. Francis, who, taking the words of our Saviour, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,' in a literal sense, undertook to preach it to the birds and beasts.

Apollos.—Astonishing ignorance!

Aquila.—And, my friend—their real saints have their histories so filled with romance and unbecoming fiction, that it is hard to find any truth in them.

Apollos.—Well—but suppose that they were truly saints, and that their lives and actions are faithfully handed down to us, is there any authority for praying to them?

Aquila.—Even then it would be easy to prove that invocation is not their due, and that for several reasons.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is, that we have no evidence that the saints, immediately after their departure from this life, are in possession of complete happiness, and the vision of God. That they are as happy, as their state will allow, and are in the enjoyment of peace of conscience, as disembodied spirits, and moreover, exist happy in the anticipation of a resurrection state admits of no question. And we have no doubt of the blessedness of a separate state. I mean a condition in which the spirit is parted from the body, for Christ said 'this day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' to a dying penitent; but still who shall tell us what, and how great that happiness is?

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

Apollos.—They cannot be perfectly or completely happy, since the last enemy, death, over whom they are yet to triumph, is not yet destroyed.

Aquila.—This is correct. But suppose them to be perfectly happy, they can no more hear the prayers of their absent petitioners, than the angels can, unless they were more omniscient than these.[1]

Apollos.—This is obvious, indeed.

Aquila.—And, my friend—such as have departed this life are said to know and mind nothing that is done under the sun. Speaking in regard to the knowledge, and interest that the deceased have in the things of this life; Solomon says, 'but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward for the memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever, in any thing that is done under the sun.' At least there is no proof that they know what is going on, in this world. And why pray to them? Indeed, my friend—there are great reasons why the invocation of saints and angels, is an affront offered to God, and these reasons ought to be well considered by all. This is an erroneous doctrine, for which we have said, there is not only no express command, but it is directly opposed to the revealed truth of God, and a reproach cast on the divine goodness.

Apollos.—Point this out, my friend.

Aquila.—In this way, it is actually saying that angels and our departed friends, are much better than God, and instead of going to him, we will go to them, as there is the greater probability of assistance from them.

Priscilla.—This is very plain.

Aquila.—And besides this, it is an affront offered to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—Point out this also, if you please.

Aquila.—It is making the saints and angels so many *mediators* between God and us, in derogation of him, who is the sole Mediator, the *Man* Jesus. And, indeed, it is dishonouring the very saints themselves.

Apollos.—In what way?

Aquila.—As the favourites of heaven they are supposed to be more merciful than their holy, and heavenly Father, the God of Heaven. And if they could present our prayers, they would have to present them, without knowing the intention with which they are offered, for of this they are wholly ignorant, God only knowing the hearts of men. And, besides, it redounds to their disgrace, to have the prayers of the wicked, and hypocrites which they prefer, rejected by God.[2]

Apollos.—How remarkable is it, that men never consider these things?

Aquila.—And, my friend—such a custom is destructive of true religion and piety, and that for several reasons: these among others. By introducing a formal, specious humility, it destroys the true humility which is due the majesty of God. And under a pretence, of more easily obtaining mercy, it has introduced an impudence and an impertinence in asking any thing, how unreasonable and dishonest soever, in prayer. Indeed, my friend—under a conceit of the merits attributed to the saints, and which it is believed may be applied to all that call upon them, men are not only confirmed in *a dissolute* course of life, but at the termination thereof, expect to inherit a home in the bosom of a God who is holy. As I once before said, who does not know, that hundreds of those, whose lives are devoted to the subversion of all purity, in society, receive every Sabbath morning, on their confessions to their priests, and invocations at the 'shrine of Mary,' and other saints, absolution for the midnight crimes of the past week.

Apollos.—What then is the true honour that is due to the departed saints?

[1] Limborch and Clarke. [2] Ibid.

Aquila.—To proclaim their holy example as far as we are authorized so to do, for the benefit of the living. To thank God for having inspired such weak and frail men with his holy spirit, to undergo so much for his sake. To do this, and to imitate their good examples, would be the greatest honour we could confer on them, without any derogation from the glory of God.[1]

Priscilla—Yes indeed—and there is a short way for us to come at every blessing we need for life or for godliness; it is through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, the omniscient Mediator, who is here ever ready to assist and guide us to the promised land. We need no other mediator.

Aquila.—No! none but Jesus, and he is all sufficient. We are to worship the true God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And He is the object of true piety. We are to recollect that the doctrine of the ministration of angels has been abused not only among heathens, but among Jews, and some called christians, and most among the latter. Angels with feigned names, titles and influences, as we have seen, have been, and still are invoked and worshipped by a certain class of men, because they have found that God has been pleased to employ them to minister to mankind, and hence they have made supplications to them to extend their protection, to shield, defend, instruct, &c.

Priscilla.—Yes, and to saints too.

Aquila.—This is perfectly absurd. For they are God's instruments, not self-determining agents. They can only do what they are appointed to perform, for there is no evidence that they have any discretionary power. And, my friend—God helps man, by ten thousand instruments, some intellectual as angels, some rational, as men; some irrational as brutes, and some merely material, as the sun, wind, rain, food, raiment, and the various productions of the earth.[2]

Apollos.—O, how true this is!

Aquila.—He therefore helps by whom he will help, and to him alone belongs all the glory; for, should he be determined to destroy, all these instruments collectively could not save. Instead, therefore, of worshipping them, we should take their own advice, 'see thou do it not; worship God.'[3]

COLLOQUY XV.

PIETY TOWARD GOD CONSIDERED WITH REGARD TO ITS PARTS, AS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL.—AND FIRST OF LOVE TO GOD, AND WHAT IS IMPLIED IN HONOURING HIM —AN IMPROVEMENT OF THESE SUBJECTS.

Apollos.—I have been, my friend—forcibly impressed with the fact, that God ought to be considered the only true object of divine worship, and to adore him is the duty and interest of every man. Convinced as I am, not only by your arguments, but by my own experience, that he is the only true object of religious worship, I desire that you will point out the several parts of that worship, which should be paid to him.

Aquila.—We have represented, Apollos—the duties of christians, as branching off into these parts. Those we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. We have shown that the only true God, is the proper and only object of religious worship, and that this part of piety has been called godliness, which, however, is a term sometimes used in a more extensive sense, as it embraces every portion of a religious life. Piety toward God then, which we are first to consider, has its several parts, and the acts of it are either internal or external. The former we may consider first.

Clarke. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Apollos.—What are the internal acts of piety, my friend—as they respect the Deity?

Aquila.—They consist of love, honour, trust, hope and fear.[1]

Apollos.—What is love to God? And when does a soul commence loving him?

Aquila.—I have already remarked that love to God, is one of those fruits of the Holy Spirit, which it produces in the soul upon its adoption into the favour of God, and when it is regenerated by divine grace. By nature men do not love God, and however a man may feel the wooings and drawings of the divine spirit, while he is repenting of sin, he ever looks to God rather as an angry judge, until by grace he is enabled to believe for his justification and pardon, on our Lord Jesus Christ. When that pardon comes, with it, also comes his regeneration. Then he is adopted into the heavenly family, has the witness of God's precious spirit, and feels and knows that sin is pardoned. Now he loves God. He never felt it before. He had esteem, or friendship and love for the truth, but he has love, ardent, holy, heavenly love, begotten in his once hard, but now tender heart, by the holy and ever blessed spirit. And now he hears 'he that loveth is born of God, for God is love.'

Priscilla.—Yes—and he is enabled to love all the people of God, 'for by this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'

Aquila.—And now, Apollos—I will answer your question, what is love to God?

Apollos.—Do if you please, my friend.

Aquila.—Love towards God, is simply an ardent desire for, or running out of the soul after God. It is the chief of what is called the 'theopathetic affections.' When it regards God absolutely, it is the movement of the soul toward him, as an object of such perfection, as to demand, not only our approbation, but engage all our affections, so as to produce both approval and delight. But when it looks at him relatively, it fixes upon the ceaseless emanations of his goodness in every respect, but especially in that 'great love, wherewith he loved us,' in giving his Son to die for and save us.[2]

Priscilla.—Yes—it is that sovereign preference given to ONE, above all others, present or absent, a concentration of all the thoughts and desires, in a single object, which is preferred to all others.

Aquila.—And hence it appears by this love, the soul cleaves to, and affectionately admires, and consequently rests in God, and it is supremely pleased and satisfied with him, as its portion, forever.[3]

Apollos.—This blessed affection ever regards God as our chief good.

Aquila.—It does, and looks to him as the fountain of all our happiness, and most ardently desires to have union with him, and the enjoyment of his favours. But again, it regards him as a legislator, and then our love, not only consists in an ardent affection for him, considered as before said, absolutely, as God; but relatively, as our sovereign, when it delights in obedience, and seeks to do his commands. This latter is founded on the former, because we love God, as the supreme good, the source of all happiness, and desire to be united to him, as such. We obey him as our legislator, in order to enjoy him as that chief good.[4]

Apollos.—But has not this love to God its various acceptations?

Aquila.—It has: for, taken in the latter sense, it evidently denotes universal holiness, and all the duties prescribed us by God, which certainly takes in the whole of religion, or else again it denotes all those duties which more imme-

[1] Watson and Clarke. [2] Watson. [3] Clarke. [4] Limborch.

diately relate to God, and which is properly piety. But in neither of these senses do we propose at present to consider this love to God.

Apollos.—How then, my brother?

Aquila.—Simply as a part, or special and inward act of piety: and in this strict sense it denotes, as we have above suggested, that ardent desire of the soul after God; that affection whereby we desire that such things be done by us, as well as others, as are well pleasing in the sight of God, that so we may obtain an intimate union with him.[1]

Apollos.—The motives of this love, I presume, are all the benefits he daily confers on us.

Aquila.—Indeed the motives of such a love are all founded on this single consideration, that God is the supreme GOOD, and the fountain of all happiness: for we love him on account of the excellency of his nature, as being the best, the greatest, and consequently the most perfect and amiable of all beings, for those surprising benefactions to us in his works of creation, providence, and especially redemption, wherein he has given the highest testimonies of his love toward us. And moreover, for those many and singular favours which every one of us in particular has received from the divine bounty.

Priscilla.—All these indeed are so many cords and bands of love, which, if duly considered, do unite and bind the heart closely to the 'God of love.'

Apollos.—But does it not happen that men, through a fond self love, are often deceived with false appearances, and think they love God when they really do not, or at least not so much as they ought?

Aquila.—I am not so sure of this, my friend. It is not so easy for Satan and an evil heart to imitate the love of God.

Priscilla.—One thing is certain, Satan may transform himself into an 'angel of light,' but he cannot into an angel of love.

Aquila.—The love of God we have said, my brother—and you know that experience proves it dwells not in the heart of an unregenerate man. Until it is produced by the operation of divine grace, he knows not that they who are 'born of God' also 'love God.' Thus there is the internal consciousness and comfort of it, as well as the fact that it has been generated in the heart by the holy Spirit, for the 'fruit of the Spirit is love,' &c.

Apollos.—My own experience attests the truth of what you say, but are there not tokens, by which, this is made still more manifest to the christian believer?

Aquila.—There are tokens of this most surely, and these may be noticed. The first is, that the love of the world has declined, and is indeed gone, that being directly contrary to the love of God.

Priscilla.—Yes! the love of this world is ever inconsistent with the love of our God.

Aquila.—Thus said St. John, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.' St. Paul says 'that the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' And love is the fulfilling of that law. St. James says, 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' And our Lord himself says, 'No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'

[1] Limborch.

Apollos.—It is very plain from this that true religion, the love of God, is directly opposed to the love of the world.

Priscilla.—Yes—as much so as day is opposed to night, or light to darkness.

Aquila.—The world offers us sensual and present delights, but God commands us to deny these, and seek for those that are spiritual and future. Now, while there are two such opposite masters, and no neutral ground, we cannot heartily love the one while we are fond of the other. We cannot obey at the same time God and mammon.[1]

Apollos.—This is evident, I see.

Aquila.—Another token is, when we take pleasure not only in doing ourselves, but in seeing others do the will of God, and thus perform that which is acceptable to him, and of course are troubled when either they or others do those things which may be construed as displeasing to God.[2] Such was the love of David and Lot, for says the former, 'Rivers of water ran down mine eyes because they keep not thy law;' and 'My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.' And of Lot it is said, 'For that righteous man dwelling among them,' (the Sodomites,) 'in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds.'

Apollos.—Hence the psalmist prays, 'O! let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.'

Aquila.—Another token also of love to God is when we grieve, if we do not constantly make some advances in the divine life, and daily feel that we are near to and have close communion with our heavenly Father, for it is in the nature of love to bring the object beloved as near as possible. Hence also, connected with this is the ardent desire to converse with God in prayer, reading and hearing his word, in meditation on his goodness, and in all the public ordinances of his house, according to his appointment.[3]

Priscilla.—Yes—and there is an ardent zeal for God's glory, so much so that the man who loves him is more offended at hearing his name blasphemed than at all the reproaches cast upon ourselves.

Aquila.—This is truly so indeed: but the last of all this is, the love of God showing itself by all good works toward them, while as an internal work it produces peace, and joy in our own souls. Indeed if we have not love to man in vain may we profess love to our God. For, says St. John, 'If any man say I love God and hateth his brother he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.'

Apollos.—Ought not the love we bear toward God to be without measure?

Aquila.—It ought, indeed the more intense the more excellent and grateful to him it is. This our Saviour expresses when he says, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength,' i. e. we must love God above every thing else. We must not suffer any, however near or dear, to stand in competition with him. We must renounce all, nay even life itself, rather than be allured or frightened to do any thing that may displease him.

Apollos.—O! this is the heavenly principle by which man's heart is bound to the living God. This is the fire that shall burn when the sun himself shall refuse his light, and the twinkling of every star shall cease.

Aquila.—The opposite of love to God is hatred, not toward God as the supreme good, for it is, I think impossible for man to hate him as such, but toward him as

[1] Clarke. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

a legislator, and consequently as prescribing many things ungrateful to a man's concupiscence, which he will not part with that he may please God. Now not to obey him as a legislator is virtually to hate him. But more strictly speaking, it denotes a hatred either of religion in general, of which number are atheists, or men given over to a reprobate sense; or of the christian religion in particular, and with such a hatred are they moved who persecute the church of Christ, made up of the faithful of this world.

Apollos.—But by hatred do we here understand such as is properly an aversion to God, and the things which are pleasing to him?

Aquila.—I suppose such as are either directly so, which I think renders devils so guilty, it being their peculiarity: or else as allured from God, and thereby their affections are carried out to those things plainly contrary to God and godliness.

Apollos.—And what are the steps by which such men arrive at this hatred to God?

Aquila.—There is an inordinate love to themselves, whereby first, they covet whatever pleases them, however contrary to the divine command. This being, in the fall of man, and interwoven in their very nature. Again, they hate the law of God as crossing their desires, and would have it removed as an obstacle to their pleasures. Indeed they set themselves against God as the author of this law, and they abhor him as being the avenger of sin, and fly from his presence as from an angry judge. These, my friend—are the steps by which they attain this degree of aversion to Deity.[1]

Apollos.—How important for a man to examine himself!

Aquila.—Indeed it is, my brother—and it will be seen from what we have said on love to God, that it is the spring from whence, under grace, emanates all the good conduct of the christian. It is this that counteracts the carnal mind, and that constitutes the image of God in the soul. It is this that preserves alive all the other graces of the Spirit, indeed it is the very essence of religion. Now abideth 'faith, hope, charity,' i. e. love, 'but the greatest of these is charity.' All else will not do without the love of God.[2]

Apollos.—And therefore this is indispensable to our salvation.

Aquila.—It is, and O! what a door for the improvement of our souls in piety is here opened, my friend. How may we try ourselves, and indeed, how diligently ought we to examine our hearts, while on this important point in christian experience. We ought to ask ourselves, do we love God? do we love him now? By faith we receive from God our Maker, by hope we expect a future and eternal good, but by love we resemble him, and by it we are qualified to enjoy heaven, and be with him to all eternity. Do! O! do we love him, and love him supremely? Do we, in proof that we love God, love all the world, love even our enemies, our bitterest enemies, so much so that we not only pray for; but do most ardently desire their salvation? That this subject may be properly improved by us I have pointed out the opposite of love, and it will be easy for us, my friend—from this to see what ground every christian ought to occupy. If we would live in heaven God is to have our undivided hearts.

Apollos.—I assure you I see it, and I trust, I feel it too. A religion, the very essence of which is love, cannot suffer at its altars, a heart that is revengeful and uncharitable, or which does not use its utmost endeavours to revive love in the heart of another.[3]

Priscilla.—Yes, and he who loves only his friends, does nothing for God's sake. He who loves for the sake of pleasure or interest pays himself.[4]

Aquila.—We are never then to withhold from any man the proof of this love,

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

but in its exercise let us seek to disseminate peace and brotherly kindness, throughout the whole world. O, my friend—we should remember the exhortation of an apostle, 'keep yourselves in the love of God.'

Apollos.—I plainly perceive that this is the christian's strong hold, and, indeed, the only true ground of safety.

Aquila.—Closely allied to the love of God is that honour which is due to him. For he that loves God, my friend—will surely honour him. This admits of various acceptations in the Scriptures. Sometimes it is taken to denote the whole of religion, and all the duties prescribed to us. So we read, 'Jesus answered I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.' It is evident, that Christ alluded to his doing the will of God, by which he was honouring the Father. So in Malachi, it is said, 'a son honoureth his father, and a servant his master, if then, I be a father, where is mine honour, if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts, unto you, O! priests, that despise my name.' Now, when it is thus taken to denote all the duties enjoined on us, it is evidently distinguished into internal and external. But here we are to understand by it that inward affection of the mind, whereby we ascribe to God, in our hearts, the praise due to his name, for all his wonderful and divine works.[1]

Apollos.—And how does it express or manifest itself?

Aquila.—There are two methods by which it usually expresses itself. One is by proclaiming His divine name. Thus, through the whole book of Psalms the name of the Lord is praised, as it also is in many other parts of the Holy Scriptures. So St. Paul in his first epistle to Timothy, says 'Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be *honour* and *glory* for ever and ever. Amen.' In the Apocalypse, it is said, 'when those beasts, give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying thou art worthy, O! Lord, to receive glory, and *honour*, and power, for thou hast created all things, for thy pleasure they are, and were created.' Isaiah says, 'and one cried to another and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.'

Apollos.—The praises of the name of the Lord, are proclaimed on almost every page of the sacred volume.

Aquila.—We are not only thus to honour the God, we so much love, my friend—by sounding the glory of his holy name, in the voice of a psalm, or song of joy, or ardent prayers and expressions of thanksgiving; but the next method of honouring him, is by directing all our actions to the honour and glory of this our God, and it is thus that he is glorified by us. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.' And St. Peter says, 'having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

Apollos.—It is evident that God is thus honoured by the upright walk of his children. Having shown me what is implied in this act of piety, point out if you please, the motives to induce it.

Aquila.—The motives which excite us to honour God, are much the same as those which induce us to love him.

Priscilla.—With this increase of motives, you know, the love of God itself, being an additional one, for if we love, we shall surely desire to honour him.

Aquila.—This is surely correct. The excellency of his own nature, and goodness toward us, both move us to honour him. But there is this small distinction, that in the duty of love they are considered as conducing to our good, but in that

[1] Limborch.

of honour, as advancing the sovereign majesty of God, which ought to be reverenced by us, with the deepest humility.[1]

Apollos.—Is not this excellency and majesty the foundation of that honour to be paid to him.

Aquila.—It is, and is best known by those works, which he has performed. In celebrating of which, whether of mercy towards the good, or in punishing the wicked, we, in our hymns and praises, magnify the divine attributes of wisdom, goodness, justice, and power. Such honour we find paid to the divine Being, as before remarked, all through the Sacred Writings.[2]

Apollos.—Yes—I have often read those portions in the Psalms where the Lord is glorified as the donor of all our mercies, as our deliverer, and as the just judge, who while he rewards the pious, will assuredly exercise the severity of his justice on the obstinate and impenitent sinner.

Aquila.—There are several things that are, my friend, opposed and contrary to that honour which we owe to God.

Apollos.—Do name them.

Aquila.—The first is an *omission* of those things which tend to his honour, and this proceeds chiefly from the too eager pursuit after the things of this world which divert the whole man from God. For being wholly engrossed with earthly things, such as tend to honour and glorify God are neglected by him.[3]

Apollos.—I have myself often seen this.

Aquila.—Closely allied to it is hypocrisy, which is simply when a man pretends by external acts to honour God, while in his mind, and as it respects true holiness, he is at a distance from him. Such are often, indeed always, exact in outward ceremonies, while their consciences are not purged from dead works.

Apollos.—Many do thus dishonour him, and some go even beyond this, in that they profane the name of their kindest and best benefactor.

Aquila.—Indeed, my friend—this is another thing which is contrary to that honour due to the living God. Some blaspheme his holy and blessed name, instead of praising it. And of this there are several sorts.[4]

Apollos.—Are there?

Aquila.—There is a blasphemy, which is properly called direct and downright, which is, when a man either ascribes any thing to God, that is plainly repugnant to his nature and attributes, as if he should say that God is cruel and unjust, and the author of sin: or when he robs God of what belongs to him, without which his nature, or at least the divine perfections would be prejudiced. As if he should deny God to be eternal, wise, powerful, and holy.[5]

Apollos.—Well, the other kinds of blasphemy.

Aquila.—Another kind of blasphemy is, when the honour due to God alone, is ascribed to a creature, for this is a sure derogation from the divine glory. And, moreover, that is a kind of blasphemy, when a man, though he does not blaspheme himself the name of God, is the cause of others doing it.[6]

Apollos.—But I do not clearly understand you. What does constitute blasphemy? Who is he that commits this attack on the divine honour?

Aquila.—To render a man guilty of this in the first sense named by us, there must be an intention, voluntarily, without force or constraint, and then a knowledge that what is uttered is blasphemous. And that which is uttered without these two concomitants of the act, is not this crime. So St. Paul says of himself that he was a blasphemer, but he did it through ignorance and unbelief.[7]

Apollos.—I am satisfied of this, my friend—but, is not irreverence, also a derogation from the divine honour.

[1] Watson.
[2] Clarke.
[3] Limborch.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

Aquila.—It surely is, my friend—especially irreverence, to his sacred word. Thus, when a man speaks of it as a common writing, and sometimes applies sentences, taken out of it to mean any idle purposes, purely for the sake of jesting. Or, when at the house of God, instead of attending the exposition of his word, he is talking and laughing, this is an irreverent act that dishonours the Deity.[1]

Priscilla.—O what a derogation is this from the glory of him who requires that we should speak of him, and divine things, with the highest reverence.

Apollos.—Truly, his word is too sacred to be made the subject of profane jest or impious drollery, and ought not to be used, but upon weighty and serious occasions.

Aquila.—It is certainly so: but you will find another thing opposed to the divine glory, which as an infectious disorder, has spread itself, often to the eternal injury of precious souls. It is that preposterous honour, whereby some men pretend to reverence God, by things in which he is not honoured, either by observing the traditions of men, or worshipping him by images, contrary to his word, which is an affront, inasmuch as it likens the invisible God, to a material and a corruptible creature. Such, my friend—the Lord our God denounces.[2]

Apollos.—It is evident to me that the love of God, and an earnest desire to honour him, are intimately connected, so also are hatred, and that irreverence which may lead to blasphemy and all its horrid results.

Aquila.—Having called your attention to these two internal acts of the pious man: at our next meeting we shall consider those which also stand closely allied to these. We should never, my friend—forget that, as we love God, so we ought daily to promote his glory by all our actions. We profess to love him, and as we do, he of course, if we be sincere, expects us to honour him. In this we are serving him, and the promise of Jesus is, 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.'

COLLOQUY XVI.

INTERNAL ACTS OF PIETY TOWARD GOD, CONTINUED—OF TRUST AND HOPE IN GOD AND THEIR CONTRARIES—AN IMPROVEMENT OF THESE CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

Aquila.—We are this evening to notice, my friend—two other internal acts of piety. I mean that reliance called trust in God, and that hope that expects at his hands all that is needful to our eternal peace, and I propose to consider what is called trust in God first.

Apollos.—What is the difference between faith in Christ and trust in God?

Aquila.—Faith in Christ is not exactly the same with trust in God. The former we have largely considered, and have represented it as that act of obedience to the calls of the gospel, whereby a penitent sinner, in the exercise of that ability granted by divine grace, relies upon and trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as such a propitiation for sin, that he obtains a free and full pardon, is regenerated and adopted into the divine favour. He now has a race to run, and innumerable difficulties to encounter in his christian course. A question arises, who is to protect him from his enemies, who is to guide and sustain him in his ignorance and weakness, who is to bring him into the land of everlasting rest?

Apollos.—God, and God alone, can do all this.

Aquila.—Then, my friend—that steady reliance on God to sustain and support

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

us under all our trials, is what we call trust in God. Here trust means a faith that is a special, an inward act of piety, distinct from all other acts, and is properly, it appears to me, an assurance, and effect of the faith that justifies, whereby we depend wholly on God, and expect from him all good things, especially such as are necessary to salvation, and a deliverance from all such as are prejudicial to our chief and greatest end.

Apollos.—And for such a trust in him, O! has not the christian the highest motives?

Aquila.—Yes—the motives we have, my friend—to such a trust are truly great, they are of the highest and most important character. There is the omnipotence of God, by which he is able to do whatever we expect from him. There is his wisdom, whereby he knows what we want, and after what manner it is most convenient to help us. There also is his goodness, by which he is inclined to bestow upon us whatever is truly good and necessary for us; and then to crown the whole, is the veracity of the Deity, which shows us that he is faithful and just in performing his promises. From hence it follows that the believing and the truly religious can with confidence rely upon him, since to them he has promised his grace and his assistance, when prosecuting a course of piety. 'Behold the eye of the Lord,' says the psalmist, 'is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy to deliver their soul from death, and keep them alive in famine. Our souls waiteth for the Lord, he is our help and our shield.' 'The righteous cry and the Lord heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles.' 'The Lord upholdeth the righteous,' 'their inheritance shall be forever, they shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.' 'For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved for ever.'

Apollos.—O! what precious promises these are. Well does the psalmist say, 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

Aquila.—But to the wicked, persevering in an impenitent state, no such promise is made, but a severe denunciation of sudden destruction. 'The face of the Lord is against them that do evil,' 'for the arms of the wicked shall be broken,' 'their sword shall enter their own heart,' 'the wicked shall perish.' For God 'shall render to every man according to his deeds;' to the disobedient indignation and wrath,' 'tribulation and anguish.'

Priscilla.—So all their confidence is vain, and must fail them.

Aquila.—It must, for the Lord says, 'The paths of all that forget God, and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish,' his 'trust shall be as a spider's web.' And 'the expectation of the wicked shall perish.'

Apollos.—But what, my friend—is necessary for a due and an entire reliance or trust in God, such as you have pointed out.

Aquila.—The very first is, that being justified freely by divine grace, through Jesus Christ, we shall constantly have our trust fixed on God alone, esteeming all human assistance as being of no avail, without the divine favour and protection. For God can alone do us good.

Apollos.—How much we are to blame, when, instead of sincerely and wholly putting our trust in Deity we have recourse to human helps, and accordingly often try to place a greater or less confidence in God, as we see outward means more or less likely to assist us.

Priscilla.—This is not to trust God, but an arm of flesh, which may, and indeed does, often fail us.

Aquila.—Another thing is also necessary, my friend Apollos. It is that our trust or reliance upon God shall be in accordance with his promises, which always have reference to our good, either as it concerns our bodies and this animal

life, or our souls and the spiritual eternal life of the same. And the promises of God, according to this two-fold good are also of two sorts.[1]

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—God promises the spiritual blessings of a future life to those who love him, as their true and proper good, requiring no other condition but their constant faith, and to honour him by an uniform obedience.

Apollos.—And he promises temporal favours too.

Aquila.—Our Lord promises in the new covenant to those that serve him, the good things of this life, but not as their chief or first good, far from it, for he makes a virtual condition therein, provided it be for God's glory and our everlasting welfare.[2]

Apollos.—Then, ought not men to place confidence in God for both of these?

Aquila.—Indeed they ought. According to this two-fold consideration of the divine promises, under the New Testament, the godly ought to place a sort of double reliance on their heavenly Father. They ought to trust him first for all spiritual comforts, and then for all the needed blessings of this life. The former they may certainly expect, if faith be in constant and lively exercise; and if, by the constant discharge of every duty we retain and occupy our regenerated state, in the 'patient continuance of well doing,' God will uphold us. Hence says the apostle John, 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.'

Apollos.—Did not you say that a godly man could not confide in his works as meritorious, and deserving eternal life?

Aquila.—I did so. And all notion of merit is precluded, nor can we without the divine grace attain salvation, since it is God alone who freely pardons all our sins, and bestows his grace upon us that we may obey him. But upon continuing to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we do perform the condition which he requires, and are enabled by grace to obey the commands of God, which proves our regeneration, and in doing this we may safely depend upon God, that he will perform what he has promised, and keep us unto the end.[3]

Priscilla.—O! remember the words of the aged and holy Paul, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.'

Aquila.—Yes—God will protect the soul that relies on him.

Apollos.—Well—how is it with respect to temporal favours?

Aquila.—In this life we may not expect them from God, unless it be with the aforementioned condition.

Apollos.—What was that?

Aquila.—That the acquisition of them be not detrimental to God's glory and our happiness. For it may so happen that a quiet and peaceable fruition of the things of this life may beget in us lukewarmness, but adversity may prove a spur to quicken us. God therefore, who in his wisdom knows what is best for us, and is ready in his infinite goodness to bestow it on us, kindly withholds what is prejudicial to our salvation. However grateful or desirable it may seem to us.[4]

Priscilla.—How true this is, and O! how ought it to be impressed on our minds.

Aquila.—To be still more particular, for a man to put his confidence in God, with respect to the affairs of this life, and trust him for assistance, two or three things are needful. The first is, that he be not only in general an honest man,

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Wesley. [4] Fletcher.

but propose to himself a just and righteous cause for an end, else he cannot expect any success from a just and holy God. The next is that he make use of those means which God has appointed, not as if he were wholly to rely on them, but to trust the event and issue of them to God alone. Above all, he must devoutly pray for divine assistance, and submit all things to the allwise disposal of his heavenly Father.

Priscilla.—How many persons live only for spiritual things, and surely forget the body and this world. While others who can trust God for eternal life cannot trust him for bread and water for one day. O! the cankering cares of this life. What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, while in God there is little dependence. The business of this world often does not prosper, because men do not commit their ways to the Lord, and often after they have heaped up treasures in this life, God sends a messenger that robs them of all, or removes the possessor from this world to the land of death.

Aquila.—There are several things opposite to this trust or reliance on God, all of which, in a greater or less degree, are criminal, some in the defect, and some in the excess, as divines say. There is a diffidence or distrust, which wholly casts away all confidence in God, in times of adversity, and is an arraigning his power, wisdom, goodness, and veracity, all at once.[1]

Apollos.—Are there not several sorts of this distrust in God, called diffidence?

Aquila.—There are, the first of which is *murmuring* against God, as if he had dealt unjustly with us. And this is such a kind of diffidence as sets bounds, as it were, to God's absolute right, and dominion over us.

Priscilla.—Yes—and to this may be added an anxious solicitude and care for the things of this life, as if God's providence had failed and neglected us, and man was left to shift for himself.

Apollos.—Two dangerous rocks on either hand, which tend to ruin us.

Aquila.—There is another kind of distrust, or want of reliance on God, which I would call the *tempting* of God. This has frequently been looked on as an error in the excess, or the presuming too far on the divine assistance, which some infer from our Saviour's reply to the devil, 'It is written thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' But if we refer to the circumstance, alluded to by our Lord, in the case of the Israelites, we shall find that it was too little, not too much confidence, that they were guilty of, and that they were incredulous, rather than presumptuous.[2]

Apollos.—What then is it to tempt God?

Aquila.—It appears to be the desire of an experiment from him, or sign which ought not to be required, for the proof of any thing, but to the reverse, we ought directly to acquiesce.[3]

Apollos.—How may a man be guilty of this, my friend?

Aquila.—When he requires a farther proof to be given to a thing, the truth of which is already evinced by sufficient arguments: or when he doubts of the will of God, in a certain thing, concerning which, that will, has already been sufficiently revealed, and of which consequently he might, and ought to have been assured.

Apollos.—I see this, for it is as much as to require a new revelation to attest the old one.

Aquila.—Truly—and is nothing less than calling the divine veracity into question. Moreover, when a man, by his enormous and repeated crimes, provokes the patience of God, without any regard had to his threatenings, and lives in such a manner as seems to question whether there be a God, and if there be, whether or no he sees his actions, and if he does, whether he will or can punish them.

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Apollos.—This is distrusting God, indeed.

Aquila.—It is so, and when also, a man in adversity, or sickness, fixes a time to God for his deliverance, especially if there be with it, as is often the case, *impatience,* and faintness of heart that seem ready to rise up and ask, 'O! when wilt thou come and deliver me,' that looks with anxiety for relief, that wants resignation, and is ready to ask a reason of God, and say when shall be the judgment, or how long shall I wait for the performance of his promises? Now in opposition to all this, St. James says, 'Be patient, therefore brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain.'

Priscilla.—O! what an exhortation, I remember it well, he goes on, 'Be ye also patient: establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'

Aquila.—Surely the Lord is not unmindful of his promises, but tenderly loves us and all men, and indeed, even delays the day of his coming, that men may be saved.

Apollos.—Wisdom marks all his dealings, I plainly perceive, with us.

Aquila.—Too great confidence then is surely a fault, as it is called in excess. Mark, my friend, not in God, but in man's own self. And this is of two sorts. When a man puts a trust or reliance in his own strength, for the more he depends on self, the less confidence does he repose in God.

Apollos.—By this over confidence in self, and in his own strength, did not Peter fall into that great sin, of denying his Lord and master.

Aquila.—Yes—and after his positive asseveration too, 'though all men deny thee, yet will not I.' And so it is, my friend—when a man applies to himself the divine favour, though by reason of his sins, he ought rather to be afraid of the divine wrath and punishment. The rashness, as well as folly of such a presumptive assurance, we have had occasion to notice more than once.

Apollos.—Yes—and have evinced too its immense unreasonableness.

Aquila.—We may now, my friend—turn to hope in God, which, indeed, is much of the same nature, with trusting God. It being, as already suggested, the expectation of receiving some future good from God and Christ; with only this difference, that faith, hath regard to the person from whom good is expected, while hope, as before said, has properly an eye to the good itself. Of course, as this falls in pretty much with *trust* in God, we need only notice particularly its motive, and object, in connection with its nature concisely.

Apollos.—What is its motive?

Aquila.—The great motives of *hope,* like those of *reliance* are the *promise* of the divine being, and these too, strongly confirmed unto us whereon our hope may depend. Hence, says St. Peter, 'are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by them ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, 'through lust.' And its objects are all the divine blessings, promised in the gospel, spiritual and temporal, with respect both to a future and the present life; but still so, as is conformable to the divine promises.[1]

Apollos.—So that all is according to God's will.

Aquila.—And with regard to its nature as made up not only of desire, but expectation, founded on a due trust in God, it is more or less perfect, and that with respect either to its efficient causes, or with regard to its own essence.

Apollos.—How is this?

Aquila.—With respect to its causes or motives, one kind of hope is founded on the express promises of God, and the strong confirmation of them, of which the

[1] Clarke.

apostles of Christ, make mention, thus St. Paul says, 'Believing all things which are written in the law, and in the prophets: and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.' St. Peter says, 'Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. St. John says, 'And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.'

Apollos.—This is 'a good hope.'

Aquila.—The other is that which arises from reasoning on the goodness, power, justice, and veracity of God, and from instances of the like nature; from whence a man infers, in any particular case, that he may expect to receive from God the good that he desires, or as I said, it is desire and expectation combined, both founded on faith, or reliance on God.[1]

Apollos.—This is very plain.

Aquila.—But again, hope with respect to its nature or essence, is more or less perfect, for as it regards this, it may either precede our duty, and be grounded on the performance of the condition, which in some measure may be perfect, or else it may follow the discharge of duty, and then it is a certain expectation of some good that will undoubtedly be obtained, in consequence of the condition being already performed. And this hope, my friend—confirms in us the love of true religion, and renders us averse to sin. For through a sure expectation of eternal life, we are sensible of the highest pleasure and greatest happiness, that can be obtained in this world, we are heartily desirous of retaining it, and are ready to part with all that would bereave us of our invaluable treasure.[2]

Apollos.—Well might one speak of hope 'as an anchor cast within the veil.'

Aquila.—Two things things may be considered the contraries of a gospel hope.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—Presumption and despair. A man may be said to presume, with respect to his everlasting salvation, when he hopes, though he has no ground to hope, or no just reason for doing so.

Apollos.—That is when he thinks himself in a state of favour with God, though he has never repented or believed, was never pardoned, nor regenerated, and has not the witness of God's spirit that he is a child of God.

Aquila.—Yes—or else, considering his present condition or circumstances, he promises to himself eternal happiness, as if he should never fall, but still persevere in a course of piety. And again, he may be said to presume, who on other accounts, does certainly and assuredly expect to receive that from God, which he has neither promised nor given him any reason to hope for, of which nature are many things relating to this life.

Priscilla.—O! how true is this.

Aquila.—Despair, is when a man, either wholly renounces all hope of the divine favour, and consequently of his eternal happiness; or else, in some particular case, distrusts the divine assistance. The former of these is properly despair, and is without question, a greater sin than presumption itself.

Apollos.—Why do you think so?

Aquila.—It abandons all the hopes and expectations which a man might have in the power and goodness of God. We may close our conversation by remarking that from what has been said, my friend—on the subjects of trust and hope in God, it will be seen, that those who are regenerated by divine grace, are in possession of reliance upon the infinite sufficiency and goodness of God, in consequence of the discoveries he has made of himself and his designs, either by revelation or immediately by his spirit. Now we know that God has revealed

[1] Clarke. [2] Limborch.

himself, not only in reference to this world, but in reference to eternity, and much of our faith, especially as it is properly trust, is employed in things pertaining to the eternal world.[1] So that while we believe in God as our sovereign, we trust him as our Father, for present comforts and everlasting life. Founded in this also, my friend—is that hope which, as we have said, taken in its common acceptation, is the expectation of future good, and this as certainly has its foundation in faith, as that is founded in knowledge.

Apollos.—That is God gives a revelation which concerns both worlds, containing exceeding great and precious promises, relative to both. We believe what he has said on his own veracity, and relying on him, we hope to enjoy the promised blessings in both worlds, because he is faithful who has promised.

Aquila.—Yes—and as every created intellectual nature is capable of eternal improvement, it would seem that eternity itself, will hardly bound the vast hopes of him who trusts in the living God. You will then recollect that all possible perfections in God, are the objects of our faith and trust in him, while the communication of all possible good, is the object of hope. And while faith goes forward to apprehend, hope anticipates, as God continues to discover his unbounded glories and perfections.[2]

Priscilla.—Thus an interest for eternity is kept up, and infinite blessings in endless succession, are apprehended, anticipated and enjoyed.

Aquila.—Indeed, my friend—hope is a sort of universal blessing, and one among the greatest which God has granted to man, life would be intolerable without it, and to the followers of God it is as necessary, it would seem, as faith itself, for often would faith cease to hold, if it were not for hope. And where despair takes hold there is the total derangement of all the mental faculties. O! have we hope, a scriptural, a gospel hope. Good in possession precludes hope, but a sure trust in Almighty God, will ever enable us to hope in him for the full consummation of all our ardent desires in that land of everlasting rest beyond the grave. Such a hope is not a dead, but a lively and a christian hope.

COLLOQUY XVII.

INTERNAL ACTS OF PIETY TOWARD GOD CONTINUED—THE FEAR OF GOD A CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Aquila.—The fear of God, as well as other acts of piety, admits, my friend—of various acceptations in the Scriptures. Sometimes it is taken in an extensive sense, so as to denote the whole of religion. Thus it is said by Moses, 'and now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul.' Hence, says David, 'the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' 'O! fear the Lord ye his saints for there is no want to them that fear him.' Then again in a stricter sense, it is put for our whole duty towards God. So in Deuteronomy, it is said thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him,' and by the prophet Jonah, 'I am an Hebrew: and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which made the sea and the dry land.' And this is the more evident from the words of our Lord, 'it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'

Apollos.—And are these the only acceptations of the fear of the Lord.

Aquila.—O no! for in the strictest sense and as at other times used, it denotes that reverence which the consideration of the divine majesty and power produces

[1] Clarke. [2] Ibid.

in us, whereby being afraid of his wrath and the punishment that attends it, we dare not commit any thing contrary to his commands, by which he may be offended. And in this sense, we are to take the term fear, as making a special part of piety, or as one of the christian's duties toward his God.[1]

Apollos.—What motives for such a fear are set forth in the Scriptures?

Aquila.—The first is a proper consideration of the sovereign dominion and majesty of Almighty God, which he claims to himself on account of creation and other benefactions. Thus says the Lord, 'if I be a father, where is my honour, if I be a master where is my fear.' 'Fear ye not me? saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it, and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it.'

Apollos.—And men ought to fear so great a God.

Aquila.—Another motive is the divine omnipresence and omniscience, whereby he is present to all our actions, knows our most secret thoughts, and will pass a judgment upon them, accordingly at the last day. Hence it is said, 'whither shall I go from thy spirit or flee from thy presence, if I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.'

Priscilla.—Every where present.

Aquila.—Yes—St. Paul, says, 'neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do,' and in the day of judgment 'God shall judge,' says he, 'the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.'

Apollos.—And he knows all this, because he is every where present.

Aquila.—And another motive to fear God is his divine power, which my friend—no man can resist, and thus it is said, 'fear and dread shall fall upon them by the greatness of thine arm, they shall be as still as stone, till thy people pass over which thou hast purchased.' So he delivered by power his people Israel.

Priscilla.—O! how vast is the 'thunder of his power.'

Aquila.—But the manifold blessings of the living God, whereby he demonstrates the height of his bounty towards us, that we may not offend a most gracious Father, nor be deprived of his benefits, are offered as motives to fear him, and thus he reproves man. 'Neither say they in their heart, let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain both the former and the latter in his season, he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of harvest.' And the Psalmist says, 'but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Hence says St. Paul, 'wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' Indeed the severest threatenings of God, are declared to men that they may avoid them. 'Fear not them,' said the Saviour, 'which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell:' and thus he forewarned men whom to fear. St. Paul says, 'wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire.'

Priscilla.—And how does the Lord enforce this truth by those instances of the divine punishment which he has inflicted on men.

Aquila.—Especially such as were attended with a dreadful destruction, as of Pharoah overwhelmed with his army in the Red Sea, related in Exodus, and of

[1] Limborch.

Korah, Dathan and Abiram mentioned in the book of Numbers, who were swallowed up by the opening and closing again of the earth. And indeed to these may be added all those instances of spiritual punishment inflicted on men. Thus says St. Paul, 'if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee.' And in the Apocalypse, it is said, 'fear God and give glory unto him, for the hour of his judgment is come, and worship him which made heaven and earth, and the sea and the fountains of waters,' and again, 'they sing a new song,' &c. saying 'who shall not fear thee, O! Lord and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.' But, my friend—the consideration of the last judgment is one among the most powerful motives offered to induce men to fear God. That day in which He will manifest his glory, and render to every man according to his works.

Apollos.—I have often noticed this.

Aquila.—Yes—the word of the Lord is, 'and if ye call upon the father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' And St. Paul says, 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men.'

Apollos.—How vast the motives to fear God.

Aquila.—They are. St. Peter says, 'but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness.'

Priscilla.—See how the Lord presses by these weighty motives his fear on us.

Apollos.—I plainly perceive that all these considerations are weighty indeed, which, if we would duly lay to heart, would not fail exciting in us a fear of God. But, my friend—give me a more extensive view of its nature, if you please?

Aquila.—This fear of God admits of a two-fold division. It is sometimes divided into a fear that precedes sin, or rather acts as a restraint, whereby a man is kept from falling into sin, which is a fear of losing the divine favour, if we abandon piety and turn aside to ungodliness. This is not only correct, but let me say it is peculiar to the faithful, and is recommended in the word of God. Thus 'let us therefore fear,' says St. Paul, 'lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' And mark his example in in regard to this, for he also feared, thus 'but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.' And then there is the fear that follows sin, it is what we would call the fear of condemnation, or rather that which is generated by the consciousness of guilt. Hence St. Paul says to the Romans, that those who lived in a way to glorify God were free from this, 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit,' and the good apostle John says, 'there is no fear in love, for perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.'

Apollos.—The fear and dread of condemnation is excited in the bosom of the sinner, who is without the hope of pardon, who dreads the Almighty as an incensed judge, and one that will take vengeance on him for his sins, and who by the testimony of his own conscience, is in a state of condemnation.

Aquila.—Such a fear as this, we have proved above from God's word, cannot be in any true believer. But in the second place, fear is either *filial* or *servile*.

Apollos.—What is filial fear?

Aquila.—Filial fear arises from the consideration both of the divine goodness and severity, and is joined with a love to God, whereby the believer, loving him as a gracious Father, is afraid of offending and provoking him to displeasure, lest he should be cast out of his gracious presence forever. This is a generous and ingenuous fear, and such as has an eye to everlasting punishments, and produces a cheerful obedience to the divine commands.[1]

Apollos —What is a servile fear?

Aquila.—A servile fear proceeds only from the consideration of punishment, when a man looking upon God as a severe master is, as it were, constrained to obedience by the sole fear of being punished; nor does he obey cordially and sincerely, but only shows it by some forced and external acts. Such a fear argues a disingenuous mind, and is unbecoming a true believer.[2]

Apollos.—But my friend—is all fear of punishment servile, and is all obedience arising thence disingenuous?

Aquila.—By no means, for as we just now observed, there is some fear of punishment proper to the children of God, whereby they are quickened and excited to diligence.

Apollos.—And is not this a servile fear?

Aquila.—No it is not, and this is apparent from the fact that God exhorts us to obedience, not only by proposing a reward but also by threatening a punishment. It is certainly not unbecoming in us to be moved to our duty by such arguments as God is pleased to use to excite us thereto. Indeed, my friend—the Scripture prescribes to us such a fear, by which it persuades us to obey God. And that obedience which proceeds from faith is sincere and laudable, and becoming the children of God. Now faith not only regards the promises, but likewise the threatenings of Deity, since it assents to all that it is uttered by him.[3]

Apollos.—What then are the genuine proofs of this fear? How may it be discerned?

Aquila.—The marks of that fear which is due to God are chiefly discernable by its effects, since these, if genuine, are the most assured evidences of the sincerity of our fear. These tokens are a *hatred* of sin, the avoiding all, especially secret sins, which might have been committed without the cognizance of, or at least without being punished by man. Hence says Solomon, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.' 'Fear the Lord and depart from evil.' 'And by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.'

Apollos.—This is indeed positive proof.

Aquila.—And we see now that, abstaining from those things of which a question may be raised, whether they be lawful or not, is a proof also of this fear. For, my friend—he who truly fears God will never commit any thing of the lawfulness of which he doubts; 'for he that doubteth is damned,' i. e. condemned, 'if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' Another mark of this fear is an ardent desire of doing good. For, says St. Paul, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthinesss of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.' And as quoted above, he exhorts others to 'work out their salvation with fear and trembling.'

Apollos.—This fear of the Lord seems to enter into every act of the christian.

Aquila.—Indeed it does, for another proof is, that we study not to please men only, for whatever we do we are to do 'heartily as unto the Lord,' serving him, our holy Father, 'not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.' 'Not as pleasing men but God,

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Clarke.

which trieth our hearts.' 'For,' says the same apostle, 'if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ.'

Priscilla.—And this is not all, the christian is to do nothing displeasing to God out of the fear of man.

Aquila.—This is evident, as he is more to be feared certainly than they, and as he is able to inflict the sorest of punishments on the transgressors of his laws. Thus our Lord said to his followers, 'Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' And Peter and his associates, when on their trial said, 'we ought to obey God rather than man.' And this apostle has himself declared, 'If ye suffer for righteousness sake happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.'

Apollos.—He that bears these signs must truly fear God.

Aquila.—He does indeed. And there is one more token of true christian fear. It is that constancy under temptations that every true christian exercises. He does not fluctuate in duty, but is fixed in his purpose to love God. Hence says Solomon, 'In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.'

Apollos.—It is apparent that the absence of this fear must expose men to a great deal of danger.

Aquila.—It does indeed, and the things opposed to it are either in the defect or excess.

Apollos.—How is this, my friend?

Aquila.—When there is the want of such a fear, or rather when a man has not the fear of God before his eyes. 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,' said David, 'there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.' Hence says St. Paul of such, 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' This lack of fear leads to the provoking of God, which is another opposite to fear, this inward act of piety, and this is done by the commission of the most enormous sins. 'For the Lord God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. When thou shalt beget children and children's children, and shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish,' &c. And it is added, 'they provoked him to jealousy with strange Gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger.' 'And when the Lord saw it he abhorred them,' saying, 'they have moved me to jealousy,' 'they have provoked me to anger with their vanities.' There is also, my friend—the murmuring against God, by being impatient under afflictions, which arises from a degree of boldness in confronting the divine Being. And this will be obvious if a reference be made to the various accounts of the murmurings and the impatience of the children of Israel, when all are compared together, they evince that where there is the want of the fear of God, there is also a disposition to repine at afflictions, and murmur against Providence.

Apollos.—This is too true, I well know, my friend. The irreligious are unwilling to submit to the will of him who does right.

Aquila.—Carnal security is also opposed to the fear of God; it is that by which a man in the midst of his sins, fancies and promises to himself that all is well enough with him, but his end and his punishment too are at hand. 'For when

they shall say peace and safety then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.' 'And take heed to yourselves,' saith our Lord, 'lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, so that day come upon you unawares,' is the exhortation of our blessed Lord. And both of these texts prove that carnal security is just the opposite to christian and filial fear.

Priscilla.—Is not superstition opposed to the fear, that is according to truth?

Aquila.—It is, and an opposite, as is said in excess, or a fear which looks upon God rather in the light of an enemy than a friend, and it supposes him displeased at those things with which he is pleased. This is generally the case of those who reverence God, but being unsound in judgment, they are frightened at those very truths by which they ought to be encouraged to advance and seek his mercy, by giving him their hearts.[1]

Apollos.—Then while fear that is filial is to be commended, that which is superstitious and servile is not in accordance with God's word.

Aquila.—Surely it is not: nor are we to suppose, my friend—that the love of God casts out every kind of fear from the soul; it only casts out that which hath torment. A filial fear, as we have seen, is consistent with the highest degrees of love, and even necessary to the preservation of that grace we now enjoy. This is properly the guardian of the love of God.[2]

Priscilla.—Yes—and without this, love would soon degenerate into listlessness, or a presumptive boldness.

Aquila.—Nor does religion indeed exclude that which is so necessary to the preservation of life, for that fear which leads a man to flee from danger, lest his life should be destroyed is not only natural but correct.

Priscilla.—And a man may have also that fear which is engendered by sudden alarm.

Aquila.—He may, nay! he ought, for it is necessary to his well being. We do not, therefore, my friend—when we speak of fear that is servile, and that which is filial, speak of this kind of fear. O! no—we mean by a servile fear, that dread of want, of death, of judgment, as the ministers of an avenging God, who will surely destroy the wicked. And by filial fear, that reverence for God as our Father, which will induce us, on all occasions, to respect his authority and do that which is consonant with his will. Hence says the prophet, 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the Lord, let him stay himself on his God.'

Priscilla.—This is true christian fear.

Aquila.—Thus we have considered those inward acts of piety towards God, and, permit me, my friend—to say, acts, without which, a man cannot be a christian, for if he do not thus love, honour, trust, hope in, and fear God, he knows but little of him, and the comforts of godliness. In vain may he draw nigh and attempt to honour the Deity with his lips, while his heart is a stranger to the import of these duties.

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke.

COLLOQUY XVIII.

EXTERNAL ACTS OF PIETY TOWARD GOD.—ADORATION AND INVOCATION, INCLUDING PRAYER, THANKSGIVING, AND CHRISTIAN MEN'S OATHS FOR THE CONFIRMATION OF TRUTH.

Aquila.—Having considered, my friend—what are called the internal acts of piety toward God, as involved in the duties we owe him, we must now turn our attention to those that are outward, and rather of an external nature, as it respects their acts, but internal and salutary, as it regards their effects.

Apollos.—What are they, my friend?

Aquila.—They are chiefly these four, adoration, invocation, confession, and obedience. These we will consider as we may have time.

Apollos.—Well—do take adoration and invocation first, and confession and obedience afterward.

Aquila.—Well—we will do so.

Priscilla.—What do you mean by adoration?

Aquila.—This, as I remarked on the case of Abraham bowing before the sons of Heth, properly denotes the low bowing of the body before God, whom we would honour: which is usually done, not only by falling on the knee, but also by prostrating the whole body on the ground. Two kinds of this adoration are mentioned in the Scriptures. The one a civil, as it has been called, and the other a religious adoration.[1]

Apollos.—A civil adoration is that respect, which was usually paid to eastern kings, by bowing, kneeling, and sometimes by the entire prostration of the body on the ground, as in the case you named of Abraham bowing before the sons of Heth, and both he and Lot, before the strangers that traversed the plains of Mamre.

Aquila.—Yes—and a religious adoration is that act whereby we honour God, the creator of heaven and earth, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we have likewise proved to be due to Jesus, as he is the Mediator between God and us.

Apollos.—In what does this religious adoration consist?

Aquila.—It is partly in the mind and is an humble submission and reverence thereof, arising from the consideration of the divine Majesty, his power, glory, and excellency: and partly in external actions, such as bending the knee, uncovering the head, lifting up the hands, prostrating the whole body, and all those other acts, which are usual in the external exercise of religion. The former of these is the foundation of the latter, for therefore do we pay to God those outward acts of reverence, because in our minds, our souls, we revere and reverence his holy and ever blessed name.[2]

Apollos.—The latter then perfects and completes the former.

Aquila.—It does so, since inward adoration does not appear to be perfect, unless a man testifies it, by some external acts of honour and reverence.[3]

Apollos.—But God it is said has no need of such external signs, my friend—For I am sure he knows the affections of our hearts towards him, since he is omniscient, and the searcher of the hearts of all men.

Aquila.—All this is true, but he requires that the whole duty which man owes to him should be performed, not that he needs it, but because he would have man be obedient to him in all things: and hence it is that we are commanded to offer our 'bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service.' It is moreover fit, that as the soul, made and redeemed by

[1] Clarke and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Clarke.

God, pays him homage, so also the body, partaker of the same benefits, should bear a part in that service. And it is requisite that men should not only give glory to God, but even glorify him before others, that they also may be excited to do the same, which could not be done with only the veneration of the mind.[1]

Apollos.—I perceive this, but is it not made up of several acts?

Aquila.—It is, and this we shall see hereafter. We may only notice now, that in the true adoration or worship of God, the external gesture of the body is not sufficient, but the inward reverence of the mind is likewise requisite, as God cannot be worshipped by body alone; but for the commission of the sin of idolatry, it is enough if the outward signs of idolatry be performed, though the mind may deride and detest them, because if not with the mind, yet in fact the idol is worshipped as if it were God.[2]

Apollos.—What is meant then by invocation, my friend?

Aquila.—Invocation, is the calling on the name of God, and is very closely allied to adoration, and includes it, though adoration does not include, properly, invocation, for a man cannot call on the name of a God, unless he be sensible of his majesty, but though he does know the one, yet it does not always follow that he implores the other. So that adoration appears to be a less degree of worship than invocation.[3] As invocation means the calling upon God, there are of it three kinds, *prayer, thanksgiving*, and those appeals that are made to Deity, for the confirmation of the truth, commonly called christian men's *oaths*.

Apollos.—Do if you please define prayer, that I may behold its obligations, and benefits in all their parts. I know their value, experimentally, in some good degree I trust.

Aquila.—I will attempt it, and waiving the several distinctions of prayer, let us only consider it as a religious duty, which we owe to God. As such, it may be defined thus, the pouring out of the soul before God, with the hand of faith placed on the head of the sacrificial offering; imploring mercy and presenting itself, a free will offering unto God, giving up body, soul, and spirit, to be guided and governed as may seem good to his heavenly wisdom, desiring only perfectly to love and serve him with all its power, at all times, while we have a being.[4]

Apollos.—It would appear then that it is that humble presentation of the requests, which the soul makes in faith to God, that he would bestow on us, and our fellow men his blessings, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Aquila.—Yes—and from this definition it would appear that prayer is a most solemn act of worship to God, one by which the highest and greatest honour is done to him.[5] For, my friend—he whom we invoke is supposed to be omniscient, hearing the prayers of all wheresoever offered, understanding the inarticulate accents of our sighs, and our groans, and who is acquainted with the necessities of all men. So we read in the Acts of the Apostles, 'they prayed and said, thou Lord, which knoweth the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry,' &c. And it acknowledges his omnipotence, that God is only able to give whatever is asked, and render us an effectual answer. And again, we hear, 'they lift up their voice to God with one accord and said, 'Lord thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.' It confesses that he is infinitely good, and will, when petitioned aright, grant the favours and blessings asked for. Hear the description of prayer by St. James, 'If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering, for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the

[1] Limborch.
[2] Clarke and Limborch.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Clarke.
[5] Clarke and Limborch.

sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.' Now when he attempts to pray as thus directed, he must remember that 'every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.'

Apollos.—From all this it is evident that God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of men, as the Mediator between him and us, is the only proper object, as of our piety in general, so of prayer in particular.

Aquila.—This is indeed so, and the dignity of this act of devotion, is specially apparent, as it is simply the holding of a conversation or a discourse with God, whereby a man, as it were pierces through all visible things, and enters into heaven itself, to talk by faith with him who wields the sceptre of the universe.

Apollos.—O! What a dignity there is in true scriptural prayer.

Aquila.—There is indeed, and this is the reason why a good man has said, 'Would you be always with God, be frequent in prayer and reading the Scripture; for in praying we speak to God, and in reading the Scripture he speaks to us.'[1]

Priscilla.—And what a comfort it is to be permitted to unbosom ourselves to him. Yea, what a true dignity, to be admitted to his presence, to breathe our sorrows into his bosom, and before him to pour out our complaints.

Aquila.—While we have spoken of prayer as the use of words in ordering our cause before God, we have said that it was an expression of the desires of the heart. And we would hereby show, that the outward pronouncing of words, is not necessarily required, but that by inward wishes, groans and sighs, we may make our requests known to him who is omniscient.

Apollos.—O yes!—he reads the heart. But do tell me the several kinds of prayer.

Aquila.—Prayer was spoken of as making requests not only to God, for ourselves, but for others. Now in this, it is intimated that there are several kinds of prayer. One of which is a *deprecation* of the evil, with which we are oppressed. Another is *supplication* for the good we need. And a third is *intercession* for another, that he may obtain the good, which he stands in need of, and be delivered from the evil to which he stands exposed.

Apollos.—Well—I think I will not forget this. Dear me! if you take out the address to the Deity, in the Lord's prayer, as it is called, you will have just these three things, deprecation, supplication and intercession.

Aquila.—In a conversation, however, on prayer, my friend—we ought to consider it in all its important parts, and in order to this, we may notice its necessity, then the matter of prayer, and the disposition of him who prays, and the circumstances thereof, and lastly, the effect or event of it. At the same time, you must keep in mind our general division, into deprecation, supplication and intercession.

Apollos.—The necessity is most apparent, and indeed ought to be so to all.

Aquila.—It ought to be, but it is not, my friend—for there are thousands who never pray at all. Our indigent condition is a sufficient evidence of the necessity of prayer, and we can have no stronger motive to excite us thereto, than a thorough sense of our wants. Our lives are exposed to various dangers, and we stand in need of all things with respect to both our animal and spiritual state.

Apollos.—Yes—with respect to the former, we are evidently in need of all things for the support of life. We owe our food and raiment to the divine Providence.

Aquila —This is true indeed—and besides this, we are subject to many adversities, miseries, diseases, and poverty, and sometimes to the oppression of other men which greatly afflict.

[1] Limborch.

Priscilla.—How beautifully does Job describe this as his condition, he says, 'is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work, so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.'

Apollos.—I remember the plaintiveness of that beautiful chapter, by the patient man of God.

Aquila.—But with respect to our spiritual state, we stand in need of all things necessary to salvation. Such as an illumination of the understanding, in the knowledge of the divine law, exciting and directing the will to walk in the ways of the Lord: we need the remission of our sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost and eternal life. We are exposed to many and continued dangers, from the world, the flesh and the devil, and also to the persecutions of unbelieving and ungodly men.

Apollos.—A sense of these our numerous wants should excite us, I see, to make our supplications to God, who alone is able to supply them.

Aquila.—But besides this, we have the express command of our Saviour, for so spreading our wants, both temporal and spiritual, before God. And the very fact that he has commanded prayer, is evidence of its necessity. He who knew our frailty, not only taught us a prayer, but said 'ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.' And again, not only 'watch and pray,' but 'watch and pray always.' All which he backs with the promise of our prayers being heard, 'now ask and receive that your joy may be full,' 'if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him.'

Priscilla.—And might you not add to this the examples of the faithful who by their prayers have obtained very great blessings at the hands of God.

Aquila.—Indeed we may, and all these things evince the necessity of prayer, since it is a duty more beneficial to us, than redounding to God's glory, however, that glory may be magnified in blessing us.

Apollos.—But some have said what occasion is there for praying to God? Does he not know my wants? And is he not so bountiful as to bestow without my asking?

Aquila.—This is true but God is pleased that we should be sensible of our own wants, for he who wants nothing or is able to bestow all things on himself, needs not pray to another for them. He therefore that petitions another, acknowledges his own necessities; and consequently by praying to God, we own him to be the author of all good, not ascribing it to ourselves, or to blind chance, but to God that he may be glorified thereby, while we are eternally saved.[1]

Apollos.—As our Lord said, 'whatsoever ye shall ask him in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.'

Aquila.—Having pointed out the necessity, let us notice the subject matter of prayer. And this comprehends several things. There is the object to whom, and the persons for whom, and the things for which we pray, and as we have just noticed the object, let us for a moment look at the other two, the persons for whom, and the blessings for which we are taught to pray.

Apollos.—And for whom are we to pray?

Aquila.—As it respects these they are the person, who prays and others. That every one who believes in God ought to pray for himself, will be admitted by all, since he best knows his own wants, and consequently ought to be most solicitous for his own welfare and eternal salvation.

Apollos.—But is it lawful for a christian in spreading his own case before God,

[1] Limborch.

to use any sort or kind of imprecation, for instance, against himself? On this much has been said by some.

Aquila.—There are several kinds of imprecations, some are thought lawful, some unlawful. An imprecation is properly the wishing or asking a curse on one's-self. Now it is contended by some that it is lawful, when made in lawful oaths for the confirmation of the truth. And that this may be done conscientiously out of an ardent love of our neighbours, and that in it we virtually wish a a calamity on ourselves, that they may be freed from the like or more grievous misery: So David said to the Lord, 'let thine hand I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me, and on my father's house, but not on thy people that they should be plagued.' So Moses said, 'and now if thou wilt forgive their sin: and if not blot me I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.'

Apollos.—Whatever might be the object of an imprecation, for this is certainly one.

Aquila.—St. Paul has also been represented as making an imprecation against himself, 'for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' When properly looked at, it is thought that these imprecations are not only lawful, but highly commendable. One thing, at least is certain, that viewed in the light of lawful oaths, or done for the clearing of innocence which cannot be effected in any other way, it does not appear to be sin. But when an imprecation proceeds from regret or impatience, at our misfortunes, as was the case of Moses, Job and Jonah, then is it certainly only so far excusable, to say the most that can be said in its favour, as it may be the product of sudden and unexpected temptation or passion. But if it assumes the character of murmuring against God, it is then highly criminal, and as was the case with Jonah, if not Job, is sharply reproved by Almighty God.[1]

Apollos.—I can hardly think that God would approve of any imprecation of that kind, only as you have said for the confirmation of the truth, and then in a lawful manner, but what of prayer for others.

Aquila.—You will bear in mind, that it is the duty of every pious man to pray for others. This is abundantly proved in the word of God. St. James says, 'confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' St. Paul says, 'praying always, with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.' But to Timothy, he says, 'I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.' Indeed, my friend—men are sometimes commanded to desire others to intercede for them, as Abimelech was enjoined to beg the intercession of Abraham, and Job's friends to desire him to intercede for them.

Apollos.—Yes—and you know that the apostles, those holy men have often recommended themselves to the prayers of the faithful, and have also reciprocally interceded with God, for his people in their prayers.

Aquila.—And by this they would show that there is a reciprocal duty resting on a pastor and his flock. It is a pastor's duty to recommend in ardent prayers the people of his charge to God, and it is their duty in all the ardour of effectual prayer to present him and his before the Deity.

Apollos.—And as it is a duty of love to pray for others, it is likewise to be extended to all whom we are obliged as christians to love I presume?

Aquila.—Surely, not only to our friends and the good, but also to the wicked

[1] Limborch.

and those that are our enemies, according to the express command of God our Saviour. 'Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you.'

Apollos.—This is a 'strait gate.'

Aquila.—Yes! my friend—and 'a narrow way,' as we shall see, when we come to consider charity toward our neighbour.

Apollos.—But are not some men so wicked, notoriously so, that it is not lawful to pray to God for them. Some have thought so from the words of St. John, 'If any man see his brother sin a sin unto death, he shall ask and he shall give him life, for them that sin a sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.'

Aquila.—But, my friend—there is no express prohibition in this place, the most that can be concluded from what is here said, is that some men's sins are productive of death, and that God will not spare their lives any longer: and indeed the meaning of the text may be simply this, that we are not obliged to pray for one who sins unto death. But you will remember that all things to which we are not obliged are not upon that account unlawful. Nor even can that inference be justly made, but only this, that if we pray for one who sins unto death, i. e. as some think, one who perseveres in a state of impenitence to his death, it shall not obtain the lengthening of his life. This is plain from what the apostle says on the other hand, of our praying for one who does not sin unto death, viz: that God will grant us the life of him for whom we pray.[1]

Apollos.—Well, my friend—only to get the arguments against such an improper practice, I ask ought we to pray for the dead?

Aquila.—We know that the church of Rome maintains, at least it teaches, that prayers may be of very great use to the dead, for their deliverance out of purgatory, and the cruel torment thereof.

Apollos.—And what do you think of all this?

Aquila.—Of purgatory we may speak, in addition to what has been said, at another time. At present it may be sufficient for us to see that such prayers are neither pious nor necessary. And supposing that they were lawful they are not of any use. There are many reasons to show that they are not necessary.

Apollos.—Point them out if you please.

Aquila.—I will, some few at least. There is no command for any such prayers in either the Old or New Testaments Indeed in the Old Testament, where we read of so many sacrifices offered for such a variety of sins, no mention is made of any one offered for the dead. And again, we have no instance of any such prayers. Now had they been necessary or useful, there were frequent occasions given for them, especially at the death and funeral solemnities of great men. On the contrary David, who with weeping and fasting interceded with God for his sick child, as soon as he was dead ceased praying for him, giving his reason for it in these memorable and most excellent words: words which have comforted the hearts of many a fond father and mother, 'While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' Nor is there, my friend—any benefit arising from such prayers, but they are wholly superfluous and vain, for nothing can be obtained by them for the dead, neither for the good nor the wicked, both being in a state wherein our prayers can be of no service to them.[2]

Apollos.—I feel the force of your arguments, my friend—and confess that they appear to me unanswerable. But it has been objected to a part of them that

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

Judas Maccabeus, and the Jews in his army, prayed and offered sacrifices for them that perished in battle.

Aquila.—But surely, my friend—this objection cannot with any seriousness be proposed, for you know we have long since proved that very piece to be apocryphal, and you will not, I know, allow a circumstance related in the Apocrypha, and proved to be fallacious, a sufficient argument to prove an article of faith. And besides, we ought to distinguish between the act of Judas Maccabeus, and the judgment which his historian passes upon it.

Apollos.—Surely this would be right.

Aquila.—What Judas did seems very commendable, and had nothing of blame in it. For when things consecrated to idols were found under the garments of every one that was slain, a thing forbidden the Jews by law, it is said 'That every man saw that this was the cause wherefore they were slain.' Judas therefore, and they that were with him, remembering how God had punished the whole people of Israel for the like offence committed by Achan, betook themselves to prayer, and besought the Lord that the sin committed might be wholly put out of remembrance.[1]

Apollos.—This changes the nature of the case indeed.

Aquila.—Besides, Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin; and they all sent two thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for a sin offering, not that the dead should be absolved from their sins, but that the punishment of the sin of those who fell in the battle might not effect them who survived.

Apollos.—This is reasonable, surely.

Aquila.—And this matter of fact, the historian does not seem to have rightly apprehended. It contained nothing in it contrary to the law, yet he supposes that Judas did a thing unknown among the Jews, that is to offer sacrifices for the dead, that they might be absolved from sin. And the mistake is palpable to every one that considers the whole context.[2]

Apollos.—Yes—and this is not the only blunder of that historian, there are several others, and of other particulars. O! there is more inconsistency and unreasonableness in the system of Romanists than any other professing the sacred name of christian. Do tell me, my brother—what are the particular things for which a christian man may pray?

Aquila.—We are permitted to ask God in our prayers for all things that are conformable to his will, all such blessings as he has promised and has decreed to give. These we may assuredly expect to receive, and may with confidence pray for to our heavenly father.

Apollos.—But what blessings are those which are according to his will?

Aquila.—The blessings of a christian are of two sorts, spiritual and temporal. The former God has promised to believers, who faithfully discharge their duties toward him, and thereby continue in a state of acceptance, and that indeed without farther condition than that of asking for them. 'If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.' 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' Only let him 'ask in faith, nothing wavering.'

Apollos.—I see this, God is ready to grant all spiritual favours that we ask for, life and godliness. But what act of temporal blessings?

Aquila.—These he has likewise promised, especially such things as are necessary for the support of life, but only in general terms, and not as our chief good, but as an addition to it. Thus our Lord says, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' And St. Paul

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

says, 'for bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So we may boldly say, 'the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' From all these things it is plain that spiritual blessings may, in the first place, be absolutely asked of God, as being certainly promised to us; and that we may likewise petition for temporal good things, but then with this reserve, provided they be not repugnant to the salvation of the soul, and the will of God, our holy and heavenly Father.

Apollos.—For this is always included in the promises of God to us, for those things. If they be for our good and God's glory.

Aquila.—And this the christian should rather do, my friend—because a secure and affluent possession of the riches of this life too often pinions us down to the things of the world, renders us less fervent in spiritual things, and consequently diminishes our love for God, enervates the mind, and makes us less capable of bearing up under our afflictions for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ; at least it is inconsistent with the virtue of patience, the ornament and victory of our christian warfare, which is never more conspicuous than in times of adversity, and when we are called to bear the cross for the name of Jesus.

Apollos.—I suppose whatever we ought to ask of God is set forth in our Lord's prayer.

Aquila.—All for which it is lawful to pray is summarily contained therein. The petitions in that prayer chiefly relate to spiritual things, and only one to the things of this life, intimating that spiritual good should be our chief concern, and temporal blessings not so often nor so ardently prayed for as others.

Apollos.—It is not then all one petition?

Aquila.—It is not; but is rather one prayer made up of several petitions, say six. The three first of which relate to the glory of God, and the three last respect our own welfare. Thus, in those which respect the glory of the Almighty, the first relates to the words, the behaviour, and the outward acts whereby God is to be honoured: 'Hallowed be thy name.' The second does properly concern not only our own hearts, but the means whereby God may be honoured and esteemed by all: 'Thy kingdom come.' The third relates to those deeds proceeding from the heart by which we obey and honour God, 'Thy will be done on earth as in heaven.'

Apollos.—These are not empty wishes indeed, but petitions properly so called, by which we pray to God to accomplish these things in us. What are the three last petitions in this prayer?

Aquila.—I have said these respect our own welfare, which we beg likewise of God, since it is he alone that can grant them to us: and they proceed in this order. First, we pray for a blessing relating even to this life, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Secondly, for the averting a spiritual evil, under which is included the obtaining of its contrary, a spiritual good, viz: justification and the gift of eternal life, 'forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' And lastly, preservation and protection from a spiritual evil, 'lead us not into temptation but deliver us from all evil.'

Apollos.—O! this is an inimitable prayer. Ought this form, my, friend—to be always used, or ought we simply to pray for nothing else than what is either expressed or comprehended under the several petitions of the Lord's prayer?

Aquila.—It is not always necessary to use this form, nor is it unlawful to ask for other things than those contained therein for we have the example of Christ and his apostles, who used other forms, and prayed for other things, thus

the apostles prayed for the Lord to point out which of two disciples he had selected to supply the place of Judas, who betrayed the Saviour. So they prayed that the Lord would grant unto his servants 'boldness' to speak his 'word.' We have had occasion to mention the prayer of our Lord in the 17th ch. John, and might name his example elsewhere.

Priscilla.—O! do you not remember the prayer of the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, when 'he fell upon his face and prayed, saying, O! my Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt.'

Apollos.—But is it lawful to use any form of prayer at all?

Aquila.—Extemporaneous prayers are certainly commendable, and when a man has the gift of speech, and can order his words in such a manner as to excite a devotional feeling in those who hear, they are certainly preferable. But surely, my friend, all forms are not to be rejected, for our Lord, himself has prescribed a form, as we have seen. Forms of prayer may not reach all circumstances, nor take in all our wants, especially such as are spiritual, of which none but our own hearts can be sensible. But I do not think that all forms of prayer, ought to be rejected and condemned.

Apollos.—But your reasons?

Aquila.—I have offered them: some at least. It is evident to all who read the Scriptures, that they are lawful, as appears from that form prescribed by our Lord, and from the form of blessing enjoined by the priest of the Old Testament. Thus, 'the Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.' To this may be added the practice of holy men, who, in praying to, and praising God, made use of forms.[1]

Priscilla.—Indeed it is very convenient to use some common forms, in private, words seem to have an effect upon, and stimulate to devotion, at least, they may be used, as devout exercises of the heart.

Aquila.—All men it will be recollected, are not equally capable of making extemporary prayers, and some are so ignorant as not to know how to express their desires in suitable words, or order them even in private before God. Whether a form be used in private or not, I am confident that the devotion of the heart will be augmented by praying in words just loud enough to be heard by ourselves, say in a whisper.

Apollos.—Then if a man is not capable of ordering his words aright, he ought never to become the mouth of a congregation, by attempting to pray in public.

Aquila.—But he must pray somewhere, so as to be heard, if he ever does pray before others at all. And the best place it would seem is in private, and social prayer meetings, where youths may become by experience, accustomed to pray, and inspired with that confidence that is necessary to become the mouth of a congregation, before the Lord. In these meetings pious young men and young women, led by their elder brethren and sisters, in their own private meetings, separate from each other, may and ought to be trained to wait on the Lord in a more public capacity, especially in their own families.

Priscilla.—Yes—every mother ought to be the mouth of her family, before the Lord, when her husband is absent, sick, or in the cold grave, and learn that family to call on God.

Aquila.—You will, my friend—I know, permit a word on a form of prayer by one who never used any particular one, except most generally on the Sabbath morning, which surely every minister ought to do, the Lord's prayer. It will be remembered that some form is necessary in a public congregation. All men you know who are even capable of praying extemporaneously in private,

[1] Wesley, Clarke and Limborch.

cannot do it in public, at least are not able to recommend the necessities, or raise the affections of a whole congregation. You may also remember that those who are so much against forms of prayer in public, do not reflect that the extemporary prayer of the minister from his pulpit, is a form for the rest of the congregation, for if they join with him, as it is presumed every pious hearer will, they cannot pray to God for any other blessing, nor in any other words than he that prays extemporaneously does at that time.

Apollos.—But God eyes the affections of the heart, does he not?

Aquila.—Most certainly he does; and more so than the expressions of the lips: but provided the mind be sincere and devout, he does not look at the exactness of the terms, wherein we pray to him. Still I say it is not only convenient to use in private devotions a form, as devout exercises of the heart, praying too, extemporaneously if we can, but also on account of children, and the ignorant, to make use of some short form in suitable words, such as may tend to God's glory, the setting forth our wants, and the raising an effort of the affections to God. For if there be any hesitation in our words, our prayer is interrupted, and our thoughts are distracted at once and led away from the Deity. Such prayers children and servants can easily commit.

Apollos.—But you would not have a form always used, or on every occasion?

Aquila.—By no means, my friend—so far from this, I would have a part of all public service, to consist of two or three extemporaneous prayers. What is here said is merely a matter of opinion. I have thought that our public service would be more profitable, if all the congregation were furnished with Bibles, hymn and prayer books; and if the services of the Sabbath were to commence with reading a portion from the Old and the New Testaments, all looking on and silently reading the same chapter: then sing a short hymn, all the congregation joining, then kneel to prayer, for Christ and his apostles kneeled, and all unite in the Lord's prayer first, not last, then a short prayer from the book, a verse or two in some hymn, a short sermon, a short hymn, and two or three short extemporaneous prayers, sometimes from brethren, sometimes from sisters, the officiating minister, always praying extemporaneously once. Let some alterations in the order be allowed, on sacramental and ordination occasions.

Apollos.—O! I have seen the services concluded with two or three extemporaneous prayers have a powerful effect, in sealing on the heart the sermon which preceded them.

Aquila.—While many a weeping penitent has been at the altar imploring mercy at the hand of God. I have only now to say that one thing is certain, those who cannot pray extemporaneously, that have families, especially mothers, ought by all means to use some form of prayer, for the edification and benefit of children.

Apollos.—What are the qualifications necessary for a man to pray acceptably before God. Tell me first, my friend—what ought to be the disposition of his heart?

Aquila.—There are, as it regards the disposition of his heart, several things necessary. The first respects his purpose. He must be pure in his intention, and have an eye only to the glory of God, the good of his neighbour, and the salvation of his soul, so that the end in view must be good, and only good as it respects the resolution of the heart. Besides, there must be that piety, that holy devotion of the heart to God, that leads him who prays to square his actions according to the divine commands, else he will pray in vain, and God will not hear his cry. I am now speaking of the prayers of the regenerate.

Apollos.—Yes—our Lord says 'he that doth truth cometh to the light.'

Aquila.—The Jews knew the plan well when they said, 'Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his

will, him he heareth.' And St. James offers the sins of men as so many reasons for the rejection of the prayers of some in that admirable chapter, the 5th of his epistle. St. Paul says that he would have all men pray, lifting up 'holy hands,' and St. Peter, the 'eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and his ears open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.' Isaiah says, God hid his eyes from the Jews, because their hands were unclean, and adds 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.'

Apollos.—Or as Jeremiah says, 'thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through.'

Priscilla.—Ah! how true is it, 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.'

Aquila.—Yes—sin that deadly foe of the living God, will ever separate between him and us. Another disposition of soul required, is charity to our neighbour. This is a humiliating, but an honourable feeling of soul. It is that which leads us if we have wronged a man, to be willing and ready to ask pardon, and if he has injured us, to be willing, most cheerfully, and from the bottom of our hearts, to forgive him.

Apollos.—O! this is noble indeed. This looks like religion.

Aquila.—Yes—this is the religion of Jesus. And this, my brother, is a qualification abundantly proved to be necessary in the Scriptures. Our Lord says, 'therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' St. Paul says, 'let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye, and above all things put on charity,' i. e. love, which is the bond of perfectness.'

Apollos.—O yes! if I had no other evidence of the divinity of the christian religion, the cheerful and sincere forgiveness of injuries, would be to me a sufficient evidence. To hear a sinner plead for mercy, 'forgive me my trespasses, as I have forgiven those who trespass against me.' None but a holy and good God, could be the author of such a religion.

Priscilla.—And O! how beautifully does our Lord set forth this, in the parable of the cruel and merciless servant. 'Shouldest thou not also,' have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee, and his Lord was wroth and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you,' says Jesus, 'if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother's trespasses.'

Aquila.—This is the holy disposition of soul, that God requires when we approach him. One thing more, we must ask in faith. Not, my friend—with barely a general faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is, if I may so speak, the parent under divine grace, of piety, but that particular faith which is an assurance or evidence of being heard, and receiving a gracious answer. Hence says St. James 'but let him ask in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.'

Apollos.—O! could we always approach the Lord thus, how should we feel his holy and glorious power revealed in our hearts? Well—but with respect to

praying to God with a heart fixed to do his will, what must a man do who lives in sin, my friend—does he not 'regard iniquity in his heart?'

Aquila.—Either he is disposed seriously to repent of his sins, or he is not. If he shall make an effort to obey the call of God, and seek to yield to the influence of grace, and attempt to pray, but still remain fond of his sins, he cannot expect to be heard of God; nay to approach him with such a temper of mind, especially if the man be fully convinced of the enormity of his crime, is desperate madness, it is an affront offered to the divine Majesty, for virtually he is asking of God the very assistance to which he declares himself a professed enemy.[1]

Apollos.—But if he seriously repent of his sins?

Aquila.—He not only may, but ought to pray, and if he be a true penitent, he will pray, and that in sincerity to God, to have mercy on him. He is doing the will of God in praying, and so is every sincere soul, that is inquiring in prayer, the way of return to the living God; who would have 'all men every where to pray, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting.'

Apollos.—But with relation to faith, is it requisite that in every prayer we put up we believe that God will bestow on us what we ask for?

Aquila.—Surely it is, if we ask according to the will of God, and this is especially necessary in things which concern our own salvation. As it regards the things of this life, such a faith is required as is conformable to the promises of our heavenly Father.[2]

Apollos.—That is we are to ask them, with the full belief that God is both able and willing to grant them to us, provided they be for our good, and that if he does not grant them, he either withholds them, because he sees they would be prejudicial to our eternal welfare; or else because he will make us amends with a greater and more substantial good.

Aquila.—This is, my brother—the true state of the case. You have the true disposition of soul, required of him who attempts to pray. I will now give you the necessary qualifications of prayer.

Apollos.—Do if you please, my friend.

Aquila.—These either relate to the manner of praying, or to the disposition and temper, as we have suggested, of him who prays. There must be humility and modesty, since by prayer we speak to God, the consideration of whose character and our sins which have placed us at such a distance from him, ought to humble our souls in his sight. Hence it is our duty in all our prayers to confess our sins to him, not always by a distinct enumeration of them, that being only required, when conscience groans under the burden and guilt of one or more particular sins, the pardon of which we especially seek; but by a general acknowledgment which may always bring to our minds, our own unworthiness.[3]

Apollos.—O! this ought never to be forgotten in any prayer.

Aquila.—Indeed it ought not. And there ought too to be ardency and affection, which requires that what we utter should come from the heart; for what signifies that prayer, where the mouth speaks, whilst the thoughts are taken up with other objects? This qualification ought to be urged the more, because experience teaches, how often men offend in this point, even whilst they lament and strive to correct their wanderings in prayer.[4]

Priscilla.—But this may be corrected by us.

Aquila.—Indeed it may, if we but duly attend to and correct the several causes of its origin.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—An anxious desire to procure the things of this world and with them its ease and comforts. These crowd upon our minds and distract our devotions.

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke and Limborch. [3] Limborch. [4] Wesley and Clarke.

Then again there is a disregard of our wants, which if duly considered, might excite us to be more ardent in our prayers to God. And again, there is the want of due consideration, as it respects the greatness of the blessings, especially if spiritual that we ask for, and lastly the want of proper attention to the value and importance of prayer itself.[1]

Apollos.—I am sure, my friend—I am deeply convinced of all these truths.

Aquila.—There is another very necessary qualification for prayer. It is assiduity and constancy according to the apostle's injunction, 'pray without ceasing,' and you remember, my friend—the importunate widow, now like her we ought to ask God for the same blessing until we obtain it; or else we ought to pray very frequently, yea, always, until our minds shall be so freed from earth and earthly good, as to remain with ease and constancy in the spirit of prayer and holy communion with God. And there is one other thing which I would name that is not the least important qualification of a spiritual prayer.

Apollos.—What is that, my friend?

Aquila.—It is brevity. The Lord Jesus says, 'we are not to use vain,' i. e. unnecessary 'repetitions as the heathens do.' By this I understand the saying of the same thing over again and again, as though God were to be moved by our much speaking to hear us. This is the known usage of the church of Rome at this very day.

Apollos.—Truly this is the case, for these men tell over their prayers according to the rule laid down in the rosary, and hope to obtain grace by the bare recital of the same prayer, over and over again perhaps a hundred times.

Priscilla.—Yes—and often Apollos—when they neither attend to, nor understand what they say.

Aquila.—Many too of those prayers and the public services of the church, being in an unknown tongue to thousands: But let us notice, my friend—a little the place and the time of prayer.

Apollos.—Do if you please, I had nearly forgot this, and especially as it regards the Sabbath day.

Aquila.—The circumstantials of prayer are chiefly two, place and time. And in order to understand this distinctly, our prayers are distinguished into private and public. As to private prayers, whether alone or in the family, they are not confined to any place, but may be performed any where as occasion may serve.

Apollos.—Was not the temple the place for the public prayers of the whole church under the Old Testament?

Aquila.—According to an express command of God it was, 'take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there shalt thou offer thy burnt offerings, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee,' which properly is to be understood of the prayers that were offered with the sacrifices. When the children of Israel were fixed in the promised land, and Solomon had built a temple to the Lord, there was the place of religious and public worship fixed. Hence it is that Jeroboam, who set up another place of worship, is condemned and charged with causing Israel to sin. But under the christian dispensation, we are not confined to Jerusalem, or to Mount Gerizim or to any other particular place of public worship, but all places are equally acceptable to God, provided he be 'worshipped in spirit and truth.'

Apollos.—It is the spirituality of the worship then that sanctifies the spot?

Aquila.—Christ said so, my friend—to the woman of Samaria.

Apollos.—How inexcusable then is the papal superstition, which fancies that the prayers that are offered in churches, consecrated by various rites and ceremo-

[1] Limborch and Clarke.

nies, by holy water, unctions, the sprinkling of ashes, and exorcisms, are more acceptable to God, than those that are made in a house, or any other unconsecrated place.[1]

Aquila.—This is a superstition indeed, nor on the other hand are those men guilty of less superstition, who suppose that popish churches, when fallen into protestant hands, cannot lawfully be made use of for the exercise of religious worship; every thing being removed from them that might incline to idolatry they may very reasonably be applied to such a use, without the least offence. I have often, my friend—heard the word preached with tremendous effect in a grove, a tavern, a school-house, a barn, and I never shall forget that the wise men of old worshipped Jesus in a stable. Where he may be found, and that is every where, there he may be sought.

Priscilla.—I never thought of this before, that those great men worshipped Jesus in the stable, it is a comfortable thing to be permitted to pray and worship God with his children, in a comfortable house, but O! how soul-comforting is the thought that he can be found any where, even in a log hut. 'And prisons would palaces prove, if Jesus would dwell with me there.'

Aquila.—We too often forget primitive christians had not fine churches in which to worship. They were cast out of the temple, and had no regular place to worship him, yet they found Jesus every where.

Apollos.—And could at all times present their wants before him.

Aquila.—They could, and this leads us to notice time as another circumstance concerning prayer. Prayers are to be specially made upon all extraordinary occasions, as in times of danger, when misery oppresses, or when we are excited by pious motions, and God's spirit to prayer. Here any time is suitable, but we should avoid, as is enjoined by the Saviour, all ostentation, enter into the closet as the most suitable place, and breathe our sorrows in private and ardent prayer, where no eye but that of God's can see us: unless some apparent necessity should press it upon us as a public duty. Other prayers are what we would call ordinary, for which stated times are appointed. Of this nature are our evening and morning devotions, grace before and after meat, and the calling on God at noon, all which, our wants, my brother, and the glory of our God, will suggest to us as proper and beneficial. To this I may add the devoting all the spare time for private prayer that we can possibly obtain.[2]

Apollos.—Do you consider family prayer as one of the private duties of a christian?

Aquila.—I do, and surely no christian can have a family and neglect family prayer. How can we expect our children to be religious, if we never pray with, and teach them to pray? How can those who have servants account for them to God, if they neglect to pray with, and teach them the way to heaven and happiness.

Apollos.—O! how many neglect this great duty of family religion.

Aquila.—While on the times of prayer, let me suggest the moment when all are called to breakfast, dinner and supper, as the most propitious for prayer. All are sure to be there to eat, and surely we ought to pray at least as often as we eat.

Priscilla.—David prayed evening, morning, and at noon, and this is a good custom in a family.

Aquila.—It is, and a short prayer may be said when all come to eat, kneeling, without loss of time, and to great spiritual profit in a religious family. Our public prayers ought to be offered up with great strictness and solemnity, to avoid confusion and preserve order in the house of God. Thus in the Jewish

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke and Limborch.

church they met every Sabbath to hear the law of Moses read, with which prayers were joined.[1]

Priscilla.—And were there not religious festivals that were times of prayer?

Aquila.—There were three in every year, at which all the males were commanded to go up to Jerusalem to worship. Besides these, they had their stated hours of prayer. But now, under the New Testatment, by the practice of the church, in all ages, a day has been set apart for prayer, and that day should be devoted to the service of God, and the promotion of piety, in our own souls, and those of others.

Apollos.—Then public prayers should be offered on all times of divine worship, especially on the Sabbath day.

Aquila.—They should. At another time we will notice the institution, and the necessity as well as obligation of that day of rest, commonly called the Sabbath, or the Lord's day. We may now consider, my brother—for a moment the effects of prayer.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—The effect of prayer is the being heard, it is that answer which the sincere, humble, believing soul receives to his prayers.

Priscilla.—He who prays obtains answers to his prayer, and God grants such the desire of his heart.

Aquila.—And this is the reason, why so much value is set on prayer in the Scripture. This is the very key, if I may so speak, to unlock the door to heaven itself. This is the ladder by which we may ascend upon high.

Apollos.—O! there are many promises made in Scripture, by which God has pledged himself to answer prayer.

Aquila.—There are, and in that holy word we have instances without number of answers to the cries of those who prayed to the Lord. 'Ask and it shall be given you,' was the promise of the Saviour. See the importunate widow, the Syrophenician woman, the Roman centurion, and others that might be named. Indeed, our Lord says, 'if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing, that they shall ask, it shall be done for them, of my Father which is in heaven.' 'And whatsoever ye shall ask that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in me.'

Apollos.—But some object, that the children of God do not always obtain what they ask for.

Aquila.—True, my friend—but from what has been said, several reasons may be assigned for this, all however may be traced to two causes, either that we do not pray as we ought, or we do not ask according to, or in reference to the divine will.[2]

Apollos.—Explain yourself.

Aquila.—It may happen that he who attempts to pray does it as a sinner in unbelief, and his request though presented to God, is not expected by himself to be answered. Or he may pray for something that is evil, or at least, injurious to himself or others, and repugnant to the divine will. Or he may ask for what is good, in order to appropriate it to a bad end. Or he may request something contrary to the divine law, and moreover, it may not have a tendency to promote the glory of the living God, in our eternal salvation.

Priscilla.—Yes—and God often delays to give us, in order to try our faith, and constancy, and our importunity too, for he would have us pray often, and importunately for needful things.

Aquila.—Indeed he would, and although he may tarry; yet will he come and will not tarry, and often does he bestow greater blessings than we ask of him.

[1] Prideaux and Josephus.

[2] Wesley.

Apollos.—I know all this from blessed experience.

Aquila.—A second, and a very important part of invocation is thanksgiving, which, sometimes taken in a more extensive sense, denotes only the praising of God; but at other times, in a more strict sense, the praising and magnifying his name for some special benefit. The former relates to the attributes of God, in which his works are displayed, the latter has regard to some blessings bestowed.

Apollos.—The things then for which we are to return God thanks, are his mercies, whether bestowed on ourselves or others.

Aquila.—Assuredly, as we are commanded to pray so are we to give thanks for all men. And these are to be rendered to the Lord—first, for the blessing we enjoy in common with them. They are temporal—relating to the body and this life, such as creation, preservation, and the government of providence: or else spiritual, relating to our souls and to a future state, such as the delivery of Christ to be our Saviour, the divine vocation, and the giving of the Holy Ghost.[1]

Priscilla.—And then the special mercies of our God to every member of his flock.

Aquila.—Certainly, for the Lord is specially good to all his children, and often there are special mercies, to a nation, to cities, and to families, as well to individuals, all of which call for thanksgiving.

Apollos.—Every nation, doubtless, has its benefits, and although some may be more highly favoured than others, yet are all laid under obligations to magnify the Lord.

Aquila.—Indeed they are, and perhaps none on earth more so than our highly favoured Columbia, the home of the oppressed, and the land of equal, civil and religious privileges. O! how are we blessed. A few centuries past the wild beasts of the forest, and blood thirsty savages here dwelt together untaught and untamed. Now, in 1837, blessed be the Lord God! from the Rocky mountains to the Atlantic, and the lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, the praises of the Lord are sung, by a free people who set under their 'own vine,' and the shadow of their own fig, and none dare molest them. Even the savage himself has joined in the song, and lately too the voice of praise is to be heard on the shores of the vast Pacific. O! that men would praise the Lord, for his wonderful works, and his great goodness to our favoured land.

Priscilla.—And every family in this, and every land, can name some special benefit from that God of goodness.

Aquila.—Yes—and every individual member of every family can enumerate hundreds of special benefits, which demand a song of thanksgiving and praise to God.

Apollos.—It is just and right that all should thank him, for all have received at his hands, goodness and mercy.

Aquila.—And, my friend—what greater motive could there be to it, if properly considered, than the equity and excellency thereof. It is reasonable that we thank him, for as God has by his mercies, laid us under obligations to devote ourselves wholly to his service, thanksgiving is a sort of return for the favours we receive, and as we cannot pay this in deed, we are called upon to discharge it in words.

Apollos.—Those who omit then this duty defraud the Almighty of his right, which by benefits conferred, he has obliged us to, and we thus attempt, at least, to obscure his glory, by not ascribing to him the honour due to his name.

Aquila.—Yes, my friend—and for the future stop the current of his mercies from streaming down upon themselves. But, I said, the excellency of these benefits ought to induce praise, and engage us in the performance of this delightful duty. This is the noblest work in which a soul can possibly engage. To be

[1] Watson and Dr. Gill.

grateful, and thank God for benefits conferred, is surely one of the noblest deeds that man can do.

Apollos.—But how are we to thank him?

Aquila.—This duty is performed sometimes by words in which we proclaim the divine mercies, and celebrate the glory and attributes of Deity. This is done as we have seen in our prayers, both public and private, in which, the soul pours out its gratitude before the Lord. Sometimes also is it done in singing, alone, in the family and at the house of God, the praise of him who is good to all.

Apollos.—O! singing is one of the excellent parts of divine worship. To hear a whole congregation as the voice, and heart of one man, and one woman, praising the God of all the earth, never fails to move every grateful feeling of my heart.

Aquila.—I do not doubt it, my brother—this was the blessed end proposed of the Lord, for singing is in accordance with the word of God, perfectly so. 'Teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.' 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart, unto the Lord, giving thanks always, for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Priscilla.—Do you not see, Apollos, that one method of thanking God is by singing? O! how I do love to sing his praise.

Apollos.—O! I see it, and that plainly.

Aquila.—Singing, when aided by the inspiration of God's Spirit, and done according to St. Paul's directions, just quoted, is not only edifying, but must inevitably excite a devotional state of feeling in the soul of every true believer present. The spirit and the understanding are to be united, especially in congregational singing. We are to sing with grace in our hearts. As a part of divine worship all are to unite, not one in ten or twenty, but all, and then sing with grace in their hearts, and with the spirit and understanding too, pronouncing distinctly every word of praise.

Apollos.—O! that is the way to sing at the house of the Lord, and I must say, my friend—however the Jews introduced musical instruments into the house of God, for he never authorized anything but the silver trumpets, I do think it repugnant to the spirit of christianity, and believe they corrupt the divine worship, destroying its spirituality.[1]

Aquila.—Those who love music in the theatre are fond of it in the house of God when they go thither, and some set up with it a spurious worship, in order to draw the people to hear the gospel. This is doing evil that good may come of it.[2]

Priscilla.—The use of instrumental music in the house of God does greatly diminish the spirituality of devotion.

Aquila.—Pipes and strings can never praise God, but warm devoted hearts, filled with the love of God, and lifted up, the voice sounding the words of one out of the thousands of hymns so famous for good poetry, sound divinity, and christian experience, that are now published in the English language, in a large and solemn assembly, is to me the most like heaven of any thing of which I can conceive. There all praise God. I am fond of the harmony of sounds as formed by musical instruments when touched with a hand that knows to play, but this is not a music fit for the house of the Lord. His Spirit should fire and direct the feelings of the heart, and the heart accompany and influence the voice. Then in thanksgiving shall we have prayer and praise combined.

Priscilla.—I do think it is one of the most solemn scenes to the contemplative and pious mind, to behold on a Sabbath morning at the house of God, on one side

[1] Clarke. [2] Ibid.

of the chapel hundreds of mothers and their daughters, on the other a like number of fathers and their sons all on their feet, and while the minister gives out the hymn, they, sing together the high praise of the Lord of Hosts, and then together meekly kneel for prayer, to render thanksgivings to his holy name. O! at such a sight, while my ears have heard, and my voice has been mingled with those of hundreds, my full soul has caught the holy fire, and I have been constrained to say, 'Bless the Lord, O! my soul, and all that is within me *praise* his holy name.'

Apollos.—Participating in such a scene as this, often have the tears of gratitude flowed down my cheeks, while my own heart has said, 'O! Lord I will praise thee.'

Aquila.—By giving to the poor, commonly called alms giving, do we also render thanks to our God, and thus imitate him who is bountiful to us in communicating a part of his benefactions to our distressed and necessitous brethren: but above all, the greatest sign that we are truly grateful to God is that of a holy life, this being a sacrifice such as God is well pleased with. It is one by which he is honoured, and without which all the praise of our lips is but empty sound, and all our alms but formal and hypocritical pageantry.[1]

Apollos.—'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' A heart renewed in every thought, a clean heart, a right spirit, will be acceptable to God.

Aquila.—It is the property of thanksgiving that it be offered with the greatest lowliness of mind, and this appears in two acts.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The first is an open confession that we are unworthy of the least of the mercies we receive from God, that are bestowed on us, they are all of grace, there being not the least merit in us. The other is the acknowledging and declaring that we cannot return thanks worthy of the benefits received; but that God's mercies are greater than we can express, and more than we can tell how, by the highest gratitude to repay.[2]

Apollos.—These are weighty considerations, such as should press themselves with all their vast importance on every mind.

Aquila.—I named also, as a part of what is called invocation, the oaths of christian men, which are simply appeals to God for the confirmation of the truth and an end of strife. It is that act of a christian whereby, as a witness between two contending parties, he appeals to the searcher of hearts for the veracity of those things declared by him.[3]

Apollos.—God is therefore called upon virtually in every lawful oath, either explicitly or implicitly.

Aquila.—He is, so that, though the forms of oaths be various, yet they amount to one and the same thing. 'God is my witness,' or 'I will tell the truth, so help me God.'

Apollos.—But is it lawful thus to invoke the name of God; rather is it lawful for a christian man to swear at all? Does not the Saviour say, 'Swear not at all. Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil?' These words of our Lord are also enforced by St. James in his epistle.

Aquila.—If, my friend—we consider the import of an oath, and the true meaning of our Lord, we shall perceive that he never intended to pronounce an oath, for the end of strife in the confirmation of the truth, unlawful.

Apollos.—What is its true import?

Aquila.—An oath, such as this, has in its own nature nothing that deserves to be prohibited; nay, it tends to the glory of God, as he is thereby acknowledged

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Clarke.

the searcher of hearts and the avenger of sin. Hence it is that God himself, under the old dispensation, not only makes use of oaths, but has also appointed an oath for the end of all strife, 'Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both.' In the New Testament we read that an angel 'lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth forever and ever;' and St. Paul surely was a good interpreter of the Saviour's words, and he frequently appeals to God, as a witness of the truth of what he declared. Thus, 'God is my witness,' to the Romans: 'God is my record,' to the Phillippians: 'God is witness,' to the Thessalonians: and to the Corinthians, 'Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul.' It is evident that our Lord intended to forbid all voluntary and unnecessary swearing, which men commonly use in ordinary conversation, and which by the Pharisees was looked upon as lawful. Christ informs them that all those forms of oaths, wherein the name of God is not expressly mentioned, but only such things as have an immediate relation to him are real oaths, and are obligatory. This was contrary to that which the Pharisees taught, who esteemed no oaths binding, unless made in the express name of God.[1]

Apollos.—Those then who do not consent to take an oath for the confirmation of the truth are in a great error.

Aquila.—They are in error, but are still to be regarded, as they generally are conscientious good citizens of a commonwealth. In them it is an error of the understanding, as they suppose that by it is manifested a greater reverence for the divine Being. Besides, even those who believe an oath lawful, do not urge it as absolutely necessary, and to abstain from things lawful which lay no obligation upon us, is no sin.

Apollos.—You say is not absolutely necessary.

Aquila.—I do; for if it had been absolutely necessary, our Saviour would have enjoined it as a duty.

Apollos.—I perceive this.

Aquila.—Here then we have set before us what we understand as embraced in invocation or the calling upon God. Prayer, thanksgiving, and an appeal to heaven for the truth of assertions, or the performance of promises. The first acknowledges our dependence, the second proclaims our gratitude, and the third is calling on the Deity for the rectitude of our words, as on one who reads the secrets of the heart. At our next meeting we shall continue the subject of outward duties which the christian owes to God. Let us, my friend—in the interim, consider well the great duty of prayer to God, and resolve to improve the privilege involved in that duty, more than we ever have done. Let us remember he who has the spirit of prayer has also the highest interest in the court of heaven: and the only way to retain it is to keep the same in constant employment. Remember, Apollos—apostacy begins in the closet. He who prays without ceasing, is sure to rejoice evermore; he who ceases praying, especially in private, will soon cease to feel the love of God in his heart. In every place we are to pray. Prayer is adapted to the condition of every individual.[2]

Apollos.—I am convinced of this.

Aquila.—We should come with confidence to a throne of grace, and remember that it is such. When we approach let us bear in mind there is an intercessor there, who pleads our cause, and before our lips pronounce a word he understands all our ardent desires. He will introduce us, and then plead our cause, and that successfully, though it may be a bad one.

Priscilla.—O! yes—our prayers should be directed through him to the Father, and under the conviction that he has purchased every possible blessing for us, we should, with humble confidence, ask for all we need.

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke.

Aquila.—Let us plead not only his promises, but also what he has done for others. Lord! thou hast done thus for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all who trust in thee. O! my brother—we should pray for every thing needed. Lord bless my soul, preserve my health, bless me in my business, my fields, my stock, my wife, my children, my parents, my relatives, my servants, my charge over which the Holy Ghost hath made me a shepherd to 'feed the flock of Christ.' Then, when the blessings come, we should thank and bless his ever blessed name.

Apollos.—Doubtless we forget that God hears prayer. O! could we but view him as ever present.

Aquila.—If all christians would cry day and night to him, 'O Lord revive thy work,' I am induced to believe that in one year such a reformation would be in this world as men never conceived of. Good night, my friend.

COLLOQUY XIX.

EXTERNAL ACTS OF PIETY TOWARD GOD CONTINUED—CONFESSION AND OBEDIENCE TO THE MORAL PRECEPTS OF THE NEW COVENANT—AN IMPROVEMENT ON THESE SUBJECTS.

Apollos.—When you entered, my friend Aquila—on the external duties of a christian, you remarked that confession and obedience were two acts which you would consider. Do tell me, is not confession a part of invocation? I do not understand how you use this term, here, at least.

Aquila.—Confession is that external act of piety whereby we profess before men, the inward worship of our hearts.

Apollos.—According to this exposition then, it is not the praising or celebrating the divine name, as is often used in the Psalms?

Aquila.—O! no—that is a part of invocation, or the calling upon the name of God. This is an open and an ingenious profession of our attachment to, as well as belief in God, the creator and preserver of the world, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, as the Saviour of mankind, in whom we ought to trust, and without whom there is no salvation.[1]

Apollos.—And this is to be made every where.

Aquila.—The most excellent confession of the Lord Jesus Christ and the cause of God before men, is that which is made before the ungodly, and at the hazard of our lives and estates. To do this, when such a confession is the road to preferment and riches, where crowns and sceptres are its rewards, is no virtue at all. Indeed, such a confession of Christ may be, and often is made by worldly men, who are enemies to him, upon the prospect of temporal advantages.

Apollos.—Ah! Christ's followers are 'not of this world.' They must be persecuted.

Aquila.—An acknowledgment of Christ which makes us envied and hated by the world, which exposes us to the scoffs and contumelies of others, which is rather a bar to wealth and preferment, and causes life itself to be at stake, my dear brother—is the confession which we must make if we would worship God aright and find our way to heaven.[2]

Priscilla.—This is among the signs of a piety that is sincere and unfeigned, love to God and the Lord Jesus, when we count all the enjoyments of the world to be of infinitely less value than the worship due to the merciful Jesus, and the glory laid up by him for us in heaven.

[1] Schmucker and Clarke. [2] Stackhouse.

Apollos.—But what do you think, my friend—of the confession of some doctrinal points, controverted among christians at present. Is such a confession necessary, before those who dissent from us, as of our whole religion before infidels?

Aquila.—Some are of the opinion that it is, and this they found upon St. Peter's words, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.' But these words are not to be understood of all controversies, relating to some particular doctrines, this is not our hope, but it relates to our entire assent to the whole doctrine of Christ, and to those points without which there is no salvation. But to answer your question more particularly. It certainly is not lawful for us to profess that we believe what we do not believe. This would be falsehood, and we are not thus to dishonour God. Besides we are not always bound to profess what we believe, before all manner of persons, but the circumstances of time, places and persons, are to be considered, that the truth may be spoken to the greatest possible advantage, in that confession we make to our neighbour of the Lord Jesus, without hazard, if it can be, with a safe conscience, and an eye single to God's glory. And, my friend—above all, we are also to consider the nature of the doctrines, for either they are absolutely necessary to be believed in order to salvation, or are not, but may be highly conducive thereto: or they are of less moment and contribute but little to our eternal happiness. Now, as to the first, we ought not to be ashamed to confess Christ at any time, and before all persons: with respect to the second, they are to be professed if there be any probability of promoting the truth by so doing, and no dangers ought to deter us from it.[1]

Apollos.—But if we have no such prospect of it, may we not wait a favourable opportunity to do so?

Aquila.—As to doctrines not necessary to salvation, prudence should ever be our guide. Indeed, my friend—in the confession of Christ before men, a great deal depends upon our deportment, and on the manner of doing it. We ought to remember the diversified dispositions among men, and we should as far as possible know them. We should seek a proper occasion, and remember that every thing that concerns religion is of moment; we should avoid contentions as dangerous to ourselves, and of little advantage to others. On the whole, polemic divinity, may be compared to edged tools, that are only to be used by skilful workmen.[2]

Apollos.—We are to confess christianity now before men.

Aquila.—We are—a modest and frank confession before a magistrate may be necessary, or it may be declined, after the example of Christ, the conscience being kept clear, but when brought to the test, we are to own him as our Saviour and God, and his doctrine too, though at the hazard of life.

Apollos.—But suppose one lived in a country where the Romish inquisition prevails, and where religious worship is paid to the sacrament of the eucharist, which we know is an idolatrous act. What, my friend—is to be done, for you know that not to bow down is to risk life itself, and all that is dear?

Aquila.—It is, Apollos—the safest way is not to live in a country where there is an inquisition. I would go to a desolate island and dwell there alone first. But if constrained to dwell in a land where an inquisition is kept up, the conscience must not be defiled, by an act which it looks upon as idolatrous, nor should we in any respect, consent to that which the word of God does so expressly forbid. It is right as far as we can, without condemnation, to decline the danger, but when we must either commit idolatry, or be exposed to danger, we ought to sacrifice our lives for the generous profession of the truth, rather than wound our consciences by a base denial of it.

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke.

Apollos.—But, my friend—it has been said that Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, were secretly the disciples of Christ, and yet they observed the same religious worship with the enemies of the Saviour.

Aquila.—But these did not adhere to any unlawful rites, but to the divine law, as promulgated by Moses, whilst Romanists engage in such unlawful acts as are a disgrace to christianity. Besides they did not approve the treatment of the Jews toward the Saviour but condemned it. Nicodemus openly contradicted them, and Joseph of Arimathea, is expressly said, not to have consented to their counsel and deed. But those who join in the idolatrous worship of Rome, by that very act do countenance and approve the idolatry. Those two men testified their love and respect for the Lord Jesus, by embalming and burying him in spices, whilst to bow down, when in heart we did not submit, would be to dissemble. And indeed, no precedent could be drawn from the case itself. I mean their not openly and generously professing themselves to be the disciples of Christ, since for this they are expressly blamed, the evangelist stating that they were only his disciples 'secretly.'[1]

Apollos.—I perceive this. But it is said that the prophet Elisha permitted Naaman, the Syrian, to fall down before other gods in the temple of Rimmon, because of his attendance on the king, though by the miracle wrought on him, he was brought over to acknowledge the one true God.

Aquila.—This text is not properly understood. Naaman does not desire, and Elisha could not grant him the liberty to commit idolatry.

Apollos.—What therefore does he request.

Aquila.—That the prophet would intercede for him with God, to pardon what he had done, in bowing himself in the house of Rimmon, not that he would allow him to do so in future. That Naaman's words ought to be taken concerning the time past, admits of no dispute to those who consider what he peremptorily declares concerning the time to come, thy servant says he 'will henceforth offer neither burnt offerings nor sacrifice to other gods, but unto the Lord.'

Apollos.—The passage taken in this sense, as it is reasonable it should be, the old prophet might well bid him 'go in peace.'

Aquila.—Indeed he might. The fourth and last act of piety which we name, is obedience. This, my friend—is, as we have shown, interwoven in the faithful and active performance of every duty, indeed, to discharge any duty, is to obey God, and hence when on faith itself, we spoke of it as an act of obedience to the gospel call. This is that virtue, if we may name it thus, by which we perform the will of God declared in his precepts, with all submission and readiness of mind, as heartily and as often as occasion offers.

Apollos.—And you have shown that the rule of such obedience is the word of God.

Aquila.—It is so, and as it declares his will, so it is the standard by which all our actions are to be tried, and to which they must be rendered conformable.

Apollos.—What is the true nature, or rather, what are the qualifications of this obedience?

Aquila.—Of course it is supposed that the characters of whom we speak, are believers in Christ, have obtained the pardon of sins, are regenerated by grace, are adopted into Christ's family, and have the witness of the holy spirit, whereby they ascertain their acceptance with God. To suppose that a man can obey the evangelical precepts of the moral law, until changed in heart, is to suppose, what is, my friend—impossible. Being born again, he is called upon in the word of God, to walk worthy of his high vocation, to 'add to his faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity.' These things are to be in him, and to abound.

[1] Limborch.

Apollos.—He is not to be 'barren and unfruitful.'

Aquila.—O! no—And his obedience is to be *sincere,* he is heartily to comply with the divine precepts, not loving in word only, but in deed and in truth. If this were not the case the christian would be but a mere hypocrite. His obedience is also to be *universal,* 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.' It is to reach to all God's commands, without any exception. Nay—to those which seem contrary to reason, for if we are sure that God has commanded, we are not to stop and inquire into the propriety of the precept, but comply at once, and leave the event with him.[1]

Priscilla.—How readily did Abraham obey the call of God, even to go up and sacrifice his own son, knowing that 'obedience is better than sacrifice.'

Apollos.—And Zacharias and his wife walked 'in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.'

Aquila.—Yes—and we are to set a greater value, or a higher estimate on the commandment of the Lord, than those of men whatever may be their authority over us. God is to be obeyed, before father, mother, husband, master, mistress or magistrate. We are to 'obey God' rather than men. And consequently, my friend—we must be willing to endure the greatest and sorest afflictions from man, and even renounce all the enjoyments of this life, sooner than do any thing that would violate our obedience, offend our God, mar our own peace, and ruin our souls.

Apollos.—I am sure, the more a man suffers for the sake of Christ, in obeying him, the more commendable will that obedience be. How acceptable such an obedience must be to God.

Aquila.—It must not only be *sincere* and *universal,* but *uniform;* every day must the christian be about his work: 'redeeming his time because the days are evil,' serving God holily and faithfully 'all the days of his appointed time.'

Priscilla.—How many are willing to be called christians in one place, that do not desire it in another. Some are Sunday christians, some are sunshine christians, some are christians abroad. How few are christians always, and every where, even in private.

Aquila.—Christianity and its blessed rewards are not the portion of the wavering and unstable. O! no—the promise is, 'be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.' We are to obey God every day, and be christians at home as well as at church, and in private as well as in public. From the want of uniformity and regularity in professors of religion, the cause of Christ has suffered more, than from all the opposition of infidels and atheists. 'That man that does not live by rule, lives not at all,' and for the want of system in living, so many great and important duties are neglected. We rise late, then we have not time to read and pray before breakfast. We have family prayers with perhaps three out of six present. We are so busy, we have no chance for private prayer during the day. We have not an hour for every duty: far from it, we have time for every thing else than to serve God. The poor, the sick, the widow, the orphan, are neglected, because we have not time to attend to them. Though perhaps we are ministers, thousands of souls are dropping into hell, because we have not the time to attend to them, or the moral courage to obey Christ, cry aloud and spare not, and expose the transgressions of those who live in vanity and sport on the brink of endless ruin.

Apollos.—O! my friend—these are cutting truths, I hope you will pray God to help me, that I may mend my own ways and live to honour and obey him.

Aquila.—God grant that you may, my brother—it is evident that obedience is a virtue truly acceptable to God, and one which renders all our duties and all our

[1] Wesley.

services grateful to him. Thereby we declare that we own the sovereignty of Deity over us, whose we are and all that belongs to us.

Apollos.—Certainly to obey is to acknowledge another's dominion, and to submit to all the precepts coming from him who is our Lord, and who has an absolute right over us, is to confess ourselves his servants.

Aquila.—Yes—and on the contrary how odious is disobedience, even as the sin of witchcraft and idolatry, 'for rebellion is the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry,' and as was the case with Saul, has been often punished in this life. The disobedient throw off all respect for the divine commands, make their own will the rule of their actions, and will not have God to rule over them.

Priscilla.—O! how displeasing to God must such a rebellion as this be? how ungrateful to a Being who is so jealous of his honour, and will not share his glory with any competitor.

Aquila.—Truly it is. Hence said St. Peter, 'what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' If we would obey him, there must then be a readiness and an alacrity, a zeal and an earnest desire to perform all his commands, which we already know, or shall hereafter be taught as our duty, 'laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset.'

Apollos.—By what means shall we be enabled to attain this fixedness of purpose and strength for active service in the cause of Christ?

Aquila.—There must be not only a constant desire for, but an actual continuance in the faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we cease to be believers, we cease to occupy a justified state, we come into condemnation, and are shorn of our strength. 'We must therefore continue in the faith,' and 'hold fast faith and a good conscience unto the end.' Our hearts must be meek and teachable being easily inclined to hearken to the exhortations of the Lord. There must be a diligent and constant effort to make daily progress in the knowledge of the divine will, which lays down our duty, and a continual exercise of all those means of grace, which are pointed out in the word of God, by which we may be more and more excited to and confirmed in our obedience.[1]

Priscilla.—Yes—as fuel cast on the fire, keeps it in blast, so do the means of grace, keep faith in exercise, and make the path of duty easy and delightful.

Aquila.—Such as reading, meditation, prayer, fasting, attention on the ministry of God's word, the holy eucharist, or supper of the Lord, christian fellowship, and experience meetings, with christian conversation, all these united with others, keep faith in exercise, and enable us to run in the path of obedience, with alacrity and delight.

Apollos.—And the motives to it are of infinite magnitude.

Aquila.—Indeed they are pre-eminent, they are such as will stir up the soul of any man who will consider them well. There is the contemplation of the authority of God. He is my king, he prescribes to me the rule for holy living, he has acquired the sovereign right to rule over me, by creation, providence, redemption, and a thousand other benefits, that lay me under obligations to love and serve him. There is also the consideration that the very end of these blessings is to excite me to obey him, who is unwilling to withhold from me any good thing. And then there are the sweet consoling promises of our heavenly Father, O! they are precious indeed, and we have only to claim them: but his threatenings also, should excite us to obey. 'Blessed are they that do his commandments,' but 'the soul that sinneth it shall die.'

Apollos.—These are weighty considerations indeed.

Aquila.—They are, and obedience to God is an act of *submission*, by which

[1] Watson.

we honour and glorify him, who is our rightful sovereign. I have not noticed some special duties largely, by which the sovereignty of the Deity is acknowledged. You can, my brother—enlarge upon the view at your convenience.

Apollos.—This I will try to do, but, my friend—I wish you to solve several questions, while on obedience, most of which respect the Sabbath day, as an institution of the Deity, and a time appropriated by him, for that service specially, by which his name shall be glorified. What obligation is there on the christian to keep the Sabbath day?

Aquila.—A very plain one, a law enacted by a rightful sovereign, and never repealed is a law still. The appointment of the Sabbath is the first command ever given by the Almighty to man. And that the sanctification of it was of the greatest consequence, we may learn from the fact, that the law for the Sabbath has been repeated at various times. It has for its object, not only the benefit of the soul, but the comfort and health of the body as well as the glory of God.[1]

Apollos.—But some have supposed that because no specific command was given in the New Testament concerning the Sabbath, there is none under the christian dispensation.

Aquila.—This is a great error indeed, were there no Sabbath for the christian, christianity would soon become extinct, and religion itself have an end.

Apollos.—But why is not the moral obligation of it insisted on by Christ and his apostles.

Aquila.—They have sufficiently insisted on it, they all kept it sacred, and so invariably did all the primitive christians, though some observed the last day of the week, the Jewish Sabbath, instead of the first day, which is in commemoration of Christ's resurrection from the dead, as well as God's resting from all his works. To insist on its observance, was not necessary, because none doubted its moral obligation. The question itself had never been disturbed, not so with circumcision and other Mosaic rites. The fact is, it is a type, and all types are in full force until the thing signified shall come to pass. The rest in heaven is the thing prefigured by this day of rest, which remains for God's people in glory, as therefore the antetype, a rest in heaven yet remains to be attained, the Sabbath, the type of that, must continue in full force and obligation, till time shall be swallowed up in eternity.[2]

Apollos.—The world was never without a Sabbath, was it my friend.

Aquila.—No! and it never will be: for there is scarcely a people under heaven, civilized or uncivilized, that has not agreed in the propriety of having a Sabbath day, or something analogous to it.[3]

Apollos.—Do you mean the seventh day out of all days?

Aquila.—I mean the seventh part of all our time, and the time of all the world, in the torrid, temperate and frigid zones. And it is not particular when men begin their Sabbath, and whether it be a christian one, the first day of the week, or a Jewish one, the last or seventh day, so that at least the seventh part of our time be devoted to rest from labour and toil, for without this both man and beast would fail from the earth.[4]

Apollos.—But there has been a heated controversy about the Jewish Sabbath, some think that it is abrogated. Some have supposed that, where St. Paul says to the Gallatians, 'Ye observe days and months, and times and years, I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain,' he meant that the law of the Sabbath was repealed.

Aquila.—Of this there is no evidence at all in the text. For St. Paul could not allude to the abrogation of a day that he so carefully regarded and so diligently improved himself.

[1] Clarke. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

Apollos.—But he says to the Colossians, 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath *days.*'

Aquila.—My brother—the word κρινετω, KRINETO, *judge,* certainly means to *condemn* as well as judge, and may be rendered thus. I believe the meaning of the apostle is that undue attention is not to be paid to the holidays and festivals of the mosaic or any other system, but I am very far from believing that the moral law ever was or ever will be repealed. May not the text allude to what ought to be the harmless course of the christian?[1]

Apollos.—But the question is whether or no, under the christian dispensation, we are bound to keep the seventh day, or Jewish Sabbath?

Aquila.—I have said, I believe, that we are bound to rest the seventh part of our time from labour, and we have the example of the apostles and the christian church for the introduction and use of the first day of the week instead of the seventh day, which after all is the same thing, the seventh part of our time. Besides you will remember, my friend—that although the law of the Sabbath was renewed to the Jews, it was most certainly delivered immediately after the creation of the world to Adam, and with him to all his posterity, to be a law forever, and as such it does not regard the Jews only.

Apollos.—But where is the morality of this precept?

Aquila.—There can be no more morality, I am ready to acknowledge, in the specific day, whether the first or the seventh, than in the place where we worship aright the true God. But, my friend—the morality of it is referable to the divine authority, the God who commands it, and the benefits accruing not only to the souls of men, by the services of a Sabbath before the Lord, but also to the bodies of man and beast. Who dare ask God why he instituted it at first, and why he never repealed the law? Who will dare to oppose his opinion to the express command of God, who, as an allwise sovereign has commanded, and it is immoral to disobey? Who will take upon himself all the consequences resulting to man and beast too, by the virtual abrogation of the Sabbath?

Priscilla.—Indeed many do virtually assume to abrogate it, for Sunday is a day of visiting, of sport, and of pleasure, while servants and horses labour more than on any other day of the week.

Aquila.—This is too true. A suitable time ought to be appropriated to our worldly concerns, and God has granted us for it six days out of seven. And he who idles his time then is guilty, and God will condemn him, for no idle man can be a christian. But the seventh part of that time belongs to another purpose, and is devoted to a moral object, the religious improvement of our minds and souls, the service of our God, and the rest of our bodies, and the bodies of all our servants and all our labouring beasts.

Apollos.—This is very strict.

Aquila.—No more so than God's word. There is only one reason for using horses in even going to church on Sunday, that is the moral benefit of ourselves and families, by which God is glorified; and connected with it the fact that we cannot get to God's house without their service. But I believe that man is a sinner who works his horses all the week, and then rides or drives them to church on Sunday.

Priscilla.—And O! if this be a sin, how great a sin it is to keep the poor servants labouring and toiling for extra dinners, and extra company on the Sabbath day?

[1] Before I ever read a commentator on this text, I was struck, from the face of the original, with the meaning and general use of this word. On investigating the subject I find that Beza renders it in the same way. I am however sure that the Sabbath, as one of the precepts of the moral law, never was repealed.

Aquila.—All this is wrong, and he who uses his beasts of burden on the Sabbath, though it may be in the divine service, must pay them with one day's rest during the week.

Priscilla.—Husband, I believe this is the reason why the curse of God rests on all the stock of so many men.

Aquila.—Doubtless the Sabbaths of the Lord are neglected, and he will teach us by losses, if in no other way, to know that he is our God. 'A merciful man careth for his beast.'

Apollos.—A good man ought to care about little as well as great things.

Aquila.—This is very true, my friend—and when we receive the whole we shall feel, I think, the constant importance of attending to the Sabbath day, and the due improvement of all its privileges. The first thing I noticed is that the law of the Sabbath is the first ever instituted among men by their rightful Sovereign the living God. The second is, that this law has never been repealed, so far from it, upon the delivery of the moral law on the mount, it was proclaimed as one of the precepts, and I again affirm has never been revoked, for if God revoked any part he has all, and then the christian is a lawless being. Not so, my friend—Christ and his disciples kept it holy; on his resurrection the apostles, messengers of God, kept with their converts the first instead of the seventh day, that while the rest to come was prefigured, the resurrection, and of consequence the death of Christ, and all its benefits, the foundation of that rest, might be commemorated. Reason teaches us that some time ought to be set apart for divine worship, and christians, on apostolic example, have made choice of this, the first day of the week, for rest and God's service.

Apollos.—And this has ever been the practice since. O! this is a powerful argument for due respect to the christian Sabbath.

Aquila.—This is not all. Public authority in every christian country has backed by specific law this holy institution, and that man must have arrived at a great height of presumption and folly who, while he disregards divine authority, and neglects to spend this day in religious exercises, not only opposes himself to the constant practice of the christian church, but to the positive laws of a christian and an enlightened republic.[1]

Apollos.—Certainly it is against the law of the land to do unnecessary work on Sunday.

Aquila.—The sanctification of the Lord's day does not consist in a bare external rest from bodily labour, but in the exercises of piety, and of such things as are proper to excite us thereto, reading God's word, hearing of sermons, religious meetings, as prayer and social meetings, holy meditations, Sunday schools, and especially the holy communion, or the commemoration of the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus. By these we are excited to holiness, and may be rendered truly useful to others.

Apollos.—That we may have leisure for such religious exercises a rest from our worldly concerns is requisite.

Aquila.—Nothing unnecessary should be done on Sunday. And even necessary things, which can be performed on the previous day by a proper forecast and exertion ought certainly to be done then.

[1] A gentleman of high standing, who was largely engaged in a fishery, where extravagant prices are paid to numerous hands for about forty days service, while his religious neighbours worked their seines on Sunday, had all his hands at rest, and said one day to me, 'My boys change their clothes and rest well all Sunday, and all the following week, poor fellows, they work in such fine spirits that it does me good.' 'I believe,' continued he, 'a man will never have any good luck a fishing, in the long run, who breaks such a palpable law of God and the country.' This man never professed any religion, but his views and example in regard to the Sabbath are well worthy the attention and imitation of those who profess it.

Apollos.—I plainly perceive that the divine law excludes those employments and recreations which are notorious obstacles to a man's serving of God either in private or public.

Aquila.—Frivolity and pleasure on the Sabbath day are ruinous in their consequences, as they are destructive of public morals, while as before said, works of necessity, mercy, and piety, are perfectly admissible.

Priscilla.—And then those days will be days of rest indeed.

Aquila.—A true christian Sabbath is a day in which men abstain from all sin, and serve God in spirit and in truth, a day of rest, typical of that rest which remains for the people of God, and on this account this law is of perpetual duration, and even as a political regulation it is one of the wisest, the best, and the most beneficent, that was ever instituted; and I believe that every man who considers this subject well will see the propriety and wisdom of this, not only as a law of God, but as wisdom on the part of those legislators, who have succeeded in preserving on our statute book this ancient law of our pious fathers, however we their ungodly descendants may by our customary neglect of that day, virtually blot out that wholesome regulation.

Apollos.—I hope the day will yet come when we shall be more particular in our attention to this important duty.

Aquila.—You have before you the whole subject, my friend—of an acknowledgment of Christ and obedience to his laws. These are a part of the regulations of this new covenant. Here is piety towards God. Him and his dear Son the merciful Jesus, we are to 'confess before men,' as we would wish and expect him to confess us before his Father. This we are especially to do by due and proper attention to the commandments of God, every one, every where, and at all times acknowledging him as Lord of all, and as our God. A proper regard to the Sabbath is one very conspicuous method of confessing him. While others, in these times of religious delinquency, disregard the Sabbath, while they travel in steamboats and cars that run for gain on Sunday, to increase the stock or value thereof of its religious owners, the true christian should confess Christ by retiring from the world and all its cares and pleasures too, to seek his rest in God's house among his children.[1]

Apollos.—How sweet a Sabbath there to spend, in hope of that eternal Sabbath day, in 'the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

Aquila.—May God Almighty grant that we all may be there and rest in peace! Amen.

COLLOQUY XX.

OF IMPIETY AND SUPERSTITION, BOTH OF WHICH, AS OPPOSED TO THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANITY, ARE SUBVERSIVE OF THE DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Aquila.—At our last interview we closed our conversation on what is properly called piety toward God. Before we dismiss it altogether, it may be convenient, and is doubtless proper, that we should consider those things that are directly opposed to it. These are subversive of the divine authority, in the same proportion as they prevent us in our duty.[2]

Apollos.—What are they, my friend?

[1] I think Dr. Clarke has some of the most pithy and pointed remarks on travelling in boats and cars on Sunday that I have ever read. The reader is referred to them. Clarke's Theo. by Dunn, fol. 244.

[2] Dr. Gill and Chalmers.

Aquila.—Impiety and superstition, both of them criminal in the extreme.

Apollos.—What is impiety?

Aquila.—The word, properly, means ungodliness, the being without God. It may be taken as a term representing the entire course of the ungodly man, and setting forth his irreverence toward the Supreme Being, contempt of the divine character and authority, and neglect of the divine precepts. But it is also taken sometimes for any special act of wickedness, as blasphemy and scoffing at the Almighty, or at his authority, and is then named profaneness.

Apollos.—Who are guilty of this?

Aquila.—Those men who either pay no worship at all to God, or else do not worship him alone. The former of these are either atheists, who deny the existence of Deity or a divine providence, or else the profane, who though they do own in some measure a God and a providence, yet do not worship him, but live as if there were no God in the world. Such are those who declare their sins as Sodom, and hide them not, the very show of whose countenance is against them, and they depart daily far away from the paths of the Lord.

Apollos.—What are these? Do name them.

Aquila.—Atheism, infidelity, debauchery, drunkenness, profanity, Sabbath breaking, lying, and intimately connected with it is perjury.

Apollos.—What is perjury?

Aquila.—False swearing. Perjury is when a man attests by an oath something to be true or certain, which he knows to be false or uncertain, or swears that he will do what he never intends to do. This is a heinous crime, because God is called upon to bear witness to a lie, and then also the non-performance of an action, after an oath to perform it. No man can be absolved from the obligation of an oath, in the eye of God, though he should swear to his own hurt.

Apollos.—Well—are not rash oaths contrary to this duty?

Aquila.—They are, indeed, and they are uttered without the least reason whatever, for what necessity or advantage can there possibly be in profaning the name of God? It is alike adverse to piety and gentility. Indeed, God will sooner or later hear the swearer's prayer, and damn his soul. These are the sins, with others of a more private character, that might be named, but only to cause a blush on the cheek of modesty.

Apollos.—How is it with those who pretend to worship God, but not him alone?

Aquila.—Their sin is called *idolatry*. It is that act of man, by which, more gods are owned and worshipped than one, of which nature was the idolatry of the Gentiles, and into which the Israelites, before the Babylonish captivity, frequently fell, or else, it is an act implying idolatry, such as the worship which papists pay to saints and angels.

Apollos.—I am sure that the worship of these is directly opposed to the law of God, the purity, and spirituality of religion.

Aquila.—This we have shewn, when on the true object of piety. There is, however, my friend—another kind of idolatry that we must notice.

Apollos.—What kind do you mean?

Aquila.—It is when God is worshipped by images, from whence the name of idolatry is properly derived. I do not mean that it is unlawful for a christian to have pictures in his house, this is innocent and allowable, but the crime consists in the paying religious worship to them. This is a sin expressly forbid in the second commandment. So that to form to ourselves any representation of God, who is a spirit, and cannot be represented under any shape whatever, or to make to ourselves the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, so as to fall down before, or worship it,

is as an act of homage, gross idolatry, of which the Gentiles were notoriously guilty.

Apollos.—But do they worship them?

Aquila.—Images may be said to be worshipped either directly, as when a man addresses his prayers to those images, believing that they are endued with some divine virtue which operates in them, and consequently, that the Deity, after a special manner is present in them, and this is the highest degree of idolatry; or they are worshipped indirectly, when a man performs his religious worship at, about, or before them.[1]

Apollos.—Is not this, likewise forbid by the Almighty, when he charges us not to bow down before them?

Aquila.—It is, so that if any one shall bow himself before, at, or about images, he may be said to adore and worship them, although in his mind he may abominate, and openly declare he does not esteem them as gods. This is so plain, my friend—that no man who reads the Bible can deny it. I will quote the prohibition of the Almighty, and in it you will see how great a sin this is.

Apollos.—Do if you please.

Aquila.—'Thou shalt have none other gods but me;' here is a part of the prohibition in the second commandment. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth.' Here is the second part of the prohibition.

Apollos.—It is not even to be made. I see it. If you had even seen with your own eyes the Lord Jesus, you are not to make any likeness or representation of him, or any thing else.

Aquila.—Just so. 'Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them.' Here is another portion of the prohibition in this command, and the reason of it is founded in the fact that the bowing down is an act of homage which God will only suffer, when it is done religiously, to himself.

Apollos.—O! what a gross sin idolatry is.

Aquila.—The last part of the prohibition is 'nor serve them.' Here is the positive worship, the other is worship by implication. Now, my friend—is there a schoolboy on earth, ten years old, that cannot see that God forbids all images, as well as the worship of them in his service, or house. The reasons assigned, for the whole prohibition are then set forth in the command, 'I am a jealous God,' &c.

Priscilla.—Well—I never did consider this commandment before. It is a most positive denunciation of all images in religious worship, as idolatrous and destructive of its spirituality.

Aquila.—It is just so—we are not to make them, we are not to bow down before or about them, we are not to serve or worship them, either is an act of idolatry which God will punish. From hence we see the virulence of that offence, committed daily by papists, both in public and private, who not only form to themselves images of saints, but even of God himself, nay, of the ever blessed Trinity, but dare to bow down before them, uncover their heads, kneel, pray and make vows unto them: who undertake pilgrimages for their sakes, deposite them in sacred places, adorn them with costly robes, lock them up in golden shrines, carry them about in processions, light up tapers before them, &c. What, my friend, is all this but idolatry?[2]

Apollos.—But do they not attempt a distinction between the idol and the image?

Aquila.—They do, but it is a foolish one. They say an idol represents a thing

[1] Clarke and Limborch. [2] Limborch.

which has no existence in nature, or a fictitious god, and a thing that does not exist; and that only idols are forbid, and not images.[1]

Priscilla.—If this be not trifling, I do not know what is.

Aquila.—Surely, for whatever is formed to represent God as the object of worship is an idol, not only that which represents a thing which has no existence, or a fictitious Deity, but also that which represents a thing actually existing, or the true God. This is plain, from the two instances of idols mentioned in the Scriptures, the golden calf made in the wilderness, and the two calves made by Jeroboam.

Apollos.—I remember them, both one and the other, were made to represent the true God, yet are they called idols and strange gods, and they who worshipped them are expressly called idolaters.

Aquila.—Yes—and of this very nature is the idolatry of the papists. Although the reverence which they pay to images is not so gross as the idolatry of the Gentiles of old, who represented and worshipped either a creature, or that which had no being in the world, yet it cannot be wholly excused from that crime.

Priscilla.—There are many things in their worship which bear some analogy to the idolatry of the Gentiles.

Aquila.—Indeed, there is. For they ascribe, as do the idolatrous nations, a miraculous power and virtue to their images. Moreover, that they are guilty of the crime of idolatry, is evident from all those idle, but frequent distinctions which they make, not only between the degrees of worship itself, as *doulia,* vulgarly *dulia, latria,* and *hyperdoulia,* but also between the object of divine worship.[2]

Apollos.—And have they not made some alteration in the second commandment?

Aquila.—They have, and this is the more intolerable, for in their catechism they have rased out of the decalogue the second commandment, which forbids the worship of images, lest the common people should discover the foulness of that crime, which they are daily committing, in bowing before them, an offence so positively prohibited in the word of God.

Apollos.—These jesuitical distinctions are, doubtless, the origin of so much superstition in this enlightened day.

Aquila.—Yes—and superstition is another extreme directly opposed to piety, which is either, as some say, an over anxious fear of the Deity, supposing him to be offended at things which do not displease him, and in this sense it is a particular fault, that is, properly, opposed to the fear of God: or else a vain and foolish worshipping of God, of which the former is the cause, so that both these are usually considered as one and the same superstition.

Apollos.—Then there are more kinds of superstition than one?

Aquila.—There are two kinds of superstition, properly so called. The first is a preposterous devotion paid, and a too great confidence put in some external rites and ceremonies, though they are in themselves good and are commanded by God as conducing to piety, provided they be used properly. Now of this nature was the superstition of the Jews, who in strictly observing the external ceremonies prescribed by God, whilst they neglected the moral law: and this their practice was absolutely condemned by the Deity. Thus, 'to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or

[1] Limborch.

[2] The meaning of these terms is as follows: *Latria,* the highest worship paid to God, from a Greek word meaning *service. Dulia* properly *doulia,* also Greek, an inferior service, and *hyperdoulia,* from two Greek words, used for super service, or the adoration which is paid to the Virgin Mary. These are the methods of Jesuits to avoid the force of a divine command, and gull the populace.

of lambs or of he goats.' 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.'

Priscilla.—Ah! this is religion.

Aquila.—'Trust ye not,' saith the Lord, 'in lying words, saying the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.' 'I hate, I despise your feast days.' 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.'

Apollos —This is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Aquila.—A solicitous observation of those things, which are neither expressly nor implicitly commanded by God, and such as have no reference to virtue is another sort of superstition. This does not refer to the duties prescribed by God, or dictated by right reason, but which depend merely on the opinion of man, and wherein true piety is chiefly made to consist. Of this last kind were the various traditions of the Pharisees, blamed of old by our Saviour, and denounced by him as repugnant to piety in the fifteenth and the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel. Under the same head may be reduced the several rites and ceremonies used in the Romish church, which were never instituted by God, though received by them as holy and meritorious.[1]

Apollos.—There is certainly a great similarity.

Aquila.—Of these rights some are idolatrous or tend to idolatry, such as the worshipping of saints, images, relics, the cross, &c. Others are vain and superstitious, as the mode of building and consecrating of churches, that are polluted when preached in by all ministers of Christ, but their priests, their observation of festivals, their distinction of meats, their pilgrimages and rosaries, &c. All these ceremonies are urged by the papists, as not only useful and necessary, but likewise as *meritorious.*[2]

Apollos.—What, my brother?

Aquila.—Yes—they lay a greater stress upon them, than upon the observance of the commands of God, as we have shown in the abolishment of the second commandment on papal authority.

Apollos.—If this does not lead men into an unavoidable superstition, then I am mistaken.

Aquila.—Superstition usually prevails over well meaning persons, and such as are inclined to piety, though of a weak judgment; hence it is that they who are disposed to be pious, by reason of weakness of judgment, and not discerning truth from falsehood, easily fall into error. And hence the impositions of the maid of Kent.

Apollos.—It is plain, that although some men may think the criminality of superstition lies in the observance of many things, that are not commanded

[1] Limborch.

[2] On the abolishment of monasteries in England, during the reign of Henry VIII. as in other times and places, the grossest impositions on the ignorant in regard to relics were discovered. Such as the paintings of St. Edmond's toes, the coals that roasted St. Lawrence, the girdle of the Virgin Mary, shown in eleven different places. Two or three heads of St. Ursula, The felt of St. Thomas, of Lancaster, a cure for the headache, and a remnant of the shirt of a saint much reverenced by some. Other relics preventives for rain and weeds in corn. Also the blood of Christ, which could only be seen by those whose mortal sins were absolved. It turned out to be the blood of a duck, in a vial, one side transparent glass, and the other opaque and thick, the former side only being turned towards the pilgrim, when he had paid out all his money for absolution. A miraculous crucifix with secret springs. To these may be added in all the papal world, their numerous shrines that utterly destroy the divine worship. The blessed candles, the blessed evergreens, the holy water, and the wafer God, are only a prelude to worse superstitions, if not an inquisitorial tribunal in the United States of America.

of God, and that therefore it is a sin not in the defect, as some would call it. The fact is, being concerned about less matters and amusing itself with an outside appearance of religion, it neglects the true and most substantial worship of God.

Aquila.—It is so, and closely connected with an idolatrous and a superstitious worship, is all witchcraft and divinations, both of which are opposed to piety, and may be considered as the product, in a greater or less degree, of diabolical influence.

Apollos.—What do you mean as implied in witchcraft?

Aquila.—This is of two kinds, one is artificial, and is simply the production of some affection or the pretended performance of some cure or great work, by some gestures, signs, words or characters, and although those who do these things do not suppose, and would tremble at the idea of being aided by the devil, still if they shall consider the matter closely, they will find that the principles involved in all such tricks are diabolical, both in their origin and end. But surely that is diabolical, when a man does, as has in some ages of the world been done, perform some strange and wonderful thing, by the direct influence of the devil. This is a most heinous crime, being no less than revolting from God and forming an alliance with Satan.

Apollos.—This was the crime of Simon Magus and others.

Aquila.—Near akin to this is what has been called divination by dreams, by observations on the flight of birds and the inspection of the entrails of beasts as under the Roman and Grecian laws and practices. It is easily seen that in any such signs, there can be no power for revealing hidden things, and if any knowledge be imparted through such an unjustifiable course, it is of the power of the devil, and is condemned of God. Thus, 'regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizzards to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.' 'There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.' 'And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits,' 'I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.'

Apollos.—The astrology of the ancients, I suppose, was of the same nature.

Aquila.—Properly astrology means an observance of the course of the stars. This is, correctly speaking, astronomy, an innocent, interesting and useful science. But judicial astrology, by which men pretend to foretell seasons, and form a calculation about the nativity of man, to predict the future events of his life, is vain and impious indeed. This will appear by a reference to the principles on which it is founded, it being simply an imaginary arrangement, retained in the memory, and experience has proved that the predictions of star-gazers, are seldom attended with either *cunning* or good *luck*. These whole systems are fraught with impiety, as they root out the love of God, and introduce fate into the place of that wise Providence by which the universe is governed. And of the same class are all those impious wretches who would be prophets and who attempt to foretell future events, the inventions of their own disordered brains, or the suggestions of the devil, and who impudently assume to themselves a divine mission.[1]

Apollos.—These are wicked things indeed. But tell me is it not a sin to cast lots about any thing at all.

Aquila.—Human lots whether consultory or divinatory, as they are called, are unlawful, the word of God is the only infallible rule for ascertaining the divine will. Divisory lots, as they are called in law, relate to the things of this life, and is a method agreed on by the parties concerned, for a division of earthly property,

[1] Limborch.

with unity and concord. And this is done without those acts which constitute superstition and impiety.

Apollos.—But I mean the casting of a lot in regard to some matter that is important, but not by that lot to decide the question of faith or law as it relates to divine things.

Aquila.—Then it is simply an action done with reference to divine providence, and its authority to determine some matter that is doubtful. Now this in its own nature is not unlawful, for God in the Old Testament instituted the casting of lots. Thus he would have the promised land to be divided by lot, by lot the goat to be offered in sacrifice was to be chosen, Achan was found guilty of sacrilege by lot, and by lot Jonathan was taken, by lot the ministering priests were elected, and Matthias was numbered among the apostles by lot. Permit, my friend—one to say, who never in all his life cast lots for any thing amounting in importance to the value of a pin, that it is not wise in men, to decry the casting of lots altogether, and about any thing human or divine, without first assigning some good reasons why the large landed estates of most countries are divided among legatees by lot, and some of the most important appointments in spiritual matters have been filled on divine authority by the casting of lots.

Apollos.—I never considered this subject before in this light.

Aquila.—I do believe it improper to cast lots on any matter, little or important, unless it be in such an one as is so doubtful, that in the nature of things it cannot be settled in concord, but by lot, then in dependence on the providence of God and by the willing consent of all concerned, a lot may be cast, as a short and ready way of arriving at an amicable decision. But all diabolical lots, of what kind soever, are absolutely unlawful, and are such divinations as are condemned of God, whether they are made by an express or an implied contract with Satan, or brought about by a superstitious regard to things subversive of piety.

Priscilla.—Well—sin is a reproach to any people, and I am sure that the ignorance, idolatry, superstition, and vices of the world, are all intimately connected. I pray God to enlighten all the earth.

Aquila.—For this we should all daily and devoutly pray, and the cry of every christian heart should be, 'O! Lord revive thy work,' in the midst of wrath, 'remember mercy.' Amen.

COLLOQUY XXI.

THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN TOWARD HIS FELLOW MEN—THESE DIVIDED INTO GENERAL AND PARTICULAR—AND FIRST OF CHARITY OR LOVE TO MAN, AND ITS CONTRARY HATRED.

Aquila.—We remarked, my friend—on another occasion, that the duties of christians were divided with relation to those toward whom they were to be discharged—God, our neighbour, and ourselves. Having pointed out those which we owe the Deity, and which evidence the purpose as well as the great object of the heart, which is to love God supremely, we approach the second class, I mean those which we owe our fellow man, and propose to point them out as they arise, under what we call two classes, the one general and the other particular.

Apollos.—Which do you consider as embraced in the general duties due to man.

Aquila.—The duties we owe our neighbours, as coming under the head of general duties, are divided into two branches, charity and justice, comprised in that command of our Lord, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Let us this evening consider the great duty of christian charity, and if we have time we may notice, that enmity or hatred is a great offence as a violation of it.

Apollos.—What is implied in the word charity as it is used in the Scriptures?

Aquila.—By it is meant that particular virtue, whereby we are moved not only to ward off any inconveniences that may happen to our neigbour, but likewise to promote his interest as far as practicable, and even to give him those things which, by common justice, he cannot claim as his due. In Scripture it is taken in a two-fold sense. To denote a charitable disposition and habit of mind, from which, as from a fountain, all the duties of charity flow; and again, it signifies all those outward duties of kindness, as flowing from a benign and charitable mind.[1]

Apollos.—This is a very important distinction.

Aquila.—There are several things which are to be considered in order that we may have a correct understanding of this subject.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—Its object, offices, rules, and necessity.

Apollos.—What is the object of charity?

Aquila.—This is generally expressed in Scripture by the word 'neighbour.'

Apollos.—And who is our neighbour?

Aquila.—The same question was asked our Lord, and he answered it. Among the Jews a man's neighbour was considered to be one of his own nation. This mistake our Saviour corrected, and by his parable of the good Samaritan, and that inimitable sermon on the mount, he has taught us that all mankind, even our greatest enemies, are the objects of our christian charity.

Apollos.—But christians are to have the preference from christians.

Aquila.—Yes—the Bible teaches that our charity ought, in the first and chief place, to be extended to those who are of 'the household of faith,' i. e. true christians.

Apollos.—Well—what are its offices?

Aquila.—They are chiefly two, the first is, to pray God not only to deliver our fellow man from the evil with which he is oppressed, but likewise to grant him whatever blessings, whether spiritual or temporal, that he is in need of. The second is the procuring those blessings for him, as far as is in our power, which includes in it these particulars, that we neither desire nor do anything which may hurt the body, good name, or estate of our neighbour; and that we also desire, and as far as in us lies, both publicly and privately to promote his welfare; and also rejoice in his prosperity, and sympathize with him in all his adversities.

Apollos.—These offices should be suited then to the diversified wants of our fellow men.

Aquila.—Yes—they are to be exercised as our neighbour shall need. If he wants the things necessary for life, then charity or christian love commands us to supply him out of our own substance, and if we have not wherewith to give, we must assist him by our advice and comfort, and seek a friend that can substantially aid.

Priscilla.—And in spiritual blessings too, for he does little who helps the body but neglects the soul.

Aquila.—Yes—if he stand in need of spiritual blessings we must freely impart to him, of our own, suiting all our advice and prayers to his peculiar state.

Apollos.—Weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that do rejoice.

Aquila.—We are to instruct the ignorant, reclaim the erroneous, support the weak in faith, raise up and comfort the feeble minded, and admonish and reprove with meekness the sinful soul.

Priscilla.—It is said in the word of God we must, becoming all things to all men, 'bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

[1] Limborch.

Apollos.—I see this, do my friend—tell me what is the rule of this charity?

Aquila.—The love of ourselves, and the love of God and the Lord Jesus Christ as manifested toward us.

Apollos.—Do you tell me so?

Aquila.—Indeed I do. The love of ourselves, is prescribed as the rule of love to our neighbour, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' says the Lord Jesus, and 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do to them.'

Apollos.—O! what wisdom, to point out a rule by which every man may so easily judge whether his course toward his fellow man is right or wrong. But I do not understand this last text exactly. Are we to perform this duty without respect to the relations in this life?

Aquila.—I think not. For instance, we cannot suppose a father bound to obey and reverence his son, because he requires that of him according to the law of nature, and nature's God: but that we should do to another whatever we would have others do to us, did we occupy the relation in life, and were we placed in those circumstances in which they are placed. And even here a just distinction ought to be observed between what is our duty and what is only lawful.

Apollos.—What is meant in this?

Aquila.—That we should think ourselves bound in duty to do to our neighbour that which we think he owes to us in the like case; and that to be just and right for our neighbour to expect from us, and for us to give him, which it is lawful for us to expect from him.[1]

Apollos.—This is a difficult point.

Aquila.—It is, and we must take care that we do not confound what is due with what is only lawful, and what is only lawful with what is an imperious duty.

Apollos.—I perceive this, I think.

Aquila.—And it is apparent from all this, that we here have an infallible rule of love to our neighbours: for as no man can be ignorant of what he would have another do to himself, so neither can he question what is his duty toward his fellow man. Nor is the equity of this our duty less visible: for what can be more equitable than to do that to another which we would have him do to us? This, my brother—is a rule that may be always and easily applied.

Apollos.—It is indeed, my friend.

Aquila.—Another rule is the love of God and the Lord Jesus Christ toward us. This as a rule of our charity, which seems to consist in several things. The first is, that as God and Jesus Christ loved us while we were yet sinners, and at enmity with Deity, so should we also love our enemies. Another is, that we should love those who are meaner or lower than ourselves, and from whom we can expect no return to be made, for God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were enemies 'Christ died for us,' and he remembered us in our 'low estate.' And moreover, after the example of God and Jesus Christ, we should freely and heartily forgive the offences committed against us by others, ever praying forgive me as I 'forgive those who trespass against' me. And after the example of Christ we should lay down our lives for brethren.

Apollos.—How sincere must such love be, my friend?

Aquila.—From it we may infer not only the sincerity but the constancy of that love which grace begets for man in our hearts, for God loves us sincerely for our own good alone, and even unto the end. This and the other properties of christian charity are beautifully described by the apostle Paul, in the 13th chap. 1 Cor. 'It suffereth long and is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not

[1] Clarke and Limborch.

itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave herself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth. Now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity,' i. e. LOVE.

Apollos.—Yes—and it shall abide forever. But from your exposition and acceptation of the term charity, and the object which you have pointed out, I should infer that an equal degree of love in all cases and to all persons, is not prescribed to us.

Aquila.—All stand on an equal ground with respect to the good, for we ought to pray and earnestly beg that eternal life, man's chief good, shall be granted to every man as well as to ourselves, and we should seek to promote it as far as possible. There is, however, some difference of order in our wishes, as we ought to desire it immediately for the pious, but for the impious, on their repentance and faith in subservience to the divine will.

Apollos.—But with respect to the *affection,* and the *external* effects, is there not a great deal of difference in our charity?

Aquila.—There is. Hence love is usually distinguished into that of *benevolence,* whereby we wish and do well to another, though unlike ourselves, and deserving the contrary; and into the love of *friendship,* whereby we desire to be joined to and associated with any one that is like ourselves, and do him a kindness, as one who deserves it.

Apollos.—Then our affection varies according to the different foundations from which it arises.

Aquila.—Certainly, for either it is founded on an opinion that the object to be loved deserves our affection, as being the friend of God, that is, he is a pious and good man; or else only on the divine command, which enjoins us to love all men, though we should be certain that this or that man, by reason of some vice or other, is unworthy of our love.[1]

Apollos.—The former of these is a more intense, free, strong, and constant love than the latter.

Aquila.—Yes—and expresses itself with zeal and fervency, while the other is of an inferior degree, and to be exercised toward those whom we cannot love in the most ardent manner.

Apollos.—Well—with respect to the *exercise* and the effects of this love, is there not also some difference?

Aquila.—Assuredly, there is a disparity in the frequency, order, and extent thereof, according as the variety of circumstances require and make the different acts of charity necessary.

Apollos.—I do not exactly understand this.

Aquila.—We ought, for instance, to exert our charity very frequently toward those, in whom there are more frequent occasions given us of expressing a true love toward them. Order ought likewise to be observed, according to the greater or less worthiness of the objects of our charity. Thus good men, and those who have been our benefactors, ought to be beloved more than others.

Apollos.—But are there not circumstances which require this order to be inverted?

Aquila.—There are: thus extreme necessity ought to make us prefer a man that is less worthy to the one more worthy, especially if he labours under some common calamity.

Apollos.—Then a lower degree of love must be due to our enemies than that

[1] Limborch.

which is due to our brethren, who serve and are united to us with love sincere and unfeigned.

Aquila.—I think so, and here it may be remarked that, as love varies with respect to more or less familiarity which the object has with us, so toward our enemies it sometimes differs with respect to affection and the external effects of charity, as the object more or less renders himself guilty in the sight of God by his hatred to us.

Apollos.—Explain yourself.

Aquila.—Some may be enemies out of ignorance, and owe the christian ill-will because he does not know what sort of a man he is, and thus supposes him to deserve his enmity and hatred. This may proceed from several causes. Little, as you would suppose from the cause of religion, when they think that the christian man has none, or that he is not only wrong but perverse, and opposed to the religion they suppose themselves in the possession of, hence they view him as an enemy of God, and deserving the hatred of all, especially good men. This was the case with Saul of Tarsus. And again, there is a difference of some opinions about the same religion; for men are commonly too much wedded to their own notions, and too often despise and hate those who differ from them. This is gross ignorance, and less excusable than the former. In addition, the espousing of any cause which they think to be either too bad or too trifling to be contended for, and all these causes produce their legitimate effects.

Priscilla.—Another is, when without any just reason, a man goes over from one party to another.

Aquila.—Yes—this is also a cause, and all that have been named may be traced to *ignorance*. *Passion* rules others and carried away by a sudden gust of it, whether there be cause or not, they think, speak, and act ill towards us, by endeavouring to blast our reputation, injure our estates, or touch our lives. Others are enemies out of pure malice, and although we deserve it not, but rather their love, wish us ill, and seek to injure. This may proceed from a mere inclination to injure us, without the least prospect of doing themselves the least benefit, or kindness, or from the expectation of some private advantage, the consideration of public tranquility, or for the sake of one that is their friend. From these various causes men become the enemies of christians.[1]

Apollos.—And we must still love them.

Aquila.—To all, under any circumstances, we owe an affection of charity. And we must heartily pray for them, although they seek our lives. We must pray God to change the evil disposition of their minds, to give knowledge to the ignorant. Calmness of temper to the passionate, and humanity to the malicious. We must pray that God would not withdraw the means of conversion from, nor deprive them of those things conducive to that end. We owe them also the exercise and effects of charity.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—First, we must not blast or injure their reputation and good name, even if we have an opportunity of doing so. St. Paul says, 'charity suffereth long and is kind,' 'seeketh not her own is not easily provoked.' And we are not allowed immediately to believe any ill report that may be raised of them, for 'charity never faileth, it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.' We must not injure their estates, even when we might do it lawfully, though they may have injured us, especially when only a damage would be done to them, and no advantage arise to us thereby, and if we are not to touch the character and property, surely not the life or health, by way of revenge, or for the gratification of humour. But above all, my friend—we must

[1] Limborch.

do even these our enemies, all the good we can, as occasion may serve. We must supply them in their wants, assist them when in danger, and to the utmost of our power, defend them in the possession of their reputation, lives and estates.

Priscilla.—O! this is the doctrine of our Lord. 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you.'

Aquila.—And all too, 'that ye may be the children of my Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and the unjust.'

Apollos.—St. Paul enforced it, 'therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink,' 'be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.' But, my friend—is it not lawful for us to vindicate our reputation from the calumnies of an enemy?

Aquila.—By all means, for the Saviour and St. Paul vindicated themselves from calumny. Thus Christ says, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well why smitest thou me?' And the 26th chapter of Acts is a vindication of the apostle before Agrippa. Indeed this may be done from the very example before us, though it may reflect on the reputation of others, whom by a frank and ingenuous apology for ourselves, we manifestly prove to be guilty of calumny. For our love to an enemy ought not to be extended so far as to give the world occasion of suspecting that he has reason to be our enemy, for by this means the cause of God would be injured, and Deity himself be insulted, as innocence and justice would be oppressed, and a pattern set for others to imitate the same wickedness of defamation.

Apollos.—But is it lawful to call such an one a calumniator?

Aquila.—Surely we ought not to do this, especially rashly, for it is possible that the man may have spoken against us by mistake, or prejudice, or in a sudden passion. And besides, what sort of a temper should we have if we give him that hard name? May not this be in the spirit of revenge, if so it is notoriously unlawful, and how easy is it for us, in a mild and friendly manner, to show that it is a calumny raised concerning us, and this is lawful?

Apollos—But our Saviour often called the Pharisees 'hypocrites,' and even says, that they are 'of the devil,' and false teachers are called 'dogs,' 'evil workers,' 'concision,' &c.

Aquila.—The Saviour knew the heart, and all this was not said by way of recrimination, but as pastors and as teachers correcting the vices of sinners, while at other times they entreated, besought, and expressed the greatest gentleness toward them. But as they knew the true state of the heart, and were convinced that they uttered the truth, there being no shade of doubt, it changes the nature of the case, and they also spake without any prejudice or passion, whilst we are often carried away with anger, as if the cause were our own. But above all, the Lord of all had a right to speak and reprove sin in that way which seemed best to himself.

Apollos.—Some have carried this so far as to say that it is unlawful for a christian man to sue for his goods before a judge, in order to recover them from an enemy who has unjustly possessed them.

Aquila.—This is certainly wrong, and subversive of all order, for in this recovery of our own just rights, there is no revenge or hatred, though it should be attended with some detriment to an enemy: provided, however, that we do all this without any intention of revenging the injury offered, or of getting back what is our due when the punishment that may be inflicted by a judge on our enemy, whether in person or property, is greater than the loss of our goods would amount to.[1]

[1] Limborch.

Apollos—Well, suppose a man should offer us an injury, does not charity require that we should resist?

Aquila.—I think not, we may, nay ought to be on the defensive, not to revenge an attempt, but to prevent it. Surely this is not repugnant to charity. We may then admonish him to forbear injuring us, we may use our utmost endeavours to prevent him from doing us any harm, and if it cannot be prevented otherwise, we may resist by an appeal to the civil authority of the land, which is bound to protect all its subjects alike.

Apollos.—How far then may resistance to personal injuries go, my friend?

Aquila.—The law of nature arms every man in his own defence, the law of Moses seems to grant it, because it allowed of the killing a thief, that came by night to steal one's property. The christian religion forbids the revenging of injuries, and calls on us to submit to any privation, even the loss of life, for the kingdom of heaven's sake; it does not prohibit the use of any reasonable means to avoid a direct attack on our person, such as getting out of the way, or warding off blows, but there is in it no precept that allows of blow for blow, any more than railing for railing. It belongs to christianity to teach it subjects to suffer any and every insult in this life, looking to be amply repaid in one that is beyond the limits of this world's sorrows.

Apollos.—O! the way to heaven may be truly said to be a 'narrow way,' and the motives to charity are immense.

Aquila.—Indeed they are, and they are all involved in its necessity, which we may now point out. It does seem natural to man to love, he is a creature of love or affection. Mind I do not say it is natural to love God, but it is natural to love one another, indeed the very indigence of our nature points us to this duty, for no man is self-sufficient, we all stand in need of help from one another, and we feel it. God has made all mankind 'of one blood,' and on that account would have all men to look upon and love one another. This, my friend—is not all, we are regenerated by one and the same spirit, to one and the same hope of salvation, that we may be sons of the same Father, and members of the same 'mystical body,' the Lord Jesus. God has commanded it, 'love one another.' The example of the love of God and Jesus Christ is before us. Love is commended of God, it is the bond of perfection and the mark of a christian, 'for he that loveth is born of God,' and 'by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples. Without charity to our neighbour we cannot be said to love God himself, for if we love not him whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?

Apollos.—This is true, and truly forcible.

Aquila.—Without it, my brother—all other qualifications, our almsgiving, nay martyrdom itself, if the 13th chapter 1st Cor. be true, will avail us nothing in the sight of God, we must have it or perish.[1]

Apollos.—Nothing short of love will stand the test of the last judgment. Oh! how deficient are our souls in love to God and man.

Aquila.—The opposite of this heavenly principle, Apollos—is *enmity* or *hatred*, and, as opposed to love, it signifies a mind evil disposed toward another, and it sometimes denotes the very act of doing him an injury.

Apollos.—What is its object?

Aquila.—It may be a man, considered as one discharging his duty, that is as pious, and is esteemed an enemy on that account. This hatred is diabolical, and tends to the destruction of an innocent person, who deserves no ill at our hands. It may, on the other hand, be a man considered as neglectful of duty, and this, as one who is not an enemy to us but to God: the wicked, and those who in error

[1] Wesley and Clarke.

embrace a system not scriptural. Or it may be one who in our opinion has really done us an injury.[1]

Apollos.—What are the acts of hatred?

Aquila.—They are various, some certainly more heinous than others. Thus the not giving to and supplying a distressed fellow man with those things absolutely needed for soul and body, or the endeavouring to hinder him all we can from the enjoyment of these needed comforts. There is also an imprecation of the contrary evils upon him, and the inflicting, or causing to be inflicted on our neighbour any injury whatever, and when hatred arrives at this pitch it generally shows itself in some external acts, as the wounding or maiming the person, blasting the reputation, or by violence and fraud injuring one's estate. The highest degree of all hatred is the sin of murder, which is expressly forbid by the sixth commandment.[2]

Apollos.—Of course it is not lawful for a christian to hate his own enemies.

Aquila.—Whatever allowances were given the Jews under the law to hate not only the idolatrous who were the enemies of God, but also such as were their own enemies, christianity does not allow us to hate any person whatever. The Saviour expressly forbids the christian to hate his veriest enemy, but the rather to love him, he charges us to beware of all revenge, whether by the injured person or a magistrate's authority. 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' saith the Lord.

Apollos.—But may not vengeance be exercised on those who injure us in some way?

Aquila.—It may, on this double account. For correction and example, as an amendment to him that is punished, and a warning to others. In this case a magistrate avenges the injury done to private persons, but this kind of revenge, for the preservation of order in civil society by the law of the land, so far from being repugnant to christianity, is in perfect accordance with it and the law of charity, for one of the great principles of the christian religion is to uphold in order and place civil government, and secure alike the rights of all.

Apollos.—The magistrate punishes here then from compassion, and for the welfare of the state, which could not subsist without such authoritative and exemplary punishment?

Aquila.—Surely: but when it is only from private revenge, to gratify the passion of the offended person, or his pleasure in seeing another suffer, and seeks to retaliate the injury by another, or else hurries him before a magistrate to gratify his disposition to revenge, then it is unlawful. The first, because it is a manifest breach of charity, which commands us to forgive and love our enemies; and it is unjust because a man sets up for a judge in his own cause, of which being blinded with self-love, he cannot pass a righteous judgment. The latter, because though he offends not against justice, since he leaves his revenge to the arbitration of an impartial magistrate, yet is his deed directly opposite to charity as he designs nothing else, but the making his neighbour suffer, and delighting himself therein.

Apollos.—Is it lawful for a christian to demand restitution, and that before a magistrate?

Aquila.—Certainly, as an act of justice, thus reparation is made for an injury sustained. One is thereby restored to a right from which he was unjustly deprived. In this case there is no revenge, nor is it any injury to the aggressor to recover what does not belong to him. And unless that recovery is made, a wife and children may suffer, and a man owes to his family at least as much as he owes to one who would defraud and rob him. If there be inability to make

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke.

restitution, then to inflict suffering on his person or character, when there is the disposition especially to make amends, is to take vengeance in our own hands.

Apollos.—But does not the Saviour say, 'if any man will sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

Aquila.—The Saviour does not here certainly treat of all manner of restitution, but only of that which is attended with revenge, for it is evident that he speaks of the violent and fraudulent taking away of property, which is punished very severely by the law if any action should be commenced thereon: not of him who desires to have the matter determined by a magistrate, and to maintain his right by good and solid arguments.

Apollos.—But the apostle reproves the Corinthians for going to law before a magistrate.

Aquila.—The apostle forbids brethren, members of the christian church, from going to law before unbelievers, infidels of that day, who were idolaters, and who would from thence take occasion to calumniate christianity, but he does allow that those disputes may be made up by believers themselves. And, moreover, he does not here treat of all manner of controversies, when both parties do really believe that right is their own, and are willing to submit to the determination of an arbiter, but of controversies about injustice and fraud. As it is lawful to demand restitution in case property be detained from us which is our due, so also is it right to receive satisfaction for a wound or maiming. Not an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth, for this would be revenge, but if the person wounded or maimed be poor, then he may require, not only that the charge of the cure be defrayed, but that payment be made for time lost, though it must be left to honest, impartial men. This is just and right.

Apollos.—And although men are the enemies of God no christian is allowed to hate them.

Aquila.—By no means. He may despise their deeds, but not their persons. If wicked we are to use all the means we can for their conversion to God. They must be admonished, rebuked, reproved if necessary, sharply, and if incurable, avoid with them all communion that they may be ashamed of their profligacy. Are they of a different profession in religious matters with us, and do they labour under some error, or are they even called heretics, still we are not allowed to rail against and anathematize, much less persecute them, confiscate their estates, banish them from their homes, and country as some have done, and even torment them to death. Such conduct is a breach of the great principles of christianity that shall bring down the vengeance of God on the heads of many, who in different ages of the world have professed christianity. The character of Christ's church is to be persecuted, not to persecute.

Priscilla.—Do you not remember when the Saviour was travelling through Samaria, and was denied entertainment in a certain village, because he was going to Jerusalem, two of his disciples would have called down fire from heaven upon the place, but he soon gave them to understand their error, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' The Jewish dispensation allowed force in the externals of religion, but he let them know that this was not to be the case in his.

Aquila.—O! no, his dispensation is one of grace, and he gave his disciples to know they had entered on a new era in religious matters. They were not 'under the law but under grace.'

Apollos.—But it is said God hates his enemies, and David said, 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee,' &c.

Aquila.—I defy any man to prove that God hates those who are good men, however in error, much less authorizes a persecution against them. And that

conscientiousness which leads them to die for the sake of their opinions, is evidence incontestible of their sincerity. We have pointed out what we are to understand by hatred in the Deity, and as no circumstances can place us in his position, though he should be averse to the wicked, which is the case, yet have we to discharge toward them, and all men, our duties, which are imperious.

Apollos —Are there not degrees in hatred as in other vices.

Aquila.—There are; the first is *enmity*, which is an inveterate degree thereof, and seeks an occasion to do our neighbour ill. When this happens on both sides, it is a breach of peace, when on one side only, it is a breach of charity. But there is another kind of hatred no less vile than the former. It is *envy*, the repining at another's prosperity. The heinousness of this appears in that the envious man does not seek any thing for himself, but only grieves at another's good fortune, which cannot damage him. And if he envies another for the good he enjoys, which he himself desires, this is an ambition that is repugnant to charity, which is of a benificent and a communicative nature. Besides the benefits, which he envies and desires are not religion, and which, though far superior to it in all its parts, he may have for asking, and God's grace will help to the attainment.

Apollos.—I see envy has not the least pretence for an excuse.

Aquila.—No! indeed—hatred may sometimes seem reasonable towards a very wicked person who has personally injured us, and while a conscientious man will know that is sinful, and a breach of charity, the less religious will justify it, but envy has no apology to make—it is a hydra of vices—it caused Cain to slay the holy Abel, and Joseph's brothers to sell him as a slave into Egypt. And all the persecutions of Christ and his apostles may be traced to this diabolical disposition.

Apollos.—What a cruel sin this is. O! every minister of Jesus ought to preach against it.

Aquila.—I will point out a few things as a remedy against it. Let us consider the great goodness of God, who scatters his good things with an indifferent hand on all mankind, and as he has designed all men to be useful to one another, so he has bestowed greater blessings on some, that they may impart them to others, so that to envy such is to arraign the divine bounty. And moreover we ought to consider the interest of the whole church, or state, or of mankind in general, which we are all obliged in our several capacities to promote, so that there is no occasion of envying, but rather of praising God for his goodness, in raising up such excellent instruments, as advance our interest and salvation.

Priscilla.—How few ever consider these very important things.

Aquila.—This is too true. But all ought to remember that envy is a sin of the heart which is hostile to every principle of christian charity and brotherly love. And as for hatred, God has declared it murder, for 'he that hateth his brother is a murderer.'

Apollos.—And yet men can enter into mortal combat, and die with this principle predominating and ruling the whole soul.

Aquila.—And such is the prevalence of what is called the law of honour, that men are permitted, to the shame of all laws, civil and religious, and the insult of all authority, both of God and man, coolly and deliberately to enter the field with the murderous intention of killing his fellow, and bidding defiance to the God of justice. The poor wretch, who ruined by drink, and infuriated by passion, in an evil hour, kills a man, is hung by the neck until he is dead! dead! dead! as unfit to dwell, even in a dungeon, in this world, and few suppose that God will ever have mercy on him. But the cold hearted duellist, in whose bosom rankles the fell hate of his murderous soul, enters the combat, determined to kill. God's judg-

ment is that he is a murderer, and shall have his punishment. O! when I think how many amiable wives, and lovely children, and fond parents have had their hearts broken, and have been bereaved by this diabolical practice, I can, my friend—but be warm in opposition to it.[1]

Apollos.—I never think of it, that I do not wonder at the ignorance of man.

Aquila.—And black hearted cruelty too, for as Doctor Clarke has said, all duellists are murderers, each meets the other with the design of killing. He who shoots his antagonist dead is a murderer, and he who is shot is also a murderer, the survivor should be hanged as such, and both buried side by side, at some cross way, as a warning to others, that they sin not.[2]

Priscilla.—But the love of God is a sovereign cure for all these wicked tempers.

Aquila.—It is, Charity, heaven born charity! not alms giving, but love, the love of God, and out of it, the love of our neighbour, not only prohibits all cruelty and every revengeful act, but every evil and injurious thought. This is the religion that shall live when earth itself shall have passed away. This is not a mere speculative principle in the head, it is a flaming love, my dear friend—in the heart. It is an active principle, not properly a single virtue, but a disposition residing in the heart, as a fountain whence all the virtues of candour, benignity, forbearance, generosity, compassion, and liberality, as so many native streams flow, and run as from the holiness and general good will of the soul to every son of Adam. Philosophy never could teach such a principle, the schoolmen never could invent such a rule, 'do to others as ye would that others should do to you.' Only Jesus, the 'light of the world,' could give to man the key, and although to discharge this duty is impossible with the unregenerate man; yet, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost given unto us, all is natural, and all is easy, then the converted man loves his veriest foe, and is ready to kiss the dust from his feet, to prove the ardour and the sincerity of his affection.

Priscilla.—This is the principle, the genuine, the holy principle, by which the lion and the lamb are brought together. And it shall burn and blaze on our hearts when the world shall be consumed at the word of the Almighty.

Aquila.—O! Almighty God, grant unto us thy love, the essence of religion, in all its divine perfections, that we may live and enjoy it forever and ever. Amen.

COLLOQUY XXII.

GENERAL DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS CONTINUED—OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TOWARD MAN, AND ITS CONTRARY INJUSTICE.

Aquila.—At our last interview we considered, my brother Apollos—at large that charity, which is a fundamental duty that we owe to our fellow men, and we propose now to consider righteousness that other general duty, which we likewise owe to all, and injustice its opposite.

Apollos.—What is this righteousness of which you speak?

Aquila.—It is that justice or equity according to which, as far as practicable, we regulate our conduct toward man. Of this term there are various acceptations. Sometimes it denotes the whole of religion, and in this sense our Lord uses it

[1] One of the first friends of my youth fell in a duel.

[2] The Legislature of Virginia, my native state, has done much, by passing a law, not only to prohibit this base practice, but to deprive the duellist of every post of profit and honour under the government of the state. This, however, was not done till many a broken heart had mourned a murdered relative.

when he says, 'For I say unto you except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' This is the new birth spoken of by our Lord to Nicodemus, 'ye must be born again,' of which the scribes and Pharisees knew nothing. Sometimes again, however, it signifies the whole duty we owe our neighbour, and that special virtue which gives to every man his due. Besides these also, it denotes fidelity and constancy in observing the divine precepts, and last of all, it sometimes signifies beneficence.[1]

Apollos.—Then it partakes somewhat of the nature of charity.

Aquila.—We propose to consider it as a virtue distinct from charity, which has been defined as a constant propension and readiness, as far as possible, to render to every man whatever is his due.

Apollos.—And what are its proper objects?

Aquila.—All external things of any kind. All things in which the right of property can be claimed, and although the body and reputation may both fall under this head, yet the common objects of justice are possessions, whether real or personal, whether of money or estate, for about these claimants mostly contend, and concerning them the question of right arises. This virtue then takes it for granted that men have a just dominion over the things which they have gained to themselves, as their property, and that God, who has given the earth for their possession, has also granted to them the just rule thereof.[2]

Apollos.—Is it so, that according to some, the just dominion of this world belongs only to the elect. All men in the fall of Adam, save those unconditionally appointed to eternal life, being without inheritance therein?

Aquila.—This is an opinion built on a ruinous foundation, as we have, on another occasion shown, there being no such an absolute election without condition. And this opinion would become the mother of all sedition, for as all would be willing, on such conditions to be the elect, so also would they be ready to put others out of their possessions in order to inherit the same themselves. And moreover, it is directly against the Holy Scriptures, which, while it informs us that Christ had not in this world 'where to lay his head,' also informs us that his servants, the elect, whose master declared, 'my kingdom is not of this world,' do not 'lay up for themselves treasures upon earth,' but their inheritance is in another and a better clime than this.

Apollos.—But does not St. Paul say, 'All things are yours?'

Aquila.—In the context, no mention is made, my friend—of the good things of this life at all. St. Paul shows that all human boastings, as to things of this life, were vain. They were not especially to boast of being disciples either of Apollos or himself, 'for all things are yours.' Glory not in men, for all they have God gave them, and all was given for your sake. So that this text has no such meaning. The fact is, that all men have a lawful dominion over the things of this world conceded to them by the Almighty, and the things which they have by lawful methods secured to themselves, as their property, may be possessed by a just title.

Apollos.—But how is this title acquired?

Aquila.—In several ways, sometimes by a just *seizure* and a lawful entering into the possession of a thing. At other times, by the right of *inheritance,* when a man succeeds another as heir to his estate by the lawful will of the testator. Also, by *donation,* when a man freely grants another any part or portion of his whole estate. Sometimes by *wages,* which are a reward for work done. And lastly, by *contract,* when one man makes over his estate to another by some obligatory act or deed.[3]

[1] Limborch. [2] Smith and Say. [3] Say and Wayland.

Apollos.—But tell me, what do you mean by a just seizure? I do not understand this title exactly.

Aquila.—The lawful entering of any thing, especially land, is considered a just seizure. Anciently the earth was the habitation common for all men, without any special distinction of possessions, but upon the increase of mankind a certain portion fell to every man, who having made the first seizure, or who had first possessed it, and he was considered its owner. Unless God, out of his special favour was pleased to give the possession thereof to another.

Apollos.—Was this ever the case?

Aquila.—It was, for God, as the sovereign of the world did by decree dispossess the Canaanites, and grant their possessions as a donation to the descendants of Abraham by Isaac. Thus the first division of dominions was introduced, which was not only necessary but just.[1]

Apollos.—Do you say it was necessary?

Aquila.—I do, for the avoiding and preventing all contentions that might every day happen about the right of property. And besides, all things might be better looked after and improved when divided into small parts, which are generally neglected when held in common, as is evident from the state of all Indian and barbarous countries. It was just, because it was founded not only on human but divine right, thus that God himself ordered the distribution of men over the whole world, his possession, and effected it by confounding the language of the whole earth, and sending man forth from building the tower of Babel. Hence even to this day the islands and uninhabited portions of the earth fall to the share of those who first settle them, and of right they should for the peaceable administration of things.[2]

Apollos—Justice then is conversant about those external things over which a man has a right by a just title?

Aquila.—Yes—and this consists in righteousness, being chiefly concerned about more or less. For when there is any contract made between two persons, if righteousness be observed, it is impossible but that one will have more than the other, while both may have some portion assigned them. The proportion thereof has been spoken of as either simple or analogical, the former lying between two terms, and the latter has been called a similitude of ratios. These terms, however, are better suited to the arguments of political economists, my friend—than to our subject, it will however lead us to notice that this righteousness or justice, of which we speak, is either *distributive* or *commutative*.[3]

Apollos.—What is distributive justice?

Aquila.—Speaking in regard to the things, of course, of this world, it is that which is concerned in the distribution of those public honours and rewards which observes an analogical proportion, as just now suggested, as distributing things to persons according to their merit and dignity somewhat unequally. But commutative justice is that which we have chiefly to consider at this time, and which regards our subject chiefly.

Apollos.—What is commutative justice, my friend?

Aquila.—It is that righteousness which is taken up chiefly in contracts, and relates to the goods of private men. Herein a simple or arithmetical proportion is observed, since it regards the value of the things without any respect had to persons. But for the due observance of justice in commutations and contracts, it is not always necessary to make retribution in the same kind, number, and quantity. For although this be requisite in restoring any thing committed to our charge, yet in the business of commutation it cannot take place; for it very often happens either that a man cannot, or else it is to no purpose to repay a thing in

[1] Vattel, Say, and Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch.

the same kind. Therefore this simple proportion andr etaliation is not required, unless a compact or obligation, or the divine law in some cases enjoined it.[1]

Apollos.—Commutative justice then consists in paying to another the price agreed on for property, which by contract he delivers me?

Aquila.—Or if it be agreed on that payment shall be made in a certain time, the promise until the time has elapsed is, instead of the thing itself, when payment must be made.

Apollos.—And if payment be not made a wrong is done?

Aquila.—Still there is room for what is called corrective justice, whereby matters are adjusted, and the injured party is satisfied, from the fact of incapacity to pay, from circumstances not under the control of the buyer, say losses by fire or other providential acts. Sometimes by the fraudulent deeds of A, B is placed in a condition not to be able to pay C, and so C is rendered incapable of paying D, so far does the injustice of one man often affect others.

Apollos.—And to restore to one whatever has been unlawfully obtained is restitution?

Aquila.—It is, and nearly allied to justice is equity. This is, as has been suggested, a moderation used in requiring our due. For the laws are general rules, prescribing what is just, considered in itself without any other circumstance. Now it may happen that a fact may be attended by some circumstances which a legislator had not foreseen; if he had, it would have been provided for. Here then it is, that equity takes place, it corrects and moderates the rigor of the law, not minding so much the letter of it as the intention of the legislator, and the dictates of reason and conscience.[2]

Apollos.—What then are the offices of equity?

Aquila.—They are two, when we require any thing justly of another, either upon our own or the public account, we should not stand too rigidly upon our terms of right, especially if the debtor be an honest but poor man, and other circumstances persuade us to recede a little from our right. Again, if any thing be demanded of us which we cannot deny to be justly due, though by some special pretence of law we might be able to defend ourselves, yet we ought not to make use of such an exception, but should voluntarily forego our right, as there are weighty reasons why we should not make use of law, which might be done, righteousness requiring the reverse.

Apollos.—But as justice consists in a righteous proportion, I would ask, my friend—if it is correct, in trading, to purchase goods cheap, and then sell them dear, and at an advance as great as we can? Is not this injustice, and consequently contrary to the divine law?

Aquila.—It is not, I presume, unlawful to trade according to the custom thereof, so far as on the whole that custom may be equitable. A man buys cheap but hazards much, sells high and may have to buy the next stock higher still. There is danger of extortion unless his profits be restrained within due bounds. For the article may be necessary to some people who could not be furnished with the necessaries of life, and consequently could not subsist without it. And moreover, it is no where forbid that I know of, except so far as a breach of the golden rule which requires us to do as we would be done by. On the whole, an advance of twenty-five per centum, including and covering all risk, is considered a fair profit on the capital invested.

Apollos.—But does not St. James say, 'Go to now, ye that say to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain, whereas ye know not what shall be on to-morrow.' Is not this a prohibition of trading for gain?

[1] Vattel and Smith. [2] Smith and Wayland.

Apollos.—I think not, he only forbids the placing the heart so much upon it, as to be induced to purpose to do a thing not in the divine strength, saying, 'if the Lord will.' Now if any man shall look at his own industry, and not at the necessity of divine assistance, and thus purpose, he does wrong, but he may trade if he will do it as a christian man, and profit too, provided he 'does to all men as he would that they should do to him.' Nor does the gain obtained by trading seem to be opposed to the righteousness of proportion required in justice, for prices always rise and fall according to scarcity or plenty. He, therefore, who buys a commodity at a cheap price in countries where there is a plenty of it, and at perhaps the hazard of life transports it to another country where it is scarce, especially if it be a necessary of life, deserves in justice an advance on the same, and there is no breach of righteousness, for he buys and sells at the market prices of the different countries in which he trades, and it is correct that there should be a recompense over and above for the danger and loss to which he exposes himself, and no constraint on him who buys.

Apollos.—But many say that in the course of trade things are brought over from other countries which are not needed, and are only calculated to augment a disposition to luxury.

Aquila.—This is true, but we ought to distinguish between the use and the abuse of a thing God has mercifully provided the world with these things for man's comfort, and also enabled him to transport them to other lands, but if they are abused it is not the fault of the merchant by any means, but the fault of the consumer. True, there should be no injustice and cheating in merchandizing, this is a sin any where, but if men who buy will injure themselves they must, my friend—abide the consequence. I have never traded in goods for myself or any man, and never expect to do so, but I have from close observation concluded that merchants are a most valuable portion of any community. Among jobbers and their counter boys you will find unprincipled persons, but these are not the high minded and often pious men, who find a market for the surplus commodities of every land, and thus give employment to, while they feed virtually the poor, who otherwise would beg bread or die in a ditch. Such men are next in importance in any land to the farmer, who makes the bread, and doubtless as merchants extend commerce, God will make them and their ships the means of carrying the gospel to the ends of the world. A ship of war can never carry that peaceful chart of man's salvation, it must go in a merchant's ship, an ark of peace. God Almighty send it to the ends of the earth. Amen.

Apollos.—My very soul responds a hearty amen to this blessed prayer.

Aquila.—Pardon, my friend—this digression—we will proceed. As men are greedy of gain, and are too apt to be led off from the path of righteousness by the love of money, there are certain rules which ought to be pursued in order to render merchandizing just, and consonant to the laws of christianity.

Apollos.—What are these, my brother?

Aquila.—Let no vender impose upon a purchaser by putting off and palming upon him his damaged goods and wares, which for want of skill to discern, or because they are imperceptible, are purchased as good. Let no buyer decry articles in order to get them cheaper, and tell false tales of lower prices at other stores. Let no seller cheat with false weights and measures, nor exchange good articles when sold, for others much worse, and send them in their place.

Apollos.—Indeed, these are good rules and will work well on both parties.

Aquila.—Let no buyer take advantage of the necessities of the seller, in order to get an article below the market price. If any persons are to have articles sold them cheaper, it ought to be the poor. O! when shall we find a merchant whose piety will induce him to sell to the necessitous, a yard of goods, or a pound

of life's necessaries, as low as he will sell a hundred yards, a hundred pounds, to a wealthy sinner, for luxurious living.

Priscilla.—Ah! many a poor widow has to pay for her children's bread and clothing, earned by her own hands, with many a pang of soul, from fifty to one hundred per cent. advance on the wholesale prices.

Aquila.—Things absolutely necessary for human life ought always to be sold according to the market price, and have in them the legal weight, as bread and provisions of all kinds. There can be no excuse in religion for a man selling provisions above the accustomed or market price. Where is the good man who, when bread is scarce, while he has in store purchased at low prices, will instead of selling to speculators at exorbitant prices, dispose to the poor and working classes, at a moderate profit, and that by retail. Where is the vender of bread stuffs that will allow the poor a reasonable time for payment, or grant them facilities in the purchase of a little, that are granted to the rich in the purchase of a great deal? All those practices of praising goods on the part of the seller, darkening of windows, and an augmentation of the prime weight of articles, &c. are contrary to right, as well as that disposition to trouble without intending to buy, and decrying the quality of goods in order to purchase at a lower than market prices. Any christian man, if he need an article and has the money to buy it, ought to be willing to purchase at the accustomed prices; lower he ought not to want it if he could get it.

Apollos.—Is usury lawful and in accordance with righteousness?

Aquila.—It depends somewhat on that which you define usury.

Apollos.—I mean by it an amount of interest over what is allowable by law.

Aquila.—Usury has been called sometimes an amount of interest agreed on between parties, without respect to law. Some do believe, any amount of interest unjust. It does appear, however, reasonable that he who is to profit by the loan of a man's money, ought to give to the lender a portion of the profit to be made by it, especially as the true owner could use it without the interference of the other. But it does appear to me to be sinful when a greater amount is demanded for the use of money than the laws of the land allow, for two reasons—first, it is a violation of civil law in matters where legislators have the right to act, and as good citizens we are bound to obey, more so as christians, and secondly, it is a violation of a principle laid down in the purchase and sale of goods, it is giving for money more than the market price, and that price too, established by positive law, enacted by the constituted authorities of the country, whom, as christians, we are bound to obey. As for compound interest, as well as usury, it is a method by which the entire capital of a man is consumed. I do not think that a christian can lend a poor man money to buy bread to sustain himself and his family, when they are in want of the necessaries of life, on interest, and have a clear conscience. How many poor men are kept at work all their lives to pay a little money occasionally lent, and the interest thereon. If it were for trade, my friend—it would be a different thing, but money lent for bread to feed a starving family on interest, especially when life cannot be well sustained without it, is a sin that God will judge.

Apollos.—O! this is a cruel thing, it never entered into my mind to look at its virulence before.

Aquila.—I am clear that when a profit is to ensue from trade, a portion of that profit ought to go by way of interest to the lender, who is the true owner of the money, but, I doubt, my friend—whether a christian under any other circumstance, can take interest with a clear conscience, especially from the poor and the house of God.

Apollos.—O! I do not like taking interest from the church.

Aquila.—This is not as it ought to be. A church ought always to be paid for, or better never be built, but if any are so good as to volunteer their money for its use, let it go without interest, for surely God is daily paying us enough without our demanding interest from him. No church can be said to be given to the Lord, and to be his until it be paid for. When this is done, we have only to present, and God will receive it.

Apollos.—But does not God forbid the lending of money on interest altogether, has he not said that it is an offence to lend on any usury or interest at all in the laws for the Jews?

Aquila.—I will quote the texts, my friend—that you may see it is only lending to a poor or a necessitous brother, thus 'If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury,' i. e. any interest at all. 'And if thy brother be waxen poor and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him, yea though he be a stranger, or a sojourner, that he may live with thee, take thou no usury of him or increase,' i. e. interest, 'but fear thy God that thy brother may live with thee, thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.' The same law is virtually rehearsed in Deuteronomy. Now who does not see that the money lent, is to the poor and necessitous, even to those in need of the common sustenance of life?

Apollos.—This is obvious indeed, but does not the Saviour say, 'lend hoping for nothing again.'

Aquila.—Surely he here speaks of money extorted from us by force, not of those to whom it is trusted by agreement or specific contract,' my friend—for he expressly calls them 'our enemies.' The meaning does appear to be, that so far from revenge we ought to give them freely the money which they would extort, though we hope for nothing again. But suppose all manner of lending is meant, nothing can be inferred from it against what has been said, for what is lent, is either to a poor or to a rich man. If to a poor man, nothing is to be expected if he be unable to pay interest or principal as said: if to a rich man, then the meaning is that though he should prove ungrateful, yet lend it if he ask of thee, 'hoping for nothing,' i. e. though thou canst not hope that he will do as much for thee.'[1]

Apollos.—This seems to be a reasonable explication.

Aquila.—A third one may be added. The original is 'despairing nothing,' and has been by some supposed to mean, by thy kindness, cause no man, not even your enemy to despair of your charity, if he should ask it, and this it is thought agrees well with what is said in St. Matthew, 'Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away.'[2]

Apollos.—But, my friend—money is a barren and unfruitful commodity, while interest is of considerable increase, and will eat out the principal.

Aquila.—True, unless properly improved, but while money is barren, as a substance, it is not so as respects its use. What injustice is there in a man's being obliged by bond to give me a share in the profit which he obtains from the use of my money? And if it be lawful to receive rent for a house, or lands, with which to shelter and feed a family, it is certainly lawful to receive an income on the money with which they might be purchased.

Apollos.—But, my friend—leaving interest, how is it with pawn-brokers and bankers?

Aquila.—These are men who advance money, without distinction of rich or poor, on pledges granted. Now whether it be sinful or not, it certainly argues a great want of christian charity to put the poor on the miserable shift of pledging their

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

little all in order to procure the means of present living. In most cases this trade is highly criminal, because all such men do not propose, by that mode of living to relieve the poor, but to make gain. And they never inquire whether the man who pawns property is rich or poor, and it is possible that many an article pledged was stolen from some one, by those who are excited to it because they can procure money thereon, no questions being asked.

Priscilla —If there were no receivers, there would be no thieves.

Aquila.—And if the object were to relieve the poor, the amount of interest, is so enormous as to exceed all bounds, and constitute every pawn-broker, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out a thousand, a bare faced extortioner. O! when shall the day come in which an association shall be formed to give a little money in the form of an extra price for labour, suited to the condition and trade of all the poor, and aid them thus to make a living for themselves and families. Associations of pious men, and of philanthropists ought to be formed in every large community, with committees to inquire into the character and trade, as well as condition of indigent persons, and help them by giving them work to do. Especially ought woman, always tender-hearted and kind, to engage in acts of charity such as these. We cannot otherwise discharge our duties to our fellow men. God has laid us, by his kindness, and that of others, under obligations to do so. How many bereaved and broken-hearted widows are left, especially in cities, to mourn the destitution and distress, often abject, of themselves and children. But especially the poor orphan girl. O! my friend—how often has my heart bled, while I have witnessed the ignominy and wretchedness of some of the most promising flowers that ever bloomed forth in nature's garden. Parents are gone to the grave—friends who flattered and caressed in the hour of prosperity, in adversity, have as depraved man often does, proved faithless and ungrateful. He who plighted his vows for protection and comfort in future life, has proved false, and in the blackness of that dark heart, whose midnight deeds prove him a villain, he has succeeded, and betrayed to ignominy and want, and doomed to mourn through life the loss of all that is dear to a woman's heart; her character, her fair fame. O! when shall holy matrons be found who will pluck, as from hell's iron grasp, those who have been ensnared and ruined by the duplicity and baseness of men?

Apollos.—May not all that you have said in regard to assistance to the poor, be applied to professions also, and the benefits resulting from their exercise?

Aquila.—They ought—it is the disgrace of any profession to let the poor want the aid that it can impart. At every bar there ought to be a society for giving, counsel, without fee, and defending the cause of the fatherless, the widow, and the distressed poor. In every neighbourhood, and city, a society of physicians for granting their advice and administering to the poor and destitute. I have known, and now know, some attornies, as honest men as ever breathed, who do it constantly. And I must say, my friend—it is seldom the case you find a doctor so cold hearted and brutal, as to refuse advice and medicine too, to the afflicted poor. Perhaps, on the great whole, doctors give more to the poor of their education, time and means, than almost any other portion of society.

Priscilla.—I believe they do, but if ever a poor person is cured of a dangerous disease, the doctor is amply repaid, for such, sound his praise and bring him custom.

Aquila.—Well—God pays him for his attention to the poor, 'for he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord.'

Apollos.—A minister of Christ is bound to attend and relieve the poor.

Aquila.—He is, and false and faithless to his God, his people, himself, and his ordination vows, is that minister, who never searches out and seeks to relieve the poor. What? a man sent to preach the gospel to the poor, and not know where

they are, and how they do? Indeed, my brother—this is the disgrace of many in the christian ministry, that they never attend to the Lord's poor. All are his, and his benefits to us lay us under obligations to visit, instruct and relieve them. And I believe, if every minister of every name, would do this, there would be many plucked from ruin and ignominy, that are now in want and disgrace. Few would be left friendless. Did every minister seek out and visit the poor, instruct them in piety, ascertain their wants, call on the rich of his flock to help them, send those who have means, to search out in garrets and cellars, the forsaken, but worthy, destitute persons, who dwell there and oft in silence and in sorrow weep for bread. But I must proceed with our subject.

Apollos.—O! my friend—you have opened in my soul a feeling for the poor, that I hope I never shall forget. I pray God to help me, that in future years, I may never forget that the poor belong peculiarly to my Lord, and that he who giveth to the poor lendeth to him.

Aquila.—The surplus of every house granted to the poor would bestow comfort, and enough on all the needy, in all the world. In continuing our subject let me say, injustice is opposed to righteousness and justice, and is that act whereby a man refuses when he has ability to give another his due. It has several branches.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—It is injurious, in taking what does not belong to us, and in not defending another's right, when it is our duty to do so. It is sometimes done merely by fraud and deceit, and sometimes by violence, by improper weights and measures, over-reaching in a bargain, corrupting of judges, spinning out a trial to exhaust the funds and patience of the poor, and by accusing falsely. Thus was it with Potiphar's wife accusing Joseph, and Jezebel setting up false witnesses against Naboth.

Apollos.—Sometimes it is done by a misconstruction of words, is it not?

Aquila.—It is, by wresting the words of an individual, thus, false witnesses misrepresented the words of our Lord. Sometimes a part of a fact is related, and a part concealed, so as to render it suspicious. So Doeg accused Abimelech to Saul: others accuse men of what they know will take away life, as those wicked persons accused the three Hebrew children and Daniel.

Apollos.—What are the methods of its accomplishment?

Aquila.—It is committed either openly, when a man does not dissemble or conceal it, or covertly, under the profession of friendship, thus Absalom killed Ammon; Joab Amasa, and Judas betrayed his master. Sometimes under the form of justice, as we have seen, sometimes under the mask of religion, so Simeon and Levi killed the Shechemites, and the Pharisees under pretence of making long prayers devoured widows' houses.

Apollos.—What are its causes?

Aquila.—There are several, but the chief are covetousness, as the case of Demetreus and Judas, or ambition, as in the case of Absalom and Athaliah, who killed the 'blood royal,' and Herod who killed all the children about Bethlehem. Sometimes it is pride, as in the case of Haman, who sought to kill Mordecai and the Jews, sometimes the desire of revenge, as was the case with Joseph's mistress, and often it is envy, which occasioned the death of Abel by Cain, and the Saviour by the Jews.

Apollos.—All theft also is injustice.

Aquila.—Surely, of every kind. All simple theft or petty larceny, as it is called, all kidnapping or man stealing, all sacrilege or robbing churches, all embezzling and burglary or breaking houses.

Apollos.—Do you not think that the punishment of theft is generally too severe.

Aquila.—It is, not however, so severe now as formerly, but surely the punishment under the law of Moses, was severe enough, God himself being judge, and

shall the charitable system of christianity be supposed to admit a punishment more severe? What, death for stealing an article not worth twenty dollars? Humanity and religion blush at such a law, and many a judge sworn to keep the law, has wept in secret, at what he was constrained to do in public. God punishes such, according to his own holy rule, with exclusion from his blessed presence.

Apollos.—And can restitution be made in such cases?

Aquila.—Sometimes it can, then it is an act of commutative justice, which makes restitution according to proportion, not according to the dignity of the person. This both nature and religion teach us as correct, the man who has stolen goods must make the restitution, if in his power, or receive no remission, for restitution must be made when it can be.

Apollos.—But if it can, the very thing itself must be restored, if not in our power, the price of the article.

Aquila.—It is so, and all guilty are bound to discharge this solemn duty. To the rightful owner if alive, if not, his heir, and if none, then to God and the poor. As Zaccheus said, 'the one half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore four-fold.'

COLLOQUY XXIII.

THE SPECIAL DUTIES WHICH THE CHRISTIAN OWES HIS FELLOW MEN, COMPREHENDED IN THAT GENERAL ONE CALLED CHARITY OR LOVE—THESE ARE INSTRUCTION, REPROOF, BENEVOLENCE AND HOSPITALITY, PEACEABLENESS, BENEFICENCE AND CLEMENCY.

Aquila.—We have seen, my brother Apollos—that charity and righteousness or justice, are the two great branches of christian duty towards mankind, and have suggested that each comprehends its own particular duties. Those that come under the head of charity or love to man are such as relate to the spiritual and temporal good of our neighbour. With respect to the former, he may be considered as doing his duty, which while it affords joy, encourages us to instruct him, or as not doing it, which occasions that reproof which is deemed expedient for his recovery. With respect to temporal good things, there is benevolence, including hospitality and peaceableness; both of which are to be practised. There are also two virtues, the one called beneficence, which leads us to bestow a part at least of our possessions on our fellow man, and another which regards him as an enemy, as one who has wronged us, yet he still has our kind feelings. This is called clemency. All are included in that love or charity due to man.

Apollos.—What do you mean by instruction here set forth as a part of this benignant and charitable feeling of the christian's heart?

Aquila.—It is that disposition of soul whereby a christian proceeds with cheerfulness in the course of the divine life, so that others may be stimulated by his deeds, and give the opportunity to instruct and point them to the Lord Jesus. The effect is sometimes put for the cause, and the change that occurs in our neighbour, affords both him and us joy, and in beholding the effects of that instruction, we are said to 'rejoice with them that do rejoice.' Indeed the apostle Paul says that the word of God is for 'instruction,' and Christ declares that his children are 'the light of the world.'

Priscilla.—Yes—and 'the salt of the earth.'

Aquila.—This is true, and he has made it an imperious duty to instruct all men as far as possible, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Apollos.—Of course this supposes that they are willing to be taught. How then my friend—can the christian discharge this high and important duty!

Aquila.—We have elsewhere said, by precept, and by example, and now add that we are to conform ourselves as far as possible to the peculiar state of men, in order to accomplish this great and glorious work.

Apollos.—To teach men by precept is to afford through the medium of words instruction to the mind. What is it to teach by example?

Aquila.—It is cheerfully to enforce by the regularity and consistency of our lives, what we have by our advice and counsel taught. So that the beauty of christianity may shine forth, and men may be constrained to acknowledge its vast importance. For a christian is not called by the divine grace, and saved from the pollution of sin for his own sake alone. Far from it my friend—he is to let his 'light so shine before men that they seeing his good works may glorify his father which is in heaven.'

Priscilla.—Ah! experience shows that the holy lives of christians are the surest methods of converting the infidel, and transforming him into a child of God.

Aquila.—True, and on the contrary, nothing more materially hinders the conversion of men, than the irregular lives of those who profess religion. They are led to believe thereby, either that christianity is utterly false, or that those who profess it, are not persuaded of its truth.

Apollos.—All then ought to teach both by precept and example.

Aquila,—They ought, and it is incumbent on all to use every means in their power to enlighten the world; but especially does it devolve on those more eminent for age, or gifts, and office, for men are ever inclined to follow and imitate those whom they regard as superior to themselves, in information and standing.

Apollos.—But is not this making a christian a proclaimer of his own deeds?

Aquila.—By no means. We have said more than once that all ostentation of good works, to be seen of men is vicious, and a bar to that reward which God would otherwise grant to them. 'Take heed that ye do not your alms,' 'to be seen of men,' 'otherwise ye have no reward of your father which is in heaven.' So a needless proclaiming of them is for the praise of men, and is unlawful and criminal. I would however, say, that as it is the christian's duty to live right, so as in the case of Job, it may be sometimes necessary to attest his innocence on the one hand, and the rectitude of his course on the other, in order to excite men to piety.

Apollos.—This though, should be with caution.

Aquila.—Truly, that whether in a public or private station, we use prudence and modesty in divulging our good deeds, and never do it, especially in a private capacity, only when the glory of God and the good of man most evidently demand it. And we must, in order to promote the good of man, be kind and condescending in all our ways, particularly to those of low degree.

Apollos.—But is there not danger in all this, of conforming ourselves too much to this world.

Aquila.—There is danger, else we should not have been warned against it, but in all our actions we should with kindness and condescension adopt ourselves to the condition of all, especially as ministers, becoming without sin, 'all things to all men, that we may gain some.' And this conformity is truly conspicuous, when a christian abstains even from lawful things on account of his weak brother refusing to use even his own liberty in this.

Apollos.—But the christian is often disappointed in all his exertions to promote the cause of piety among men, by their ungodliness.

Aquila.—This is a fact, but still we are to rejoice, in that we have done our duty. I know that we often grieve at the sins of others, especially if they are of

our own families, the church to which we belong, or those in an exalted station, in church or state.

Priscilla.—O! how the backslidings of a minister afflict the pious flock of Christ.

Aquila.—They do indeed, and when such become the emissaries of the devil, to persuade or command men to sin, the grief occasioned is incalculable. Lot's righteous soul was grieved at the sins of the Sodomites, and David said, 'rivers of water run down mine eyes because they keep not thy commandments.'

Priscilla.—Yet is there not a danger of being an injury to others by becoming too complaisant?

Aquila.—There is, for often while christians, especially ministers, ingratiate themselves in the favour of the world they neglect their duty to God, become light, trifling, and sometimes sinful, at least by neglecting some known duty. Thus parents, masters, magistrates and ministers, who do not discharge their duty toward those under their care, by admonishing, commanding, exhorting, entreating, and even reproving and correcting, sin against God. Sometimes, while these do not commit the sin themselves, they indirectly encourage others to do it. In the church, christian discipline is neglected, at home, children and servants are allowed to be disobedient, and never attend divine service in the family, if it be held at all; in the state, crimes are committed, at which public officers wink for fear of their popularity. Many a professor connives at sin.

Priscilla.—O! how true is this.

Aquila.—And how many even of those well trained or educated, by parents now in the cold grave, associate with persecutors, and are found among the opponents of the God of their fathers. Alas! alas! it is enough to make the heart bleed. What the daughter of that holy mother, the son of that pious father, now that their bodies are in the grave, and their souls in heaven, at plays and balls, and parties, and races, running in all the rounds of levity and mirth, according to the custom of this gay world?

Priscilla.—And these because they attend service on Sunday, have an enlightened piety and are very religious.

Aquila.—Still the christian has an important work to perform toward such.

Apollos.—What is that my friend?

Aquila.—It is to correct and reprove them, and this in a brotherly manner.

Apollos.—This is an important, but I should think, a difficult duty.

Aquila.—It is my brother—but when our neighbour has sinned, we are not to suffer sin on him, far from it. We are to reprove his iniquity, and admonish him to return to duty.

Priscilla.—This, though an ungrateful office, nevertheless, is a great instance of charity. Few have at all times the moral courage to reprove sin.

Aquila.—And there are but few men, who can bear to be told of their faults, and as few who feel obliged to it, especially where they are to meet with scorn and contempt, if not hatred for their good will.

Apollos.—But those concerned for the salvation of others should never mind this. If a duty, it ought to be discharged.

Aquila.—Unless it is done men often become hardened in sin, when, whatever difficulties we may be exposed to, a seasonable reproof and timely warning may produce the most salutary effects.

Apollos.—But my friend—whom are we bound to reprove.

Aquila.—First our brethren who fall into sin, and who repent not, these are absolutely our neighbours, of whom we ought to take most especial care.

Apollos.—But christians at present are cut up and divided into sects and parties, and only those of a particular name, call themselves brethren, how then are we to act?

Aquila.—As our charity ought to extend to all men, so this particular act of it ought not to be confined to any particular sect, for if christians, we are all members of the same body, and should reprove sin in one another with all meekness and kindness.

Apollos.—On what grounds should we act in all this?

Aquila.—There should be a certain knowledge that some sin has been committed, otherwise the reproof must be wholly inapplicable, and then too, it must be done, with some prospect at least of success, for to reprove a scorner is wholly useless, Deity himself being judge.

Apollos.—But while it is the duty of all, do tell me, by whom is reproof especially in difficult cases to be administered.

Aquila.—We are commanded to exhort one another daily, while it is called day. So that generally speaking, it is the duty of all to reprove; but it is chiefly incumbent on those whose office or excellent gifts would render it more suitable for them, to administer it with success.

Apollos.—He must be free himself from such a sin as he reproves in others.

Aquila.—Certainly, and not only free from the sin, but even suspicion, otherwise his reproofs are of little avail. But even if guilty, he may give evidence of a genuine repentance, and in the confession of his own sin advance the spiritual interest of the person reproved.

Apollos.—But I have always thought that the manner of doing it is of vast importance.

Aquila.—It is so my friend.—There are many ways of reproving, but certainly it is difficult to get the right way. A reproof ought to be founded on the word of God, as the only rule of life and manners. It ought to be tempered with christian charity, and mildness of expression. There must be no aggravation of circumstances, this might provoke and render one listless to all admonition, love must be breathed out in all our remarks, and there must be an eye to the glory of God.

Apollos.—But how when a man is fast asleep?

Aquila.—Then words of an alarming kind may be used, to arouse the sinner from his deadly slumber. And this must be done with great prudence. Do not take a time of passion, when the man is out of humour, but stay for a calmer time, and then use all the kindness and conciliation of a christian, and a brother. Age and other circumstances must always be taken into the account, and in every case we should deal tenderly with tender feelings. Parents are not to be reproved before their children, nor those in authority, before those who are governed by them. As a public magistrate before the populace, this lessens the authority of God's ministers, and excites prejudice in the human heart All efforts of this kind should be in meekness and in perseverance, that our fellow men may be rendered better thereby.[1]

Apollos.—We are not to be afraid of the anger or hatred of those who cannot bear such admonitions.

Aquila.—O no! we should discharge our duty and plainly tell a man, though he be a superior, as to his standing in this life, his sin, and remember the faithful conduct of Elijah, who reproved Jezebel, and John the Baptist, who boldly reproved Herod, though for it he lost his life.

Priscilla.—And see how Jesus reproved the Jews.

Apollos.—As this is such an important though an afflictive duty, it ought to be well received by those reproved.

Aquila.—Indeed it ought with charity, and esteem for those who take such an interest in our prosperity, we should remember that the reproofs of our friends, are the wholesome physic of precious souls, and proceed from a sincere love

[1] Limborch.

toward them. It should be received with humility, and a determination to repent and sincerely implore the mercy of God.

Apollos.—And faithful is he that will take up this cross.

Aquila.—Christian men are too apt to run into the opposite extreme, and be so complaisant as to neglect their duties toward others. We are afraid of offending man, we connive at his faults, as if it were not our duty to regard our brother's welfare; and their daily sins, lie at our door: oaths, Sabbath breaking, neglect of duty, all, all are suffered on them, and we fear to reprove.

Apollos.—This is surely true.

Aquila.—Still there must as suggested ever be a benevolence, and kindness of soul, that should set forth our conduct toward others, in the best light, and we should prove how much, we seek the joy and happiness of all.

Apollos.—That is, we are to be benevolent, and kind to all.

Aquila.—Yes, and in every condition in human life. In prosperity we are to rejoice with them that rejoice, especially if this joy proceed from any spiritual advantage that accrues to our neighbour. In adversity we are to sympathize with him, or as an apostle has said, 'weep with them that weep.' And again, 'remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.'

Apollos.—But here those are only meant who suffer for righteousness sake.

Aquila.—True, and therefore, true christian benevolence is branched out into the following particulars. We ought to pour out the most ardent and fervent prayers for those that are afflicted. We ought to visit, comfort, and exhort them to persevere in the faith. We ought to intercede for, and defend the captive, that his innocence, with the justice and truth of his cause may appear to all men, and above all our charitable affections, are not to be expressed in fruitless words, but by real deeds.

Apollos.—This is benevolence, and how vast are the motives to it my friend.

Aquila.—Indeed they are vast, for among others we find that spiritual bond, by which the members of Christ's flock are bound together, so that if one member suffer, all suffer with it, and indeed the misery of man seems eased in a great degree by the condolence and benevolence of his fellows. There is also a profit in it, for in this way we discern the frailty of our lives, and uncertainty of all worldly good.

Apollos.—But many are insensible to all these glorious considerations.

Aquila.—They are, and this insensibility is the very opposite of christian benevolence. It does not feel another's wo, and to it may be added the envy that sorrows at another's prosperity, or rejoices at his misfortunes.

Apollos.—Hospitality is closely allied to benevolence, I suppose?

Aquila.—It is, this is that kind of deportment that extends itself, and proves the benevolence of our hearts toward all, especially to strangers. It is recommended in both the Old and New Testaments. Thus Job says, 'The stranger did not lodge in the street but I opened my doors to the traveller.' Isaiah speaks of it thus, 'Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.' St. Paul says, 'distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality;' and 'let brotherly love continue, be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'

Apollos.—This is a most delightful duty.

Aquila.—It is not properly an exercise of kindness to our friends, but to strangers, sometimes poor people, who by the calamities of war are driven from home and from their country, some wander in the earth to spread the cause of Christ, neither are to be excluded. Every good man must be hospitable, he cannot be

otherwise. Who has ever read some of those acts of hospitality in the Old Testament without being moved thereby?

Apollos.—What are its several acts?

Aquila.—To give the stranger entertainment, as did Abraham and Lot the angels that visited them. By acts of kindness to rescue the good and the virtuous out of the hands of the violent and wicked. We are to do for them all the good offices that we can, supply them with all necessaries, and protect them against all injuries.[1]

Priscilla.—And there are immense motives to these acts of kindness. There is the common lot of human nature, by the inconstancy of which it may happen that we may need the hospitality of others.

Aquila.—And while the pious and virtuous are protected, we may do a deed of piety that shall tell upon the destiny of some yet unborn. Moreover, some have thereby entertained angels, ministers of God, and above all, hospitality has the promise of a great reward. 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. But whosoever shall give to drink a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say to you he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Inhospitality is directly repugnant to this great principle, and indeed to the laws of nations as well as the law of God, and there may be an infringement of this great duty either by the denial of all acts of kindness, or by the cheating or robbing the stranger, and sometimes by passing severe laws to prevent the oppressed from entering a country, especially where they are refugees from their own on account of religion.[2]

Apollos.—How many have suffered anguish almost extreme by such unfriendly and inhospitable treatment.

Aquila.—From what has been said on benevolence and hospitality, it will be easy to perceive the quiet disposition of those who really love God. And this leads me to notice another trait in their character. They are peaceable, and are in fact peace-makers. This prohibits the christian from all injury to others, and commands us to do them all the good we possibly can.

Apollos.—This is a kind of reciprocal duty, one in which there are two parties, and without which there cannot be peace.

Aquila.—It is so, for it is the exercise of that benevolence and love which predominate in every christian bosom, between two of undivided affection, or the restoration of it between two who have unfortunately been divided, or between two who have been wholly at enmity, but are now restored to peace and unanimity, in which they live to honour and glorify God. And of course this christian virtue is reciprocal or otherwise. It is the former when both parties do all they can to procure peace, and the latter resists all advances toward it.

Apollos.—Included in it, then, are different kinds of peace-making.

Aquila.—It is two-fold, concerning civil life on the one hand, which is a political or civil peace, or about things relating to religion, and then it is a religious, christian, or ecclesiastical peace.

Apollos.—Peace is to be sought in civil as well as religious society.

Aquila.—It is. St. Paul says, 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live

[1] Clarke and Limborch.

[2] The late act of the Austrian emperor, in forbidding the oppressed inhabitant of Poland his country, is an infringement of this principle for which God will judge him. Even those who had entered have been sent off by Russian and Austrian tyranny homeless and friendless. God grant them a quiet home in happy America!

peaceably with all men.' And again, 'Follow peace with all men.' Now this is to be maintained either between private persons or between bodies and societies of men. It is to exist between distinct communities or bodies politic, as nations or states, and then it is opposed to war; or between persons of the same nation or state, and then it is opposed to civil dissentions and factions.

Apollos.—And in what consists its perfection as it regards its degrees?

Aquila.—First, in external tranquillity, wherein every one enjoys his own in peace, though the minds of all are not united, or in internal peace, which comprehends a sincere union of mind. Two things are therefore necessary to this, a peaceable disposition of mind, and such actions as tend toward procuring peace.

Apollos.—If there be not a peaceable disposition to, engagements for peace will never be permanent.

Aquila.—It is just so, and for the attainment of this disposition peace should be our only aim, and not our private interest, for when this fails peace is gone; and a man should most heartily and sincerely love and seek it, consequently he must avoid those things calculated to create broils and strife, such as self-love, covetousness, ambition, a spirit of revenge, envy, groundless suspicions and jealousies, and all that selfish policy which is for the advancement of oneself, whatever may become of another.[1]

Apollos.—And all should endeavour by good acts to promote it.

Aquila.—They should indeed, and so by good offices win on others. We are willing, as citizens, to bear our share in the public and common duties of our common country. By a friendly intercourse we are to endeavour to win upon the affections of others, and are patiently to endure the common ills of this life which fall to our portion, or abandon society and its blessings altogether.[2]

Apollos.—But as peace is somewhat reciprocal, one man of course can not always bring it about.

Aquila.—O! no—but he can do his part. Hence says St. Paul, 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.' Thereby intimating that it will sometimes happen that, by the wickedness of others, there can be no peace procured even by a peaceable man. Suppose, however, there is peace now existing, we as christians are never to break it, or cause a rupture; and if others will do so, it is better for us to put the best construction on it, and not excite to anger. If we, however, have been the cause of a breach, we are frankly to make the necessary reparation, if our neighbour has done so, we are not to be implacable but seek to win him by good offices sincerely.

Apollos.—How noble this is?

Aquila.—And how vast the motives to it, my friend. Look at its equity, we are brethren of the same common stock and should be at peace, 'for God hath made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth.' Besides, God commands it, and here is the necessity thereof, 'Have peace one with another,' 'Follow peace with all men,' 'Live peaceably with all men.' And this is our own private interest, 'for every house divided against itself cannot stand,' and we are to 'take heed' how we 'bite and devour one another, lest we be consumed one of another.' Besides, dissentions are wicked, and are to be numbered among the 'works of the flesh.' By it many sins may be avoided, see the case of Abraham and Lot, and living in its exercise we serve him who is called the 'prince' and the 'God of peace.'

Apollos.—But what things are needful to establish an ecclesiastical and spiritual peace?

Aquila.—This is a peace between members of that flock which Christ has gathered together. In Scripture it is urgently recommended. Those among whom

[1] Wayland. [2] Clarke and Limborch.

it is to be maintained are the persons who 'call on the Lord out of a pure heart.' In order to secure peace each one should possess faith in Christ, and evince by his conduct that he is a true believer, such as God approves. In this probationary state men are liable to error, and therefore the greater necessity, of diligently and humbly pressing on, in the faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—And there are to be as great if not greater efforts for a spiritual, than a civil or temporal peace.

Aquila.—Yes—and beside the acts required for securing the former, we are, in order to obtain the latter, to remember that all who agree in the fundamentals of religion are not to condemn and attack one another, but are to look on each other 'as brethren,' and heirs of the same promises. They should, as often as convenient, assemble in each others chapels, publicly pray and labour together, though differing in things acknowledged non-essential; and above all, they should embrace all convenient opportunities of commemorating the holy sacrament together, especially in public, in order to let the world see 'how these christians love.'

Priscilla.—O! how desirable such a course, and how amiable would it appear?

Aquila.—And even in the event of a difference of opinion in any doctrinal point in religion, we are, if possible, as members of the same branch of Christ's church, to give no occasion of schism, but to our utmost avoid it. In order to this we are not permitted to pass a rash judgment on those who dissent from us, as though he were moved by any other cause than conscientious motives. We are to beware of multiplying controversies, taking for the main point in dispute adventitious circumstances. And in charging the opinions of others with absurdity, we are never to charge the persons themselves, and make the question a personal one, instead of one about principle.

Apollos.—I do think these are good rules.

Aquila.—Contrary to this true christian virtue, peaceableness, is discord or strife, by which men's affections are alienated from one another. And of course, is either political or ecclesiastical, the former leading to dissentions, broils, and wars, and the latter, schism and ruptures in the church of God. This latter is more particularly repugnant to the great interest of man.

Apollos.—What is schism?

Aquila.—Schism, in its general meaning, signifies division or separation, particularly on account of religion. It is properly a division among those who stand in one connection or fellowship; but when the difference is carried so far as to break off all communion and intercourse one with another, and form distinct connections for obtaining the general ends of that religious fellowship which they once cultivated, it is undeniable, there is something different from that schism which is spoken of in the New Testament.[1]

Apollos.—This is a separation from the body.

Aquila.—Certainly, and the word schism in the Bible does not literally signify an open separation, but men may be guilty of schism by such an alienation of affection from the brethren as violates the internal union in the hearts of christians, though there be no error in doctrine, nor separation from communion.[2]

Apollos.—It is then a division in feeling and affection, while there is none in profession and in church membership.

Aquila.—I surely think so, for to withdraw from a communion is the privilege of every man. But to remain together and continue disunited in affection is wrong. Hence St. Paul, in pointing out the works of the flesh, names among them 'variance, emulations, wraths, strifes, seditions, heresies,' &c. To the Corin-

[1] Watson. [2] Campbell.

thians he says, 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. It hath been declared,' &c. 'there are contentions among you,' 'I of Paul,' 'I of Apollos,' 'I of Cephas,' &c. All however in the same communion. So says he in another place, 'First of all when ye come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it.' It is worthy of notice that the word Σχισμα, SCHISMA, a *schism* or *division*, is only so used by way of metonomy, the thing itself being a rupture in affection, which produces this course of conduct. The effect is put for the cause.

Apollos.—That is when they who ought to live in union and concord are divided and disunited in affection, though members of the same communion.

Aquila.—It is so, and there may be reasons which, even on this very score, may make it requisite to separate in order that each may enjoy that quiet which is so necessary to advancement in religion.

Apollos.—And may not other reasons be offered to justify a separation from a church.

Aquila.—There certainly may be several reasons offered: such as the maintaining some heresy, imposing terms of communion that are absolutely sinful, and the like. This, my friend—clears the protestant churches from guilt in their separation from the Romish church, with which they could never commune without sin, and without being partakers of their idolatrous superstitions. But divisions in a church are sinful, and for the plain reasons that those who dissent can retire, but to be followed by persecutions on the part of those remaining is also sinful. Again, when a church has lost all spirituality, its ministers become sinful, worldly, and a reproach to all godliness, when they prevent in every possible way instead of advancing the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, it is not certainly a schism nor a sin to leave them and seek a better home.

Apollos.—Then it is important to ascertain the motives of a separation in order to know the propriety and rectitude of it?

Aquila.—It surely is—for a separation is not always to be attributed to the love of truth and the cause and honour of the kingdom of Christ. It is sometimes to be traced to the pride, tyranny, and the avarice of ecclesiastics, or to the ambition of designing men, or the efforts of unprincipled politicians. But where there is that agreement as to the great principles of christianity, and especially where christian discipline is kept up, there ought ever to be at the table of the Lord that meeting and union that shall evince an earnest desire to promote peace and prove ourselves the true lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the common opponents, as protestants, of that system of papal worship so repugnant to godliness, and the feelings of those who only desire to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Apollos.—But is there not danger of maintaining peace with those, with whom it ought not to be maintained?

Aquila.—There is, for we should have no agreement and union with those, who are not wholly willing, to take the Scripture for the only rule of faith and conduct, or who either entirely rejects it as infidels, or add another more perfect as the Turks pretend their Alcoran to be, or reject a part as the Jews, or declare the word inefficacious as do the Quakers, or imperfect as do the Romanists, and who therefore add their traditions. On the other hand, when men maintain doctrines destructive of the fundamentals of religion, or impose such to be believed as are not set forth in the Scriptures, we are not required to remain with them, especially, if their unrighteous conduct is such as to exclude all prospect of a union as christians, and this is the more important when they would introduce, as do the papists, an idolatrous and profane worship, in the house of God, or by their

unholy and abominable conduct prevent that progressive piety which the value of our soul requires.

Apollos.—It is no charity then to cover the iniquities of such, by remaining in communion with them.

Aquila.—It is not, my friend.

Apollos.—Did you not name beneficence as one of the virtues preceding from charity.

Aquila.—I did, and it is simply the supplying out of our abundance, the wants of others. From hence it is manifest on whom this duty is incumbent.

Apollos.—Whom do you allude to?

Aquila.—The rich, who out of their superfluous store may contribute to the wants and necessities of the poor, and even those who labour, that by industry they may be able to bestow on the necessitous?

Apollos.—Yes, he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.

Aquila.—There are vast motives to induce us to discharge this noble duty. In doing so, we resemble God himself, and the law of humanity and charity requires it at our hands, especially as bearing in him the image of God, and being the Lord's poor. Besides God has expressly commanded, and if we are disposed to neglect it, by precept, we may be reminded of duty. Thus St. Paul tells us, that we should be 'rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Indeed the law of the Lord has been from the beginning, 'if there be among you a poor man,' 'thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.'

Priscilla.—Without discharging this duty as far as we have ability, our love to God is all vain.

Aquila.—Yes—and God has bestowed riches on some, not to be used by them as absolute proprietors or owners thereof, but as stewards of the Lord's household, and we ought to distribute to the poor, for it is sinful to divert them from the proper end designed by the Donor, and he has promised to reward it in another and a better world, saying, 'come ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you,' &c.

Apollos.—But to whom am I to give? who are the proper objects, toward whom I am expected to be beneficent?

Aquila.—I think the poor and needy of whatever religion or nation, as is plainly shown in the parable of the good Samaritan; nay our very enemies, 'give to every one that asketh thee,' not to friends only, my brother.

Apollos.—But it is impossible to give to all.

Aquila.—Then there should be some order in our charity, and we should give to the poor who are distressed for the necessary food of life first, and that too without delay, lest they die from want.

Priscilla.—These must have immediate succour.

Aquila.—When all other circumstances are alike, morals must be respected and we must give to the virtuous poor before we bestow on the vicious; mind I say when morals only are concerned. But when the vicious want bread, must they die? O! no—we must feed them, and in preference to the more moral who are not reduced so low.

Priscilla.—But when they are lazy, it is sometimes good to deny some persons in order to induce them to work.

Aquila.—But a good man cannot be a lazy man.

Priscilla.—I know that, but a bad man may be lazy, and if not in immediate want of bread, should work when able.

Aquila.—He should so, and when ties and obligations are considered, we ought to feed and take care of our own immediate relatives and brethren in the church, first of all, other circumstances being the same, they should have the preference.

Apollos.—But now the manner.

Aquila.—O! this is important, for many a good deed is spoiled in the manner of its performance. The very first thing is, the end must be good, clear from all vain glory, and only to honour God, and subserve the interests of charity. We are to consult the feelings and reputation of our poor brethren, assisting them privately that they may not be brought into contempt. It must proceed from love, the love of God and man, be done cheerfully, for 'the Lord loveth a cheerful giver,' and when we do give, we should do it more willingly than the person asks, to take away his feelings on the occasion, even preventing the repetition of the first request.

Apollos.—O! how salutary is this advice, to save the feelings of the distressed poor.

Priscilla.—Ah! how many who lived once in a better state are now reduced to ask alms at the hands of others, and how mortifying to one begging bread, to see it come with coldness and indifference.

Aquila.—Indeed it is mortifying; but dire necessity often compels the measure and forces such to beg. There is one thing, however, that must be minded, my friend—in giving we must be particular as to quantity.

Apollos.—How is this, my brother.

Aquila.—We must not give sparingly but liberally. To give to the poor is to sow seed. 'He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly.' He who needs most must have the greatest share, and we should give in proportion to the wants of all who are in need and lay out more in charity, than in gratifying our own pleasures. We ought to consider what effects christian piety and charity have on others, and be excited to equal them, and ever let christian prudence and charity be our directors, both as to the quantity and quality of what we give.

Apollos.—And we must not boast of it.

Aquila.—By no means, beware of this, rather own that the poor object deserved more than you gave, and as much as possible, forget the benefit, nor ever put him in mind of it. Never require a return for it, unless there be urgent necessity, and perfect ability, and never lament bestowing, even on an unworthy object, God will certainly reward for it.

Apollos.—And he will pay well.

Priscilla.—O! what a blessed duty this is, 'pure religion and undefiled, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep yourselves unspotted, i. e. unpolluted from the world.

Aquila.—Opposed to this, is covetousness—which is not only gathering, and hoarding riches, but the love of money, so that men, professors of religion too, shut up their bowels of mercy toward the poor. Some are charitable in affection, not in deed, others give, but do not give enough to be of any real benefit. Some give their kind, soft words, and pity too, but cannot part with money. Some will beg themselves of others for the poor, but never give, they cry up charity, but in vain do the poor cry for help.

Priscilla.—Such men 'say and do not.'

Aquila.—Still there is danger on the other hand of giving without reference to want, manners, the relation of our neighbours to us, and a due consideration of our own ability. By this means, we often throw away what might be better applied, and the vices and idleness of some are fed, while the virtuous poor are neglected. The former, or covetousness, has been called the opposite of beneficence in the defect, and the latter, profuseness, the opposite in excess, both of which are equally culpable.

Apollos.—And what is clemency?

Aquila.—This is a virtue which relates to our neighbour, considered as having

injured us, and stands opposed to that anger or wrath, that too often predominates in man's heart.

Apollos.—What do you define anger to be?

Aquila.—It is that passion or affection, by which we would drive evil far away from us. It is properly somewhat of the nature of those passions, that, in themselves are neither good or bad, but the sinfulness of which, consists in their exercise, as it regards an object. For anger against sin, opposition to it is just and allowable, as it tends not to the injury, but the amendment of the sinner. But sinful anger is that occasioned by an injury real or supposed, and tends directly to revenge. Such was the anger of Simeon and Levi, and of Saul against David, and David against Nabal.

Apollos.—What are its causes?

Aquila.—The causes of this vicious anger are pride of heart, proceeding from self-love, and self-interest, sometimes from jealousy, sometimes from too great credulity, by which we listen improperly to calumnies, and false reports, not considering the infirmities of human life, a softness and effeminancy of feeling by which we desire to have every thing as we would, not respecting the views or wishes of others.[1]

Apollos.—Such an anger must be vicious.

Aquila.—It is, and most generally degenerates unto hatred. Hence St. Paul speaks of being angry without sin, and not letting the sun go down on our wrath, and that it is not to be lasting, nor lodge in one's bosom for a night. This remark of St. Paul proves the truth of the exposition given of anger: that it is a passion by which we would repulse and resist, all that we suppose evil and injurious to us, but in this we are not to 'give place unto the devil!'

Apollos.—What destructive effects it has produced when it degenerated unto hatred.

Aquila.—It has indeed. Its natural effect is clamour, which often terminates in jangling, quarrelling, and disputation. Sometimes it becomes detraction, which injures the reputation of others, and reproaches them with words and actions, at least motives that never existed, then lastly, it produces revenge, by which we repay like for like, and even inflict a greater evil, in order to be avenged on our fellow man.

Apollos.—Now I see all these evils are restrained by clemency.

Aquila.—They are so my friend. It preserves us from being inflamed with anger, by guarding our minds against its causes, and keeping us in calmness and evenness of temper. And if excited to feel, and anger begins to arise, then this virtue, will not suffer the sun to go down upon our wrath. It prevents revenge, which a christian dare not suffer to enter his heart. We have the example of Christ, who prayed for his enemies, and the mercy of God extended to the sinful, and the duty of forgiving others, as we expect forgiveness, all to stimulate and inspire us with resolution to perform our part in this great work.[2]

Apollos—But some are ready to say as God pardons the penitent, so we are ready to forgive others when they repent.

Aquila.—This is not right my friend—for God requires forgiveness of us, whether they repent or not. When there was no eye to pity, and no ear to hear, the Lord Jesus had mercy, and granted that grace which is unto eternal life, and as such mercy has been extended to us, we are most cheerfully to forgive all that injure us, and that in the sincerity of our hearts.

Apollos.—This is a most difficult, but I plainly see an important duty.

Aquila.—Thus my friend—we have noticed those particular duties that we owe

[1] Limborch. [2] Clarke.

our neighbours, as originating in charity, or love towards them. In all of which, you will perceive, that love to God, and obedience to his precepts, are to be the ruling features of the christian's life. It must be indelibly imprinted on our hearts, 'little children love one another,' and however we may differ in opinion from others, still we are never to forget that love is a debt we owe to every man.

COLLOQUY XXIV.

SPECIAL DUTIES WHICH A CHRISTIAN OWES HIS FELLLOW MEN CONTINUED—THOSE COMPREHENDED UNDER THAT GENERAL ONE CALLED RIGHTEOUSNESS—SUCH AS CANDOUR, VERACITY, FIDELITY, AND GRATITUDE.

Apollos.—You informed me, my friend—that there were some particular duties, which are set forth and included in that other general one of righteousness or justice toward our fellow men. Do, if you please, name and give me an exposition of them, as you have of those included in charity or love to man.

Aquila.—The particular duties derived from that general branch, my brother—are candour, veracity, fidelity and gratitude.

Apollos.—What is candour?

Aquila.—Candour and veracity are two christian virtues that are nearly allied to each other. The former has an influence over all the external signs whereby we express the sentiments or inclinations of our minds to others, and the latter over our words only. Candour, plain dealing, or sincerity, all synonomous terms, is that virtue whereby, without the least disguise or dissimulation, we open and express our thoughts to others. It has four offices.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—1. That a christian beware, either by his countenance, words or gestures, of advancing any thing that is contrary to the true sentiments of his mind: or pretending to greater piety and virtue, or greater love and benevolence toward his neighbour than is really in his heart.

Apollos.—In other words, he is not to be a hypocrite.

Aquila.—Indeed, hypocrisy is just the opposite of this virtue, but candour goes a little farther than this, for it prohibits all dissimulation, however it may accord with policy. Another office then of this sincerity or candour, is to acknowledge one's faults or errors as soon as in heart convinced of them, and owning the truth we are to amend our faults: obstinacy in refusing this is its contrary. If, however, we do not approve of our brother or neighbour's actions, we are not to retain it in our own bosoms, but candidly and at once to tell him his fault between us. Perhaps we do not know all, we must not, we dare not judge him, and, as we have shown, the contrary of this is too great a complaisance, and a desire to please others, and be esteemed by them, when in heart we are opposed to them.[1]

Apollos.—This is real wickedness.

Aquila.—It is, my friend. Another office of this very rare christian virtue is to acknowledge freely whatever is praiseworthy in any man, though not so kind to us, and though he be our very enemy, and opposed to it is that temper, by which one would dare to question all the laudable actions of another, whom he esteems, perhaps wrongfully, an enemy.

Apollos.—All hypocrisy and dissembling then is opposed to this virtue I perceive.

Aquila.—Indeed, it is, and all that insincere outside, that show of friendship,

[1] Limborch.

and those professions of a disposition to help and feel for others, when there is not even the desire to do what is porfessed in words or gestures, is but sheer dissimulation and hypocrisy. On the other hand, simplicity as it is called, especially where there is the want of prudence, is a fault opposed to this, for all things that are true, are not always to be spoken. There must be prudence and propriety in the selection of time and place. What, however dissembles, in order, directly or indirectly, to prejudice or injure a neighbour, is repugnant to justice and a breach of sincerity. Equivocations used with a design to deceive, are most surely but falsehood in disguise, and he who uses ambiguous or doubtful terms, intending to deceive, is equally guilty with him, so that any action, word or gesture, spoken or done with an intention to delude is virtually falsehood.[1]

Apollos.—Well I have ever thought so, and I believe I am right. I would rather a man should be imprudently candid, than to be artful, politic, and false, not to be apprehended and uncertain in all his actions.

Priscilla.—O! such a man, my friend—is a knave, no christian.

Apollos.—A christian ought to be like daylight, open and frank, and honest and sincere.

Aquila.—And next to this, and intimately allied to it, is *veracity*, a virtue which preserves an entire agreement between words, and actions, and thoughts, not only chiefly in religious matters and such as tend to salvation, but also such as relate to the things of this life.

Apollos.—But ought our words always to convey that sense, in which we know that they will be taken by others?

Aquila.—If we would have others give credit to our words, certainly we must utter them so as to convey the sense in which they understand them, as we speak for their sakes, not our own. And when the glory of God is concerned, we ought to be ingenuously candid. However, we have the example of our Lord, for declining sometimes an answer, when by this means we may avoid a danger, and be so far from promoting the welfare of others, as to do them an injury.[2]

Apollos.—And the contrary of this veracity is falsehood.

Aquila.—It is, to speak plainly, lying.

Apollos.—What is the definition of a lie?

Aquila.—It is an intentional discordance between the purposes of our hearts, and the words of our mouths, or our gestures, or actions. It contains a purpose to utter a falsehood, by words or gestures, and this in order to deceive. Hence appears the difference between telling a lie, and an untruth, the latter through ignorance may be told by a good man, the former includes an intention to deceive. Some lies are told for pleasure, some are intended to injure, some are officious as well as injurious, some contain calumny and detraction, one or both, some testimony that is false, and this directly intended to injure a neighbour, some do so only indirectly, and under the pretence of friendship. Some proceed from malice, some from rash judgment, some are formed in the moroseness and peevishness of our own judgments. All these are alike unjust, and uncharitable, untrue and uncandid, contrary to the golden rule, an injury to our neighbour, and calculated to bring him into contempt.

Apollos.—Is not flattery my friend—opposed to veracity?

Aquila.—It is, and so is all adulation, especially concerning religious matters: the injury is, if not to the flatterer, to the flattered, who is led into error by the deceptious sayings of those double tongued professors. The flatterer is a disgrace to any part of society, but especially to a christian church, these two characters, the flatterer and dissembler, especially he that does it for policy, and with the view to exalt self, however he may ascend to the pinnacle, will fall in an unexpected hour into disgrace and forgetfulness.

[1] Lord Bacon. [2] Limborch.

Apollos.—What is fidelity.

Aquila.—This is that part of justice, which relates particularly to the keeping of promises. In them, as expressly made, there must be no ambiguity at all, much less an intention to deceive. These when made, are to be faithfully kept, whether pledged to believers or infidels, to heretics or the othodox, for to whomsoever we oblige ourselves by a promise, we are if possible to perform it, though it were to heathens or idolaters.

Apollos.—But it has been taught otherwise.

Aquila.—It has, for according to papists, there is no faith to be kept with heretics. That this is a most pernicious error, tending to the destruction of all faith between man and man, is most evident, and consequently destructive of civil society. Now whatever the church of Rome may pretend to, it is notorious that it has absolved not only princes and magistrates from the promises which they solemnly made to their subjects, but have also absolved subjects from all allegiance they have sworn to their rulers, just as one or the other seemed, less calculated to injure the see of Rome.[1]

Apollos.—All history proves this.

Aquila.—Several things are necessary to render a promise binding. The first, is that it be made of some lawful and honest thing, else it cannot be obligatory, since no man is obliged to commit an evil action, contrary to the law of God. The next, is that he who promises shall be of 'compos mentis,' that is a sane mind, and master of himself, knowing what is promised, and the nature of an obligation. That no injury be likely to be done by performing the promise to the person, to whom it is made, for if so, it is apparent it ought not to be performed.[2]

Apollos.—But my friend—suppose the promise is injurious to the person who makes it, how then?

Aquila.—It must certainly be performed: as by a promise we have virtually transferred our right to another. However, some cases may occur, wherein the performance of a promise may be prevented by circumstances unforseen, and unexpected, which, if he who made the promise, had been aware of, he would have excepted, and therefore he is supposed strictly to except. But in these tacit exceptions, fidelity requires that things committed to our trust be faithfully preserved by us, and restored on demand, that we faithfully discharge the office we are in, and fulfil all the parts of it, and that we convert the things committed to our care, only to the use intended by the owner.

Apollos.—Then the rich who consume in their lusts what should be used to glorify God, do sin against him.

Aquila.—Truly they do. One thing more, we are never to forsake him who relies upon us, especially after we have given him hopes of our assistance, though he be a poor slave.

Apollos.—O! this is surely righteous.

Aquila.—Hence all perfidiousness, deceit and treachery are opposed to that faithfulness which is just and right.

Apollos.—And what is gratitude?

Aquila—A christian virtue which is engaged in requiting a benefit, and chiefly requires three things. A grateful heart, i. e. a grateful acknowledgment of the benefits received, or a propensity toward requiting it. Then there is the returning thanks by words for the benefits received, and they are not to lessen the favours, nor by flattery to magnify them. Thirdly, there is the requital of the courtesy, when it is in our power. Thus if possible, we are to repay it more than the amount, for it was gratuitous, and the return should be made at least as freely as the favour was bestowed on us, and all should be done with a cheerful mind.

[1] Mosheim and Hume. [2] Wayland and Limborch.

Apollos.—And opposed to this is ingratitude.

Aquila.—Yes—and this is a great sin. It either makes no return at all for the benefits received, or does it in such an unbecoming and unseasonable manner, as that it is no requital at all. Sometimes it dissembles, or if it returns, it is under such circumstances, as to show that there is no grateful feeling of the heart toward the benefactor. Hence in every nation ingratitude is a crime, that is to be, alike detested by all. For there are none who do not seem to despise an ungrateful deed. Indeed this is a vice which the very beasts are not guilty of, they express their gratitude toward their benefactors.

Apollos.—This is all true. He is unjust toward his neighbour in not repaying by gratitude his kind dealings towards him, and while his action is prejudicial to the benefactor, he is hated by all. No man pities him, and he dries up the current of liberality that once flowed freely toward himself.

Aquila—And the causes of it too, my friend—are alike base, for it may be traced to arrogancy and self-conceit, covetousness and ambition. Thus Saul forgot that David killed Goliah, and would have slain him to gratify his ambition. Sometimes it is founded in envy, which repines at the benefits of others, and unmindful of all favours, seeks only to accomplish its own dark ends.

Priscilla.—O! sin is a reproach to any people, and, view it as you will it is most evident, that it brings with it a load of consequences, which extend themselves to all concerned.

Aquila.—It is so indeed, hence we should shun sin as we would a deadly poison, and 'flee from every appearance of evil.' We are to love God our great benefactor, with all the heart, and our neighbour, his creature, as ourselves.

COLLOQUY XXV.

THE DUTIES, WHICH A CHRISTIAN ACCORDING TO THE PRECEPTS OF THE NEW COVENANT, IS EXPECTED TO DISCHARGE TOWARD HIMSELF—THESE ARE INCLUDED IN THE WORD SOBRIETY, AND CONSIST OF SELF-DENIAL AND A THIRST AFTER GODLINESS, WHICH PRODUCE TEMPERANCE, CONTENTMENT, HUMILITY, WITH FORTITUDE, PATIENCE AND CONSTANCY.

Aquila.—That duty which according to the new covenant, my friend—consists in the government of ourselves with all the several parts or branches of it, is summed up by the apostle in one word, namely, *sobriety*. We are not only to live godly, as it respects Deity, righteously as it regards our neighbour, but soberly as it concerns ourselves.

Apollos.—Does not this christian virtue consist in laying a restraint on our passions and lusts?

Aquila.—It does, and taken in its general sense it is simply self-denial on the one hand, and that thirst after godliness on the other, which leads to the active and daily performance of the internal acts of piety.

Apollos.—What is self-denial?

Aquila.—To deny is properly to relinquish the interests of another, and openly to profess it, either by words or deeds. So that we may be said to deny ourselves when the heart and life are surrendered to God, and no reason permitted to withdraw us aside in the least from him, or the duties that we owe him. This self-denial is taken in a very strict sense by our Saviour. Thus, 'If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.'

Apollos.—This does seem to denote nothing else than that our lives, and all that is dear to us should never be brought into competition with the service of God.

Aquila.—Indeed, we should rather die than form a fondness for this world and its enjoyments, do any thing unbecoming of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. This duty is, however, generally used by divines in a larger and a more extensive sense, to denote the renouncing our own wills and affections, and voluntarily submitting to the commands and will of God. So that we do surrender up ourselves, souls and bodies, to him who is the absolute sovereign of the universe, to be disposed of as he may see best.[1]

Apollos.—In what is founded the reasonableness of this duty.

Aquila.—Simply in this, that we belong to him who has created us, and to our Saviour Christ, who has redeemed us, that we might be a 'peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

Apollos.—Properly then, we renounce nothing, but only consecrate it to God, who is the lawful owner of us, and all we have.

Aquila.—Indeed, it is so, my friend. And the offices of this duty are founded in those very reasons named by us. In the worship and service of God we are not to follow our own carnal prudence, but the direction of Deity alone, in whom there is the highest prudence.[2]

Apollos.—Our own reason and will then, must not be the guide of our actions.

Aquila.—Surely not, for the wisdom of this world is only calculated to deceive and injure, while that which comes from above is wisdom indeed. In another act, all the affections are to be brought into subjection, so that whenever they would be carried out to any grateful objects, especially those that will not help us on to heaven, we are to restrain them, and bring the same into subjection. This is to be done voluntarily, though it may be with deep self-abasement and mortification.[3]

Priscilla.—So as ever to be ready to lay down our lives, and at once part with all enjoyments for the sake of Christ.

Apollos.—It is plain then that this duty consists in self-government and relates specially to the good or evil to which while here we stand exposed.

Aquila.—Yes—it is so, for in the general, it either directs our love to the proper object, and leads us to thirst after God, or it particularly restrains us so, that temperance, contentment and humility govern all our conduct. And these several things are contained in that sobriety, or self-denial, which the Scripture enjoins, and as it regards the evils of this life aided by it, they are endured with fortitude, patience and constancy, which come in for our support in the christian warfare.

Apollos.—Involved then in it a thirst after God.

Aquila.—It is so, there is a holy panting, an ardent and constant thirsting for him, and this is the very foundation of self-denial. For the christian so delights in God and pants for him, as to be willing to forego any and every earthly delight, to be in the full and constant possession of him. And included in him are all the blessings which he has promised, with that also of immortality itself. The excellency of their nature will be esteemed by us, and these will be considered 'the pearl of great price,' while at the same time we shall know that they are to be ardently thirsted after. Connected with it, is also, an anxious desire for all the virtues and graces of a christian, and while there is this love of virtue there will be a corresponding effort with unwearied endeavours for its attainment.[5]

Apollos.—As one said, 'my soul followeth hard after thee,' 'as the hart panteth for the water brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.'

Aquila.—And so ardent is it that it is ready to forego all the pleasures of this

[1] Limborch.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Clarke and Watson.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Limborch.

life, the love of the world, and consider God only as our chief good, being willing to abandon pleasure, riches, and honour, and take in their stead pain, poverty and contempt. Such, my friend—is the conduct which the christian life requires.

Apollos.—I see how naturally now those virtues you named come in to bring about this gracious state of soul.

Aquila.—They do. Temperance, contentment and humility on one hand, and fortitude, patience, and constancy on the other.

Apollos.—What is temperance, my friend?

Aquila.—It is properly that virtue which moderates the affections in their pursuit after the pleasures of the flesh, which we enjoy in common with other animals of the earth. Temperance then chiefly consists in restraining desire, which the external senses, when any object grateful to man presents itself, are apt to excite in us.

Apollos.—It certainly cannot be criminal to be sensible of pleasure when a grateful object is presented to the flesh.

Aquila.—Surely not for this is natural and unavoidable tending to the exercise of our virtue, and without which there could be no such thing: but we are to beware of being carried away with that pleasure, and of prosecuting immoderately the things grateful to the flesh. We are to lay a restraint on that concupiscence or desire which is conveyed through the outward organs of sense to the heart.

Apollos.—Which are the senses by which this is done?

Aquila.—There are five senses by which we perceive pleasure, all of which may transcend their legitimate and proper bounds. Temperance, however, it is chiefly concerned in restraining those that arise in the senses of tasting and touching. These are the most brutish, and of course, temperance consists of two parts. First sobriety, which lays a restraint on the pleasures of taste, and secondly chastity, which puts the reins on sensual gratification. Sobriety is that virtue which keeps a medium in the pleasures that arise from eating and drinking, with respect both to quality and quantity.

Apollos.—Can there be a universal rule for this, my friend.

Aquila.—By no means, for such is the variety of constitution, and such the different state of the digestive organs of the same man at different times, that it is impossible to say what and how much shall be used. These general rules, however, may be observed both as to quantity and quality. As to quantity, we should never overcharge our stomachs, so as to render our bodies and minds useless and unfit for contemplating heavenly things: and as to quality, we are not to covet such delicious meats and drink, as may provoke us to eat when we are not hungry, and drink when we are not thirsty, for in such a case we deviate from the very end of eating, which is to nourish and sustain the body, and are imperceptibly drawn into sensual pleasure, and are allured from the path of sobriety.[1]

Apollos.—The measure then to be observed is, what is needful for health.

Aquila.—Certainly. It is not lawful for rich or poor at any time to eat more than is dictated by sobriety, and as for drink, all intoxicating fluids, whether distilled or fermented, should be excluded, the latter as producing organic derangement of the system from an undue proportion of acidity, and the former, functional derangement, that must sooner or later terminate life's career. Water, pure unadulterated water, is the blessed drink that God has granted man, and one too that is most conducive to his health.

Apollos.—But our Saviour was at a feast and turned water into wine.

Aquila.—He did indeed. And so may we attend a marriage feast, and if we can procure, also drink such wine as was used in those days. This was simply

[1] Wesley and Clarke.

the juice of grapes pressed out and delivered to the individual, see the case of Pharoah's butler. But a drink in which by fermentation the alcoholic principle is generated, is injurious to health, and opposed to sobriety. Christians should abstain at least, millions having been plunged by strong drink into the drunkard's grave. Their souls are in the hand of God.

Apollos.—Then no feast is proper when the object is the mere gratification of appetite.

Aquila.—By no means, the number of dishes, the pomp and parade for ostentation sake, nice and costly food, because rare and scarce, are all incompatible with charity to the poor. O! how can professors of religion set down to a dinner that costs a hundred dollars, and never reflect at this moment, my poor brother or sister is in want of the common necessaries of human life. How can they drink the health of others, and encourage by such a practice a love for strong drink in themselves or fellows that may damn the soul?

Apollos.—You oppose then sobriety to all gluttony and drunkenness.

Aquila.—I do to all tippling, as well as downright intoxication, as destructive of the powers of the human mind, and as calculated to feed the humours of the body, which too often break out in a flame and end in death. The second part of temperance is chastity, which forbids unlawful pleasures, that no illicit connection shall be entertained, and all the pleasures of wedlock itself, shall be in moderation. In view of the certainty of death, as the result of a christian profession, in apostolic days, it is said to be best not to marry, but there is no absolute perfection in virginity, and chastity does not forbid marriage, for God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and 'marriage in all is honourable and the bed undefiled.' All those professions of celibacy on the part of some, contrary to the order of God and avowed for religious purposes, are often intended to answer other and more unhallowed ends. The eyes, my friend—are to be turned from unlawful objects, the ears are to be closed against obscene and loose speeches, and the heart is to be fixed on God and him alone.

Apollos.—All impure desires then are unlawful.

Aquila.—They are most certainly 'for he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery already in his heart.' All external vices opposed to chastity are also forbid, all impurity, all lasciviousness, all wantonness of dress or gestures, all fornication and all adultery. And God has granted us great helps to prevent these sins.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—We must avoid all occasions of unlawful desires at the very onset. We must be always employed in some honest labour, a lazy man or woman is always ready for sin. We should fast often, we should use frequent and fervent prayer to the living God. We should read and meditate in the Scriptures—these things will break our carnal desires.

Apollos.—What is contentment?

Aquila.—When taken in an extended sense, it is that christian virtue whereby a man is easy in whatever condition he may be placed in by the divine Providence, and from this fact, it includes that evenness and sedateness of temper that are characteristic of the christian under every ill of this life. In however, a more strict sense, it is that christian virtue, by which a man, assisted by grace, rests satisfied with the enjoyment of those things, that are at present necessary for the support of himself and family, and resigned to all those afflictions that he may be called on to endure, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature.

Apollos.—Of course various are the offices of this virtue.

Aquila.—They are and ought to be applied distinctly, according to the different conditions in which he may be placed in respect to the good things of this world,

for he may either want the necessaries of this life, or he possesses them, or he abounds in superfluities. In all these different cases, contentment rules and regulates the man, and accordingly enjoins these duties.

Apollos.—What are they?

Aquila.—It enjoins it on man as a duty not to murmur or repine at his lot in this life, and this takes place in all those three conditions just named. If in poverty it teaches us to resign ourselves to the divine will, remembering that God has a reason for all he does. If God bestow on us a competency, then we have less reason to complain, and we should be satisfied as having enough, but if we have abundance, we have no reason at all to murmur, and then to complain is the height of ingratitude, and unbecoming a rational, much less a christian man. This contentment enjoins a man not to be craving after the things of this life, but to rest satisfied with its necessaries, at the same time it does not prevent a man from seeking an opening of Providence to better his condition.[1]

Apollos.—But some ask what are the necessaries of this life? what my friend—is a competency?

Aquila.—Such a general rule as may be observed by all, it is possible cannot be prescribed, since one man wants more than another, taking those dependant on him into consideration. But for a distinct reply, permit me to say, that a man may be considered either simply and absolutely, or as he is in a public capacity, such as a citizen, a master of a family, a husband and a magistrate. Now, according to this distinction, the necessaries of this life vary, some things are necessary to nature itself, to feed and support it, others are necessary for the station in which a man is placed in the providence of God.[2]

Apollos.—Those which nature requires, of course are simply food and raiment, a place to shelter, and the means of securing and preserving health, and the person placed in the station of master, parent, or ruler, must provide not only the means of his own, but the support of others. But is it lawful for a man to acquire more than what is necessary?

Aquila.—There is an industry which is free from all anxious care for getting wealth, but yet does not refuse the labour necessary to it. This is lawful, and often God blesses a man's honest labours, the opposite course, the seeking most anxiously for riches, is my friend—highly criminal. On the one hand if he heap up riches, with injury to others, he cannot have on them the blessing of God, on the other, if he seek them before he devotes his heart to the Deity, he also commits an offence: 'seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Apollos.—Then contentment curtails the fondness for riches, and teaches men not to be attached thereto. This as a general rule of life is suited to the condition of all, especially to the rich, I suppose?

Aquila.—It is so my friend—and we learn that like the rich man, we are not to say, 'soul, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.' Riches are of a fleeting and an uncertain nature, of them a thousand accidents may deprive us, death surely will. As this is the case we are not to distract our minds about what shall be our condition here. 'Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.' 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' There is to be no solicitous care, nor are we to be concerned about keeping them, and in their loss, say with Job, 'the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Apollos.—Then it is not unlawful, and repugnant to the christian religion, to acquire property, and that in abundance.

Aquila.—By no means, my friend—provided it be acquired without solicitude, and all be used as the property of the Lord, we acting only as his stewards, to

[1] Clarke, Watson, and Limborch. [2] Limborch.

honour and glorify his name in it, as such we have seen that it is admissible to procure the things necessary to life, 'and having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.' This is lawful, for the Saviour has taught us to pray for our 'daily bread,' i. e. necessary food. But in the event of our heavenly Father's denying this—we should still learn in 'whatever state we are therewith to be content.' On the other hand, it is allowed to have more than the necessaries of life for ourselves, for the apostle John had an estate of his own, for when the Saviour committed the care of his mother to that holy man, it is said that from that hour, 'that disciple took her to his own *home*.' We moreover learn, that 'Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others administered' to our Lord, of their substance: now, this could not be done if they had no more than the bare necessaries of life for self. All are commanded my friend—to perform acts of charity, but all are not required to part with all they have.

Apollos.—Well—I never thought about John having property of his own before.

Aquila.—I think it possible that most of the twelve disciples possessed some property. Peter had a wife whose mother Jesus healed, she must have lived somewhere. And when Jesus was foretelling the flight of his disciples, at the time of his being betrayed, he says, 'the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own.' His own, here doubtless means home or house.

Apollos.—Hence Peter said, 'we have left all and followed thee.'

Aquila.—Yes—and whether little or much it was their all. The opposite of contentment, is covetousness, which is an insatiable thirst for more, especially that which is not now our own. This in Scripture is called by several names, and consists also in several particulars.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—A covetous man is never content with things necessary, hence a man sets no bounds to his desires, and as riches increase his thirst after them will also proportionably increase. Again, he will not use the things now in possession to supply his own and the wants of others, by which he proves his thirst and ardent love for the things of this life: often is he tormented with anxious solicitude lest he should want, his confidence is placed in his riches, he has little if any in God, and in grieving for the loss of wealth, he is reduced to wretchedness extreme.

Priscilla.—O! this 'love of money is the root of all evil.'

Aquila.—Yes—and St. Paul says, 'which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows,' for it produces innumerable other evils in this life. With respect to civil life, it is the parent of all the injustice, fraud, and knavery that are in the world: and as it regards a religious life it is far worse, for it alienates the mind from God and all the obligations of religion, and instead of seeking 'the things that are above, it falls at the shrine of the mammon of unrighteousness, and commits the basest and the vilest deeds to obtain riches. Look at Achan, at the sons of Samuel, at Gehazi, at Judas, at Ananias and Saphira, and how many among our own acquaintances have fallen a prey to the love of money.

Apollos.—Not so much to money as the love of it.

Aquila.—Money does no harm but a vast amount of good, it sends the everlasting gospel to the ends of the earth. It is, my friend—'the love of money' that is the 'root of all evil.'

Apollos.—How fervently ought men to pray to be delivered from it.

Aquila.—Yes—and if they will rely on God instead of leaning on an arm of flesh they shall find in him a sure recompence, a contented mind, which is a constant feast. If they will but consider the emptiness of all created good, the

things after which covetousness so anxiously hunts, they will at once see the unsatisfying nature of all this vain and giddy world.

Priscilla.—I think there is another thing that will help to cure a covetous heart, just let a man who is anxious for the things of this life give to the poor and the distressed liberally, this will at once tear up this mean and grovelling sin by the very roots.

Aquila.—Indeed it will, hence St. Paul advises the rich instead of trusting in uncertain riches, 'to do good, to be rich in good works, and ready to distribute,' and in this way would 'they lay up in store for themselves a good foundation,' i. e. treasure, 'against the time to come.'

Apollos.—All things indeed seem to conspire to put down this irregular desire of man, for sure the love of money has in itself the least of reason and of real pleasure of all things else in existence.

Aquila.—And closely allied to contentment, as a cure for the love of this world's wealth, is humility, which is properly modesty, a remedy certain and sure against the honours of this world. Indeed it is that christian virtue which moderates our pursuit after the honour of this life, it renders us humble in our own eyes, and disposed not to 'think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, 'according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.'

Apollos.—Then it must contain two offices, to think meanly of ourselves, and to desire moderately at most the honours coming from others.

Aquila.—This is the case, and we may add to it the readiness to grant all the honour due to all men; hence the acts of humility are never to arrogate to ourselves what we are not, nor claim to be higher and greater than we actually are. Never to be puffed up with conceit as to personal qualifications, say of nature, as beauty and strength, of fortune, as wealth and power, of intellect, as wisdom and ability in public performances.

Priscilla.—How important are these offices. It is astonishing to see how men arrogate to themselves a station to which they have neither qualifications nor claims.

Aquila.—Yes—and if they have the qualifications they are not to make as modest humble minded men, an ostentation of them, nor suffer others to do so. We are never to despise another though we be his superior, but rather as Christ did, be willing to become his servant. A christian, moreover, is never to hunt after worldly honours, nor seek to be placed above the rest of men; this is but the pride of life, which is plainly forbid in the word of God, and we are not to affect or express any luxury or pomp in our habits, furniture, buildings, and diet, all which is surely contrary to christian humility, and opposed to the glory of God.

Apollos.—But the superiority of magistrate in public affairs is surely not opposed to christian humility.

Aquila.—By no means, for they are placed there as ministers of God, for the preservation of order and good government, over fallen wicked men. Their authority is necessary to peace and the government of the world. But when men use indirect and unbecoming means to attain an office that exalts them above their fellows, or when exalted, disregard and violate their duties if not their oaths, they deserve the reprobation of all. Indeed, the mean, low, sycophantic conduct of many office-hunters, who seek to buy public favour, sometimes with *whiskey,* and sometimes with *prayers,* sometimes at the *grog shop,* and sometimes at *church,* all alike good to such weathercocks, is too contemptible to gain the support of the honest yeomanry of any land. It would, my friend—puzzle a conjurer to tell their true creed, either political or religious, and the service of

Mohammed would suit them as well as that of the God of truth, if it would only exalt them to posts of profit and honour.

Apollos.—But you remarked on the impropriety of affecting pomp and luxury in our condition and manners. What ought to be a rule for christian men and women?

Aquila.—To do all to the glory of God. In order to this, we are never to offend against modesty and gravity by a luxurious and a pompous demeanour in any respect. There is no harm in a public officer, whether civil or ecclesiastical, wearing the badge of his office, if there be one attached to it either by custom or law. The customary clothing of a christian country for males and females ought, generally speaking, to be the dress of those who live in it, with some alterations only, which may be allowable as aforesaid. But for females to assume the garb or any very important portion of the dress of males, is a gross breach of all modesty, and an assumption of female attire in any of its important parts on the side of man, is an act so effeminate that such an one should be chained to a distaff, and doomed to be tasked by women for life. There is no religion, my friend—in a coat. Some are much more precise about a coat, a hat, a cap, or a bonnet, than the weightier matters of the law. Custom should be the law of dress to distinguish men from women, comfort and health the law as to the peculiar mode, and economy the rule as to the texture. I know it is customary to denounce the vanity and wickedness of female attire, and I am sure in most places, especially cities, there is room for it, and perhaps one half the females who die in cities in this country have laid the foundation of their own ill health and dissolution by tight lacing, thin dresses, thin shoes, and a lazy life: but I have looked at this subject, and have blushed when I have suffered myself to institute a comparison between men and women.

Apollos.—How so my friend?

Aquila.—On the score of economy.

Apollos.—O! the dress of one young man, is very expensive.

Aquila.—Indeed, it is, and the dress too of one plain man. If his beaver hat, his costly boots, and clothes of super merino, be thrown together, the sum will nearly clothe ten decent women for as many months to come.

Priscilla.—Well—now as you have both gone so far, I must say I never hear the poor women, the 'weaker vessels,' and God knows foolish enough, but the mothers, wives, and daughters of men, threshed from the sacred desk, about their apparel, that I am not too apt to look at the texture of the preacher's coat.

Aquila.—Humility and modesty are averse to all pride, whether it displays itself in the love of self, or boast of worth, or wealth, or other qualities, whether real or imaginary, and worse than all, is that haughty carriage, in which a man looks down on those esteemed beneath him especially if he supposes his superiority to consist in the quantum or quality of his religion.

Apollos.—Spiritual pride is a great sin.

Aquila.—Indeed, it is, and worse in a christian minister, my friend—than any other man. O! beware of this as a deadly poison. What! a minister of Christ haughty, overbearing and without conciliation and kindness? To assume a station he does not occupy is still more vain and wicked. How many have split on this rock. Unwilling to be themselves, they have sought to be Bourdaloue, or Massillon, and thus on borrowed capital, the disgrace of a christian ministry, show out in the gaudy plumage of some popish priest. Here and there you will find one of such *great preachers* who will condescend to commit a sermon from Tillotson, Sherlock and Wesley, or some British divine, whose sermons are so conspicuous for argument and style, but these are morsels rather dry for those *capacious* minds, which can only feed on the dainties produced by orators of a superior class.

Priscilla.—Now and then a little from Jay, who seems to have combined the Gallic fire with the laconic style of the enlightened Englishman.

Apollos.—But these two authors, Wesley and Jay, are rather too common for these times, they are in the hands of every body, and he that commits them is likely to be *treed.*

Aquila.—True, my friend—yet some are incautious enough to do even this.[1] I know a friend, now gone to the grave, who said, 'I can't go to meeting to-night, I have heard that minister often, and he only preaches the sermons he has committed to memory, and he has but a few, I have them at home, and can read them, for all the time he is preaching the devil is saying, 'alas! master it is borrowed,' and if I go there he will preach from such a text, it is about his time to do so.' I went and sure enough the preacher did take that very text. O! my young friend, work for yourself, never for God's sake, never paralyze your own natural talents, quench the fire of native genius, and sin against heaven by saying thus saith the Lord, when the words have been memorized as penned by another. Such men take more time in committing a sermon than they would have to take in making one, with God's assistance.

Apollos.—I hope I shall profit by your remarks.

Aquila.—Pride and idleness are for the most part the cause of all this, we are too little disposed to work for ourselves, and desire to become *popular* and receive the applause of the world, to live without the labour of study, and then we must have time to attend, as is said, to action, as ORATORS do, and this is all important. This custom, and that of imitating others are assuredly, produced by the want, at least of modesty, if not humility.

Apollos.—You have said man is an imitative creature.

Aquila.—I have I admit, but let me tell you, a christian minister is the last man that ought to appear in the character of another. He should be a true christian in his heart, and carry out the principles of christianity in his life, then he should appear in his own character. Study hard, read so as to understand, take advantage of all the studies, and the investigations of others, make their works his own by application and industry, then deliver them as himself, with proper attention to avoid, what is unnatural, constrained, and imitative. For in most cases all this proceeds from an improper source, the lack of modesty, if not the presence of pride.

Apollos.—How careful and how watchful ought a man to be, especially a young and inexperienced minister.

Aquila.—You must, my friend—pardon my digression from the thread of our subject. Fortitude, patience, and constancy, all intimately connected as christian virtues, next demand our attention.

Apollos.—What is fortitude?

Aquila.—It is that christian virtue which sometimes, taken in an extensive sense, denotes that constancy of mind, which is conspicuous not only in the undertaking of a difficult enterprise, but likewise in bearing of hardships, and thus it includes patience. Sometimes it is taken in a stricter sense, to denote that particular virtue whereby a man contemns dangers, and undauntedly engages in an arduous deed.[2]

Apollos.—Consider it then in both these senses, if you please, my friend.

[1] I remember once a preacher came along and preached a fine little sermon, another came three weeks after and in nearly the same congregation, and the same church, preached the same sermon word for word. The first was praised for a fine preacher indeed, but when the second was heard the people began to suspect them, and at last one produced the book. O! this was a mortal blow to their popularity.

[2] Limborch.

Aquila.—I will, but for a more distinct view of it, I must premise that God has not called the christian to a soft and an effeminate kind of life, but to a difficult and a laborious one. A race is to run, that is beset with many dangers, and it may cost us life to run therein, and he who would run this race must prepare himself for the greatest hardships. We are not only called on to believe in, but to profess our faith before Jews, infidels and atheists, though it may cost us much to do so.

Apollos.—And he that does not bear them, is no christian.

Aquila.—I do not say so, but I do say that he must be willing to bear, and to endure persecution, even unto death, if called to it, in God's providence. So then we see the important offices, it is called to fulfil in us. The first is to teach us how to bear any afflictions, even death, for the sake of our Lord, for his glory and the good of man. This is our duty, and fortitude or virtue, as it is sometimes called, will teach us how to do it.

Apollos.—But we are not to be imprudent and rush into danger, or throw away life?

Aquila.—By no means, my friend—christian prudence requires that we should be 'wise as serpents, and harmless as doves,' if persecuted in one city, we are to flee to another. We must take care that the doctrine we are to suffer for be true, and then if we can find no way to escape for life, lay it down rather than deny and dishonour the Lord.[1]

Apollos.—What is the other office of fortitude?

Aquila.—To suffer all manner of evils and afflictions and death itself, with a cheerful and a courageous heart, whenever called thereto in the divine providence.

Apollos.—The great object of God in thus exposing us to danger is for his glory.

Aquila.—It is, and also the welfare of others, even the wicked, for it is said of christians, 'having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ,' 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' But the good of those who suffer is one of the chief and greatest ends designed of heaven in our afflictions, and which by no means are tokens of his displeasure, but rather his affection, while they 'work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' 'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls unto him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.' This is easy to be seen as our duty from several reasons.

Apollos.—Do point them out, my brother.

Aquila.—The first is that by afflictions we are weaned from the world, and learn to thirst after heaven and the enjoyments thereof. Secondly, we are confirmed in the faith that the reward of piety is beyond the grave, and the treasure of the good man not here, but in another and a better world. Thirdly, persecutions excite men to pour out their sorrows before the Lord in fervent prayer, as they expose to us our dependence on him, for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and these very sufferings try our faith and constancy. So that while God is glorified, we are as christians confirmed in mutual charity toward each other, chastised for our own errors, and at last being tried as in the fire, shall come forth like gold, meet for the master's use.

Apollos.—Now to do all this with resignation to the divine will, with meekness and without murmuring, is patience.

Aquila.—It is so, my friend—and there are vast motives to it. Let us just consider that the most he parts with is but life, and of what a frail tenure is this?

[1] Clarke and Henry.

for its loss God will amply repay us beyond the grave, and when done with this world, we shall certainly be free from all its ills. Again, let us consider how light our afflictions are, when compared with those of others, and especially, let us think on the afflictions of Christ, in order to obtain our salvation. See, O! see on Calvary's bloody brow, the anguish extreme, to wash away our guilt: and shall we think hard of, or be impatient under suffering, when he proposes as a reward, to crown our sorrow with eternal life and joy in heaven?

Apollos.—How then may all these sufferings be rendered acceptable to God?

Aquila.—In our afflictions we are never to murmur against him, as if he dealt hard by us. Nor are we to wish any harm to our persecutors or those made the instruments of our suffering, much less should we use ill language toward, or resist them with violence, and we should never do any thing displeasing to God or injurious to others, in order to avoid the hands of our persecutors. In fine, we are never to demean ourselves with less courage than becomes men, supported by the hopes of immortality.

Apollos.—These are considerations truly important, this christian virtue then is changed in its name, in proportion as we undertake and continue to discharge duty.

Aquila.—It is so, for when duty lies before us plainly attended with many difficulties, it is virtue, fortitude, or courage to undertake it. When we endure all afflictions that may come on us with resignation, saying 'Father, thy will be done,' then it is patience, and when we endure to the end, as good soldiers of the manifold mercy and grace of God, then is it constancy.

Apollos.—Now I see through it.

Aquila.—Opposed to this patience and prudence is *rashness,* which casts a man into danger, when there is no necessity, and when he might have avoided it, without any breach of duty, or prejudice done to truth: and again, on the other extreme is fearfulness, when a man alarmed and ashamed of others, tacitly or openly denies the truth, and impatience is also opposed to a patient resignation to heaven's will, which effeminately and cowardly denies the truth, on account of the hardships which we dread to encounter.

Apollos.—How difficult is it to be a christian in deed and in truth. How prudent, how correct we ought to be.

Aquila.—Indeed we ought. Prudence and charity ought to be our guide, we should never, if possible, give an offence, and ought to bear a great deal rather than take one, and by the example of no man should we be drawn into sin. Some things it is true, are indifferent, but we are to remember my dear friend—that nothing commanded of the Almighty is indifferent. Far, very far from it. Meats, drinks, raiment, and the actions of civil rights, either expressly allowed or no where prohibited, are allowable, but christian liberty never allows of sin, it rather consists in its entire destruction. Satisfied of the correctness of our faith, we are to honour God in things that are lawful, and these are never to lead us to do what is unlawful.

Apollos.—Here is plainly our duty.

Aquila.—The law of charity however says, we are not to use our liberty so as to injure a weaker brother. We are to give no occasion for contention and scandal on one hand; nor on the other for fear of it, are we to renounce the truth, and abandon our course of serving God, and saving our souls.

Apollos.—Thus we are to do all we can to prevent the injury of others, but at the same time secure our own salvation.

Aquila.—We must indeed, and that too with fear and trembling. Look my friend—at these duties and the more you consider them, the more important will it appear to you that we should keep our own 'bodies under, lest whilst we preach to others, we be cast off ourselves.'

Apollos.—I am convinced of its vast importance, 'if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.'

Aquila.—When we shall have considered the relative duties of a christian, you will have before you, his entire course, we have pointed out his duty to God, his duty to his neighbour, and his duty to himself in view of his eternal interest, and joy at God's right hand. How holy, how devoted must he be in order to accomplish so great a work as his own salvation, under God, and become as far as possible, the instrument in the salvation of others? Little things, my dear friend—are to be borne in mind, and every duty, both great and small is to be discharged. We are to add to our faith continually, and in all things prove ourselves the servants of the living God. How carefully, closely, and conscientiously, day by day should we examine our hearts and try ourselves by that standard which the living God has appointed. May he grant us his grace, that we may so walk before him, as at last, to attain to everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

COLLOQUY XXVI.

THE RELATIVE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANITY AS SET FORTH IN THE PRECEPTS OF THE NEW COVENANT.—THOSE OF BOTH SEXES CONSIDERED—WHETHER AS AGED OR YOUNG, MARRIED OR SINGLE PERSONS.—ALSO THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES, PARENTS AND CHILDREN, MASTERS AND SERVANTS, AND THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH THE GOSPEL IMPOSES ON MAGISTRATES AND CITIZENS—THE RICH AND THE POOR—ON THOSE THAT HAVE HEALTH, AND THEM THAT ARE SICK.

Aquila.—The duties which have been presented for your consideration my friend—as set forth in the precepts of christianity, in our preceding conversations, are such as are common and alike incumbent on all christians. We are now to consider those that are necessary to each one of them, according to the different relations they bear to one another.

Apollos.—By an application of general rules, I presume all will be expected to see and know their duties.

Aquila.—This is true, but special rules are often given by the Almighty, that all the particular obligations of piety may be obvious to the understanding of every believer.

Apollos.—But we are all brethren in Christ, and all on the same level with respect to eternal salvation.

Aquila.—This is certainly true, but the christian religion does not destroy the different conditions of men in civil life, far from it, for the Scriptures teach that these are not abolished, but rather prescribe particular duties for each peculiar state. It does manifestly make a distinction, especially with regard to masters and servants who are believers. 'Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it, but if thou mayest be made free use it rather.' It is therefore lawful for a man to aspire to a better condition in life, because there are distinctions in it, not with regard to salvation, but on account of the conveniencies of this life.

Apollos.—But the differences of states, which are evidently allowable among christians, do not render men more holy or acceptable to God, the one than the other.

Aquila.—By no means, this is evident from what the Scripture says. 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, or uncircumcision, but a new creature,' in the parallels 'faith that worketh by love,' and 'the keeping the commandment of God.' It is therefore the duty of every man as far as possible,

to make choice of such a state in life, as will be most suitable to his welfare, both civil and religious. And that St. Paul teaches it as our duty and privilege to make this selection, is evident from his remarks on marriage in the 7th ch. 1 Cor.

Apollos.—But ought not a man to proceed in these matters with caution?

Aquila.—He ought. A christian must not embrace a state in life that is repugnant to piety, such as a conjurer, a fortune-teller, a juggler, nor one averse to justice, as a pirate, a robber, nor one opposed to chastity; such as that of a pander, a bawd, a whore; nor one contrary to honesty, as a buffoon, a rope-dancer, a play-actor and the like. Moreover my friend—a christian should not be hasty in altering his business or situation in life, and shifting from one sort to another, but after mature deliberation, it is most certainly lawful to change that condition for one more convenient, and more congenial with our own wishes and views. In youth especially, it is not right to enter rashly into a vow, that may be a yoke for life, or lead us to tempt God, and above all in whatever state we live, we are to be obedient to Christ, and prove to all that in any condition in human life that is honest, a man may be a christian.[1]

Apollos.—As then there is this difference of states, and as all christians have not alike external things at their command, some being possessed by one man that are not by another, there is the obligation of contentment, moderation, gravity, temperance, and sobriety, as well as self-denial, resting alike on all.

Aquila.—It is certainly so, and as there are duties growing out of those special relations in life that we sustain to others, as well as the diversified condition we are called to fill, the christian may be considered with respect to sex as male or female, with regard to age as young or old, as to his state or condition in life, as married or single, as a parent or child, as a master or servant, as a magistrate or citizen, as rich or poor, as healthy or sick. All these conditions have duties connected with them, and in all these stations christianity is to be exhibited, so as to honour and glorify God.

Apollos—And, generally speaking, what are the duties of man?

Aquila.—God has designed men for great undertakings, and has endowed them with qualifications for the same, hence it is their duty to be courageous and active in every christian duty. The ancients used to call *fortitude* manliness, and an apostle says, 'be strong, quit you like men.' Formed after this manner, the lord of this earth, it is manly and proper to moderate and restrain anger, and never to abuse authority or power, never to be soft and effeminate in dress, manners, or mind, this being too great a condescension for him who in God's providence is made a MAN.

Apollos.—That is men should be manly.

Aquila.—They should, but the peculiar duties of females, involved in their holy christianity is *shamefacedness*, which includes on the one hand chastity that alike becomes both sexes, but is the peculiar ornament of woman, and it excludes all lasciviousness and impudence both in looks and language. Such must also be *modest*, never doing what does not belong to them, and never exercising lordship over their husbands. This lovely quality of woman is conspicuous in her gravity, decency of habit, and silence in learning her duty. As I suggested on another occasion, my friend—a christian woman should be modest and grave in her attire, she should avoid gaudy and wanton dresses, such as may feed and encourage the pride of the heart. And as those who spend much time in dress have but little for piety, or much cost in its purchase, have little to give, however such may be styled a fashionable and a genteel lady by a loose luxurious age, she never can be acceptable as such to the living and holy God.[2]

[1] Limborch.

[2] Wesley, Clarke and Limborch.

Apollos.—No christian should ever forget the poor.

Aquila.—No! indeed—and that modesty which will keep a woman modestly attired, will also prevent her appearance at masquerades, and the adoption of all those Indian fashions which have lately been revived among us.

Apollos.—What are the duties which originate in the diversity with respect to age?

Aquila.—Persons may be considered either as they are of the same age, or older and younger. Those of equal ages should conduct themselves as brethren, since there is no manner of superiority with respect to them, and hence young Timothy was exhorted to 'rebuke the younger men as brethren?' The duty of the aged men is gravity, a virtue necessary to support their authority, as they are to govern the young, to be directors of their actions, and advise them in all their course. 'The aged men should be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.' Their speech should ever be 'seasoned with salt.' They should be free from all passion, all rashness, of a mature judgment, and by a holy example instruct the young in that path that leads to heaven.

Apollos.—And the first duty of the young is to follow at once that holy example.

Aquila.—Indeed it is, and never to put off seeking religion until old, for life is uncertain, and every day we progress in sin our conversion becomes more difficult, we should consecrate the flower of youth to God, and not delay repentance until we can only offer the dregs of an ill-spent life. As it regards our conduct to the aged, a young man should reverence and respect them, rendering all the assistance we can, and that with profound respect. The young should fly from 'youthful lusts,' and make no important engagement in life without the advice and encouragement of the aged and experienced.

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend—is there any real merit in a single state?

Aquila.—Celibacy, or a single life, has its inconveniences, so also it has its conveniences. In times of war, and of great and extreme persecution, it would be unjust and improper in any man to involve an innocent woman in his suffering: and while celibacy is in itself indifferent, for God leaves a man to choose for himself, and marry or remain single, it must be admitted on all hands that a married life is not only answering best the ends of our creation, but is the means of more holiness, the greater and more enlarged exercise of the christian graces and virtues, and religious usefulness.

Apollos.—Is not the Scripture in favour of a single life?

Aquila.—By no means, God could never contradict himself. It may be proper sometimes to suspend a general rule as it regards its particular bearing on some peculiar cases. As was suggested, in times of great persecution and war, in an indifferent matter, when a man is allowed the liberty to choose or let it alone, it may be prudent not to enter into matrimonial engagements, but the word of God, however it may be warped to suit the notions of Papists, never did and never can say that a single state is more acceptable than a married one to Deity. God says otherwise, it is 'not good for man to be alone,' and however Paul might advise men in times of persecution to remain single, we know he gave it 'not by commandment,' and are certain that Peter was a married man, and it is probable that most of the apostles were.

Apollos.—As then it is indifferent, and a christian may be married or remain single, what are the duties that render the latter state acceptable to God?

Aquila.—The duties of the unmarried are, whether as never having lived in wedlock, or as the widowed, to be chaste, 'for whoremongers and adulterers God will judge,' they are not to be distracted by various lusts, but marry, and having the fewer engagements in life, as they have more time, they must be

more diligent in watchings, fastings, prayers, and all the duties of religion. Widows especially are exhorted to 'trust in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day,' because in most instances deprived of all human help. Hence God in Scripture is called the husband of the widow and an avenger of their wrongs. These are to avoid all luxury and idleness, all talkativeness, and the busying themselves in the matters of others.

Apollos.—What are the nature and obligations of marriage?

Aquila.—Matrimony has been defined the joining together a man and woman so as to make them one flesh. These are the ends for which it was ordained. To replenish and augment the inhabitants of the earth, and to train them in the fear of God, to prevent fornication, and to act as a ligament in society, by which, for the comfort and help of one another, we are bound together, hence says the word of God, to avoid fornication 'let every man have his own wife, and every woman have her own husband,' and the Lord God said 'it is not good that man should be alone: I will make a help meet for him.' And therefore matrimony, according to all the Scripture, was ordained by God himself, and he proclaims it, whatever a popish priest may say to the contrary, 'marriage is honourable in ALL, and the bed undefiled.' And, my friend—St. Paul has foretold that these very priests should arise to contradict what God himself has said, and teach the world that his law, as it regards this matter is carnal and unlawful.

Apollos.—Where, my brother?

Aquila.—Paul says to Timothy, 'the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, and after their own lusts shall they heap up unto themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,' 'speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with an hot iron; forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, of them which believe and know the truth.' These very texts point out those very men that thus pervert and deny the truths of the Lord.[1]

Apollos.—The original institution of marriage was only between two?

Aquila.—Certainly, and the fact that God not only has said, 'a man shall cleave to his wife,' forsaking all others, but also that 'they *two* shall be one flesh,' is positive evidence that polygamy, or the having at one time more wives than one, is unlawful and a sin. This may be easily established by reason.

Apollos.—Point out the reasons if you please?

Aquila.—As we have just seen it is repugnant to the original institution of marriage, which was made by the Almighty, not only between two persons, but also by a tie for life, more binding than all other relations, and one that exceeds all bonds of blood and friendship. Besides polygamy is a sin expressly forbid by the Saviour, 'whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, and whosoever marrieth her that is divorced committeth adultery.' The reason of this is plain, the wife that is put away is the lawful wife of the first husband, unless it be for fornication, and therefore he that marries her is an adulterer. And by consulting the parallel texts you will find that this also is applicable to man. There is also another reason.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—The very end of marriage is a peaceable and quiet cohabitation and union, but where there are more than two as in the case of Jacob and his wives, there are jealousies and quarrels that are but the repetition of the sad tales of Rachel and Leah, Hannah and Penninnah, to the end of all time.

[1] Clarke, Scott, and Henry.

Apollos.—The plea then of the patriarchs having more wives than one, is by no means sound.

Aquila.—Surely it is not, for we are not to inquire who has set a bad example, but into God's law of marriage, which in its origin was between two only, and the first one we hear of that was guilty of polygamy was Lamech. Nor are we to seek for what God allowed in ancient times on account of the hardness of men's hearts, but what he now allows to men considered as christians. Then we shall find marriage reduced to its original design.

Apollos.—But it has been considered proper, politically speaking, or as a mere matter of state policy, admissable.

Aquila.—I know this, but deny the theory of such in toto, for the question as it regards the state, is not whether one man may become the father of more children by having many wives, but whether each woman may not be the mother of more children, thereby increasing the population of a state, provided no man shall have but one wife.[1]

Apollos.—When the first husband is dead the wife is freed from him, and vice versa.

Aquila.—She is, and 'is at liberty to marry again whom she will,' as says the apostle Paul. Indeed God has left this as an indifferent matter to every one's discretion.

Apollos.—What then are the duties of married persons?

Aquila.—These are to be considered as it regards their contract, either before or after marriage. With respect to the former, marriage should never be contracted between those who come within the degrees of consanguinity and affinity, whether lineal or collateral, whose marriage is forbid by God and man, and that clearly in the 18th chapter of Leviticus, and never repealed. Again, a christian should marry no infidel or atheist, as St. Paul says, 'only in the Lord.' This is proper for several reasons. God has forbid a marriage with an infidel, 'Thou shalt make no marriages with them.' An idolatrous unbeliever is almost sure to draw away his companion, and this is certain to be the case if a woman; see how the lofty and wise Solomon was captivated, enslaved, shorn of his strength, ruined, and perhaps damned, by the instrumentality of a vain and an idolatrous woman. Such marriages, my friend—were the cause of the deluge, remotely at least. 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took them wives, of all which they chose,' immediately God determined on the destruction of the world.

Apollos.—Well—I never observed this before.

Aquila.—As a man or woman is about to introduce a stranger in his or her parental family, parents should be consulted. This is a respect due from children, especially if minors, to parents, for if not of age they are not at their own disposal. But if parents object to a christian marrying any christian, then children, I should think, might marry when of lawful age and free from parents at their own discretion. This contract, however, must be made by mutual consent, without fear or constraint, never extorted by force, or brought about by those worldly considerations of money and standing in life, without respect to pure love, the only tie that can ever bind a man and woman for life, for weal and for wo, together. O! my friend Apollos—if ever you determine to marry, never marry the best, richest, and most beautiful woman in the world on any man's advice, unless you love her better than all that are in the world. An experience of more than twenty years, has taught me that pure love, with religion, will make a man and woman happy together, under all the ills of human life. Sooner die a bachelor, hard as is his lot, than ever marry a woman that you do not love above all others.

[1] Paley.

Apollos.—Verily, I believe this is only right.

Aquila.—After marriage there are some duties common to both, and others peculiar to each.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—A special and most ardent love for each other, by which he or she is preferred in constancy of love to the nearest akin. 'Therefore,' says God, 'shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.' 'So ought men,' says St. Paul, 'to love their wives as their own bodies, he that loveth his wife loveth himself.' And 'every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.' And the aged are 'to teach the young women to love their husbands.' This is the common bond that makes each share with the other most willingly the ills of life. Such can delight in living together in the same house, and possessing together the same board and bed. To such it is a pleasure to communicate all the comfort and assistance imaginable from each to the other for family support, to educate children, and by such the marriage vows are faithfully kept in the fear of God, till death's chilling hand dissolves the tie by which they 'twain became one flesh.'

Apollos.—What are the peculiar duties of each?

Aquila.—That the husband not only continue to love his wife, but avoid all sourness, all bitterness, all harsh and threatening language, and never dare to use violence by giving her a blow. With her he should live prudently, giving honour as to the weaker vessel, affording his counsel, forgiving her infirmities, and honestly, industriously, and cheerfully labouring to provide for and support her and her children.

Apollos.—Such a husband is a good husband.

Aquila.—The peculiar duty of the wife is obedience to her husband as the head. 'Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.' By which is implied simply that she so respect, reverence, and love him, that she will not displease, much less usurp authority over or command him, though it is ever the part of a faithful wife to advise, for often is the woman the more prudent of the two; and as a prudent woman, instead of being heard a mile, will manage all her affairs with *silence*, moderation and decision, regarding her husband as an ornament given her by her Maker, and most tenderly and affectionately seeking to secure and perpetuate his happiness.

Apollos.—Such a couple must be happy.

Aquila.—They are happy if above all they have the love of God. And let me tell you, Apollos—it is in the power of a man to make a good wife out of a passionate and peevish woman; and a woman of an amiable disposition can conquer, in most instances, the hard-heartedness of a cruel man. For surely, he who would assail and insult the feelings of a woman, especially a wife, is worse than brutal. There is only one exception to this rule that I know of.

Apollos.—What is this, my friend?

Aquila.—It is when the man is a drunkard. God's grace much less a woman's tears, cannot cure and prevent the deeds of him that gulps down the liquid fire. But when there are not the fumes of liquor to create demons out of mortals, then may each kiss away from the other in one moment the very cause as well as the effects of a misunderstanding. And death alone can part such, for pure conjugal love, founded on christian feeling and the love of God, is strong, and can only be broken by the hand of death.

Apollos.—If such have children then there are duties which devolve alike on both.

Aquila.—There are, and the duties of parents are summed up in these words, 'Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture

and admonition,' i. e. discipline, 'of the Lord.' In this general precept several things are comprehended.

Apollos.—Please point them out.

Aquila.—We are to *nourish*, that is supply them with food and raiment, we are to *educate* them especially in the christian religion, we are to set before them a good example, for children ever eye their parents, and if unruly, stubborn or refractory, it is as much our duty to chastise them by looks, words, or rods, according to the true natural disposition, as it is our duty to pray for them. But this is never to be done in anger or in wrath.

Apollos.—Education is a thing but little regarded among most parents.

Aquila.—This is true, 'children are a heritage from the Lord,' and how many are concerned about heaping on their sons and daughters the professions of this life, who never instruct and adorn them in the truths of piety. The wise man has said, children must be trained in the 'way in which they should go, and when old they will not depart from it.'

Apollos.—But some think children are too young, and are not capable of that discretion that piety requires.

Aquila.—The children of a great many parents, are wicked when grown, because not encouraged in piety when young, and thus often become a curse to themselves and their parents. How many mother's suffer their daughters to visit theatres and balls, and mingle in a circle that conscience never would let the parents do. O! if their morning sun should set at noon, and they unexpectedly fall into the grave, what an account will such parents have to give. Children are to have line upon line, and precept on precept. Father and mother are daily to pray, that God may crown and bless their souls with everlasting life.

Apollos.—Well--while all are educated is it not proper to try to make them equal in this respect?

Aquila.—It is true, all are not naturally alike capable, but some parents spend thousands on sons, and train their daughters in comparative ignorance, as it regards the things they should know. I have never yet, my friend—known a mother however poor, that did not try in some way to have her children taught at least as much as she knew herself. This is not the case always with the father, he has not time, and cannot take that care.[1]

Apollos.—Children owe an important duty to their parents.

Aquila.—Indeed they do, and all their duty is comprehended in the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.'

Apollos.—I have often noticed the particularity of this commandment, 'honour thy father,' and not him only who has the authority and power to command thee, but 'thy mother,' poor, weak, and feeble, on account of whose feebleness no man is ever to neglect and slight in any degree.

Aquila.—Indeed my friend—this is well thought of, and let me add, that all the living progenitors, as grand-father and mother, are virtually included in this command.

Apollos.—What is included in this duty?

Aquila.—Three things, reverence, which children ought, as before suggested, to possess first in their hearts, having a most sincere and ardent love for their parents, as the authors of life to them, and most immediately representing the image of God. This reverence should be manifested by their words, for they

[1] Some of the greatest statesmen and warriors owed their renown to the education of their mothers, and we know that the Wesleys, the great reformers of the seventeenth century, were indebted to their pious mother, who was perhaps, the most systematic woman on earth, for their love and adherence to rule and to order.

should never speak to them but with the profoundest respect. And still more so by deeds, in performing all offices of kindness and respect toward them, rising in their presence, standing while they sit, giving them the direction in matters of importance, never interrupting them in their discourse, never undertaking any thing of moment, without consulting them, these, and the like acts manifest the reverence and love of our hearts.

Apollos.—And what ought to be the obedience of children to parents?

Aquila.—It ought to be universal, 'children obey your parents in all things,' is the word of the Lord, and to this there is but one proviso.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—That their commands do not clash with the divine precepts. Whatever may be parental authority in indifferent things, it is never to counteract or subvert the authority of God. When parents either embrace an error, or wish to prevent the religious efforts of their children, they are too apt to oppose them, or rather interpose parental authority, in order to prevent the influence of that which is divine. If the children be of a proper age to judge for themselves, they must regard the authority of God rather than that of man. And I have known some acting on this principle, to be made the happy instruments in the conversion of the parents, dear to their hearts.

Apollos.—Then it is abominable, if this be the only exception, for Jesuits and priests, to take away youths from their parents, and suffer them, contrary to parental authority and will, to enter into monastic vows.

Aquila.—It is certainly wrong, my friend—they allow them, after sixteen, to enter monasteries, deserting even their believing parents, a plain and palpable violation of the fifth commandment. The unreasonableness of it is apparent, they say the monastic life is not necessary, and may be rejected by any. No man can dedicate the property of another without the owner's leave, to any purpose, and children are by law, both natural and divine, the property of their parents, and their vows are not binding, without their consent, even if they were legal and expedient. Besides, it is rash to determine without the consent of parents, any thing about one's future life, and our Saviour teaches a contrary course by his example, for he 'was subject to his parents.'

Apollos,—They say, 'he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.'

Aquila.—The Saviour does not here treat of indifferent things, without the observance of which, a man may be a christian, but, of the divine commands, which are not to be subverted by parental authority.[1]

Apollos.—I perceive the difference.

Aquila.—Another act of that duty which children owe their parents is gratitude. This requires that they should relieve them in their necessities, as the parents before relieved and sustained their children, when they were helpless and without support, and from this duty no external acts of any religion or piety can ever absolve a child. Our Lord in the 15th ch. Mat. evinces the wickedness of ingratitude to parents. And while every assistance is afforded, the child is to do all in his power to excuse the peevishness and fretfulness of a parent, attributing to them those infirmities that are natural to age. The fact is, my brother—God has never punished any sin in such a pointed and severe manner as he has irreverence and disobedience to parents, except idolatry, and to induce attention, kindness, and honour to aged parents, he has graciously promised long life to him that honours his father and mother.

Apollos.—O! what a sin is it to slight and neglect our parents.

Aquila.—Indeed it is, and what will be the feelings of children who treat disrespectfully an aged father that begat them, the mother that bore them with so

[1] Limborch.

many pangs, when their heads are laid low in the cold grave. And it may be that God who is just, will repay them their wickedness, in their own coin. I have known several young men and women, famous for care to their aged parents, prosper beyond all human expectation, I have always attributed it to the goodness of God in rewarding their acts of gratitude towards their parents.

Apollos.—O! who that reflects on the many long and tedious nights of care and suffering, a tender mother has watched the slumbers of a son, a daughter, and now for that son to break her heart, or that daughter to wound and insult her feelings, and bring down her gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. O! it is too much. It ought not to be.

Aquila.—In relative duties there are those also of the master and servant. We have shown that the christian religion has not taken away this distinction, nor discharged the latter from his service to the former, on account of embracing christianity. But it must be remarked that it is much more congenial with the gospel of Christ not to detain them who believe in bondage, much less to bring them who are free into captivity. And christianity has done much for the world, in abolishing in part, that severe custom of making prisoners of war, slaves. But to enslave those who are free and innocent against their will, and sell them to others, or buy them of those who have taken them, in order to sell them again, is inhuman, barbarous, and inconsistent with the most equitable laws of nature and nature's God. 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.' The nations who have made the slave-trade piracy deserve the thanks of all the earth.

Apollos.—What are the duties of masters and servants?

Aquila.—Masters are not to assume to themselves absolute authority over their servants, since they are all under one and the same master. 'And ye masters do the same things,' says St. Paul, 'forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.' And 'masters give unto your servants what is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.' Hence we learn several very important things.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—Never to command a thing above the strength or beyond the ability of a servant. In commanding no threatenings are to be used, a just reward is to be given for their labour, in rebuking be moderate, 'you have a master in heaven,' who respects alike the servant and his master. Take good care of them in sickness and old age, above all, see that they and their children are trained up as your own, in piety, and the service of the true God. If the laws of the land will not allow emancipation, when slaves, by marriage, or on the law of descent have come into your hands, these rules properly carried out, will mitigate greatly the sufferings of a portion of our brothers doomed in the providence of God to hardships sore indeed. If they be hired servants their wages are not to be kept back, nor detained, much less are they to be defrauded of the same.

Apollos.—And servants owe a duty to their masters also.

Aquila.—They surely do, and these servants are either slaves, who are servants in that sense in which the term is generally used in the New Testament, Roman prisoners being generally sold as slaves, or they are hirelings, and for wages serve others. In either case, according to the precepts of the new covenant, which ever respects the laws of the land, such are bound as good men constantly to honour their masters. St. Paul says, 'let as many servants as are under the yoke,' i. e. in bondage as slaves, 'count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit.' They are also to render obedience in all things which are not opposed to piety,

and this not only to the kind and gentle, but to the froward and disobedient. Thus 'servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God, and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord and not unto men. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.' 'Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.'

Apollos.—The gospel makes it the duty of a man to serve God faithfully in whatever condition the divine providence may place him.

Aquila.—It is even so, and hence St. Paul says, 'exhort servants, to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' All this must be done not with eye service, but in simplicity of heart. 'Not,' says St. Paul, 'with eye service as men-pleasers; but as the servant of Christ doing the will of God from the heart; with good will, doing service as unto the Lord and not to men.' To the Colossians nearly the same. 'Servants,' saith he, 'obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.' And if such good servants can honestly, and with the consent of their masters obtain their freedom, they may very justly aspire after it, and surely to such a faithful, valuable servant, a good master would, where the laws of the country will allow it, grant him most cheerfully his freedom. And if this cannot be done amply remunerate the faithfulness of such a servant in another way. Hence says St. Paul to the Corinthians, 'Art thou called being a servant, care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free use it the rather.'

Apollos.—St. Paul is explicit in regard to these duties.

Aquila.—He is, and all that is said here of the duty of slaves toward their masters is most certainly and truly applicable to hirelings for wages, for these receive a just recompense for their services, and ought therefore to do their duty the more faithfully. Some of the most faithful and praiseworthy deeds that I have ever known performed in private life, have been performed by slaves, who, with their families, have been in bondage for life. On the other hand, how many who are free, and receive the price of their own labour, are idle and unfaithful; this does not grow out of their being free, but the want of a deep sense of religious obligation. If the poor pious slave who barely receives his *daily bread* is faithful, what ought to be the conduct of those who are well and amply paid, whether coloured or white. On the other hand, how careful ought masters and mistresses to be to prevent or supply all their reasonable wants, and knowing that they have a master in heaven, how mindful should they be of the feelings of those reduced to the necessity of labouring as servants for a support.

Priscilla.—Often have I thought of this, how many poor motherless girls are thrown away, that might, if properly nursed and instructed in those families where they reside, become in future life an ornament to society.

Aquila.—Indeed they might, but they are looked upon and treated with indignity, their feelings are often ground to the quick, and that by parents who do not know but that their own children may be destined to toil and endure the like, at the hands of others.

Priscilla.—A proper course of conduct on the part of those who hire, would doubtless save many a poor girl from utter ruin.

Aquila.—The relative duties which have been noticed, have respect particularly to man, considered in a private and limited circle in society. But when we contemplate him as the member of a community, a citizen of a state, there are

evidently duties devolving on him as such which christianity most imperiously commands. And these respect men as the *rulers* or the *ruled*.

Apollos.—What then can a christian be a magistrate?

Aquila.—It must, my friend—be borne in mind that a magistrate, as we have suggested on another occasion, is the minister of God for the preservation of order. 'There is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God, whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God.' Such an office then may be, nay ought to be filled by good men, qualified duly and constitutionally for the same, from that of the chief magistrate of a country to the lowest officer. Of this we have evidence, for Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, as well as Cornelius, and Sergius Paulus the pro-consul, retained their offices: and it is easy to prove that the exercise of the office of a magistrate is not repugnant to christianity. Is he the source of law? Surely it is not immoral to make wholesome laws. Is he the administrator of justice? Certainly there is nothing in this opposed to goodness, and even in the execution of punishments for capital offences, when it is considered an act done to protect innocence, and secure the peace and happiness of all, it will readily appear that one had better suffer than many.

Apollos.—What then are their duties?

Aquila.—Simply to take care of and procure to the utmost of their ability, the welfare, both religious and civil, of that community of which they are public officers.

Apollos.—What, the religious welfare, my friend?

Aquila.—Certainly, for a magistrate is 'a minister of God,' and the servant and watchman of the public; and the laws are for the security of moral as well as temporal good. It is his duty to preserve the privileges of all in that worship which the laws of a country grant unto them, and thereby to be a terror to evil doers. A magistrate who by example or precept acts otherwise deserves the contempt and pity of all: on the other hand, they are often expected to seek out and interfere in business when prudence and justice require them to be neutral.

Apollos.—What are their duties in regard to civil matters?

Aquila.—To preserve, and with lenity to enforce the laws, by a prudent and an unbiased administration of justice, according to the same, and thus secure the public peace. In order to this, they should closely investigate and seek to understand the laws according to their plain common sense meaning. He must have a full knowledge of the cases brought before him, at least he must make a diligent and a faithful inquiry into the same by the examination of witnesses, and all the evidence in the case, whether recorded or oral; in order to this there must be judgment, prudence, patience, attention, and a freedom from all passion, prejudice and partiality, else the stream of justice itself will become polluted.

Apollos.—Such a man will be a good 'minister of God' indeed.

Aquila.—Above all there must be a magnanimity and an independence of feeling and character, that will enable him, whatever may be the opposition of parties and the influence of wealth, to do justice and apply the laws according to his conscience and oath, to the very best of his ability; and then with a decision of character that is worthy a good man, enforce the same. The innocent poor and oppressed are ever to be protected against the violence of the rich and the tyrannical, and he who administers the law should most faithfully and conscientiously observe its precepts.

Apollos.—I am sure that a man who will thus discharge his duty will be regarded and respected by all.

Aquila.—This is not always the case, my friend. It is however evident that he ought to be, and obedience to the laws of a country is the duty of all its citizens, whatever may be their stations.

Apollos.—Every man ought to obey.

Aquila.—He ought, the christian precept is, 'let every soul be subject to the higher powers,' the magistrates, from the supreme officer down, of that particular country, in which he lives. Not, my friend—to the pope who is proclaimed the supreme lord of the world, and who is said to have the right to exempt ecclesiastics from the cognizance of the secular power, far from it, every man is amenable to the laws, and that order or class of men, who swear allegiance to no country, and no lord, but the pope, is an order designed in its very constitution, to subvert every government on earth, but that of the see of Rome. The combination of civil and ecclesiastical power under whatever name, is, my friend—to be dreaded by every lover of his country, as the signal of destruction to our liberties, of rapine and bloodshed to our property and persons, and infamy and disgrace to our mothers, our wives, and our daughters. It is enough that civil authority protects the religion of all alike, let the truth have fair play and it will prevail. The ministers of religion have nothing to do with temporal power, this is the direct road to popery. Let them make the laws of a land, and the more powerful party must have it their own way.

Apollos.—As the duty of obedience is incumbent on all, so then it is, I presume universal, as it respects the laws of a land.

Aquila.—Certainly, provided those laws do not impose a violation of the precepts of the new covenant, and even then a christian is not to oppose the law by force. The people are the supreme lawgivers of every country, power is delegated to legislators and magistrates, because all cannot be present to make the laws, and administer the same. This right, on the part of the people, is the palladium of liberty, civil and religious, and hence fealty to a foreign power, temporal or ecclesiastical, is an indirect attack, to say the least, on the great principle of the sovereignty of the people. But if a religious man be oppressed by laws, that constrain a worship against his conscience, or a subscription to principles that are destructive of the true faith of the gospel, or entail slavery on his posterity, he had better die, and at once sacrifice life, than do an act that will dishonour his God, and disgrace the cause of truth. It is the duty of every christian to render honour to whom honour is due, to pay all the taxes and regular duties or customs of his country, and he is not only to 'honour' but 'fear,' i. e. reverence his rulers, and especially where they constitutionally administer civil authority, and he should both publicly and privately pray for them. All rash censure on the regular constituted authorities of a country is wrong, and inconsistent with that candour and moderation which become a christian. We are not to 'speak evil' of them, this is to calumniate if not slander, for the truth may be told in such a way and spirit as to become slander. In a free government, according to the rights of the people, the source of power, the public acts of a public man may be canvassed, and be closely examined by the light of reason and truth, but while he is in authority, under the precepts of the new covenant, we dare not speak evil of him, nor can we slander him or any man, at any time, with impunity.

Apollos.—The Scripture affords some terrible examples of those who were punished for such offences. I see then we must 'render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.

Aquila.—Yes—'honour to whom honour,' but we should never forget that this honour is one that is founded in civil law and right, and not in the assumed power occasioned by wealth and tyranny.

Apollos.—How far, my friend—are riches and poverty suitable to christians?

Aquila.—Riches considered absolutely in themselves, are of the nature of indifferent things, which a man may abuse, or else use to the honour and glory of God. Hence they are reckoned useful and are numbered among the divine

blessings, for Job and others are presented to us as blessed of God with wealth. When properly used they are instruments for the exercise of liberality, continency, modesty, and gratitude toward God. On the other hand, in the possession of them there is great danger, for they expose to temptation, they choke the good seed, they prove a snare, and those who have them, with difficulty enter heaven.

Apollos.—How true is this?

Aquila.—True poverty is a necessity which is either hereditary, as inherited from poor parents, or through some misfortune or failure in health, or friends, or bad conduct, or some afflictive providence of God, as in the case of Job. As to voluntary poverty, among nuns and monks, where there is common stock, far beyond the means of any private man, I do not believe in. I look upon those mendicant friars, professedly so poor, as the disgrace of catholic Europe. They have lately found their way to America, and with feigned poverty, pick the pockets to eat the fruits of other men's labour, and spend a life of idleness and sloth, in voluptuousness and pleasure.

Apollos.—Suppose a man then rich through the blessing or providence of God, what is his duty?

Aquila.—The rich are not to be puffed up, 'Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

Apollos.—O! if this be done, what a great amount of good may be accomplished by the man of wealth.

Aquila.—Indeed there may, my friend—and there will be no time nor means for gluttony and pleasure, for living sumptuously every day, for being clad in fine linen, and purple, but as God's stewards, there will be a disposition to do good, not as proprietors of that which we hold.

Apollos.—And what are the duties of the poor?

Aquila.—If possible, to get an honest living by industry and labour. Not to be discouraged, but trust in God, and remember that he has some wise end in view, which shall turn to our benefit. Though despised by the rich we are not to envy them; for as it regards their eternal salvation, they are on a level with us. While the poor are grateful for all the benefits bestowed on them by the rich, they should also be thankful to them, as the dispensers of God's gifts. And all the kindness bestowed by others, is to be turned to his glory, and not to intemperance and sin. Indeed the poor should ever remember, that God has them under special care, and will assuredly, if they devote to him their hearts, amply reward their every toil.

Apollos.—And this is more than all the riches of this world.

Aquila.—It is indeed. Other relative duties of a christian, my friend—grow out of the fact, that he may be in the possession of health, or worn down by sickness. Hence there are duties which in health we are to discharge, that cannot be performed in sickness, and in sickness especially, are we to discharge duties, of which we know but little when well.

Apollos.—What then my brother—are the duties of a man in health?

Aquila.—The very first, as we have often said, is to repent of all sin, seek after the living God by faith, and never to rest until our hearts are changed by grace. This may be done in sickness, but be assured it is hard work for a sick man to return to God, and indeed, it is very uncertain whether God will help us to

return. While we have health and life God should have our hearts, sickness and death may come and prevent its dedication to him.

Apollos.—And what are the duties of the sick?

Aquila.—St. James says, to have recourse to God in prayer for restoration to health, and as they are feeble themselves, they should desire the prayers of others, especially the ministers of the church. You must remember my friend—that this is a duty positively enjoined on the pious sick, at least. Thus says the apostle, 'is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him.'

Apollos.—This is not done always.

Aquila.—O! no—after all other physicians are tried, and the man is certainly going to die, it is sometimes the case that some barbarian doctor will give him an opiate to stupify his senses, and then his friends will call a preacher to pray him quietly, and without distraction into the other world. O! I have often thought how terribly affrighted must some who die be, when so unexpectedly, they open their eyes in the other world, where all is a solemn and an eternal reality.

Apollos.—But there is a great difference between sick people, some are pious, some without religion.

Aquila.—It is so, but still a religious man when sick, should solemnly examine his soul, and diligently interrogate himself, as to his life and his experience. If he find himself in God's favour, his sickness shall prove a source of comfort and true consolation. Such should remember, that God who is the donor of every good, afflicts for their eternal welfare. On him they should throw themselves, that pain, however acute, may be shortened, and if lasting may be alleviated, and although the lips may be scorched with fevers, yet the spirit may be lifted to God, and they may be supported by an assured hope of eternal bliss. Past favours and supports, and the experience of thousands, and the promises of God should cheer our souls, and induce the belief, that in death itself we shall prove his faithfulness.

Apollos.—Prayer, incessant prayer, should be offered up.

Aquila.—Yes! my friend—and if brought to death, confident of pardon, forgiving all our enemies, and imploring heaven's blessing ever on them, we should rely on Jesus by faith, bear in mind that death is a debt which all must pay, and a kind messenger which heaven sends to call us, from this vale of tears to that home, where we shall rest from all labours, be no longer strangers and pilgrims, but adore and bless his name for ever and ever. There is one other duty of dying saints.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—To commit their friends, husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers and sisters all to God. The Almighty would have us commit them to him.

Apollos.—This is a comfortable thought indeed. But suppose a man has no religion, and is taken sick.

Aquila.—Then he must betake himself also to God in prayer. He cannot do better than to pray, pray for grace to aid him, that he may return, and though saved as by fire, yet be saved. He must remember God searches his heart, he must call to remembrance his vows and resolutions, all forfeited, and consider the number and magnitude of his sins. While he promises amendment, and desires the prayers of others, he should call upon God most fervently; and earnestly strive to lean by faith, on the Lord Jesus Christ, for mercy and support. He can only be saved by faith, he has not a moment to spare, eternity is at hand, he is here now, he may be damned in an hour. O! how he should cry out, and seek for mercy at the hand of heaven.

Apollos.—I perceive my brother—that christianity suggests a duty in every condition of human life.

Aquila.—Indeed it does my friend—and in every relation too. Relative duties are especially important. So much the more so my brother—because others are involved in their consequences. I pray God that we may be faithful in all our ways. As citizens, as companions, parents, children, masters, servants, rich, poor, healthy or sick, we have a work peculiar to that state in which we act, that must be faithfully performed.

COLLOQUY XXVII.

THE PRECEPTS OF THE NEW COVENANT, CALLED CEREMONIAL—THE SACRAMENTS, AS INSTITUTED BY THE LORD JESUS—BAPTISM—ITS NATURE, MODE AND PROPER SUBJECTS.

Aquila.—Ceremonies, my friend—are signs of a mutual contract between God and men. The law had its numerous rites. We have pointed out the moral precepts of the new covenant, in which a holy life consists, and are now to notice, that the Saviour has annexed to them some ceremonies, which are to be observed by us. Although the worship to be observed is spiritual, in opposition to the external ritual worship of the law, yet it has pleased God to bind the christian to that worship by a seal, consigning as it were, his grace and promises in it, to them.[1]

Apollos.—What are these rites generally called?

Aquila.—Sacraments, a word of long usage in the church, though unknown to the writers of the Holy Scriptures. There have been great disputes concerning the matter, the form, the efficacy, and the administrator of these sacraments. So many and so various have been the tracts on these subjects, that we may only take time to notice the origin and course of their institution, in their nature, including the matter and form, and lastly their efficacy.

Apollos.—What is the origin then, of the sacraments?

Aquila.—They are simply signs or seals of the covenant of grace, between God and man. The nations of the earth have all had their peculiar ceremonies, confirmatory of covenants. These were always performed when men entered into a contract. In condescension to human infirmity, God was pleased to imitate as it were, the custom used in human covenants: that is, he has instituted certain rites, as visible signs, whereby men should be assured of the conditions of this covenant. Here then, is their origin.

Apollos.—What is the matter of the christian sacraments?

Aquila.—Simply my brother—some sensible thing; for they are pledges by which God assures us of the performance of his promises. But as the blessings of the New Covenant apprehended by faith, are things invisible, for the confirmation of that faith, the promises should be shadowed out by sensible pledges; especially as man cannot apprehend many things but by the intervention of the senses.

Apollos.—What about the form as included in this nature?

Aquila.—It consists simply in some significative *force* or virtue; for although there should be some natural analogy between the sign and the thing signified, yet is it inconstant and undetermined, and could never signify that thing, unless God had ordered that this sign should have such and such a signification.

Apollos.—I think this evident.

Aquila.—Now the signs of the sacrament are either commemorative, which

[1] Watson and Limborch.

bring some past things to memory, as in the Lord's supper, or significative, to denote some future or present, but spiritual, invisible thing, as in baptism. Or obsignatory, which seal to us either something given, or to be given by God, and testify the duty we have or ought to perform on our part: of which nature, are both covenants.[1]

Apollos.—In what then, does their efficacy consist?

Aquila.—'Sacraments ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.'[2] It appears then, to be 'an outward sign of an inward and spiritual grace,' that is given unto us: which rite was ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive that grace, and a pledge to assure us thereof.[3]

Apollos.—From these words it is plain, that no other efficacy of conveying grace, is ascribed to the sacraments, than as they are outward signs appointed by Christ, to represent that inward and spiritual grace, which he alone bestows on us.

Aquila.—Certainly not.

Apollos.—But the Romanists contend, that the sacraments bestow grace, 'ex opere operato,' i. e. by virtue of the sacramental action instituted by God, to that purpose, and not for any merit of the actor and receiver: so that the will, and faith, &c. of the individual adult, are required, but not for any active causes. In other words, no actions of ours can make up a sacramental grace, or add any efficacy thereto; they only tend to remove obstacles out of the way of their efficacy.[4]

Aquila.—But my friend—the absurdity of all this is apparent; for first, it would then follow, that the sacraments, as instruments, work justification by their own immediate energy. But the Scriptures never attribute this to them, but to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, not as the meritorious but instrumental cause. And secondly, they may be administered on this ground, which Bellarmine admits, nay urges to unintelligent beings; or as is the custom of papists, to Bells, which they consecrate and baptize: all of which is ridiculously profane.[5]

Apollos.—Is it possible that the sacraments can reach the heart?

Aquila.—No; for they are gross and sensible things, but outward signs, commemorative, significative, and obsignatory, as before said, and who can tell in what part of them is situated this energy and grace that are so operative? And besides, on this plan, all dying without having received these sacraments, must of course be damned, for therein and there alone, is the grace.

Apollos.—And this is the reason why the commonalty among them make such ado about their sacraments. But, my friend—papists say that the Scriptures teach, 'he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved,' and that of course faith is not alone: there must be baptism.

Aquila.—Yes—but the words that follow show that however baptism may be proper as an initiatory ordinance in Christ's church, it is not of that absolute importance as is faith, for it is said, he that believeth not shall be damned. Of course, according to their exposition, he must be damned though he did believe, if not baptized. Now the reason of baptism is this, not that it imparts grace, or changes the heart, but is the external sign and profession of that inward and spiritual grace granted through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] Watson and Limborch.

[2] 16th Article of M. E. Church.

[3] Catechism of the Church of England.

[4] Bellarmine, lib. 2, chap. 1 and 8.

[5] Ibid. Bellarmine gives a long list of persons and things, to which the sacraments may be administered.

Apollos.—But they say that baptism is called a washing, or the 'laver of regeneration,' by St. Paul to Timothy.

Aquila.—Admit that the apostle here alluded to baptism, which is denied, would it thence follow that it wrought regeneration in us? It would be only a figurative expression, whereby the thing signified is put for the sign, on account of that strict connection that exists between the two. Baptism therefore, in this sense, might be called the laver of regeneration, because by the washing of water it is shadowed out to us. But, my friend—St. Paul does not here speak of the ordinance but the thing itself, regeneration; and as the crown of glory and the crown of life are called life and glory, so the laver here means regeneration itself.

Apollos.—But they say it is written 'repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and that it is here declared that sins are washed away by baptism.[1]

Aquila.—And here again is an error, for this is not because baptism is the instrument of remission, but because that men by it profess penitently, their faith in the Lord Jesus by which remission of sins is obtained.[2]

Apollos.—It is so plain, that an external ordinance cannot impart the remission of sins, which is suspended on faith in Christ, that one might as well attempt to impose on the world any other error as one so inconsistent.

Aquila.—In the holy sacrament it is evident that Deity exhibits to men his great grace, not actually conferring it on them, but placing it before them as by a sign, not of a future, but a present thing. And this efficacy requires the intellectual faculty to be rightly disposed, that it may be able to apprehend that which the sign offers objectively to the mind. Hence we see the manner in which these sacraments act in us, as signs representing to our minds the thing signified, acting as a confirmation or seal, though outward and visible, and assures us that we are in covenant with him who will certainly perform what he has promised.[3]

Apollos.—Romanists have seven sacraments.

Aquila.—And they had as well have fifty: it is therefore unnecessary, my friend—to dispute this point with them. It is evident there are no sacraments set forth in the Scriptures as institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ, acting as signs to commemorate, signify, and seal that covenant of grace made with man, but baptism and the Lord's supper. We may notice in the sequel that the seven sacraments of papists are simply superstitious inventions designed to subserve the interests of a polluted priesthood.

Apollos.—Well give me your views of baptism first, if you please.

Aquila.—In the institution of both the sacraments, my friend—our Saviour seems to have had regard to the custom that then prevailed among the Jews and Gentiles. For as the Jews, on receiving 'a proselyte of the gate,' a Gentile convert to their religion, washed him with water as a testimony of his having left the worship of false gods and embraced that of the true Deity; so does the Redeemer appoint baptism, or a washing of water, to show not only that both Jews and Gentiles were very corrupt, but that an amendment in their morals could only be accomplished by his grace, set forth and signified by the water. So also was it customary for the Jews upon a festival to invite their friends and neighbours, especially at the passover, to partake with them, and after the repast to distribute a better sort of bread and wine among the guests, giving thanks to God, and making a solemn commemoration of their exit from Egypt, in a manner suited to the day. So the Saviour, in the institution of the supper, seems to have had an eye upon those ceremonies, and added thereto the commemoration of his

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson and Limborch. [3] Limborch.

death. I do not insist on the analogy that there is between the rites of the New and those of the Old Testament, but will proceed to notice baptism according to your request.

Apollos.—I never considered before the analogy between the ceremony of washing or baptizing, and of eating bread and wine together to commemorate an event of the Old Testament and the Sacrament of the New. From this it is apparent that baptism was instituted as a religious rite before Christ used it.

Aquila.—Certainly, all the priests as well as proselytes of the gate, were 'washed,' i. e. baptized with water. Now in the christian baptism it is proper to consider its nature, subject, and the various circumstances thereof.

Apollos.—Well—with regard to its nature.

Aquila.—Baptism is that rite or ceremony of the new covenant, by which persons are initiated into the profession of the christian religion, or it is the mode appointed under that covenant by which a person assumes the profession of that religion, or is admitted to the participation of the privileges belonging to the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was by this mode that those who believed the gospel were to be separated from unbelievers, and joined to the visible christian church. The rite or washing with water was doubtless intended to represent the renouncing and washing away their former impurities, and that internal grace by the operation of which alone, the heart of man is cleansed.

Apollos.—But a question arises in my mind—did the Saviour institute this baptism or washing with water? and did he command its use in the christian church?

Aquila.—Water baptism was most certainly appointed by the Saviour. This is evident, from the fact, that he has positively commanded it. 'Go ye, said Jesus to the apostles, into all the world,' 'teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' And moreover, this very same thing is confirmed by the apostles themselves, who in several places, both in the Acts, and the Epistles, are said to have baptized with water those who were converted to the christian faith. Thus 'then Peter said, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you, and your children, and to all that are afar of, &c. and they that gladly received his word, were baptized.' When 'St. Paul asks the Corinthians if he baptized any of them, there is an evident admission, that they were baptized.' All which may be abundantly proved, by a reference to the texts setting forth this duty.[1]

Apollos.—But it is objected that many believed in Christ, who yet were not baptized, as the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, the hundred and twenty mentioned in the first chapter of Acts, and the five hundred named in the fifteenth chapter Corinthians. For we do not read of their baptism.

Aquila.—And can it therefore be inferred, that they were not baptized? Many things were certainly done, of which we have no account in the Scriptures:[2] from the first chapter of John we evidently learn, that some of them were baptized by John the Baptist, and even suppose that they were never baptized, the case between them, and those they were sent to baptize, was evidently different.

Apollos.—But are christians at present, obliged to be baptized. You know that it has been taught otherwise by Socinus, who said that as a duty it respected only the apostles, and those ministers duly ordained by them.[3]

Aquila.—This is not the only error taught by Socinus; the command to and the practice of the christian church, all prove it to be for the obedience of the faithful to the end of time, as we shall see in the sequel.

[1] Dwight and Dick. [2] Ibid. [3] Limborch and Watson.

Apollos.—Do if you please, point out to me the true nature and mode of baptism.

Aquila.—This is a subject on which so many tracts have been written, and on which, there has been so much heated controversy, that really my friend—it must be acknowledged, when considered as an outward sign only, those controversies have become the disgrace of the christian church. These tracts you may read at your leisure, they enter fully into the subject, and we have only time to notice it concisely, and pass on. Baptism is simply according to the original meaning of the word, and the practice of the church, a washing with water. By this rite it is thought by most divines, is shadowed out to us, that gracious remission of our sins, purchased by the blood of Christ, by which we are saved from its polluting and contaminating effects, as is the body cleansed by water.[1]

Apollos.—And is this the reason why it is called a baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins?

Aquila.—The Saviour to this rite, used already by John, adds another signification: it is the profession of his name, and the public acknowledgment of that doctrine which he taught. And for this reason he commanded baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To this very intent that those who enlisted in the cause of truth and God, being baptized in the name of the Trinity, should become the disciples of that doctrine, whose original was God the Father, which was revealed and preached by God the Son, and confirmed by the varied miracles of God the Holy Ghost. To this the apostles seem to have added another thing of which it is also a figure.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—A spiritual resurrection from a death of sin into a newness of life in Christ Jesus. Thus, says St. Paul, 'know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'

Apollos.—Well my friend—what are your views as to the mode?

Aquila.—The original word, whether βαπτιζω, BAPTIZO, or its primitive βαπτω, BAPTO, does mean, and all who are critically acquainted with the Greek language know it, to *wash* or *purify* a thing, whether by plunging, sprinkling, or pouring. Its primary meaning being the effect, and not the mode. Of this I venture to affirm, my friend—there are at least one hundred examples in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, the words themselves, are often to dye, tinge, stain, or colour, and when taken for immersion, are only in a secondary sense.[2]

Apollos.—I had not noticed this.

Aquila.—And my friend—these words though often capable of denoting any mode of washing, whether by effusion, sprinkling, or immersion, since cleansing was familiarly accomplished by the Jews in all these ways, yet, in many instan-

[1] There is a tract by Wesley, one by Val. Cooke, and one in Watson's Biblical Dictionary, worthy of a serious perusal. There are also some remarks by Dwight, Dick, and Clarke, and a plain common sense exposition of Baptism, by Schmucker, all of which will amply repay the reader. In a well written little volume, by Mr. Slicer, in answer to Mr. Broadus, of Va. all the minutiæ of this subject are considered. The reader is requested to peruse it. The premises are good, and the conclusions legitimate. The author has done the subject ample justice.

[2] This is amply proved by Dwight and Dick, to whose excellent remarks on this subject, I refer the reader. The words of Mr. Dwight are—'I have examined almost one hundred instances where this word βαπτιζω, BAPTIZO, and its derivatives are used in the New Testament, and four in the Septuagint.' 'To my apprehension, it is evident,' 'that the primary meaning of these terms, is cleansing, the effect, not the mode of washing.'

ces, cannot without obvious impropriety, be made to signify immersion, and in others cannot signify it at all.[1]

Apollos.—This is well worthy of observation.

Aquila.—It is indeed. In the church of Rome, baptism is celebrated with several rites besides the application of water. There is the sign of the cross, an exorcism to drive out the evil spirit: salt is placed on the tongue, to signify the deliverance from the corruption of nature. Spittle is put on the nostrils and ears, to show that he is enlightened by the holy spirit, the crown of the head is anointed with oil, to represent his being of the flock of Christ, the anointed: if an adult, he is clad in white, if a child, has presented a white handkerchief to point out his purity of life, and resurrection state, and a burning wax candle to expose, as placed in his hand the charity received, and inflaming his heart in baptism. This is the explanation given by themselves.[2]

Apollos.—And it is well they have explained it, for it would puzzle a philosopher to do it for them.

Aquila.—We have suggested that the manner in which water should be applied to the body in baptism, has occasioned much disputation among the professors of christianity, some contending for immersion, others for sprinkling or pouring. It is however most evident that baptism means simply, the setting apart and dedicating to the service of God, by the application of water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And we have seen that the original words, which mean to wash, dye, stain, cleanse, by sprinkling, pouring or plunging, and so used in scores of texts, cannot, and ought not to be applied solely to the act of dipping in water. For this we have some of the very best reasons, as well as the universal use of the word in its terminations in the Sacred Writings and elsewhere.

Apollos.—Point them out, my friend.

Aquila.—Among many, I will name only a few. The idea conveyed by this verb is sometimes to sprinkle even, when dipping is named, and this too, rather than dipping. Our Saviour, in the Revelation, is described as clothed in a garment, our translation says dipped in bloop, while βεβαμμενον BEBAMMENON, there evidently means *sprinkled* or *stained* with blood. For he is presented in prophecy as a warrior, and in the parallel in Isaiah, we have 'their blood shall be sprinkled on my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.' The sentence pronounced on Nebuchadnezzar was that he should be '*wet* with the dew of heaven,' and the word here used, εβαφη EBAPHE, surely means simply to *sprinkle* or *moisten*, as here '*wet* with dew.'

Apollos.—This is very plain, indeed.

Aquila—I do intend to say most positively, that the original word means to wash, by applying water in any way, and appeal to the numerous examples of Scripture to show that it is not applied, as is affirmed, solely to dipping. There are two remarkable examples of the same use of it in the Apocrapha. In one it denotes washing, without respect to form, in the other simply sprinkling. Thus it is said, Judith εβαπτιζετο EBAPTIZETO, *washed* herself *at* the fountain or spring near or by the camp, and the son of Sirach speaking of a person, who is purified from the pollution, occasioned by touching a dead body, calls him βαπτιζομενος BAPTIZOMENOS purified, that is sprinkled according to the law in 19th ch. 13 v. of Numbers, from that pollution by the water of separation.[3]

Apollos.—And it is to be presumed that the words so understood and used in the Septuagint by the Jews, was so also used by the New Testament writers.

Aquila.—Certainly, and it is unwarrantable for persons, sometimes wholly unacquainted with the use of those original words, boldly and fearlessly to affirm

[1] Dwight and Dick. [2] Dwight's Theo. vol. 4. fol. 345. ed. 1836. [3] Dick.

that they only mean *to dip*. Now it is also plain that our Lord so understood and used this self same word. 'The Pharisees and all the Jews except they wash,' i. e. 'baptize their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.' And when they come from the market, except they wash,' i. e. baptize, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold as the washing, i. e. baptism 'of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.'

Apollos.—But it is said that you dip the hands in water to wash them.

Aquila.—It was not so among the Jews, if it be so, which I know is not always the case, among us. It is said that 'Elisha the son of Shaphat poured water on the hands of Elijah.' The 'baptizing,' or washing on their return from market, is simply the cleansing the hands as above, it is to be presumed, and admit, that 'cups, and pots, and brazen vessels,' were dipped in order to cleanse them, which is not yet proved, they did not surely dip their κλινων KLINON here badly translated 'tables,' it should be *couches*, on which they reclined when at meat.

Apollos.—O! it is evident from the original, that to baptize is to wash with, or cleanse by the application of water.

Aquila.—Yes—and if it had been translated as it means, the effect, without respect to the mode, it would have saved a world of disputation. But to supply what is wanting in evidence from this word itself, many strive to show that it was by dipping or plunging that baptism was administered, from the passages where it is named. Thus John is said to have baptized εν EN *in* Jordan, as is affirmed standing in the water and dipping those that came to him. However, this preposition may be considered as denoting the place of an action, it is most evident, and it is declared after a close examination that it means, at, nigh to, or about a place. Thus, 'now εν EN, *in this place* where he was crucified there was a garden.' I ask was he crucified *in* the garden or *near* it?

Apollos.—The answer is in the vicinity of a garden.

Aquila.—So in like manner, it is said 'on those eighteen, upon whom the tower εν EN, *in* Siloam fell and slew them,' here it is not meant that the tower stood in the pool, much less was immersed in it, but that it was *close by* the pool. And, indeed, while St. Matthew says that John baptized *in* Jordan, St. John tells us that he was baptizing *beyond* Jordan, and as there can be no contradiction between their statements, the reconciliation is found, my friend—in this little word εν EN, which is simply that John was baptizing *near* Jordan.

Apollos.—And even if he took his station in the middle of the river, it does not follow that he dipped those that came to his baptism.

Aquila.—By no means, as a matter of convenience to procure water, not only for baptism; but the vast numbers who came together from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region round about Jordan, must have water for their own use, and that of their beasts.

Apollos.—But it is said that in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian, they went down *into* the water and came up *out* of the water, and here is immersion.

Aquila.—I think not, my friend—for if one was immersed so also was the other, for what is said of one is also said of both, besides a man may go into the water, when only ankle deep. Now the prepositions εις EIS here translated *into*, and εκ EK, *out of*, are most assuredly translated *to* and *from*, and in this very case would be a better translation, for the whole statement is simply this, that Philip went with the eunuch *to* the water, where he baptized, i. e. washed him in token of his salvation from the idolatrous pollutions of the age, and reception into Christ's church, and when they both came *from* the water, Philip was caught up by the spirit, &c.

Apollos.—Are there any examples of these words being thus used?

Aquila.—Scores of them, my friend—and you cannot make sense of them any

other way. Thus it is said, when 'Jesus came εις EIS, *to* the sepulchre of Lazarus.' Now we know that he did not enter it. And again, when 'ships came εκ EK *from* Tiberias, we do not suppose that they sailed from the midst of the city, but commenced their voyage at that place, and sailed from it. I affirm without any expectation of ever being contradicted by any man who has ever read any classical writer in the Greek language, that the preposition εκ EK means the *point from which*, and εις EIS, the *point to which* a movement is made. And my friend—in the present case, nothing more is intimated by the sacred historian, than that Philip and the Ethiopian, went *to* the place where they saw the water, and after the baptism, they both departed *from* the water, one being caught up by the Spirit of the Lord. And in proof of this, a different preposition is used for the departure of our Lord after his baptism: I mean απο APO, which even a schoolboy that is at all acquainted with Greek, knows, in its constant use, is simply *from*, not *out of*, and marks the place from whence he departed, without at all suggesting, that he had been immersed in the water.

Apollos.—But it is said that Saint Paul uses the expression, 'buried with him by baptism,' and hence it is inferred that we should be immersed.

Aquila.—Indeed my friend—there is an appearance of childishness in thus explaining an expression manifestly figurative. In the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle says first, that we are baptized into the death of Christ, and then adds, that 'we are buried with him in baptism,' referring most evidently, not to the form, but to the import of the ordinance by which it is signified, that through his death we become dead to sin, or are delivered from its power. This is more apparent; for in the next verse, he expresses the same idea by another figure, when he says, 'we have been planted together in the likeness of his death.'

Apollos.—And how does it come that one figure is supposed to mean baptism more than the other; why should it resemble burying more than planting?

Aquila.—No reason, but the desire to support a mere hypothesis. Besides, my friend—many proceed upon an erroneous idea of the Saviour's burial, into which it is strange that any person should have fallen, who has read the account of his burial in the New Testament. He was not buried after our custom, covered up in a deep hole with earth, but he was laid in a sepulchre in which men could sit and walk, hewn out of a rock, with its floor on a level with the surface of the earth, or but just below it. What resemblance is there between this and an immersion in water?

Apollos.—Indeed no two things in the earth are more unlike.

Aquila.—We have seen, my friend—that the original word means to wash with water, and that by any mode, whether by an application of water, or an immersion therein. Now when a word is used to denote an action which is figurative, it does seem to be fair, in determining its sense, to observe how the thing which the action represents, is in other places expressed. As the water in baptism is emblematical of the influences of the Holy Spirit, we may bring to the illustration of the term baptize, the passages of Scripture which speak of the communication of those influences; and I may venture positively to say, that there is not one of them which, in the most indirect manner, alludes to immersion.[1]

Apollos.—I have myself noticed this.

Aquila.—The Holy Ghost is said to 'fall' on men, to be 'poured' upon them, and in reference to the same subject, God promises to 'sprinkle clean water upon us,' which shall 'be as the dew of Israel;' and that his grace shall 'come down as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers which water the earth.' And if

[1] Dick's Theo.

water is a significant emblem, because it purifies, it is reasonable to suppose, that it is to be applied in a manner fit to represent the influences of the divine Spirit; and it is by no means proper to suppose, that God would speak of the operations of his Spirit in one way, and symbolically represent the same in another; besides, there would be no analogy between the promise and the seal, and the discrepancy would originate a confusion of ideas, and these things are objectionable in immersion, and cannot be easily evaded.

Priscilla.—I have also noticed, that the baptisms in the New Testament do not carry with them the least probability of an immersion.

Aquila.—They do not; for as we have seen in the case of John, he did not baptize in, but beyond Jordan, that is, on its banks, having the river between him and Jerusalem. It is not even credible, that the three thousand persons baptized on the day of Pentecost, were dipped. True, there was a pool in Jerusalem called the pool of Siloam, but we do not know whether from its size and situation, it could have been fit for this purpose; and the gross indecency of it, and a process so tedious, if all the multitude had put off and on their clothes, there being no previous preparation for such an event, and that too before the whole city, and it is as unlikely that they were plunged with their clothes on. I confess, my friend—that if this be admitted, after the closest consideration of this subject, I should be forced to admit more inconsistent, unreasonable, and indecent things than I shall ever do, or conceive to be enjoined in the word of my Saviour.

Priscilla.—And when whole families were baptized at a time, in a house, what reason is there to suppose, that there was water enough there to immerse them in?

Apollos.—It is not to be presumed that the houses of the Jews or Greeks, were better accommodated than ours.

Aquila.—Yet some seem to think that every house had a fount or bath, in which to immerse them; and why? because it would fain suit an hypothesis started by themselves.

Apollos.—And could the apostles administer baptism by immersion in every place?

Aquila.—They could not, and if this had been the mode, and too the only mode, most of the converts would have been led away to some pond or river, and in many regions in the east must sometimes have occasioned long journeys in order to find water. There is not one single fact in the New Testament that can bear such a construction: the narrative implies that they were baptized on the spot, some by day others by night, and as many as three thousand at one time, and almost simultaneous with a change of heart, and at the very place where that change occurred.

Apollos.—This surely leads to the conclusion that only a small quantity of water was necessary, which could be easily procured.

Aquila.—It is certainly so, and the argument that immersion, is the only meaning of the original, and on the prepositions εἰς, EIS, and ἐκ, EK, and that founded upon a fanciful analogy after the most careful examination you can give, will be seen utterly to fail. It will be found contrary to the usual language of Scripture, respecting the thing signified by baptism, and to the general strain of the history which relates instances of baptism where immersion could not be practised. With, my friend—whatever confidence this may have been pronounced to be the only scriptural mode the evidence preponderates on the opposite side: and we may therefore persevere with safety in our own practice, a practice followed for ages by the christian church and which no man has yet been able to prove unscriptural, and not the practice of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.[1]

[1] Dick.

Apollos.—Indeed it would seem unreasonable that so many should be baptized at one time, and without a previous preparation, by immersion.

Aquila.—The same argument is valid in regard to those who were baptized by John, that were baptized by the apostles, a vast multitude, who did not even know whether he would baptize them. Many of them doubtless women, to have immersed whom, either clad or naked, would not have been proper. The former because they had no change of raiment of which we have any knowledge, and the latter from motives of decency. And it is not the least argument that God would not institute in his service an ordinance which was a violation of common decency on the one hand, or on the other, from the difference of climate exposed to serious injury of the health of the subject. But if the passages be rendered to cleanse, wash, or purify, by the application of water, then it is most evident that all will be consistent.

Apollos.—I well remember several texts of this very kind, where the word is used in reference to the Holy Ghost.

Aquila.—Yes—there is the remark of John the Baptist concerning Christ. 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and in fire,' if translated, he shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost, they can have no just sense at all. But translate them as intended and all is clear.

Apollos.—O ! yes—'he shall baptize,' i. e. cleanse 'you with the Holy Ghost.'

Aquila.—And prophecy says, 'I will pour out my spirit,' and the history of the case is that the Holy Ghost fell or was poured upon them. Besides, St. Paul affirms that all the Israelites were baptized in that very way.

Apollos.—Is it possible ?

Aquila.—It is, hear it: 'Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed, through the sea ; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Priscilla.—And happily for us we have the whole account of this baptism in 13th chapter of Exodus.

Aquila.—Indeed we have, there we are told, among other things, that the angel of God went before the Israelites, from the commencement of their journey from Succoth, in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, until they were overtaken by Pharoah on the margin of the red sea, beside Pihahiroth. Next we are told that he who had gone before removed and went behind them. Then that the waters of the Red sea were as a wall on either hand, that the Israelites went into the midst of the sea on dry ground. Here is no account of that baptism at all named by the apostle. They went over dry shod, the water was as a wall on either hand, and they could not have been taken up and immersed, as some believe, in the cloud, for they are said to have walked on and passed over. Now what Moses omitted is found in the 77th Psalm, 'The waters saw thee O God,' &c. 'The clouds poured out water,' and that the inspired writer alludes to this very baptism we hear, 'thou leadest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' Here is the baptism of which St. Paul speaks, do my friend—read that Psalm.[1]

Apollos.—I surely will. Here was the pouring or sprinkling of thousands at once.

Aquila.—And doubtless it was so on the day of Pentecost as well as at the baptism of John.

Apollos.—But it is said that immersion is such an ancient custom.

Aquila.—If it be so, I might reply so are many other superstitious appendages of baptism, but I am candidly of opinion that immersion, as practised in this day, is not an ancient practice, it may be traced as it now occurs, not farther back than

[1] Dwight and Watson.

the commencement of the fifteenth century. An immersion was practised in the second century from which it has been taken by one or two churches, which consisted in dipping three times, under the notion of making the rite more emblematic, and anointing with oil, as we have seen. This was the invention of men like Tertullian, without judgment, and exceedingly superstitious. This simple circumstance has led some to suppose it of apostolic origin, and even the men of that opinion and time, never supposed it the only mode, for they permitted baptism by aspersion or effusion, and in cases of sickness only sprinkled, which no immersionist of our day will allow.[1]

Apollos.—Indeed I should doubt it the more for its pleading antiquity, for almost all the additions made to gospel institutes and superstitions of our day may do this.

Aquila.—Truly it is so, and the ancient baptism by immersion, which is spoken of, was mostly in the days of Tertullian, it cannot be traced farther back, and it is not the immersion of our day, for the subjects were baptized naked, whether men or women as better representing the putting off the old man, and the nakedness of Christ on the cross.[2] Who, my friend—does not see in this the superstition of that age? Now if antiquity be pleaded as to the mode, it must evidently be with all its appendages. Of course the immersion must be dipping three times, nakedness, eating milk and honey, anointing with oil, &c. All of which are attempts to improve on God's word.

Apollos.—And on this account too some have magnified the 'fountain of On,' called 'Enon,' as a great place of many waters. Unfortunately no traveller can possibly find this immense fountain.

Aquila.—What, my friend—will not the fruitful imaginations of men do? I have only to add on this subject that the introduction of a practice about the commencement of the 15th century in Germany, for which there was no positive authority in the word of God, was attended, not only with many extravagancies, but much crime.[3]

Apollos.—I remember these historical facts very well, but, my friend—I am surprised that those respectable brethren, who *baptize* by immersion, should have no regular communion with other christian denominations.

Aquila.—This originates in their not being baptized in that way; but as we know all immersion baptism, if it were even practised by the apostles, has been lost in the lapse of ages, and that for centuries, it may be asked who baptized the first man on the revival of this custom after those ages had passed?

Apollos.—This is a material point.

Aquila.—It is my friend—and although I must refer you to the writers on this subject, for a full exposition of it, let me tell you, no man, and no work, now in existence, can be adduced, that can prove that the apostolic baptism was by immersion and its administrators as immersionists remain by succession to this day.

Apollos.—Why then do the protestant churches allow the individual to chose his mode?

Aquila.—For two reasons, the first is that he is baptized on his own faith, not that of the administrator, and the second is that baptism is an application of water in the name of the Trinity, by a minister duly authorized, and to satisfy the subject may be applied in any quantity.

Apollos.—Baptism then is an emblem.

Aquila.—It is, and points out the washing away of the guilt, the pollution of sin, and the pouring out of the holy and ever blessed Spirit. In Scripture it is made an emblem of these two things, and these chiefly. Of one thing I am sure, my friend—that there is no evidence at all that immersion, was ever known in the

[1] Watson. [2] Wall and Robinson. [3] Robinson's History of Charles V.

christian church until the latter end of the second century. There was first instituted of God, sprinkling or pouring as the just representation of the divine operations of the Holy Spirit, but men to better it, must afterward first introduce washing, and then immersion, and that naked, for fear of contamination from the *clothes*, and moreover, to dip them three times: and also many other superstitious appendages. The men of that day sinned by excess, my friend—not by defect, in regard to matters of this kind, and superstitions took the place of the pure gospel truth.[1]

Apollos.—These facts are all-important, and even if there had been an immersion of apostolic origin, who was authorized to recommence that practice? If a *sprinkled* priest as ministers are called, who have not been immersed, why may they not do it now?

Aquila.—I am confident, my friend—that more feeling has been produced, and more injury to the cause of true piety, by harping on immersion in the last twenty years, than another twenty can repair. No wonder that men should ruin a sister church, in which are doubtless many pious persons, both ministers and members, and form a party who make water baptism the sum of all their religion. They go into the water sinners, and come out saints. We must proceed now to notice the subjects of baptism.

Apollos.—Who are they, my friend?

Aquila.—We view the gospel as sent to a world in total unbelief: it is preached, and men are led to see and feel its weighty obligations. They wish to associate together for the enjoyment and benefit of christian communion. They approach the minister, and inquire for the door by which they may be admitted into church membership. They are told that they must be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whom it is expected that they will make a public profession of their faith. The proper subject is at once seen. He must be a believer, one who does from his heart believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Who does not see, that at the first proclamation of the gospel, none others could possibly be expected to be the subjects, for until parents believed themselves, they never would of course offer their children as candidates for admission into Christ's church. We have seen that baptism was appointed to be both a characteristic mark of christianity, and a seal of the covenant, into which God entered through Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—And the terms of this covenant are on man's part faith in the Lord Jesus, and upon this God has promised the pardon of sin. The faith being sincerely exercised, it is professed publicly in baptism, which God allows as the seal of that covenant, and accepts the believer as a member of his flock.

Aquila.—It is so, 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.' From hence it follows, that the principal and primary subjects of baptism, are believers, who, abandoning a false religion, and a wicked course, embrace christianity, and purpose to lead a new life, according to the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism then, first regards those who are converted to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if we take a closer view of it, we shall find, that it is of perpetual obligation, and is binding on all who subscribe their names to the truth as it is in Jesus; even upon all, whether parents or their children; and those who oppose it, as useless and unnecessary, oppose the apostles of Christ, and the whole practice of the christian church from the beginning.

[1] I must again refer the reader to Dwight, Dick and Watson on this subject. I know that many great men have admitted the antiquity of immersion. Simply for the reasons above assigned, but in my heart I concur with Dwight and Watson, that there is not a clear case of immersion that can be made out from any part of the New Testament.

Apollos.—Well all admit, that believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, ought to be baptized; it is asked, ought children, i. e. infants, who cannot believe in Christ?

Aquila.—Some reject it as needless and superstitious, it is true. All do not go, however, on the same principle, in its admission, some receiving it as the laver of regeneration, as before suggested, and others as imparting grace, whereby a change is effected. That the Romanists' opinion of baptism being regeneration, is fallacious, is easily disproved. It is ridiculous in the extreme, for them to suppose, that a habit of faith, as it is termed, can be infused by a ceremony, into the heart of an unconscious babe, who is incapable of voluntary action; and hence the pardon of sin in them is nonsense. Others, while they do not believe with papists, and some protestants, that baptism is the new birth, and imparts grace, say, it is a seal of the covenant, into which they contend that children should be admitted, but will not venture to damn those who are not baptized; still they cannot admit, according to the creed of election, that all who are baptized, are actually in covenant.

Apollos.—So there is the anomally of an individual dedicated to God, whom he has decreed he will never save.

Aquila.—This is so, for they cannot affirm, that all the children of believers are of the elect, and in covenant. Indeed, this very notion does seem to me to overthrow the obligation of infant baptism, which I dare not do. For in this view, it would be only a doubtful sign of the divine covenant. Hence Zanchius, to avoid this absurdity, says, that it ought to be administered with the proviso, or form, expressed or understood, 'I baptize N. O! God, according to the election and purpose of thy divine will.'[1]

Apollos.—How astonishingly inconsistent!

Aquila.—I am therefore bold to say, my friend—that baptism is not absolutely necessary to the salvation of the infant. It is however clear, that God did enter into a covenant of grace with Abraham, that in his seed Christ Jesus, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The sign or seal of this covenant was before the coming of Christ, circumcision; and it will be clearly seen, by a reference to the 17th chapter of Genesis, that this covenant was not a political, or national, but a general one. In it, God promised to bless Abraham, to make him a father of many nations, to give to his seed the land of Canaan, to be a God to him and that seed; but above all, that in his seed 'all the nations of the earth should be blessed.' Who is there, that does not see here plainly, a fact that places the whole world in covenant with God by Christ Jesus? and the seal and sign of that covenant was circumcision: that is, circumcision was the sacrament or seal of it. Hence says St. Paul, 'he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised.' This rite was annexed to the covenant for temporal blessings, and in the institutions of Moses, was continued a seal, or sign of blessings, both temporal and spiritual. In the fulness of time, came Christ the seed of Abraham, as promised in the old covenant made with him, and mercifully entered into a new covenant, the one of which we have been speaking, and whose precepts we have pointed out. The old covenant being changed in its form, by its fulfilment in Christ, its rite or seal, circumcision was then abolished. If however, baptism be not in its place, then is there no initiatory sign to the new covenant, in its more perfect form.[2]

Apollos.—This is obvious.

Aquila.—Certainly, for the Lord's Supper is not this initiatory rite. And it is most evident, that baptism is to the new covenant, what circumcision was to the old, and took its place by the appointment of Christ.

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson.

Apollos.—O! this is plain; the covenant was, 'in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' It was sealed by circumcision; Christ came, completing the covenant by his appearance, and abolished the sign. Then he entered into the new covenant, changing as he had a right to do, the seal thereof, and putting in its stead baptism.

Aquila.—The proof of which is, 'go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Now see the fulfilment of the promise and covenant made with Abraham; as all nations were to be blessed in his seed, Christ sends forth his gospel, and commands the seal of this covenant to be affixed, if I may so speak, to it, for the benefit of all the world, who were to be baptized upon the reception of that good news, of One ready to save.[1] But Christ did not as Moses, re-enact a seal, but appointed another, viz: baptism, or the washing with water, in its place, after the manner of receiving a proselyte of the gate. And when our Lord says, 'except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,' it is evident he uses the phrase to express the state of his church upon earth, which is the gate to that above; and no one can deny but baptism is here set forth as the initiatory ordinance in that militant church; and there are sundry texts that establish this fact. For, says St. Paul, 'as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's by being thus 'baptized,' and by 'putting on' Christ, 'then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

Apollos.—This is indeed decisive, for it cannot be denied but that strangers and Jews were alike admitted into the privileges of the old covenant by circumcision, and the very same office as it respects the new, is here attributed to baptism. And as the Abrahamic covenant was offered to the acceptance of all, so also is the new covenant to be proffered to all the world, its benefits being purchased for all.

Aquila.—And from all this it will appear that the Abrahamic and the christian covenant are the same gracious engagement on the part of God to show mercy to man, and bestow upon him eternal life through faith in the true sacrifice Christ the Lord, circumcision under the former, and baptism under the latter, being the seal thereof. Christ only having the authority to change that seal. And in vain may men attempt to prove the reverse of this.[2]

Apollos.—And as sign or seal does it correspond with circumcision?

Aquila.—It surely does. As circumcision was a constant sign of God's disposition to be reconciled to man, as it was an initiatory rite into his church, being a sign, on symbol of the circumcision of the heart, and the setting apart for the service of God, so also is baptism a sign not only for all these, but the 'washing away of sin and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' and doubtless was put in the place of circumcision, because designed to set forth the out-pouring of the Holy and ever blessed Spirit on man.

Apollos.—But, as a seal does it answer to circumcision?

Aquila.—It does. Circumcision was an act by which, under the old dispensation, men were made parties to the covenant with Abraham, and therefore it became a pledge or seal to that covenant, and it is evident that Christ has set forth

[1] Watson.

[2] Mr. Watson's arguments on this subject are unanswerable. The intelligent reader is requested to peruse and honestly weigh them all. Watson's Theo. In. p. 606—47.

baptism as such; and it is no objection to all this that circumcision was used by any after the christian dispensation was ushered in, for it is evident that, as an initiatory rite of the church, it could have no force or obligation, until duly and properly perfected, published, and known.

Apollos.—And as it would have been monstrous indeed to circumcise one who did not believe in the living God, who was of adult age, so in changing the seal it became necessary to let all adults know that by faith only could they partake of the benefits of this new covenant, and hence believers are the first and primary subjects of this baptism.

Aquila.—It is just so, but not to the exclusion of children, who were by circumcision made parties to the covenant under the old dispensation by the act of their parents.

Apollos.—All this is surely so, and is easily seen to be the case by a reference to the facts. It is plain that baptism now supplies as a sign, a seal, and initiatory ordinance, representing the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and washing of the heart, is, in the place of crcumcision, the sign of that covenant, which admitted children as members of the church of God. And although it be admitted, which it is not, that children have no explicit claim to the seal, yet in the absence of an explicit exclusion we have a sufficient proof of their title to it.

Priscilla.—I believe there is a positive command to baptize children.

Apollos.—Where, my sister?

Priscilla.—'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' And I should like to know whether or not children form a component part of a nation?

Apollos.—I did not think of this before.

Aquila.—If the covenants be the same in all spiritual blessings, each looking to Christ as the promised seed, the seal only on his authority being changed, and no change in its subjects; no one can have the right to carry that change farther than the lawgiver himself, and exclude the children from entering into covenant by baptism on the faith of their parents, they having been entitled to it by circumcision. Indeed to do this is to interfere with the authority of God, and propose terms which he alone has the right to prescribe. And to say that faith in the parents, as a condition of their baptism, would exclude the children from church membership, is to say that circumcision should have done it, which is contrary to fact. For children, their parents being first circumcised, were likewise admitted as parties to the covenant made with Abraham.

Apollos.—O! this is surely reasonable.

Aquila.—Baptism as instituted by our Lord was no new ordinance at all, though he gave it a particular designation. His practice was to adopt what he already found established to the use of his religion.[1]

Apollos.—I know this is so, for a parable was the Jewish mode of teaching, Christ adopted it, and on the passover itself, he grafted the most significant rite of his holy religion. And there were among the Jews, as you have showed, divers washings or baptisms.

Aquila.—Yes—Maimonides says, 'In all ages, when a heathen was willing to enter into the covenant of Israel, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon himself the yoke of the law, he must be first circumcised, and secondly baptized, and thirdly bring a sacrifice; or if the party were a woman, then she must be first baptized, and secondly bring a sacrifice.' He adds, 'At this present time a stranger must be first circumcised and then baptized.' This proselyte baptism of the Jews was so notorious that it became in Italy a common proverb.[2]

[1] Clarke and Watson.

[2] Watson's quotation from Epictetus.

Apollos.—On this point, this testimony is truly decisive.

Aquila.—Moreover, it is fully proved, and is a fact notorious, that the proselyte baptism of the Jews was a baptism of families, it comprehended their infant children, and the rite was a symbol of their being washed from the pollutions of idolatry. And while the extent and import of christian baptism are very different from that of the Jews, it nevertheless shows that the Jews were familiar with the rite as it extended to children, in cases of a conversion to their religion. In the discourse of Christ and his apostles they are no where excepted, and is it possible that this new covenant should differ so widely from the old, excluding children, a thing never before known, and it not to be named? Instead, indeed, of placing children in a better state it left them as outcasts, and a promise made to Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, excluded all children, forming at least one-third part of every nation, from those benefits. On the contrary, how could the Jews have understood St. Peter when he preached, 'repent and be baptized, for the promise is to you and your children,' for both they and their children were included, the latter had nothing to repent of, and were incapable of that duty, but could be partakers of that covenant, and receive the sign on the faith of their parents.[1]

Apollos.—This was fulfilling the old promise, which was to them and their seed, and the Jews could not understand it in any other way.

Aquila.—Yes; and the apostle and his hearers being Jews, could only have understood each other in the same way. Hence St. Paul calls the children of believers 'holy,' as being in covenant with God by Christ, their federal head.

Apollos.—They were members of Christ's church before his mission into the world.

Aquila.—And after his advent, he did declare most positively, that they are members of his church. That they were made members of the church of God in the covenant with Abraham, is admitted on all hands; and he that will deny it, must deny facts the most notorious. And they were admitted too by circumcision; not a political but a religious rite. If, my friend—we had no direct and positive authority for receiving children on the profession of faith in their parents, the simple fact that by express law, they had been admitted members of the church of God, and that law never was repealed, would be enough.

Apollos.—Indeed it would; for a law not repealed, is a law still.

Aquila.—But we learn, that while the mode of initiation is changed, the subjects are not changed; far from it. In the New Testament, there is not the least intimation of all this. The same church remains; 'the olive' is not destroyed; the Gentiles are only to be grafted in it. Christ came to augment, not to diminish the spiritual privileges of men; but children were entitled to membership under the old: shall they be cut off under the new covenant? Hear, my friend—our Lord's testimony on this point; it is a very remarkable passage: 'And Jesus took a child and set him by him, and he said unto them, whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me; for he that is least among you all, shall be great.' And in Mark he said, 'suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God: and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.' Here the children are so small, as to be taken into the arms.

Apollos.—But it is said, they were brought to him to heal them.

Aquila.—St. Matthew virtually denies that, for he says, 'that he should put his hands upon them and pray;' St. Mark, 'that he might touch them;' and when he did so, he 'blessed them.' We have proved my friend—that all children dying before they have actually sinned against God, are admitted into heaven through

[1] Watson.

the blood and merit of the Lord Jesus Christ; but for this very reason, the Saviour not only pronounced his blessing on them, and declared, of such is the kingdom of heaven, but also it is easy to see, that as children, they might all be members of the church on earth, while as such, they could not all be members of the church in heaven, for all would not die in childhood. One thing at least is certain: if they are fit for heaven as babes, they also are fit to be received into a covenant relation with Christ their federal head. And thus indeed, Christ having died for the whole world, made up of men, women, and children, it would seem that every child is the purchase of his death, and a member of his flock. For as accepted in Christ, every child until capable of sin, stands in the same relation to him, as do believers, hence 'except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

Apollos.—They then are members of Christ's church both on earth, and in heaven?

Aquila.—They are; and the apostolic practice proves that they accepted them as such.

Apollos.—What was that practice, my friend?

Aquila.—To baptize the household of them that believed.

Apollos.—Was this so, my brother?

Aquila.—Indeed, it was, if we are to believe the testimony of the Scriptures. It has been said that there is no infant baptism in the Bible. Admit that it is so, might I not ask is there any authority for administering the sacrament of the supper to a woman, and yet it is done, and that regularly, and pray tell me, my friend, ought it not to be shown that this very important law of the Old Testament, if altered at all, should have been announced? Where is the law for excluding them?

Apollos.—There is no such law.

Aquila.—Had there been a law, or even a custom to exclude them, is it not reasonable to conclude, that it would have produced some remark from a Jewish parent, instead of that, what do we find? That from the very commencement of christianity it has been the custom for christian ministers to baptize children.

Apollos.—Is this so, my friend?

Aquila.—It is, for we are told that the apostles themselves baptized such a heathen, or such a man and his house, or his family. What could be said more positively to show that children were baptized, than that the house or household of the jailor, or Stephanas, or Lydia, were all baptized. Add to all this, my friend—the antiquity of this practice. When I say antiquity, I mean from the very commencement of christianity. We see from the Scripture, as far as words can show, that from the days of Abraham, children were in church membership. That the apostles baptized the converted heathen and his house, the very word being used, which signifies children. It has been said that it is an innovation. If so, who, my friend—ever introduced it, and did no body oppose it? On the other hand, the very individual who resisted this ancient custom of the church, can be pointed out.

Apollos.—Is it possible.

Aquila.—Yes—Tertullian, who lived late in the second century, a superstitious man, who had introduced an innovation in the church, dipping naked persons three times, surely gravely offers as a reason why children should not be baptized, that Christ says, 'suffer little children to come unto me,' and therefore they must wait until they are grown up and are therefore able to come, and he too, would prohibit the unmarried, and all in a widowed state from coming, because of the temptations to which they are liable. But even he, allowed that infants ought to be baptized, if their lives were in danger.

Apollos.—It is evident that it was then the practice to baptize them.

Aquila.—It was, and Fidus, an African bishop, applied to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, not to know if an infant might be baptized, but to know whether or not it might be baptized, before that it was eight days old. At this time, and both before and after it, infant baptism is mentioned by the most conspicuous ministers and men in the christian church, and down to the time of the Anabaptists, about the commencement of the 16th century, this was the constant practice in the christian church, even as at this day.[1]

Apollos.—How remarkable it is, that men should say that it is a popish superstition.

Aquila.—My dear friend—let me tell you that until about the commencement of the 16th century, the present mode of baptizing by immersion, with its conditions as set forth by anabaptists, was unknown. Wall, himself, can only trace it back to Peter Bruis, a Frenchman, about the year 1030. And to the infant, this sign is the pledge and seal of its reception into covenant with Christ, to be owned, blessed, and accepted of him. To the parents it is the seal of God's favour, not only to them, but their seed after them, to be directed, guided, and saved by his spirit.

Priscilla.—O! that is a poor fold, and he is a bad shepherd, that secures the sheep, but never cares or provides for the little lambs.

Aquila.—This is really too true, children ought to be nursed, and daily, and duly, instructed in the path of piety and truth.

Apollos.—Well, my friend—as baptism is the sign and seal of that, our profession of Christ, where ought it to be administered.

Aquila.—This, my brother—is one of the circumstances attending christian baptism, and I will now notice them. The first, is that it must be with water, for this is the material to be used. The second, is that the administrator shall be a minister or messenger of God, duly and properly authorized. The third, is that the subject shall be such an one as God appoints and approves, and then that this water shall be applied to that subject, by this administrator, duly authorized, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. If it be asked where? I answer, that the most proper place is the church, or chapel, and the members belonging to that church should, if possible, be present, for it is not proper to introduce one among them as a member of Christ's flock, without their presence and prayers. Again, if baptism be a badge of our profession, it ought to be assumed publicly. Sickness, and unavoidable circumstances may, however, sometimes prevent. Parents should, if possible, bring their children to the church, unless they have them baptized soon after their birth.

Apollos.—Ought baptism my friend—to be administered twice to any person?

Aquila.— By no means. Such a practice must not only be selfish, and improper in its very nature, but vile and offensive in the sight of God.

Apollos.—But did not the apostles rebaptize John's disciples?

Aquila.—Certainly, for John's baptism was not the christian baptism, and never administered in the name of the Trinity: indeed some of his disciples, had not even heard of the Holy Ghost, much less been baptized in his name. Thus when they were taught this privilege, as we see in 19 ch. Acts, 'they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.'

Apollos.—Well—I am more than ever satisfied of the propriety of that custom which the christian church has pursued for ages.

Aquila.—I have just touched upon some few of the arguments in its favour and refer you my friend, to those who have written largely on the subject. I must however say in conclusion, that as a command of the Lord Jesus, it is too lightly esteemed by many who profess religion. 'Go, said he, into all the world

[1] Dick, Watson, and Dwight.

preach the gospel to every creature, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' 'Go ye therefore teaching and baptizing all nations.' This is a duty that every christian ought to discharge, and I am sure, he has no just right to partake of the holy communion, until, he shall have been admitted into Christ's church, by that door which he has opened. I mean baptism, the initiating ordinance of the christian church.

COLLOQUY XXVIII.

CEREMONIAL PRECEPTS OF THE NEW COVENANT CONTINUED—THE SACRAMENT OF OUR LORD'S SUPPER—VARIOUS NOTIONS CONCERNING IT—ITS TRUE DESIGN AS SET FORTH IN THE SCRIPTURES, AND ITS OBLIGATION ON ALL CHRISTIANS.

Aquila.—Well my friend—the other rite of the new covenant, which I promised to notice is the Lord's supper. It is that act by which, those who believe on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been duly initiated by baptism into his church, commemorate, in the breaking of bread and drinking a little wine, his death and sacrifice, with grateful hearts. And as baptism was instituted in the place of circumcision so was the holy sacrament, in the place of the passover; Christ being our Lamb, typified by the paschal lamb, slain for us, whose souls are spiritually nourished by his body and blood, and maintained in one body, by him, our spiritual head.

Apollos.—But is there not a diversity of opinion in regard to this ordinance.

Aquila.—There is, my friend—among some, and considerable difficulty has arisen in regard to the words of the institution of this sacrament, especially among the Romanists.

Apollos.—Point them out, if you please.

Aquila.—That the rite or ceremony is a precept of the gospel is most evident. Thus, we read, as they were eating, 'Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it and gave it to the disciples, saying, take, eat, this is my body: and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' And as this blood was shed for many, i. e. all, as we have proved, this institution has not relation to the apostles only, but to all who believe in the Lord Jesus. And all who do feel the virtue of his death should gratefully commemorate the same. Hence St. Paul prescribes the observation of it to all men. 'For I have received of the Lord that which I have also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the same night in which he was betrayed took bread,' &c. and says he, 'let a man so examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' And the forbidding one to eat and drink unworthily, all prove that it is an institution designed for the use of all the members of Christ's flock.

Apollos.—The rite then consists in eating bread broken by a minister before the whole christian company assembled, and the drinking the wine poured out by him, which ceremony is joined with faith, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Aquila.—Yes—and these symbols of bread and wine do shadow out the body of Christ broken, and his blood shed for us, which is intimated by the very words of the institution wherein bread is styled Christ's body, and wine his blood. Here then you will perceive, my friend—the error of the church of Rome, which cleaves to the literal sense, 'this is my body, this is the blood of the New Testament,' and admit no figurative meaning at all.

Apollos.—I perceive it. They say that bread and wine is changed into the body and blood of Christ by transubstantiation, so that, the substance of bread and wine

being destroyed, there succeeds into its place the substance both of the body and blood of Christ.[1]

Aquila.—The absurdity of this opinion is evident, for the apostles received certainly at the hands of the Saviour no other substance but bread. For first, that which Christ took into his hands he gave to them, and that was bread. The evangelist expressly declares that 'he took bread, brake it and gave to his disciples.' If his body were eaten by them, it must have been his body before these words were pronounced by him, because it cannot be said of any thing which is not, that it is. Moreover, it would then follow, that if it were his body before the words, then was the bread either changed by them, which is absurd, or by other words, which they will not allow. Besides, St. Paul calls it bread after the consecration words themselves, and it remains but bread still.

Priscilla.—And the doctrine itself is repugnant to all the human senses.

Aquila.—Indeed, Priscilla—this is a most powerful argument against this notion. For transubstantiation contradicts all the evidence of sense, we see, feel, smell, and taste the bread and wine, and yet forsooth it is the very body and blood of Christ. Many things we are called on to believe that we cannot comprehend, but not what is found out to be false and contradictory by our senses. And, my friend—in the case of breaking bread to the apostles, it is plain that nothing can be changed into that which it is already, and has never ceased from being, but only into something else which it is not; else it would be and not be, which Romanists themselves will own to be a contradiction, since then the body of Christ did already exist, the bread could not be changed into it.[2]

Apollos.—This is most apparent.

Aquila.—And this doctrine above all, is full of absurdities; for, 1. There would be two Christs: one born of the Virgin Mary, and one made of bread; one broken and eaten, and the other that went to the garden and cross to be afflicted and crucified, and neither broken nor eaten. The body of Christ would be both glorious in heaven, and corruptible like bread here on earth. This body would be in many places at once, be moved by contrary and different motives at once, and to say no more about this inconsistent nonsense, Christ would have set down, and after giving himself to be eat up by his disciples, afterward gave them the cup, and indeed as he partook with them, eat himself.[3]

Apollos.—They quote 'the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

Aquila.—But it is most evident, that the chapter itself does not treat of the Eucharist at all.[4]

Apollos.—But they quote, 'except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.'

Aquila.—Then it must be concluded, that the cup should be administered to the laity, which they deny, and both bread and wine to infants, or they must perish, as having no life, and this they will not allow. And you must remember, that the apostles themselves had not yet partook of the supper, and of course had no life in them.

[1] The Council of Trent say, 'In the blessed sacrament of the Eucharist, our Saviour Jesus Christ, real God and man, is truly and substantially contained under the species of those visible signs:' and further, 'by the consecration of the bread and wine, a change is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of our Saviour's body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood.'

[2] Limborch.

[3] The application of the figures of the Old Testament by Bellarmine, to this subject, is ridiculous, wicked, and opposed to the Scriptures.

[4] Limborch proves that Cardinal Cajetan and other Romanists admit this, and as an inverted order of speech, is directly contrary to that of the institution, 'This is my body,' &c.

Apollos.—But they say, it is positive, 'take eat, this is my body.'

Aquila.—It is worse than foolish to argue thus, for I might prove by it, that Christ is actually 'a door, a shepherd, a way, life, a vine, God, a husbandman,' and his disciples sheep, and the church a sheep-pen. Who does not see that these all are representative expressions?

Apollos.—And consubstantiation is entertained by others.

Aquila.—It is, and is as inconsistent as that of transubstantiation. Those who hold it, say the body of Christ and his blood are actually then present, but they cannot tell how, as it is above their reason to comprehend it, and it is one of the mysteries of the divine wisdom and omnipotence. Its fallacy my friend—is manifest from the fact of its being inconsistent with the reality of Christ's body, which according to the nature of all bodies, is circumscribed, and in a certain place in heaven, and how can it be present in the bread eat, in a thousand places on the same Sunday?[1]

Apollos.—O! the ubiquity of Christ's body as every where present, to be with the bread and wine, is too inconsistent for any spiritual man to admit. But it is said that God has infinite methods of accomplishing this wonder, and that it cannot be defined.

Aquila.—I presume not; for when they say his presence is *real*, they determine the manner of it, and yet it cannot be defined, and the idea of its being as a substance present, and yet not present with every particle of bread, is still more incomprehensible and inconsistent.[2]

Apollos.—It would be very hard to convince me that matter of any kind can possibly impart spiritual advantage to the soul, only so far as it may through the senses, prove a memento of something that was done to effect my salvation.

Aquila.—It is certainly so, and I assure you my friend—I am sometimes astonished to hear protestants offering, virtually, for consubstantiation, a thing they do not and cannot comprehend, according to their own showing, the very arguments offered by papists for transubstantiation.

Apollos.—This is surely wrong. Do then my friend—set forth the true matter, as well as the lawful and proper use of this sacrament.

Aquila.—In order to have a distinct apprehension of the nature of this sacred ceremony, and after what manner bread and wine are the symbols of the body and blood of Christ, the end and design of it ought to be duly considered.

Apollos.—Do point them out.

Aquila.—The first and principal end of it, is the commemoration of the bloody and cruel death of Christ, which is well set forth by breaking of bread, and pouring out of wine: by them is pointed out how the body of Christ was broken, being scourged and crowned with thorns, being crucified, but chiefly by death itself; and also how his blood was shed, as poured out from those wounds made in that body. This commemoration is attended with the giving of thanks for the benefits obtained by the death of Christ; and hence it is that the whole action is called the EUCHARIST, as if it were altogether a thanksgiving act.

[1] Luther's first argument, when carried away in the heat of debate on this matter, was borrowed from Jacobus Faber, who first advanced it: that as Christ was at God's right hand, which was everywhere, so was he bodily as well as spiritually every where. Afterward, he gave up this, and founded the presence on the words themselves, as did most of the Lutherans after him. It was afterward introduced at the instigation of John Brent, and James Andrews, many of the Lutherans dissenting.

[2] It must be observed by the intelligent reader of the history of the reformation, how the errors of popery, and the earnest desire of peace, influenced all the reformers, and induced their leaders to try to bring them into unity of effort and action against papacy. Hence the additions by Bucer and Calvin to the opinions of Zuinglius. Bucer seems to have invented his plan to reconcile matters between Zuinglians and the Lutherans. Hence there was surely much ambiguity of expression.

Apollos.—Thus far it appears very plain, and a subject easy to be comprehended.

Aquila.—Another end is a public declaration of our real communion with Christ, which requires that we should be inspired with a true and lively faith in him, and that we should lead holy lives, according to the institutions and precepts of the Saviour. For, as without faith, it is impossible to please God, so without faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, it is impossible to hold communion with him. Another thing that presents itself is, that this act is a public profession of brotherly charity, whereby the faithful partaking of one bread, do testify not only their love for our Lord Jesus, but their mutual love and confidence in one another, their communion with him as the head of his church, and their fellowship, as members of one spiritual body, of which he is the leader and guide. This brotherly love is felt and expressed toward all who according to God's word ought to be acknowledged as followers of the Lord Jesus.

Apollos.—And of this number are all those who adhering strictly to the fundamentals of salvation, live and walk according to the precepts of this new covenant, though liable to err, and in some doctrinal points, may err, yet cleave by faith to the Lord Jesus, as the only and sure foundation of all hope of salvation.

Aquila.—They certainly are, my friend—and we ought willingly to meet all such at the communion table, for fear at least of excluding them out of our love, and the communion of Christ, whom he condescends to accept and bless. You must also remember, that the character of this ordinance is something more than commemorative. It is commemorative sacramentally, the very expressions used by our Lord in its institution, set forth that most intimate connection that exists between the elements, and that which is represented by them, viz: the sacrificial offering of the body and blood of Christ, as the price of our redemption. They were the signs, my friend—of what was given for us, and surrendered to death in our stead. They point to the covenant, for that covenant itself was ratified by his blood. Hence St. Paul speaks of it as 'the blood of the covenant.'[1]

Apollos.—It would seem then, that as a ceremony it is a covenant, rite, and consequently a sacrament, a visible sign and seal on the part of him who made the covenant, that it was established and ratified by the sacrifice of Christ's death.

Aquila.—Indeed it is so, and as it bears that covenant character on the part of the institutor, so does it also on the part of the recipients. They are all to eat and drink in remembrance of Christ, surely of his death in particular, yet not as a mere historical event, but, my friend—as a sacrifice for sin.

Priscilla.—O! that is the leading feature in the holy eucharist.

Aquila.—And as a sign it exhibits the infinite love of God to the world, who gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish but have everlasting life. Then it sets forth the *love* of Christ, 'who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Then the extreme nature of his sufferings which were unto death. Also the vicarious and sacrificial character of that death, as a sin offering and a propitiation, in virtue of which only, a covenant of grace was entered into with man by an offended God. It is also therefore a sign of the benefits derived from the same, viz: the remission of sins and the ultimate salvation of the soul.

Apollos.—And it is a seal too.

Aquila.—It is: a pledge that God gives, by which he assures us of the continuance of this covenant, of redemption in full and undiminished force. And every time we commune, my friend—we renew our acceptance of, and reliance

[1] Watson.

upon that new covenant, publish our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and tell the world that we glory in his cross, and only hope for salvation in his blessed and holy name.

Apollos.—O! how important that these things be duly and properly considered.

Aquila.—It is my friend—and from what has been said you will perceive what ought to be the qualifications of a communicant. He should lead a life such as he professes therein, else does he eat and drink unworthily. And lest we should not partake aright, not 'discerning the Lord's body,' let us consider for a moment what ought to be done before, at, and after the holy communion.

Apollos.—Do if you please, my friend.

Aquila.—Well—before we commune, as professors of faith in Christ, our hearts must be influenced by the love and grace of God, and this be extended to all men, being in charity and love with our neighbours, wholly unbent from worldly care, and we should come with a penitent and contrite heart, bowing down our souls as in the dust before the Lord. When at communion we should celebrate this sacrament according to that view which we have set forth. In order to this there must be a holy meditation on the death of Christ, voluntarily endured for our sakes, and a most holy reverence for God the Father, who offered his Son for us, and a prostration of the soul as in the immediate presence, and under the influence of God the Holy Ghost. There ought to be real and holy communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, and then should we also discern the Lord's body, by faith distinguishing between this rite, and any vulgar or common thing.

Apollos.—And when we leave that sacred place how should we conduct ourselves to profit thereby.

Aquila.—We should retire from the table to our knees, and on returning home spend our time in prayer, in meditation on the Scriptures, especially on the sacrifice of Christ's death. At private and social prayer, and experience-meetings, but especially in private prayer, a great deal. Above all, let us live more than ever devoted to God.

Apollos.—How important to search ourselves.

Aquila.—It is indeed, and we should try to do so. We should examine ourselves in regard to faith, experience, and our conformity to the divine will, and prove ourselves. Indeed our sins should not keep us away, but giving them all up as poor helpless penitent sinners, we should come to acknowledge our utter helplessness without Christ. Some neglect it through fear and infirmity. This is not proper, it should be given up, and we should come only trusting the Lord Jesus. Indeed unless we purpose to sin, and live in it, it is safer to come than stay away, for he that turns his back on this, denies the Lord that bought him.

Apollos.—But some will not come because unworthy persons take it.

Aquila.—And, my dear friend—if we stay away on this account we shall never take it, for you will hardly find a congregation where some are not unfit to commune. Besides, we are too apt to censure others, let us look at home, and remember they may narrowly observe us. At least God sees and knows our hearts; and after all I am not my brother's keeper, I do not know all, and even if I did, charity will cover a multitude of sins, the holy communion is no place for uncharitable feelings, much less an uncharitable act.

Apollos.—But why, my friend—do the papists differ so widely from others in regard to the communion?

Aquila.—Because they have permitted the most extravagant abuses, which have destroyed the very essence of this ordinance.

Apollos.—How so, my friend?

Aquila.—First, they have denied the cup, i. e. the wine, contrary to all apos-

tolic example to the laity. Christ gave both the bread and wine to all who communed at that time, not considered as public ministers. From the 10th and 11th chapters of 1 Cor. it is evident that the apostles administered it in both kinds to all believers. The very design to shadow out his death, by which his blood was poured out for all, and the very text they quote to prove transubstantiation says, 'Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have no life in you.' And no satisfactory reason can be assigned for this mutilation of a divine command.

Apollos.—Well—have they not changed the sacrament into the sacrifice of mass?

Aquila.—They have, and contend that, as the body and blood of Christ are actually present, they are under the form of bread and wine, substantially offered to God as a true propitiatory sacrifice. Now the Scriptures tell us that Christ 'offered' as 'a priest forever' 'himself once for all,' and hence the fallacy of such an opinion. And all their notions of an external and visible sacrifice are offensive to a holy God.

Apollos.—But they actually worship this and call it the Host.

Aquila.—And this, my friend—is the most heinous abuse of which they are guilty. It is an idolatrous worship paid to the elements, bread and wine, creatures of God to be used as symbols of his broken body and shed blood. 'And this worship,' they say should be paid 'because it is materialy if not formally the very God.'

Apollos.—O! shame upon it.

Aquila.—Yes—the bread is, say they, by transubstantiation the very Christ, and the wine his very blood. And many of them do acknowledge that if there be no real presence in this bread and wine, there cannot be a grosser piece of idolatry.[1]

Apollos.—The superstition and idolatrous acts of that people are beyond all endurance in this enlightened day.

Aquila.—Still, my friend—let us pray that he who alone can change their hearts would turn upon them a pure language. God Almighty grant to them his mercy! The very nature of this ordinance excludes all open unbelievers, and all who reject the atonement, all the impenitent and openly wicked. On the other hand, the table of the Lord is not to be surrounded with superstitious terrors. All are welcome, all truly penitent, all who feel the burden of sins, all who are willing to renounce them; all who take Christ as the foundation of their hope, may come and commemorate his death and offering. Indeed this is the Lord's table, and around it his children ought all to meet. And the habitual neglect of it is highly censurable.[2]

Priscilla.—How interesting the scene, to behold all the followers of Jesus around the same board, commemorating the broken body and shed blood of their crucified Lord.

Apollos.—O! it is indeed, and they ought to do it. For they all belong to one family, are all saved and regenerated by the same grace, all bought by the same price, the blood of Jesus; all are serving, if religious at all, the same God, all are bound to the same land of endless rest, and all, if ever saved, must live together in heaven. O! if they cannot meet together here how can they do it in heaven?

Aquila.—My friend—these are reasons most cogent for free communion. There is a want, and a great want of charity in the contrary course. The invitations given to a free communion ought always to be free and open, each one should feel at home. Some ministers invite their brethren in a way which they know will keep them away. This is wrong. There ought to be an openness, a freedom, an affection, however we may differ on other points, which will lead us to remem-

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson.

ber here is an emblem of what will be in heaven, all around the table of their common Lord.

Apollos.—This eucharistic feast then was not the love feasts, or feasts of charity which, in apostolic times, were held among christians?

Aquila.—The AGAPÆ or love feasts of the primitive christians were held sometimes before and sometimes after the sacrament, it is thought, in imitation of the feasts of the sacrifices among the Jews, or feasts of charity among the Romans, when the poor fed on these sacrifices. At Corinth they were held before the sacrament, for St. Paul charges them with coming to it, and eating unworthily, because of their excess at their feasts of charity. According to the historians of the day, these feasts were opened with prayer, the rich and poor eat together as brethren, then they sung hymns and conversed on christian experience, finally closed with prayer, and repaired to the sacrament, or prepared for worship at night.[1] This primitive practice, under a simple form, and more expressly religious, is retained in modern times by the Moravians, and the Methodists, followers of the Rev. John Wesley. A crumb of bread and a little water are taken by each, after singing and prayer as an evidence of brotherly love and christian equality. Then those who feel at liberty so to do, relate their christian experience, frequently the congregation singing a hymn, finally they close with prayer and retire.

Apollos.—These experience meetings must be of great value.

Aquila.—Indeed they are, and often does the experience of one, encourage and cheer the desponding hearts of many.

Priscilla.—And experience is the all important part in religion.

COLLOQUY XXIX.

AN EXAMINATION OF WORKS MERELY EXTERNAL, AND OF HUMAN INSTITUTION—OF FASTING—MONASTIC VOWS, AND THE FIVE PRETENDED SACRAMENTS OF PAPISTS.

Aquila.—Our Saviour has appointed under the new covenant, my friend—no rites or ceremonies as necessary to be observed by us, but baptism and the supper of the Lord. Indeed he has redeemed us from the grievous bondage of ceremonies, and brought us into a state of liberty. The worship he prescribes, is spiritual, and 'they that worship him, must do it in spirit and in truth,' 'and we through the Spirit do wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.'

Apollos.—And in these texts are set forth by the 'Spirit,' the spiritual manner, as well as nature of his worship.

Aquila.—Yes; and although we do not hereby as you have seen, exclude all external and bodily worship, as man is a compound being, made of body and soul, and while the latter is engaged with God, the body should be humbled, still it is to be remembered, that religion does not consist in external ceremonies.

Apollos.—Works merely external, may be performed without any proper devotion of the heart.

Aquila.—This is true; and it is notorious that great zeal and a show of devotion, frequently serves to cloak a wicked and a hypocritical heart. Hence the christian religion is called 'a reasonable service,' as founded on all those holy principles laid down in the word of God, and of a pure, spiritual nature and tendency. And in opposition to this, the external numerous ceremonies of the Old Testament, are spoken of as 'weak and beggarly elements.' Christ has freed us from these, and brought in a service so pure and spiritual, as to operate on, and constantly keep the mind and soul of man engaged.

[1] Watson.

Apollos.—The revival and multiplication of those rites and ceremonies by the church of Rome, instead of pleasing, must be offensive to God, and against the precepts of the new covenant.

Aquila.—Indeed they are, and a gross violation of the spirituality of Christ's holy religion. Those ceremonies, they assert, are not only a part, but a meritorious part of divine worship.[1]

Apollos.—Preposterous idea!

Aquila.—Their whole time and service is taken up in the observation of outward ceremonies about their festivals, adorning and consecrating churches, fasts and abstinence on certain days from flesh, whipping and afflicting the body, muttering over their prayers according to the tale in their rosary, pilgrimages, and all the ceremonies of their seven sacraments.[2]

Apollos.—All repugnant to the very perfection and spirit of the gospel.

Aquila.—Hence so much stress being put upon an attention to their ceremonies, fasts, &c. We find that the vilest of persons can obtain remission as soon, if not sooner, than one who eats meat on Friday.[3]

Apollos.—But may not ceremonies be lawfully used in the christian church?

Aquila.—Ceremonies and traditions, with superstitious rites, founded on human invention, used to supply the place of true piety, and in their very nature destructive of its spirituality, are wholly unlawful. Those who invented them, 'in vain worship' Christ, 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' But a worship founded in reason and Scripture, is certainly not wrong. Now all are reasonable and Scriptural too, which tend to preserve the precepts and laws of God inviolable, as are those that secure order and decency in families, in the church of God, and the body politic, provided they are not made to supply the place of the faith and love of God. And so also, are all those proper, which are calculated in the very nature of things to increase in us the love of God: as watchfulness, prayer, fasting, christian experience, and fellowship meetings.

Apollos.—Great stress is laid by Romanists on fasting.

Aquila.—Among all the works which relate to outward worship, none perhaps are more eminent than that of fasting, of which there is so much mention made in Scripture. By Moses, God commanded Israel to observe an annual solemn fast. There we have instances not only of pious and devout persons who fasted, but this practice is very often recommended. Rules are prescribed for the due performance of it, in Isaiah, and by our Lord, and extraordinary gifts have been bestowed by the Deity on some who fasted. From hence it must be said, in general, that if fasting be not a divine precept, it has at least the approbation of God. It is however, of the nature of those acceptable to him, only on account of the end, for which it is undertaken.

Apollos.—What is properly a fast?

Aquila.—A voluntary refraining from food for a certain time. It is not a necessitous abstinence from it, nor yet is it sobriety and temperance which are of perpetual obligation. This is only *acceptable* as before said: in it there is no merit at all.

Apollos.—What are the ends which make fasting thus acceptable to God, and profitable to man?

Aquila.—Sensual objects bear down a mind sensually disposed. By subtracting a portion of our diet from the usual quantity, we subdue proportionately, the petulence and lust of our nature, and the better qualify the mind to contemplate heavenly objects. We are also the better enabled to pour out our prayers before God; for when the body is disburthened of a load, by which mental operation is clogged, we are the better enabled to look upon and contemplate heavenly things,

[1] Bellarmine, lib. 2, de sac. c. 30. [2] Limborch. [3] Ibid.

and watch unto prayer, with lowliness and reliance. Indeed, humility is one of the great benefits produced by it; for in depriving ourselves of food, there is produced generally a humiliation of soul, which must ever precede exaltation and acceptance with God; for 'he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'

Apollos.—But this is not the fasting of the Romanists, my friend—though they have numerous fasts?

Aquila.—O! no; corrupt and depraved man, is ready to abuse every good; and the church of Rome has done so, in changing fasting into an abstinence from flesh, and all things else which are reputed as belonging to flesh; but they allow men on fast days to eat often and plentifully of other dishes, such as delicious fish, aromatic roots, and above all, to drink the *best of wines.*

Apollos.—This is a poor fast indeed. I would not care ever to see flesh for food, if I can get other good things in plenty.

Aquila.—There is too much flesh consumed in diet, it is not healthy in too great an abundance. It was not used as food before the flood, it is probable, at all, and the promiscuous use of animals, clean and unclean, as a diet is certainly injurious.

Apollos.—Fasts should be as private as possible.

Aquila.—They should, and all ostentation, as our Lord clearly shows, should be avoided. Men, instead of fasting from mere custom, should, my friend—fast from necessity, and a disposition to humble themselves before the living God. The greatest abuse of all is, that it should be esteemed meritorious, for a reward granted in the way of blessing, does not denote any merit, but only presents it in connection with its end, as aiding that prayer and faith which apprehended the merit of Christ. Fasts may be private as we have suggested, originating in some private cause, as the condition of one's-self, family, or friends, or it may be a public fast, proclaimed by the constituted authorities of the country or the church, in either case it is the duty of all appertaining to them to unite in such a fast.

Apollos.—What do you think of the stated fasts of the Romish church?

Aquila.—All superstitious, and productive of ostentation on the one hand, and on the other, a real *carnival,* as in catholic countries, i. e. feasts, shows, operas, plays, concerts, balls, and all kind of abominations, as in the week before lent.

Apollos.—Well do, my friend—tell me now before you leave this subject what is your opinion of vows, and especially monastic vows.

Aquila.—A vow is a solemn voluntary promise made to God, by which we bind ourselves to the performance of a duty enjoined by him. Hence, it is either general, as in the case of Jacob, who devoted himself to God, saying that the Lord should be his God, and such is the vow of a christian in baptism, which is virtually repeated every time we commemorate in the sacrament the death of Christ. Again it is *special,* and of this nature was *Jacob's* vow to give the Lord the tenth of all that was his. But no vow in itself, is the worship of God. Vows have been made from a fear of some evil, to obtain some benefit, as in the case of Hannah and Jepthah, sometimes to testify our gratitude, and often to mortify the flesh, and curtail the intemperate and rash passions of our nature. And some of these, it is apparent, are rash and improper.

Apollos.—Are they at all admissible?

Aquila.—They are, where there is a dedication of the heart to God, in the profession of the christian religion, and the service of the christian church, as in baptism, and the vows of ordination. But remember they are to be made to God, not to saints, they must be voluntary, not constrained, they must be lawful, not about trifles and impossibilities, much less sins, which was the case with those who vowed to kill Paul, they must not be rash, and contrary to God's word. General vows oblige the conscience, where made according to God's word, as in

baptism, or in ordination, but wicked vows, as those of a nun, and a priest to celibacy, contrary to God's word are never binding, nor are those by which the inhabitants of other lands own fealty to the pope of Rome.

Apollos.—I perceive at once you have a poor opinion of monastic vows.

Aquila.—Indeed, I have. Monks and nuns vow three things, continence, which is rather celibacy than pure and undefiled chastity, for private and illicit connections between the sexes are admissible, so they remain unmarried, and the deeds of darkness be private.[1]

Apollos.—And they vow poverty too?

Aquila.—Yes—a poverty de proprio, i. e. of their own property, but holding all things in common with the fraternity to which they belong.

Apollos.—And that common property, if we may judge from what we see and know is a very large estate.

Aquila.—They also vow obedience, by which they bind themselves to obey their provincial general abbot, or prior, especially the pope, in whatever he shall command them.

Apollos.—And do they maintain that these precepts are divine?

Aquila.—O! no—they say they are only counsels of perfection, a work recommended by Christ, but not given by precept, and they distinguish it by saying that it is only for those who can bear it. So that from their own showing they are not of God. Look at it, my friend—a vow contrary to God's word to perpetual celibacy on the part of thousands of young men and women, on whom God in his word enjoins marriage. A vow to wilful poverty, to spend the life in idleness, luxury, and pleasure. A vow to obedience, by which young, indiscreet, rash girls are thrown together, by scores, to become in those very vows the menials of a priesthood, that in every age has proved itself, not excepting the popes themselves, guilty of lewdness, debauchery, and every sin offensive to God, and opposed to virtue. From this very vow of obedience, emperors and kings have been assassinated, governments have been overturned, and there can be no dependence, as all history proves, in a priesthood, who hold allegiance to no government on earth but that of the pope of Rome, and whose very oaths are not binding if made to heretics. What must be the nature of that religion which must be shut up in brick walls, and be hid from the world? Not so with Christ's disciples, 'Ye are the light of the world.' 'A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.' And the greatest wonder of all, is that in America, free, happy America, there should be those prisons, where the free born daughters of Columbia, doubtless to subserve the dark purposes of a polluted priesthood, are shut up PRISONERS FOR LIFE, to obey the mandates of those who have sworn allegiance to a foreign power.

Apollos.—O! this is most abominable.

Aquila.—And my friend—the means pursued by that priesthood, to palm upon the people their notions as sacraments, and thus impose on those who, as they seldom if ever read the Bible, and then a perverted translation, know but little, comparatively speaking, of christian duty.

Apollos.—They have five other sacraments, besides baptism and the Lord's supper?

Aquila.—They have. The first is confirmation, which is simply this: a person

[1] After laboured efforts by a pope's legate to prove the impurity of marriage, &c. in priests, that night, in London, he was found in one of the worst houses in the city. The Duke of Norfolk meeting one of his chaplains said to him as he was suspected of favouring the reformation, 'sir, what think you of the law to hinder priests from having wives?' 'Yes, my lord, replies the chaplain, 'you have done that, but I will answer for it, you cannot hinder men's wives from having priests.' And is this the chastity of those who have upon them the vows of celibacy? Heaven save us from such abominations! Amen and Amen.

previously baptized by them, is anointed with a mixture of oil and balsam, adding these words, 'I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Then the bishop strikes the person confirmed, and dismisses him with the peace of God. Their idea is, that by baptism they are regenerated, and by confirmation they become men in Christ Jesus. All this we have already disproved.[1]

Apollos.—I remember you showed that baptism could not be regeneration.

Aquila.—Another sacrament of theirs is penance, which term they use instead of repentance, it being declared by outward signs, with the word of absolution. They make it to consist of contrition, auricular confession and satisfaction. The form of the priest is thus, 'I absolve thee.'[2]

Priscilla.—O! this is wicked; who dare absolve a man but the God he has offended?

Aquila.—And it is abominable, that a priest should be in possession of all the sins of the neighbourhood; for they require a particular account of all committed; and for a little money, they will soon be pardoned. Their satisfaction is in some external acts, as fastings, prayers, almsgivings, &c. And as the pope has a *treasury* of good works, of the saints, a little money will easily buy as many indulgences as are requested, at the will of the confessor.[2] A third sacrament, is extreme unction, which is the anointing with olive oil, a person supposed to be dying, on his nose, mouth, eyes, ears, &c. saying 'may God by this holy unction, and out of his most tender mercy, grant unto thee pardon for all thy offences, committed by seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Amen.'[3]

Apollos.—And they make ordination a sacrament too?

Aquila.—Yes, indeed; this is a fourth sacrament, which they call holy orders. This they make to consist in laying hands on one who enters the ministry. And the last is marriage; but in this they are very much divided in opinion: some deny it, and others say it is peculiar to the faithful. It is astonishing, if it be a sacrament, and so holy as only to be administered by their priests, that they will not let the priests partake of the same. My dear friend—the more you turn your attention toward these subjects, the more will you be astonished at the perfidiousness and wickedness of man. I have said more on them than is profitable, only to point out to you the views of that church, which has so basely apostatized from the faith of the gospel. I must refer you to those who have written largely on these things, and I assure you that the closer you investigate them, the more will you be disgusted with a system evidently designed to support the pope, unbind the priesthood from every tie, to every land, and from every interest except their own: so that by sacraments multiplied, by confessions and indulgences, they may augment their own store, and live for luxury, pleasure, and sin, not being virtually held responsible to any authority, civil or ecclesiastical, but the See of Rome.

COLLOQUY XXX.

PERSEVERANCE IN OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE PRECEPTS, BOTH NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE—THE DANGER AS WELL AS CRIMINALITY OF APOSTACY FROM THE FAITH.

Aquila.—We have seen, my friend—what is commanded, and indeed what also is allowed in the precepts of the new covenant: it is of vast importance that we be deeply impressed with the necessity of obedience to the same. It is

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

obviously necessary that a man be not only inclined toward the divine precepts, but that his affections be so placed on God, as to induce a constant active service to him, our Sovereign, as well as the suffering his most holy will.

Apollos.—So that we habitually serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Aquila —Yes—as we have shown all the habits of sin are to be forsaken and that watchfulness and prayer exercised, by which, we may bring every thought into the captivity of the law of Christ.

Apollos.—In what is this necessity founded?

Aquila.—First, in the command of God. In the holy Scriptures we hear that he will judge us according to our works, and that he will recompense to every man, according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad. And without this we can have no fellowship with him, and although we are justified by faith, yet can we not continue to exercise it without a daily obedience to the precepts of the new covenant. 'As ye have received therefore Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,' is the command.

Apollos.—All those doctrines then that tend to lead a believer to trust in works and not in Christ, to depend on faith only, and neglect duty, as the antinomian does, to predicate a hope of eternal life on an election while he is unmindful of duty, as well as the idea that, though a believer may fall into sin, he cannot finally fall, are therefore subversive of this obedience.

Aquila.—It is so, and I may add to them all those notions of men, that our nature is so imperfect here that we cannot keep the divine commands, while on the other hand some consider the mercy of God so great, that there is no necessity for it. This necessity is not founded in any merit in obedience, abstractly considered, but in the fact that faith in the Lord Jesus, cannot be exercised regularly and constantly by him, who does not persevere in the path of duty.

Apollos.—But, my friend—is this possible? Can we keep the precepts of this covenant?

Aquila.—The Pelagian error, that a man may, by his own strength fulfil the law of God, is positively opposed to the Bible, and unworthy of notice. Others have gone away beyond the mark, and have taught that man may be so perfect as to be out of the reach of temptation, while others have taught that there is the necessity of sinning all through life. Each of these opinions you know we have disproved. The Scripture doctrine, my friend—is, that a christian may, by the assistance of grace, keep the precepts commanded in the gospel after such a manner, and in such a degree of perfection, as God requires of us in his word.

Priscilla.—Some would make the way too broad, some would have it too narrow. God has pointed out the path, and grace will aid us to walk therein. The commandments of God, by which I mean the moral law, so far from being impracticable, are denied to be grievous and burdensome, his 'yoke is easy,' and the burden light to that man who loves God and believes on Jesus. So Job 'was a perfect man that feared God and eschewed evil.' And Zacharias and Elizabeth 'walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.' And Christ says, 'He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me.' 'Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.'

Apollos.—While then it is practicable, it is also necessary that we should persevere therein.

Aquila.—It is, and the necessity is manifest from the fact that salvation is promised to none; but those who do persevere, 'he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved,' is the language of our Lord. And St. Paul says, 'to them who, by a patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' 'We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.' Hence is enforced the gracious exhortation, 'be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.

And moreover, God threatens destruction to those who relapse into their old habits of sin, thus, 'Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' 'Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it,' for 'if we deny him he also will deny us.' 'Be not,' therefore, 'high minded, but fear,' 'take heed lest he also spare not thee,' thou standest by faith,' 'and because of unbelief' some 'were broken off' from the true vine.

Priscilla.—And although righteous before, as Ezekiel shows, 'their righteousness' is not remembered, and avails not for them.

Aquila.—And because of our danger the Scripture constantly exhorts us to constancy and care, lest we 'fall from our steadfastness, and die in unbelief.' And, my friend—if it be possible, and that it is we know, for a sinful man to have his heart changed, it is equally possible, by the same grace, for him to war a good warfare, and hold out faithful to the end. God will ever bestow more on those who improve what is granted: 'to him that hath shall be given,' and the world, the flesh, and the devil, all combined, are not equal in power to that God, whose grace 'is sufficient for us,' and although 'these may tempt, they cannot constrain us to sin.'

Apollos.—Then apostacy is the opposite of perseverance?

Aquila.—It is, and this is either temporary, as when a man sins, but afterward, upon his repentance and return to God, he is restored, or it is final, as when he dies impenitent and is damned. So also it is said to be partial and total, the former is when a man does not lay aside all dispositions to godliness, but is a backslider in heart, a lukewarm professor, but it is total when he throws off all restraint, and lives and dies in sin.

Apollos.—But many, my friend—doubt this. Can a man backslide from God and perish?

Aquila.—That he can backslide, and wander away from the divine favour is most evident, the Bible says so, and that he may die in that state and will of course perish, in consequence of it, is equally evident from Scripture and reason.

Apollos.—Well do, my friend—consider if you please this point a little.

Aquila.—I will, let us first turn to the Holy Scriptures, and there we shall see that a believer may apostatize and become a cast away from God. 'But when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that a wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.' Here it is evident that he may not only turn away but ultimately perish. And the declaration that it is *his* righteousness, not the Lord's, which would make the man a hypocrite, is the most futile and absurd. A man could not turn away from righteousness if he had it not, and if it were hypocrisy, the quicker he turned the better, and as for the Lord's righteousness, we have proved that this is not the righteousness of faith by which the soul is justified before God. Above all, it is here directly opposed to unrighteousness from which a man may also turn and do good.

Apollos.—It does seem inconsistent to admit any other exposition.

Aquila.—Again: our Lord says, 'But he that received seed in stony places, the same is he which heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the world, by and by he is offended.' By these words we are plainly taught not only that a man may, but that some actually do fall away, and depart from the faith. Hence says St. Paul, 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers

of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance. Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.' 'For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall destroy the adversaries.' He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.'

Apollos.—O! all this would have been needless if a believer could not fall away.

Aquila.—Indeed it would, for they are said to be enlightened and sanctified, to have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, surely all these blessings are not the portion of hypocrites. And the whole argument of St. Paul would be destroyed by such an admission.[1]

Apollos.—The apostle says to the contrary.

Aquila.—Again, St. Peter says, 'For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' On this text there is no need of one word of comment, it is so plain and incontrovertible that all who read must understand it. Look for one moment at the character. He had 'escaped,' but now 'he is entangled,' and his punishment 'the last end is worse than the first.' And, my friend—there are characters set forth in the Scriptures who did fall into sins the most heinous.

Apollos.—Do point them out.

Aquila.—Look at David, that pious man, who first lusted, then committed adultery, then as an accessary before the fact, was basely guilty of murder. Old Doctor Crisp might excuse all this in David, as not affecting his election, and represent the christian as bound by no law, but surely in this enlightened age of the church no such crimes will be excused in any believer.

Apollos.—I hope not.

Aquila.—Look again at what is said of Hymeneus and Alexander, 'Holding faith and a good conscience,' says St. Paul, 'which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck, of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan,' and parallel to this is 'their word will eat as doth a canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already, and overthrow the faith of some.' Here Hymeneus, Alexander, and Philetus, are said to cast away a good conscience, to make shipwreck of faith, to have erred, i. e. wandered from the truth, and consequently to have apostatized from God.

[1] I have closely examined Doctor Scott and Henry on these texts, and I must confess, that to me it is incomprehensible how good and great men could, in view of the positive declarations in the texts and the contexts, pen such inconsistencies. Really, one unacquainted with the character of the pious Henry, would be induced to suppose him unwilling to consider a text with the fairness and frankness that become a christian. But this can never be admitted by those acquainted with his history, and his remarks are the rather attributable to the prejudice of opinion. He represents both these texts as containing the experience of the unregenerate and hypocrites.

Priscilla.—And therefore delivered over to Satan. Who can throw away what he has not? Who can wander from a way in which he has not been treading? Who can cast off a good conscience if he never had it?

Apollos.—These questions I confess are unanswerable, unless we admit that a believer may apostatize from God.

Aquila.—There is Demas also, who in the epistle to Philemon is represented as one of the fellow labourers of the apostle, and is declared to be 'written in the book of life,' it is said by St. Paul, 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,' and surely the love of this present world is inconsistent with the love of God.

Apollos.—'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

Aquila.—The exhortations, the promises, the threatenings of the new covenant, addressed directly to believers, and pointing out their danger and duty, all prove that they may apostatize. Take for instance a text, my friend—any text, I care not which, addressed to the church. Ask to whom is this text addressed? Answer: to a believer. What does it teach? Answer: the danger of apostacy, or the importance of perseverance. And by what argument is it enforced? By the fact that the apostate may be damned forever.

Priscilla.—O! I recollect fifty such texts. Hear, 'And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father,' &c. 'If thou seek him he will be found of thee, if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever.'

Apollos.—A man who never was in the favour of God could never forsake him, and I am sure, if cast off forever, he can never be restored to that favour.

Aquila.—This is a very good argument, my friend—and you and Priscilla have obviated at once the necessity of quoting another text. I could quote those of this very character till the sun should rise to-morrow morning, and yet the Bible would furnish more. And all the arguments founded on the faithfulness of God, to show that believers cannot fall finally, &c. are vain, the fact does not turn on God's faithfulness but ours, and although earth, and hell, and the flesh, cannot constrain us to sin, still we may voluntarily depart from him, and offend against his law, as did Judas and others.[1] But the gracious call of God is to the poor backslider, to 'repent and do his first works over again,' and says the Lord, 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love, remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen, and repent.' O! the backslider should recollect God is ready to save him, desperate as is his case. This will, however, be more apparent in the consideration of the promises and threatenings of the new covenant.

Apollos.—O! the matchless grace and mercy of our God, and yet how just is he with whom we have to do.

Aquila.—Thus, my friend—we have passed through the consideration of the precepts of the gospel. We must at our next interview consider its promises and threatenings, in which we shall find enforced by infinite motives, those important duties which we have been pointing out.

[1] The final perseverance of the saints is a subject handled in such a masterly manner by the Rev. Messrs. Wesley, Fletcher, Whitby, and Watson, that we have only to notice it. We venture an opinion that their writings on this subject never have been and never will be answered.

COLLOQUY XXXI.

THE PROMISES AND THREATENINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT CONSIDERED IN GENERAL, WITH REGARD TO LIFE, BOTH ANIMAL AND SPIRITUAL, IN THIS WORLD.

Apollos.—You promised, my friend—that before you dismissed the consideration of the new covenant altogether, you would point out the promises and threatenings of that covenant, as setting forth the penalty of sin, the condition of believers here, and the state of the faithful and end of the wicked, in that world which is to come.

Aquila.—I did, my brother—and will now proceed to notice them. What we have said, may be considered as that part of the new covenant which specially relates to man, the performance of which God requires at his hands. The other part is that which God has promised to do, on the condition of our accepting or rejecting this covenant. True, God could demand our service as creator of the universe, but he delights in bestowing his blessings on man, a creature of motive, in such a way as shall be consistent with the free and unconstrained obedience of a moral agent. Hence, on the one hand, he encourages by promises, and on other deters from sin by those threatenings recorded in his word: and thus he would engage rational beings in the practice of piety.

Priscilla.—And it is likely, fallen as man is, there would be no obedience to the divine laws on his part at all, especially if any thing were required ungrateful to flesh and blood.

Aquila.—This is certainly true, and hence promises and threatenings are the very bone and sinew of the gospel law.

Apollos.—But does it become a christian adopted as a son of God, to obey him from the hope of a reward? Does it not look mercenary, should we not do it from love only?

Aquila.—This notion we have once said is inconsistent with our present state, and besides God by his promise of a great reward exhorts and excites us to obedience, which shows the propriety of our position Thus in the sermon on the mount he connects a reward with every duty, with poverty of spirit, mourning, persecution, mercy toward man, purity of heart, &c. And St. Paul says, 'if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live.' Hence, says St. John, 'this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.' And surely it is not unlawful to make use of the same means which God uses, and points out to reclaim man. Besides the Scripture expressly commands us to have an eye as had Moses to the recompense of reward, and seek after it by obeying God. 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.' 'Fight the good fight, lay hold on eternal life.' 'To them who through faith and patience inherit the promises of eternal life.' And hence eternal life is called a reward, indeed 'a recompense of reward.' And it seems that faith has an eye constantly to this. Thus 'he that cometh to God, must believe that he is a REWARDER of those that diligently seek him.'

Apollos.—It is therefore not only lawful to have an eye to the recompense of reward, but in fact we cannot discharge duty without it.

Aquila.—It is so, and as we learn from 11th Hebrews, the best and most holy persons have been excited by the hope of a reward to discharge duty.

Priscilla.—Indeed, the apostles declare the same in regard to themselves, and it is said of the Saviour, 'that for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.'

Apollos.—But is there not something of self-interest in it, self-preservation at least?

Aquila.—And self-preservation is the first law of our nature. We are thus also, wisely formed by our Creator, but a distinction ought ever to be made between temporal and eternal things: for the very essence of eternal life is the full and complete possession of God, whom we love.

Apollos.—But is it not servile to obey God from the fear of eternal death?

Aquila.—It would look more noble, it is true, to become a christian from the love of the truth, but indeed such is the power which the lusts of the flesh have over man, such the influence of the world, and such the dominion of Satan, that the sinner can hardly be alarmed sufficiently at his danger to induce him to fly from the cruel grasp of hell.

Priscilla.—The law then becomes 'our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'

Apollos.—But does not true faith cast out fear?

Aquila.—'Perfect love casteth out fear' that has torment, but it does not dispel that reverential awe for the divine character, and that respect for his law, which would lead us to neglect the threatenings thereof. Indeed these very threatenings are motives to induce obedience to God, who can, not only 'kill the body,' but after he has done so, 'cast both soul and body into hell.' And we have proved, that the fear of the gospel is begotten in the heart by the agency and operation of divine grace.

Apollos.—So that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom?

Aquila.—It is; and hence the promises and threatenings of God, both act alike in the production of that disposition to love and serve him, which are connected with our happiness. And these promises and threatenings respect both our animal and spiritual life, and this as well as the other world.

Apollos.—And do the promises of God regard this life, and man, considered as a mortal being?

Aquila.—They do; for St. Paul says, 'Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' 'Be content with such things as ye have; for he saith, 'I will never leave nor forsake thee.' And again, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Two things I have already suggested in regard to these promises, my friend.

Apollos.—What are they, my brother?

Aquila.—The first is, that the promises of God in regard to this life, are the least of all for which he has pledged himself to the christian. Eternal life is the great promise of God to the faithful, and as it regards this life, I have once before said, that there ever is a tacit condition. God will give the good things of this world, provided they be for our good, and tend most to his glory. A christian therefore, should not only be willing to live to be very old, even in poverty and want, but desire it, in order that he may do the will of God, glorify his holy and blessed name, who promises at least bread and water to sustain him.

Apollos.—And what are the threatenings that relate to this life?

Aquila.—These comprehend those various troubles, afflictions, distempers, and even death itself, which may befall us. There is no doubt but death, generally speaking, means in the New Testament, eternal death; sometimes however, it means temporal death, and this is inflicted even as a punishment, on believers, for some offence into which they may have fallen, and which God, although he will not let, go unpunished, yet will not punish with death eternal, 'for there is a sin unto death.' And the judgments of God are either for visitation and correction, or utter destruction.

Apollos.—How is this?

Aquila.—The former take place in this life, the latter in that which is to come. God visits to instruct, reprove, and correct, in his mercy, and when these all

fail, in wrath he visits the sinner, to drive him away in his wickedness forever. And the punishments of this life, regard sometimes individuals, as we have shown, who are afflicted bodily, for their reformation, or cursed with spiritual blindness, being given over to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind. Sometimes they fall on churches, as on the seven churches of Asia; sometimes on nations, as on the Jewish, Egyptian, and other nations.

Apollos.—Well, the promises and threatenings, as they respect the spiritual condition of man, in this life.

Aquila.—These are such as present themselves, in view of our true spiritual condition. For instance, God has promised pardon and all its concomitant blessings to the believer, but indignation and wrath to the unbeliever; hence our justification, including our regeneration and adoption, and our sanctification and qualification for eternal life, are blessings promised to him who receives Christ by faith, while God threatens to the infidel, reprobation, blindness, and hardening in sin, as the precursors of his damnation.

Apollos.—Is election included in these promises?

Aquila.—It is; for we have shown that it is that act of the Deity in time, whereby he separates a believer from the rest of mankind, and as it were, involves him among those who, if faithful, shall be saved. I say in time, to distinguish it from an eternal, absolute and unconditional election, which we have proved to be false.

Apollos.—Faith then, is the qualification for the election, and not the result of it?

Aquila.—Assuredly; and this also has been proved. Election, in Scripture, is simply an allotment to some privileges which others want, and is either of a whole nation, to some prerogatives above other nations, as the Israelites were the chosen or elect people of God, for the progenitors of Christ. Or of particular persons: 1. Some to extraordinary offices, as Saul and David for kings, Aaron for the priesthood, the twelve disciples for apostles. 2. Or to some temporal favour, as Jacob to be preferred before Esau, as the progenitor of Christ, in the line of Isaac from Abraham. 3. Then there is an election to grace, which is now the condition of those to whom the gospel is sent, and proclaims the Spirit of the Lord, or grace of God, as enlightening every man. But when these obey the gospel call, repent, believe in Jesus Christ, and obtain pardon, being justified freely, and regenerated by divine grace, they are elected or chosen as the sons of God and heirs of his glory, on condition of being faithful unto death: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' But finally, on being found and adjudged faithful in the day of eternity, they are chosen out as the saints of God, and blessed of the Father, to whom the Son shall say, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

Apollos.—The promises then of spiritual blessings and support to the christian, are in connection with the constant exercise of his faith.

Aquila.—It is, hence, if I may so speak, there is a daily justification, or in a judicial sense, that daily declaration witnessed by our own consciousness and God's spirit of acceptance with him. The testimony that our walk and conversation is according to his will, and word, and tend to holiness.[1]

Apollos.—Yet, this is connected directly with faith.

Aquila.—Certainly, for we walk by faith, we stand by faith, we live by faith. Indeed, my friend—although we cannot obey till regenerated, yet do we, living in the faith of God, daily feel inwardly that God justifies and accepts us in the

[1] Fletcher.

beloved. And that election of the sheep, or saints, in preference to the goats, or wicked in the day of eternity, as founded upon faithfulness and obedience, it is admitted, I think by most persons, is a justification, by which God declares his approval of the saint's course, after their adoption into his family on earth, in that they have obeyed to the end.

Apollos.—And are these blessings of pardon and adoption into God's favour and grace, all that are connected with our course in this our spiritual life.

Aquila.—O no! for, as we have heretofore suggested, while justification involves the pardon of sin, and adoption on our regeneration, puts us in possession of a fair and undisputed title to eternal life, before us is a race, a warfare, and we are to be tried, proved, and qualified, as is the ordinary way of the Lord's working in us, for eternal life. Sanctification, which means a separation and setting apart of a thing dedicated or devoted to God, appears to be a more perfect separation of the sons of God from an impure world, and the impurity of their own natures, to serve God most perfectly in newness of life.[1]

Priscilla.—This is what is called the entire sanctification or the perfected holiness of believers. And blessed be the Lord God it is not involved, as a privilege of his children, in obscurity and mystery.

Apollos.—I am clearly convinced that regeneration is a concomitant of our justification, for the Scriptures always connect the new birth with it.

Aquila.—Well, my friend—you will admit that those born again are in the favour and love of God, and too are sanctified and set apart, in their new birth for God's service.

Apollos.—Surely, my brother.

Aquila.—And what do we hear St. Paul saying, in a gracious prayer for those, thus born of God. 'And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*, and I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Suppose I ask you now for whom Paul prays, and for what blessing he prays?

Apollos.—He prays, I see it, for the converted Thessalonians. And he asks God to sanctify them *wholly*, and then preserve them *blameless* to the coming of Christ.

Priscilla.—Here is getting the blessing of sanctification, and then living *wholly* sanctified until Christ shall come.

Aquila.—And it is exactly so when he writes to the Corinthian brethren. 'Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

Apollos.—And although they were actually converted to God, he prays to the Lord that 'he would cleanse them from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.'

Aquila.—And the experience of every christian man testifies to this fact, that there are in him though pardoned and justified, and born again, the corruption of his nature, which arises, and although kept under by grace and devotion to God, it is there, and to have this so subdued as to feel that Christ is all in all, and that we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, is to be wholly sanctified.

Apollos.—But is this attainable?

Aquila.—I presume so or Paul and other apostles would not have prayed for it to be granted to their brethren. All christians agree in this, that a man must be holy in order to enter heaven.

Apollos.—Yes—but I meant in this life.

Aquila.—Well—I suppose if they do not get it in this life, they will not obtain it in another. I do not believe in purgatory.

[1] Limborch.

Apollos.—But while we are living.

Aquila.—Ah, my brother—now you touch the point, while all agree that we must have it, there is a great difference of opinion as to the *time*. Some think it can only be found in a dying hour.

Priscilla.—Death is to do for them when going out of the world, what the blood of Christ cannot do while they are in it. But be assured they that would 'be found of him in peace,' at his coming, must be 'without spot and blameless.'

Aquila.—The promise of an entire sanctification, my friend—if you will search the whole Scriptures through, you will find is no where restricted to the hour and article of death: so far from it, Christ prayed that his disciples might be sanctified through 'the truth.' Nor are we allowed to infer that the union of the soul of man with the body, is any necessary obstacle to its entire sanctification.[1]

Apollos.—But does not St. Paul speak of himself as under the 'carnal mind?'

Aquila.—No! my friend—he does not, you certainly have not forgot that we proved that St. Paul, in the 7th chapter of Romans, is not speaking of himself at all, and I am happy to say that no such doctrine is taught in the New Testament. I refer you to our conversation on that subject.

Apollos.—I now remember it well, and I must say I am forced to come to the same conclusion with you as to this fact.

Aquila.—The whole context proves exactly the reverse, that St. Paul was neither 'carnally minded' nor 'sold under sin.' And the doctrine of sanctification is one which he taught as experienced and enjoyed by himself. 'I am crucified with Christ,' 'I live,' 'Christ liveth in me,' all these expressions prove the holiness of his heart. Hence says he, 'What the law could not do in that it was weak, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

Priscilla.—How inconsistent is the notion that while we are in the flesh we must be constantly sinning, at least the flesh must have an occasional dominion.

Apollos.—Then we may be completely sanctified and prepared for heaven in this life?

Aquila.—Well—if we are not in this life, I should like to know when, for the destruction of the body of sin is certainly not referable to the hour of death.[2]

Priscilla.—And the doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in the soul until death, is not authorized at all by Scripture.

Apollos.—But there has been much controversy in regard to this, my friend—some have questioned the manner of it, contending that all attainable degrees of it are acquired by the process of a gradual mortification, and the acquisition of holy habits: others have alleged that it is instantaneous, and a fruit of the act of faith in the divine promises.[3]

Aquila.—That the regeneration which accompanies justification is a large approach to this state of perfected holiness, and that, all dying to sin, and all growth in grace, advances us nearer to this point of sanctity, is so obvious that on these points, there can be no reasonable dispute.

Apollos.—But are not these inconsistent with an instantaneous work?

Aquila.—By no means, for when the depth of our natural depravity is most painfully felt, we plead in faith the accomplishment of that which our God has promised.

Apollos.—But the great question is whether the deliverance sought so mournfully be held out to us in these promises of which you speak.

Aquila.—There certainly is no ground to doubt it for one moment. For the greatest violence must be offered to the word of God if this be not admitted.

[1] Wesley and Watson. [2] Watson. [3] Wesley and Watson.

Surely all the promises of God which are not expressly, or according to their order, referred to future time, must be objects of *present trust*, and their fulfilment now is made conditional only upon our faith, and they cannot be pleaded in our prayers, with an entire reliance on the truth of God, in vain; for there is the general promise that we should receive 'all things whatsoever we ask in prayer believing,' and the particular one 'from all your idols,' &c. 'I will cleanse you.'[1]

Apollos.—But if a man be perfected in holiness, or sanctified wholly, does it not suppose in him the impossibility of sinning?

Aquila.—By no means, for though the angels and Adam too were created holy, the latter certainly in the image of God, they sinned and fell most grievously. And hence we are liable to be tried and tempted as was Job, that *perfect* and upright man, who feared God and eschewed evil.[2]

Apollos.—But does it not render the atonement superfluous afterward?

Aquila.—Surely it does not, for this blessing proceeds of grace, through faith, as an instrument, and is maintained through the sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost, poured out upon us constantly, in answer to that incessant prayer that ascends to the living God; and this prayer wholly respects the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose 'blood cleanseth' as an offering 'from all sin.' Besides we are not to suppose that prayer offered to God for a blessing, that transforms us into the divine likeness, is offered in vain, for one of the benefits of Christ's death is the assurance that our prayers are heard, and that he will grant us according to the desire of our hearts, a deliverance from all things that would offend, 'and this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us.'

Apollos.—Well, my friend—convinced that there is such a thing as holiness and that it is attainable, I ask what is it?

Aquila.—It is that habitual disposition of soul which, in the Sacred Writings, is termed holiness, and which directly implies the being 'cleansed from sin,' 'from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit,' and by consequence the being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus, the being so 'renewed' in the image of our mind as to 'be perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.' And this consists in loving God with all the heart, with all the mind, all the soul, all the strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. And this love purifies his heart from envy, hatred, malice, wrath, pride, and every unholy and unkind temper. And moreover, agreeable to his one desire is the end of his life, to do 'not his own will, but the will of him' who is his Father and God. The tree also is known by its fruits, and 'he runs in the way of the commandments of the Lord.'[3]

Apollos.—Then this perfection is one of love and its consequent christian virtues: and, considered in the aggregate, is that holiness without which no man shall see the face of God in glory.

Aquila.—It is so, indeed, while in this state we are not perfect in knowledge, we are of course liable to err. We are not free from infirmities, a dullness, say of apprehension and understanding, a quickness or heaviness of imagination, and a consequent liability to err in judgment. And there is no perfection in any created intellectual intelligence that will not admit of an augmentation, whether he be mortal or angelic, for as there is an increase of knowledge there must also be an increase in reverence or love for the living God.[4]

Apollos.—In what sense then are they perfect?

Aquila.—As adult christians, not babes in Christ, they are so sanctified and made holy, as not to sin at all, 'for he that sinneth is of the devil.' True—this is the glorious privilege of the christian, though but a babe in Christ, but then, 'if

[1] Watson. [2] Ibid. [3] Wesley. [4] Addison.

we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Here is both pardon and sanctification.

Priscilla.—This is the glorious privilege of the children of God, and herein consists their real and true liberty.

Aquila.—A salvation from evil and sinful thoughts, which spring from the corrupt heart of man. So likewise a deliverance from evil tempers, by which the matured christian is enabled to say with Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.' He is saved from pride, and is lowly and meek in heart. He is saved from self will, and resigned wholly to the will of God; not only as a justified man saved from outward, but from inward sins. Hence it is said, 'if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'

Apollos.—So that this great gift is no other than the image of God stamped on the soul.

Aquila.—Just so; hence our Lord said, 'blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' And the souls of such are even and calm at all times, rejoicing hourly in the 'good hope through grace, of eternal life.'

Apollos.—But when my friend—does this sanctification commence?

Aquila.—At the very moment of our justification. Yet does the seed of all sin remain in man, until extracted by the sanctifying grace of God; but from the time of justification, a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.[1]

Apollos.—But is not the term 'sanctified,' often applied to the justified soul in the Scriptures?

Aquila.—It is, and correctly too; for he who is justified, is set also apart for the service of God, and dedicated to him, as the God of all the earth. But the sanctification of which we speak, is an *entire* sanctification; it is that maturity *in love, peace,* and all the holy *tempers* and *graces* of the Spirit, that are attainable here through faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And while the inspired writers speak to the sanctified jointly with others, they seldom speak to them alone: hence arises the circumstance of their speaking of or to those so often, who are justified, and exhorting them to advance in quest of this heavenly blessing.[2]

Apollos.—And you say, God has promised it?

Aquila.—I do; thus take a few texts from the Old Testament: 'He shall redeem Israel from all his sins;' 'then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you: I will also save you from all your uncleanness.' No promise, my friend—can be more clear and explicit. Does not St. Paul refer to this in his exhortation, 'having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God?'

Priscilla.—And equally clear and express is that ancient promise, 'the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.'

Apollos.—But my friend—is there any such promise in the New Testament?

Aquila.—There are such, and they are as explicit as those in the Old Testament. Thus, 'for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'

Priscilla.—All sin is the work of the devil.

Aquila.—Indeed it is; and St. Paul says, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish.'

[1] Wesley. [2] Watson.

And God sent his Son, 'that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.'

Apollos.—But does the new covenant give us any reason to believe that we may be saved from all sin?

Aquila.—It surely does, both in the prayers and commands set forth in it, all of which are equivalent to an assertion: 'Deliver us from all evil.' Would not this be mocking God, if we cannot be saved from sin, the worst evil? 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word,' 'that they may be perfect in one.' 'I bow my knees,' says St. Paul, 'before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 'that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God;' 'the very God of peace sanctify you wholly,' as before quoted, my friend. Now, if for a moment you will look at the commands, you will see the accordance. 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself.' Now tell me, if God's love fill the heart, is there any room for sin?

Apollos.—I should suppose not. But how can it be done before death?

Aquila.—From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living. And it is said that Christ 'gave himself for us, that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'

Apollos.—But is there any example of it?

Aquila.—Indeed there are; St. John was one, and others of whom he speaks. 'Herein is OUR LOVE made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as HE is, so are we in this world.' Job was a 'perfect man.'

Apollos.—Christian perfection then, as a promise made in the new covenant, is that love of God and our neighbour, which implies deliverance from all sin?

Aquila.—Yes; and this we have said, is received by faith. And although the work may have been progressing for some time, yet is it completed or accomplished at once, the moment in which we can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, for complete salvation: a salvation which qualifies now, this moment, for heaven. And the way to obtain it, is not to look for it to be accomplished in death, but now, every moment, until we obtain it. None, my friend—feel the need of Christ, and none so entirely depend on him, as those who are thus saved. And their language truly is, 'every moment Lord, I need the merit of thy death.'

Apollos.—Does it destroy desire?

Aquila.—The desires that are wicked or sinful, as those that lust after a neighbour's property, his wife, his man servant, his maid servant, and any thing that is his. These are destroyed, and indeed the love of all sin, but it does not destroy lawful desires as we have heretofore showed. There may be, as said already, mistakes, and involuntary acts, that seem not in accordance with right, and things growing out of the peculiarity of our condition, but rest assured that sin must be destroyed before that we are qualified for eternal life.

Apollos.—The infirmities of a man are not sins, I plainly see. But, is not the being born again, or regeneration, the sanctification or holiness of which you speak.

Aquila.—It is not I think, as before said, for as we have proved when on that subject, regeneration consists in the principle of grace as leaven being implanted in us, by which we upon our justification are so changed and renewed, as to lay aside all sin, and no longer, be brought under by its dominion. The sanctification of our souls then commences, and while we progress in the divine life, we feel, we know we love God, and love him more than any other intelligence, but we find, while we are brought into subjection by no sin, yet in us, are the remains of

pride, lust, love of the world, covetousnesss, and beside, that our graces are weak, we are babes, have but little faith, little humility, little patience, but still we are panting after more, to belong wholly to God, and be devoted to him in such a way as to 'serve him with a perfect heart.' Our duty is to go on.

Apollos.—'To press toward the mark.'

Aquila.—Yes—and as we press the corruption of our nature is more and more weakened, 'there is no condemnation,' when first converted, such are 'in Christ,' but they are yet 'babes,' imperfect, they however press on until they are enabled by grace, so to venture in the exercise of faith, on our Lord Jesus Christ, and apply his merits, that they are saved from desire, pride, love of the world, peevishness, fretfulness, impatience; in their stead, are an unshaken confidence, perfect peace, constant joy, overwhelming love, patience, meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, charity; above all, they now love God 'with all the heart, mind, soul, strength, and their neighbour as themselves.' Now they are resigned to heaven's will, of this there might have been a deficiency before. Now they feel 'to live is Christ,' that is, to honour and dwell in him, 'but to die is gain:' for the soul qualified for its rest, is ready to say, 'amen, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.'

Apollos.—But, my brother—it seems such a great blessing, who can obtain it? and if obtained who can live it? and would a man be fit for this world?

Aquila.—Any believer may have it, if he will seek it by faith, for God has promised it to him. And there is your mistake, it is the very gift which will enable us to live a blameless and an unspotted life in this world. When David reflected on the cause of his departure from God, he saw that it might be traced to the uncleanness of his heart, and cried out, 'create within me a clean heart,' 'and renew within me a right spirit.' Get this, and then we shall be stable, settled, rooted, and fixed. And as for a man being fit for this world, my dear friend—it is the very best gift that God bestows in this world, it fits us to live right here, and makes us ready to die, and go off to heaven any day.

Apollos.—When one was spoken to on this subject, he asked, are you a perfect man?

Aquila.—This is nothing to the point, whether you or I, or any other man, are perfect. God's word presents the standard, 'be ye holy,' God promises 'ye shall be holy.' And O! without it we can neither live nor die holy. If it be a work of God at all, it can be accomplished by him at any time, if it be necessary we ought to seek it at once, if it be going on, there must be a time for its accomplishment, and I hope, as it is the qualification for heaven you will not say that man cannot be qualified for heaven until death comes. That unscriptural opinion that a man, when converted, is saved from the corruption of his nature, and so sanctified as to need no other, but barely to grow in that, is so contrary to experience, and the prayer of the apostles for that blessing, on their churches, and of Christ for it upon his disciples, as to leave no room to doubt our privilege. Let us come up to it, fast, pray, agonize, God has promised, and God will give it to you, to me, to every believer, that presses on. Those just converted have a title to heaven, are in God's favour, are his children, if they backslide, they may die and be lost; if they do not press toward holiness, they are sure to backslide in heart or in life. If they press on, God will save them, and bear them up. See then his providential care. They may not be complete and perfect in Christ as men, as women, as fathers, as mothers, for years, but are they pressing on. If so, God will be their friend and shepherd in every trying hour, and sooner or later sanctify them *wholly*, make them *perfect* in love, and qualify them *fully* to live with him, in a state of eternal bliss. Then their full souls shall feel that God is all and in all, filled with delight, lost in love, they shall say 'my God is mine and I am his.'

Priscilla.—O! this is the sweet precious doctrine, the doctrine of the Bible, that excludes all sin, yea, its very roots from the heart.

Aquila.—An assurance of God's grace, and the support of his love, are promised through life to all his children. In every trial he will support. There is a race to run, duties are to be discharged, sufferings to be endured, but 'My grace shall be sufficient for you,' says the Lord, and supported by him, when life's sorrows are all over, triumphantly passing death's darkest hour, we shall wake up in a happier, and better world, 'saved by grace,' and there in deathless triumph shout God's praise among the 'holy' forever and ever. Amen.

Apollos.—But this is not the case of those who continue to reject God.

Aquila.—O! no—the justice of God, as we have heretofore seen, is exercised, first, in reprobating them, which is a judicial act by which, in consequence of continued unbelief, he casts them off, and will do so to all eternity, as we shall hereafter see. You must bear in mind, we have proved this not to be an act of absolute dominion, but as just said, that of a just judge by which he turns away from himself the impenitent offender. In it are involved several things, 1. Former good deeds are thrown into oblivion and passed by, as the man once righteous has turned from the right way. 2. There is to him the denial of grace which has been so often slighted. 3. The ceasing to call and the removing all the means of his recovery. Then comes on blindness, judicial, as in the case of Pharoah, and a hardness of heart, proportionate to his distance from God, and his sacred influences. Some men are suffered, as Pharoah and Herod, to become the instruments of their own obduracy, by the indulgence of passion and pride, or for gain through covetousness as Judas.

Apollos.—But how does the devil harden men?

Aquila.—Not by force, for he cannot force them, nor can he infuse blindness, nor work hardness in their hearts, but by persuading, exciting, and stirring up passion, by presenting objects to tempt to sin, by an emotion of the animal spirits, and by raising in the imaginations sinful ideas. When God blinds and hardens he removes the obstacles by which they were restrained from sin, and his word becomes to them more obscure, he delivers them up to be led captive by Satan, he permits the devil to lead them on without giving them time or opportunity to repentance, and even means, as in the case of Ahab, appointed for man's benefit becomes the medium of his destruction. The natural cause of all this is sin, and these acts of Deity, judicial in themselves, are but the results of it.

Priscilla.—O! what a desperate state to be in, forsaken of God.

Aquila.—Deplorable indeed is he who, given up to despair, goes on to his doom.

Apollos.—Such soon run their race, I suppose, my friend.

Aquila.—They do, for 'he that being often reproved, hardeneth his heart, and stiffeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.' Sometimes past feeling, they have not the least remorse, even in death itself, their spirits are suffered to slumber on till waked up by it, they are called off to eternity.

Priscilla.—Heaven prepare us for a dying hour!

COLLOQUY XXXII.

THE PROMISES AND THREATENINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT, WHICH HAVE THEIR COMPLETION IN ANOTHER WORLD.

Aquila.—At our last interview, my brother—we considered the promises and threatenings of the new covenant in regard to this life. We must now consider those that have their completion in the world which is to come.

Apollos.—But, my friend—does not the Bible teach that there is a state between this and that eternal doom of the wicked and righteous, in the other world.

Aquila.—It does, and although what is said affords us but little light in regard to that matter, still there is a condition in which the souls of men, are separated from their bodies: while these last are decomposed by death, their immortal spirits exist in a separate state, in happiness or misery. Let then the Scriptures be our guide in this matter, and let us be careful to avoid those errors that others have fallen into. The spirit of the little daughter of Jairus was not asleep, and when Jesus called on her it came back to her dead body. So is it with those who have passed the Jordan of death, and have left their bodies on this side awhile. In a state separated from them, they wait till God shall wake the slumbering dead, and call the nations to his bar.

Apollos.—Their souls do not die with their bodies, my friend.

Aquila.—As I have said, they do not, my brother—they survive them. This is a truth not only evinced by sound philosophical reasons, but also by several passages in Sacred Writ, which are positive on this subject. Thus when speaking of man's death, Solomon says, 'then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.' Our Lord said, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to cast both soul and body in hell.' St. Paul says, 'We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him,' i. e. if the body be alive we shall live here accepted of Jesus, if dead, while the body is here, the soul shall be with him. Hence says he, 'I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.' Who does not see that Paul anticipated a life with Christ, when the body should be mouldering in the clay, in a state antecedent to the final resurrection?

Priscilla.—When the body is asleep at night the soul is awake, it cannot sleep. O! no, it is engaged in wandering to and fro through the earth.

Aquila.—Yes—and it is inconsistent with the nature of a spirit, whose very essence is to think, that it should be in a dozing condition. Besides, neither the wicked nor righteous can enter upon their final appropriate rewards or punishments, until reunited with the bodies in the resurrection morn, which have been associated with them, in the most conspicuous deeds in earth. Doubtless the souls of the righteous are in a paradisical state, as happy as they can be until reunited with the body, but the wicked are not cast into their ultimate state of punishment until after the day of doom; but perhaps kept shut up in a miserable darkness, tormented with a despair that is horrific, in the sorrows of hell, or the place of departed spirits, reserved there until 'death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,' 'where the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever.'

Apollos.—When then, men are said to sleep in death in the Scriptures, there is an allusion to their bodies, not souls.

Aquila.—Doubtless, and hence you see the error of papists, who have invented subterraneous prisons, in which Old Testament saints were kept till Christ came to set them free, when, as they say, he descended into hell, which is in the centre of the earth, where souls are purged, after this life, and fully purified and prepared for another.

Priscilla.—It is not then done by the blood of Christ?

Aquila.—I once before noticed this nonsensical invention of priests to procure money, by pretending to pray people out of purgatory. I will just say now, no

mention is made in Scripture of any such thing, there the word purgatory never occurs. Nor is there the least hint in Sacred Writ of such a purgation of the soul after death: nor do we read of any fire of purgation, or any sacrifices, or intercessions, performed for the delivery of one solitary soul from purgatory. Lazarus was at once in the bosom of Abraham, and the rich man in hell, and Christ said to the penitent dying thief, 'this day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' And, my friend—this notion is altogether unreasonable, for the turpitude of sin can never be destroyed by punishment; if so, a thief on being whipped or burned in the hand would be more holy than before.[1]

Apollos.—From whence arose this opinion about purgatory?

Aquila.—The Roman catholic religion, if I may call it a religion at all, is a compound, made up of heathenism, judaism, and christianity. The idea of a purgatory originated in the Platonic philosophy, which, however, was a different fire from what papists pretend to. They said that the fire should be sprinkled on the world, men, and all things, to purge it. Papists have turned it to a money making machine, by which, as well as by indulgencies, sold by the pope at stated prices, they deliver souls out of the fires of purgatory. And such have had the audacity to handle deceitfully the Scriptures for a purpose so unhallowed.

Apollos.—But the promises and threatenings of this covenant extend to the resurrection of the pious to life eternal, and the wicked for everlasting death.

Aquila.—They do, and this is the very foundation of our whole religion, for if the resurrection be overthrown, all the promises of God fail. The Sadducees denied the resurrection, Hymenius, and Philetus, and others, held it in a spiritual sense, and so maintained that it was 'passed already.' St. Paul refutes this error, and the Scriptures abundantly prove that by the power of God, at the last day, the dead shall be raised from their graves, and the bodies and souls of all men be reunited.

Apollos.—St. Paul, I remember, did maintain with much energy this doctrine.

Aquila.—He did, indeed, and on an examination you will find that in the Old Testament it was set forth in a manner by no means obscure. 'I am,' said the Almighty, 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,' and this a long time after the death of those patriarchs, hence said the Redeemer, 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.' Three days he kept Jonas in the belly of a sea monster, and then delivered him from his grave. Elijah raised the son of the widow of Sarepta, and so did Elisha, the Shunamite's son, and a dead man was revived by touching the sepultured bones of this prophet. Job says 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' 'and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.'

Apollos.—But is not the clearest manifestation of this in the New Testament?

Aquila.—It is, for it is Christ, 'who has brought life and immortality to light, in that he hath abolished death.' The promise, my friend—of a resurrection is annexed to this new covenant, and it is repeated so often, that by unquestionable testimony, we have it as a doctrine of the New Testament, confirmed and sealed by the blood of Christ. Again it is proved as a doctrine of the Scriptures, to be true, by the resurrection of our Lord, who after he had suffered a most bitter and cruel death, was raised again on the third day. Hence it is, that St. Paul, in the whole of the 15th ch. of 1 Corinthians, proves from the fact of Christ's resurrection, that also, of all men.

Apollos.—The only difficulty is in the consideration that bodies destroyed by

[1] Clarke, Watson, and Limborch.

birds and beasts, and burned to ashes, should be raised again the same body, and identified to be such.

Aquila.—This difficulty will at once vanish, if we look at the omnipotence of that God, who originally formed man from the dust of the earth, and in six days created all things.[1]

Priscilla.—It is no more difficult for him to raise a body, than to create the same.

Aquila.—Its powerful cause is the living God, who shall accomplish it with the 'word of his power.' And the circumstances attending it, will be grand beyond description. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shall man be changed, but yet so that some order shall be observed, between the change of those that survive at the last day, and the resurrection of the dead. The apostle says, 'For we who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.' Here, my friend—is the plain unvarnished statement the Scriptures give of this subject; and all intricate, nice, or curious questions in regard to it, are useless indeed. From it however, there are several important inferences, that ought ever to be made, and that may be profitable.

Apollos.—What are these, my friend?

Aquila.—The first is, that as our bodies are to arise, and be united to our souls forever, we ought while here, to present them 'as instruments of righteousness, a living, holy, and an acceptable sacrifice to God,' that we may be 'accounted worthy of a blessed resurrection.' And again, 'how willingly ought we to suffer all the adversities and sorrows of life, not shrinking from death itself,' but shouting, pass in triumph through death's iron gate, nor feel its terrors; for we shall arise, and conquering death, return home rejoicing, on that blessed day, for which all other days were made.

Priscilla.—O! enrapturing thought! I shall live again, and live to dwell with those that have long since slept in the grave.

Aquila.—And the doctrine of the resurrection tends to render us courageous under every torment. Let men torture the body, and beasts devour it, God will find it again, and re-unite it with the immortal soul, though its ashes be scattered to the four winds of heaven, or thrown on the surface of the vast deep.

Priscilla.—Yes! and then we are not to grieve too much for friends who descend to the grave. Now they rest from the toils of life, and after a while, we shall meet again, to sing of the love of God, in that state of eternal life beyond the reach of sorrow.

Aquila.—A few things more, close our remarks on the new covenant, my friend.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—The most tremendous of all that we have yet named: I mean the last judgment, the end of this world, eternal life as a promise, and eternal death as that punishment, set forth in the precepts of the gospel of Christ.

Apollos.—These are serious subjects.

Aquila.—They are. After the resurrection follows the judgment. That God has appointed this day, before the creation of the world, appears from the remark of our Lord, in which a kingdom is said to have been prepared for the righteous, and everlasting punishment for the wicked, before the foundation of the world. This irrevocable decree, was manifested obscurely, under the Old Testament, and

[1] Drew and Clarke.

was proclaimed by the prophets, but is now set forth clearly in the new covenant. Thus God spoke by 'Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,' who 'prophesied of these, saying, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' And Daniel proclaimed a day, when 'they that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

Priscilla.—Under the new covenant, this is often spoken of.

Aquila.—It is; for God is there said to have 'appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.' In the 25th chapter of Matthew, we have a most lively description of it, and the whole process of the last judgment presented to our view.

Apollos.—I remember it well. It is surely grand beyond description.

Aquila.—The christian makes a judgment to come, a most important article in his creed, and proclaims to the world that he 'believes in Jesus Christ, who sets at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' And the same thing is evident from the justice of God, my friend—and the methods of Providence.

Apollos.—How so?

Aquila.—God declares himself a lover of justice, and an enemy of all iniquity. The method of his government requires that the good shall be happy, and the bad miserable. In this life, the good are often afflicted, and the iniquitous flourish; hence as God is just, there must be a day, when each shall receive their appropriate reward. It is called in Scripture, a day of 'restitution,' when the 'Judge of all the earth shall do right,' and when 'the tares shall be separated from the wheat,' the righteous enter into life, and the ungodly be confounded forever.

Apollos.—O! that will be a dreadful day to many that now disregard it.

Aquila.—It will indeed; and especially so, as natural conscience appears to testify to that day of final retribution: here it accuses, condemns or acquits; and while it points the innocent to a period of relief, it also premonishes the sinner of that misery that awaits him at the termination of his earthly career, and makes him hear it too.

Apollos.—But what is the particular constitution and manner of this judgment, as set forth in the Scriptures?

Aquila.—The first thing we notice is the judge, the ancient of days, the supreme God and Lord over all, but more particularly the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father hath appointed king and judge over all men. 'In that day,' say the Scriptures, 'God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ' Hence says St. Paul, 'He that judgeth me is the Lord.' And this Christ does, as we have shown, in virtue of his kingly office. And then according to the Scriptures we shall find him the supreme, the omniscient, the just, the omnipotent, the inexorable judge, who shall fix, notwithstanding the cries and groans of the men of the earth, the unalterable doom of all who have lived in this ruined world.

Apollos.—And all men shall be there to be judged by him.

Aquila.—Yes—the 'good and the bad,' the 'quick and the dead,' who shall be raised from their graves, and placed before the august tribunal of the Lord Jesus. There men shall give account to God 'for all actions,' their external deeds, their wicked and their idle words, their secret crimes and inward thoughts, their sins of omission as well as commission, all, all shall be manifest, and laid before that mighty judge.

Apollos.—But as he is omniscient he knows every action, and will at once decide each case.

Aquila.—Not so, it appears that there will be a particularity, and an order in this great trial of men and devils. 'I saw,' says St. John, 'the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'

Apollos.—What an awful day will this be, my friend?

Aquila.—It will, and from this very particularity, that the ways of God toward men and devils may be justified, it has been thought by some, that to try the whole world by individuals will take at least a thousand years.[1]

Priscilla.—It will take a long while. There is the great accuser, the devil, and under him perhaps many others. There are all that are to be tried. Besides devils, the antedeluvians, all from the flood to Moses, from him to Christ, from the christian era to our day, and from our day until the termination of the world. And every 'secret' of every heart shall then be made known and accounted for before God.

Apollos.—What an assembly placed before the great court of the universe.

Aquila.—After the trial the sentence shall be pronounced on all. On the righteous, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' To the wicked, 'Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. From this decision there is no appeal.

Apollos.—Poor souls!—intruders in hell itself. What a thought? Heaven save me for ever from it.

Aquila.—God! grant to hear your prayer, my friend. Then shall be executed that sentence which the Lord Jesus Christ shall pronounce on every man. A sentence from which none can possibly escape.

Apollos.—'Of that day and that hour knows no man.'

Aquila.—No, all the circumstances of that day are, however, plainly set forth in the New Testament which presents to us an account of realities that shall be experienced by all that live. There we have the manner of his coming. 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with all his holy angels,' and that too in 'flaming fire.' The world shall see 'the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.' The trumpet shall sound and 'he shall send his angels with the sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' And although the time be unknown, there are signs which precede it.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—There are general ones, as changes in governments, and in human affairs, such as are described in the 24th chapter of Matthew and 21st of Luke. Then there are particular signs, such as a notable apostacy for 'the man of sin shall be revealed.' The Jews shall be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in. The sun and moon shall be eclipsed, and the stars shall fall from their places in the heavens. Then shall ensue the sign of the Son of Man in the heaven, and the conflagration of the whole world.

Apollos.—Earth, the great theatre of man's crimes, polluted by the transgressions of ages must be dissolved.

Aquila.—Yes—the earth shall be burned up, and all things therein. All its inhabitants, as already signified, shall stand before God, and there, having rendered an account for all their deeds, shall be adjudged by Jesus Christ to endless bliss, or everlasting despair.

Priscilla.—A judgment to come is a subject that ought ever to have a practical bearing on our hearts and our lives.

[1] Wesley.

Aquila.—Indeed it ought, and the use that may be made of it, as was suggested on another occasion, is wholly practical. This doctrine serves to vindicate the providence of God in disposing the affairs of man. Here many things appear unaccountable, but all shall be plain in the day of rewards; and every mysterious providence shall be unfolded and made clear. The fact that there is a judgment where every suffering for the cause of God shall be amply rewarded, should support the christian's mind under all his afflictions and conflicts. It should teach the wicked their insecurity, and excite every man to work out his salvation with fear and trembling before God. Hence, my friend—a good man used to say, 'As often as I think on that day my very joints tremble; whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I have always this dreadful sound in my ears, 'arise ye dead and come to judgment.'[1]

Apollos.—You said that the sentence then pronounced, should forthwith be executed.

Aquila.—Yes—when mankind, by the last judgment, are distributed into two parts, the righteous and wicked; the former shall be sent to the enjoyment of the greatest good, and the latter to the endurance of unutterable torment. The souls of both, which have existed for ages perhaps, in a separate state, reunited to their bodies, arise from the earth in the morning of the resurrection, and then they enter their eternal abode, the one part in misery extreme, the other, in joy that is indescribable.

Apollos.—Do point out the component parts of the christian's joy, if you please.

Aquila.—This joy or happiness is usually called eternal life, the greatest good. It is not one single enjoyment, but a combination of many blessings, in order to make it a perfect state, and complete our felicity. Of course then, man shall arrive at a degree of perfection, both of body and of mind, unattainable this side eternity. There he is freed from all evil, there, in the possession of all good, on him shall be stamped the image of God, there shall he abide for ever and ever. The understanding, will, affections, memory, shall all be sanctified, and exercised in the participation of what must delight forever. 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be,' saith the Lord, 'his God and he shall be my Son.' Hence we are, 'heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ.' 'There' shall be 'one glory of the sun, and another of the moon, and another of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory;' and perhaps no two saints shall be alike, as to the degree of felicity, though all are so, as to the nature of it, and all are 'filled with the glory of God.'

Apollos.—O! happy, happy, state.

Aquila.—All the perfections of soul, and a body incorruptible, unite to make them happy—all their associations conspire to make them happy. There is God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, pre-eminently present. There the Lord Jesus, that sought our salvation on the accursed tree. There are the holy angels of God, who have ministered to the saints, age after age, in their passage through the world.—There are all the saints themselves—Old Testament as well as New Testament saints—martyred saints—thousands on thousands, an innumerable company, 'a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues,' they stand 'before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb. And all the angels,' stand 'round about the throne, and the four beasts,' i. e. living creatures, and fall 'before the throne on their faces,' and worship 'God saying, Amen—blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen.' 'These are they which come out of great tribulation,

[1] St. Jerom.

and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

Apollos.—O! the state of exquisite bliss.

Priscilla.—Parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, there shall meet to part no more.

Aquila.—This is not all. To render the triumph of God's saints complete, it shall last forever, for, when the saints of the Most High, take the kingdom, 'they shall possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

Apollos.—There the wicked shall cease to trouble, and the weary be at rest.' But what will be the doom of the ungodly.

Aquila.—These shall go away into everlasting punishment,' while 'the righteous' enter 'life eternal.' There shall be the greatest sense of pain, of both body and spirit. Deprived of the beatific vision of God: shut up with devils and damned spirits in a 'lake of fire,' 'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' Understanding, memory, the senses, all conspire to render their torment extreme. Separated from all that once delighted—now ingulfed in that ocean of misery, that endures for ever. But, my friend—I cannot describe it. Jesus says, 'they are cast alive into a lake of fire and brimstone.' 'This is the second death,' and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.'

Priscilla.—Ah, worse than all, their woe must last forever.

Apollos.—Separated from God, from all that is good, from children, parents, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—their friends in heaven, themselves in hell—O! I tremble at the very thought.

Aquila.—God Almighty! grant, my dear brother—to save us from such an end. Amen.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

COLLOQUY I.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH CONSIDERED IN GENERAL AS A CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS—THE MINISTERS OR MESSENGERS OF JESUS CHRIST, WHO ORIGINALLY PROCLAIMED THE GOSPEL OF GOD, AND BECAME THE INSTRUMENTS OF FORMING THIS CHURCH—THESE MINISTERS CONSIDERED AS EXTRAORDINARY AT FIRST—A CONCISE EXPOSITION OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL OFFICES.

Aquila.—In the consideration of the new covenant, my friend—we have had before us the believers in Christ singly, and the duties of each one in order to retain and enjoy the divine favour. It now devolves on us to consider them as a body, collected under one head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and explain the duties devolving on them as such, both collectively and separately. The name of this body in Scripture is a CHURCH.

Apollos.—What is the meaning of this term?

Aquila.—The original word εκκλεσια, ECCLESIA, means an *assembly*, a *society*, a *congregation*, sometimes a particular, and sometimes the general CHURCH of Christ, as made up of all christians. It is a term by which we are to understand the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true shepherd and bishop of men's souls. A church then is a congregation or society of men, called by the preaching of the gospel into the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who, upon obeying that call, have not only been enabled by grace, to believe on him for the pardon of all sin, but are in obedience to his most holy commands, going on to holiness and glorifying God by an upright walk in this world; Christ dwelling in their midst.

Apollos.—A church then is a congregation or company of christians.

Aquila.—It is, because it is no where said that one man is a church, but it always has reference to many, at least the whole of those who usually as christians, assemble in one place, town, or country. But as suggested, it sometimes is used for all those who are believers in our Lord Jesus Christ in all the world.

Apollos.—Still it is not requisite that there should be a great many in order to constitute a church.

Aquila.—It appears not, for two or three seem sufficient, thus our Lord says, 'where two are three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Mention is made of the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, in days of old also. For St. Paul requests his friends to 'greet the church that was in their house,' which of course could not be very large. So he addresses not only Philemon, but 'the church,' i. e. the society in his house. I say a a society, for a church is also a society, provided the several members of it be united together with the spiritual bond of faith and charity. So also they who are not of the same congregation, as partakers of 'like precious faith,' may also, be considered of the same church whose head is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Apollos.—I see the propriety of your remarks as to a society of men, for some have said that angels form a part of the church, making up with believers, the body of our Lord Jesus.

Aquila.—Such a notion is easily disproved, for the Scripture says that Christ has purchased his church with his blood, thus, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.' Besides the Scriptures say, that it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. 'Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.' 'And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.'

Apollos.—I see plainly that these things can by no means be applied to the state of angels.

Aquila.—You must also bear in mind, we remarked in the exposition of church, that this assembly, society, or congregation were called by the preaching of the gospel, in order to show you, my friend—that the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not made up of all men, or all sorts of men: but it is a company of men who, upon being called by the gospel as proclaimed to them, have obeyed that call, and are now believers in Christ. Nor do I mean that they accompany or assemble with them only, but that, in order to be truly members of Christ's church, we must, as having arrived to years of accountability, have exercised faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been justified by the same in him our Lord.

Apollos.—Then the very fact of the formation or association of men, as a church or society, after this plan, supposes the means by which it is accomplished.

Aquila.—Indeed it does. And in the constitution of this church it is important that we notice the ministration of this word, by which this body is formed, the faith preserved, and the doctrines of Christ propagated. For the 'visible church is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.' So that, while we have to consider the means by which the society or body is brought together, we must also consider that body itself, with its various divisions and attributes. In the ministration of the word, we should consider its ministers, and that government which ought to be in Christ's church. Now, my friend—you must bear in mind that the means which Christ uses, as I once showed you, to make us acquainted with his will are various. Some, I informed you were extraordinary and others ordinary. To these last, as the general method of forming and cementing together a christian congregation, or many congregations under one denomination in the faith of the gospel, I will now call your attention. These I say are the ordinary external means.

Apollos.—Point them out, my friend.

Aquila.—The Bible may be considered as the great minister of God to man, and the reading the word of life, as one of the most powerful for the recovery of the world, and the binding together in one body, the church of God. Then, there is also the constant preaching of that word, and it must be remembered by you, that before the church was gathered, and that word committed to writing, God was pleased to announce his will by certain persons commissioned by him for that purpose, through whom he made his revelation to mankind, as a body, still more complete; that it might be committed to writing, and be faithfully preserved by men. These are the ordinary external means of forming a christian church, the word of God preached and expounded by his ministers.

Apollos.—God then, calls men together in one society, by men, and then through the medium of his word, and their ministrations, as outward means sanctified and blessed by his Spirit and grace, holds them together as one in Christ Jesus, the great and good shepherd of Israel.

Aquila.—It is so; and with respect to this two-fold state of the church, we must distinguish between the offices of the persons employed, either in gathering the company, or in propagating the faith. For on this account, some were also extraordinary, while others are only, my friend—ordinary ministers of this covenant.

Apollos.—Do tell me, which do you call extraordinary ministers?

Aquila.—These are the persons whom our Saviour made use of in laying the foundation of the church, and whose office was to cease when that was done.

Apollos.—Are they any where pointed out to us in the New Testament?

Aquila.—They are; for St. Paul says, 'he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting, 'of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.' Here, you see, St. Paul tells us of apostles, prophets, evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, &c.

Apollos.—Do, if you please, be a little particular here, and explain the office of each one of these different classes of ministers distinctly; for I want to understand this subject.

Aquila.—The chief of all the extraordinary ministers of the gospel were apostles. Now the word apostle, properly signifies messenger, or ambassador: one sent from God, which was applied to the twelve, in the New Testament, who had constantly attended our Lord, were made witnesses of his resurrection, and sent out by him to preach the gospel to all the world. To their number, St. Paul was afterward added, being called by Christ himself, then reigning triumphantly in heaven, to that office; and hence it is, that in the beginning of his epistles, he speaks of himself as 'Paul called to be an apostle.'

Apollos.—Were the prerogatives and privileges of the apostles, above all the ministers God makes use of under the Old or New Testament?

Aquila.—Certainly they were; for the apostles were chosen, and sent forth immediately by Christ himself; not by dreams and visions, as were the prophets of old, but by word of mouth. And they, after Christ, were the first publishers of his gospel, the most perfect of all doctrines preached to men in the name of God, in which the will of the Deity was most gloriously and fully revealed. They excelled in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, all ambassadors that preceded or came after them, and were led by the Spirit of God into all truth; so that we may, nay ought, without any fear of being deceived, to give the same credit to their preaching and writings, as to Jesus Christ himself, because he speaks through them to men. They had the power of miraculously punishing those who rebelled against the gospel; and although a power similar to it was granted to Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, yet was the power of the apostles, of a most extraordinary kind. For they not only punished the obstinate with sudden death, and blindness, but also delivered them up to Satan.

Apollos.—Do you say so?

Aquila.—I do; for we read of the deaths of Ananias and Saphira, at the word of Peter. You remember how St. Paul caused Elymas the sorcerer to become blind at once, and this same apostle declares to Timothy, that he delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, 'that they may learn not to blaspheme,' and he commands the Corinthian church likewise to deliver up a certain character to Satan, 'for the destruction of the flesh.'[1] Moreover, their commission was of an

[1] I am aware of the variety of opinions in regard to these texts. I take them as they read, believing the apostle means what he says.

extent that far surpassed any that went before, not excepting Moses and the prophets. For the apostles of Christ were commissioned to preach him in all the world, while the lawgiver of Israel, and the holy prophets, were sent only to one nation or people.

Apollos.—And this commission they faithfully discharged?

Aquila.—They did; and with so much efficacy, that many barbarous nations, not prepared by education, for the reception of the gospel, but strangers to God, and the true knowledge of him, under the prevalence of habitual sins, polluted with gross idolatry, and given up to their lusts, were converted to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, through their instrumentality; and many churches were raised among them, of living members, such as glorified God in their bodies and souls. Next to these were the prophets.

Apollos.—And were there prophets under the New Testament?

Aquila.—There were indeed; and also my friend—prophetesses.

Apollos.—Do you say so? I never observed this before.

Aquila.—There were Agabus, and also others, for it is written, 'In those days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch, and there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit, that there should be a great dearth throughout the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.' And again, 'As we tarried there many days, there came down from Jerusalem, a certain prophet, named Agabus, and when he was come to us, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews, at Jerusalem, bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'

Apollos.—Astonishing! that I never marked all this before.

Aquila.—And besides there were others, for it is said in Acts, 'that Judas and Silas being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.' And so also was Barnabas a prophet, for of him it is written, 'there were in the church which was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon, that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, &c.'

Apollos.—And did you say that there were prophetesses too?

Aquila.—I did, these were the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist. For says St. Luke, in his Acts of the Apostles, speaking of Philip, into whose house they entered, and with whom they abode, 'The same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophecy.' And it appears that there were several others in the beginning and infancy of christianity, for St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians says, 'every man that prayeth or prophesieth with his head covered, dishonoureth his head, but every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head,' from which, and other texts, we learn that among primitive christians there were both prophets and prophetesses.

Apollos.—The term prophet, generally denotes a person who foretells future events.

Aquila.—If we attend to the language of the Scriptures, we find that a prophet was a term denoting any person, whatsoever, that announces the secret things of God, revealed to him, whether they be past, present, or future. Thus, John the Baptist foretold nothing particularly, and yet he is called the greatest among the prophets, by our Lord himself. A prophet, therefore, properly speaking, is a messenger of God to men, to whose office two things are requisite.

Apollos.—What are these, my brother?

Aquila.—A particular revelation from God, first, and then a command to publish this revelation to others.

Apollos.—But was not the gift of prophecy much more eminent under the Old Testament than under the New?

Aquila.—Far, very far from it, my dear brother—for we learn just the reverse in St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, and his first epistle to the Corinthians. We are there told of many who prophesied in the primitive church, for God poured out the gifts of his spirit on all manner of persons, without any distinction of age or sex. Joel had prophesied in old time of gospel days, saying, 'It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.' Now, St. Peter declared that this very prophecy was fulfilled in his day. But says he, 'this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, 'It shall come to pass,' &c. 'and they shall prophecy.' So in addition to what we quoted of Philip's daughters, Agabus and others, prophesying, we hear 'God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly, prophets, thirdly, teachers,' 'workers of miracles,' &c. Indeed, the 14th ch. of 1 Corinthians, sets forth these different offices, and their duties.

Apollos.—I suppose among the prophets of the New Testament, the apostles were the chief.

Aquila.—They were, to whom this title was attributed in a more especial manner, and that on account of those privileges, and prerogatives, named already.

Apollos.—But did they foretell any thing that was then future?

Aquila.—Certainly, many things, and to their predictions they added many serious admonitions, as appears in their acts, and especially in their epistles. But with respect to prophecy, there seems to have been this difference between the apostles and the other prophets: that to the apostles immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the day of Pentecost, most of the mysteries of the christian religion were at once revealed, so that if we except the calling of the Gentiles, and a few other things, chiefly of a minor character, they had no need of any other instructor, or a more immediate revelation.

Apollos.—But those who became prophets in their day, and the rest of the faithful, did attain the knowledge of the gospel, which they have by the information of the apostles.

Aquila.—It would seem so, and when converted to the faith they were indeed honoured with some revelations by the Deity, and specially endued with the knowledge of some particular doctrine. Some mysterious things were often revealed to them, either that they might instruct others, or be enabled to foretell some things that would happen. And I do not know that it is absurd to think that some things were revealed to them which were kept secret even from the apostles themselves, as in the case of Agabus foretelling the imprisonment of the apostle Paul, already mentioned. There is positive evidence that the prophecy of which we speak was an extraordinary gift, and the explication of the various articles and mysteries of christianity, belonged to the office of a prophet. This is plain from the 14th ch. of 1 Corinthians. There St. Paul represents it as a gift, and authorizes them to desire it.

Apollos.—Then we are not to understand it of that knowledge which is acquired by study, as some imagine, but of some extraordinary divine gift.

Aquila.—Certainly; and this appears from hence: because all the gifts treated of in that chapter, of which prophecy is placed first, are evidently extraordinary. And in the 12th chapter, prophecy is also placed among those extraordinary gifts which the Spirit worketh in believers according to his will.[1]

Apollos.—Yet I remember the apostle there says, 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administration, but the same

[1] Limborch.

Lord; and there are diversities of operation, but the same God, which worketh all in all.'

Aquila.—There is also reason to suppose, that a part of the work of a prophet under the New Testament, was to interpret the writings of the Old, which it would seem probable, ought to be explained by the same Spirit which originally dictated them; else it is probable the mystical meaning thereof would not have been obtained.[1]

Apollos.—And who were the evangelists?

Aquila.—Although the name evangelist is usually and properly attributed to the four who wrote the actions and discourses of the Saviour, yet in Holy Writ the word is never taken in that sense at all. By evangelists, are understood those travelling elders or bishops, who were the assistants of the apostles in preaching the gospel, and who were sent by them to places whither they could not themselves go, to confirm the churches which they had established in the faith. Of this number, were Philip, Timothy, and Titus; of this nature it is thought, was the office of the seventy disciples, and also that of Clement, Sosthenes, and Silas, and others mentioned in several parts of the Acts of the apostles, and in their epistles. Thus St. Luke says in the Acts of the apostles, that he and St. Paul 'entered into the house of Philip the *evangelist*, which was one of the seven, and abode with him.' To Timothy, St. Paul says, 'but watch thou in all things; endure afflictions, do the work of an *evangelist*, make full proof of thy ministry. To Titus he says, 'for this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.' And you remember the appointment of the seventy by our Lord: these were endued sometimes with extraordinary gifts, so that they seem to have been not inferior, but in some respects superior to the prophets themselves, having the gift of prophecy in common with them, and also the gift of tongues.[2] They were it is evident, travelling bishops or evangelists, as Timothy and Titus. Here my friend—I must close my observations on the christian ministry, until another evening: remarking, that what we have said, chiefly concerns that ministry which is called extraordinary. Good night.

COLLOQUY II.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH CONTINUED—ITS VARIOUS DIVISIONS—THE OPINION OF ROMANISTS IN REGARD TO THEM—THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH—BELLARMINE'S MARKS OF A CHURCH CONSIDERED—THE MARKS OF A TRUE CHURCH POINTED OUT—THE DUTIES OF ITS MEMBERS AS SET FORTH IN THE GOSPEL.

Apollos.—Well my brother—I am anxious that you proceed with the account of the ministers and governors of the church of Christ.

Aquila.—I know my friend—it is customary for those giving an account of the christian church, to proceed to consider its teachers of an ordinary kind; but this I must say I believe incorrect. I take the case of the apostles, on the day of Pentecost: they preached, thousands were awakened and converted. What was done then? Did they forthwith ordain ministers among them? O! no—we see it was not thus.

Apollos.—What did they do then, my friend?

Aquila.—They first, my brother—received them into the church, baptizing them upon the profession of their faith, in the name of the Father, the Son, and

[1] Limborch. [2] Watson and Limborch.

Holy Ghost. Here then was a church formed at once, by an extraordinary ministry, and by miracles the most astonishing. These men grew in grace, under the preaching of these extraordinary ministers; and we shall find, my brother—that in this manner the church first commenced. When some of these private members had proved themselves, as we shall see in the sequel, they were selected there and elsewhere, for other and more prominent stations, in the house of God.

Apollos.—O! my own sense might have suggested this. A man must certainly be a member of the church, before he becomes a teacher therein.

Aquila.—It is so; by these extraordinary ministers or messengers of God, in sundry places, as Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Phillippi, Thessalonica, and other places, sinners were awakened, and on being converted, and often confirmed in the faith of the gospel by miracles, they were received into the church, being at once baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. Sometimes there were only two or three members, and their society or church was formed in a private house: sometimes there were more.

Apollos.—Any company of believers then, who regularly assemble, among whom are the sacraments, and to whom the word of God is regularly taught, is a church?

Aquila.—It is; and permit me to inform you, that of this church, two things are to be considered. The first, is the parts of which it is compounded, and the second is the attributes of it.

Apollos.—What are its divisions?

Aquila.—You remember doubtless the noted divisions of it by papists, into three parts: The militant on earth, the labouring in purgatory, and the triumphant in heaven.

Apollos.—The second branch of this division, is not worth a groat; for you have shown, that according to God's word and reason, there can be no such place as purgatory.

Aquila.—Yes—this is only a fictitious state, designed to store the coffers of the priesthood. But the division which is most natural, of the church, is into militant and triumphant. The christian's course in this life, is one of contest with spiritual enemies: hence it is called a warfare. And as this is our state, the Saviour calls on us to 'strive to enter in.' St. Paul 'fought the good fight,' and those who hold out to the end, are called 'conquerors,' on whom Christ will bestow 'a crown of life.' The other branch of the church, the church triumphant, will commence its triumphant state in the morning of the resurrection: being made up of the conquering faithful of the militant flock.

Apollos.—Is there another division of the church, my friend?

Aquila.—Both papists and protestants seem to have agreed in a division of the church into the representing and the represented. I am ready to admit that there are many things which may, for decency and order sake, be done by the ministers, or by a deputed person, or persons, or the same by a whole church, for the sake of decorum and propriety; but my friend—I must confess, what I have often announced, that where matters of faith come up, no man can commit them to a delegate, without hazarding his soul's best interest. God will require of every man an account for himself, for his own faith and works, nor can any person arrogate to himself an authority over the church, or any portion of it, without being guilty of tyranny and treason against the divine majesty.

Apollos.—Christ alone is head of his church.

Aquila.—There is another division which is often used: it is into Catholic, and particular.

Apollos.—Not Roman Catholic?

Aquila.—O! no—Catholic means universal, and when one says 'I believe in the Catholic church,' by it is meant the universal church of Christ. And the

Roman church has arrogated to itself this term, in order to signify the pope's power over all the earth. It is not a Scriptural expression; it is often used in the writings of ancient christians, and is variously understood. Sometimes it is used to denote christians of all times and places; again, as those of all places, but at one and the same time. The Romanists, and some few dissenting from them, use it for the orthodox, which is most certainly wrong, because it may so happen, that errors may overspread a whole church, as is the case with the church of Rome, and yet it may claim orthodoxy, when wholly heterodox.

Apollos.—What is a particular church?

Aquila.—Any one portion of the universal or whole: as the church of Corinth, or that of Philadelphia; and no marks are properly the property of the whole Catholic or universal church, that are not also the property, of right, of each portion thereof.

Apollos.—This is evident; but do particular churches admit of any other division?

Aquila.—They do; and are very naturally divided into four parts. First, with respect to doctrine, some are orthodox, which profess to believe the pure gospel, not that they are free from all, but from fundamental errors. Others are heretical, who profess and maintain fundamental errors: as those who deny the divinity of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement, and the torments of hell as eternal, contrary to God's word. Again, some are idolatrous and worship images, as the church of Rome; and with regard to manners, some are pure; and with regard to conduct, endeavor to demean themselves according to the gospel, in the sight of God: these are not polluted by the vices of the world, and they seek to correct those who are so. Lastly, some, and perhaps it is so in every particular church, are contentious, while others are sons of consolation and peace.

Apollos.—I see plainly the necessity of attending to these divisions of each particular church.

Aquila.—The general universal, or Catholic church as it is called, and also a particular church, are again divided into visible and invisible.

Apollos.—A visible church of course is a congregation or society of persons who openly profess the true and saving doctrine of the gospel, although all should not properly be believers.

Aquila.—It is so, for some may not be lively members of Christ's body. The invisible church is a society of those who are not only professors of faith in Christ, but are actually believers in him, and lead lives agreeable to the precepts of Christ's gospel.

Apollos.—But Romanists laugh at the idea of an invisible church, and call it a figment.

Aquila.—I know this, but you must distinguish between the men who compose a church, who are surely visible; and you must remember that true faith and piety are invisible. When men outwardly declare them they are visible, but this may be done by hypocrites, as is often the case. Hence no man can be determined a christian, by outward acts. It is his heart, my friend—at which God looks.

Priscilla.—Ah! that is the test, an upright heart, for God 'searches the heart.'

Aquila.—To this visible church are the ministrations of God's word and his ordinances granted, for the support and confirmation of each believer.

Apollos.—Of such a church there are certain qualities it is said, that belong to it as Christ's visible flock here, and that this attribute is infallibility, or rather its indefectibility and perpetuity.

Aquila.—I know this is the presumptuous sin of papacy, that as a church it cannot err, to disprove this, look my friend—at what is said, that a particular

church may err, but the Catholic church cannot. Now it is apparent, that whether particular or Catholic, representing or represented, believers or hypocrites, any church may fall, and that most shamefully, only however, my brother—with this distinction, that such a church ceases to be a church. I need not mention the seven churches of Asia, I will only point you to the Roman church, as it is called, whose gross idolatry is incontestible evidence of the fact. Some few may not relapse into the sins of the visible church, and thereby Christ still shall reign in the hearts of those who love him. Nor is it necessary to the fall of a church that all its members should depart from God.

Apollos.—I think this very reasonable.

Aquila.—As all particular churches may err, so also may the universal Catholic church err, and the plain reason is, that all men are liable to error and sin. And pursuant to this fact, the time was when 'all flesh corrupted its way before the Lord.' The same may be proved of all churches that have ever been, not excepting the Jewish, and if we look at Corinth, Galatia, and other places, at the Gnostics, the Marcionites, Manichees, Sabellians, Arians, and thousands of other heretics, we shall see the positive proofs of this fact. For if a part may err, the whole, as made up of parts, may also err. Besides, the Catholic church, by the very concession of papists, may err in manners, and of course in matters of faith, for surely an error in faith is of less importance than an error in conduct. He who thinks wrong is to be pitied, while he who knowingly acts wrong is a wilful offender. And in proof of this God usually withdraws his spirit from such men, and surely we are not to believe that a man is deprived of the Spirit of God, and is still perfectly right and safe.

Apollos.—A church then may depart from the faith.

Aquila.—It certainly may. When I say it may, I speak not of the invisible but visible church, not of the particular but Catholic or universal church, for as already suggested, papists themselves admit that particular churches may depart from the faith, and of course, what part can do may be done by the whole. And although the original founders of that church may have been holy men, yet is it evident from examples too numerous to be named, that their successors, both in the ministry and membership, may be so wantonly wicked as to be cast off wholly by the Almighty, and be given up to abominations. As I said before, see the case of the seven churches of Asia, and also the present ruined and idolatrous state of the church of Rome.

Apollos.—O! this is undeniable, the Jewish church, the African as well as Asiatic churches, are overrun by Mahometanism.

Aquila.—And as we have proved from the word of God that men may fall from grace, it is also plain that even the members of the invisible church of Christ, i. e. true believers, may so depart from the faith as to lay aside faith and a good conscience, come into a state of condemnation, and the last state of these be worse than the first.[1]

Apollos.—What, my friend—are the true marks of the invisible universal church of Christ?

Aquila.—The marks of believers, so far as they are apparent to us, it is evident, my friend—can only be such as are obvious to our senses. These are said to be necessary or contingent, and common or proper. The meaning of these terms will at once present themselves. I will only notice now those that are necessary and proper. And as we spoke of the church as visible and invisible, the tokens of both may be demanded. It must be apparent, that all marks as to the latter must be contingent; and that, while there is the pure profession of the doctrine of Christ, there are also actions conformable to that profession. And

[1] Limborch.

there may be faith aad true piety, even where men would judge to the contrary, the eye of God only reads the heart.

Apollos.—This is apparent, but what are the marks of a true visible church of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Aquila.—I might ask what tokens are expected to be produced. Now, many have fixed on tokens that are not such as God has set forth. For instance, Romanists give miracles as a token of a true church. Surely, they cannot produce one solitary miracle that has ever been performed by a priest of their faith. As to their account of miracles, these have been proved false to their disgrace long since.[1]

Apollos.—This is well known all over the christian world.

Aquila.—My friend—signs or tokens of any thing ought to be more apparent than the thing itself, otherwise infidels, who know nothing of the doctrines of the gospel, are incapable of judging of its value. Besides, the marks ought to be distinct from the thing signified. Otherwise to inquire where is a true church, would be simply to ask where is the gospel preached in its purity. Now it does appear to me, that even where the gospel has not been preached by a minister, either extraordinary or ordinary, there may be a church, that is a society or company of believers, although they may be deprived of the sacraments, for by reading the Bible they may see the truth, and associate together until the Lord shall raise up among themselves or send them a pastor. Hence there were churches in private houses, and St. Paul speaks of the house of God to Timothy, the believing christians who met to worship God as 'the church of the living God.'[2]

Apollos.—If this be not admitted, then, when a minister shall go off, or a society be without a preacher, and of course the sacraments for a time, the church has become extinct. But the papists and others too, have many marks of what they call a church. I would like for you to examine them a little.

Aquila.—We have not time closely to examine all, my friend—for Bellarmine, their great champion, has at least fifteen, some of them, the most material we may notice, particularly naming most of them.

Apollos.—Fifteen!

Aquila.—Yes—their first one we have explained, that is the term Catholic, which is a virtual assumption of the government of the world by the pope of Rome. For as this is to be the only and universal church, and all power temporal and spiritual is in him, the infallible vicar of Christ, he is to reign according to their notions over all the earth.

Apollos.—What consummate vanity!

Aquila.—Bellarmine sets forth another, it is this, the antiquity of the church.

Priscilla.—O! this is their hobby.

Aquila.—And where will they find it, it is certainly not an antiquity in men, for they are constantly on the remove, and others succeed them, nor in the antiquity of temples and sees, in which new doctrines are constantly broached.[3] And it is not in the doctrine itself, for it must be known in order to ascertain whether it be modern or ancient: but their doctrines, or rather dogmas, are to be concealed from the vulgar, and only revealed to the learned. Surely this is not a mark then by which men are to know the true church.

Apollos.—And that church which is now ancient was once new.

[1] McKnight and Clarke.

[2] Several of these societies or small churches, companies of believers in private houses, both in Europe and America, were raised up by laymen and the word of God, about the commencement of the great revival under the late Rev. Mr. Wesley.

[3] Limborch.

Priscilla.—And antiquity cannot make a church, for then a lie might become a truth by it, and be made a church, at least become the truth of God.

Aquila.—Yes—and the pagan religion is older than the religion of Romanists, and if antiquity be pleaded for one it ought certainly to be for the other. Besides true antiquity is to be sought after in the Holy Scriptures, and in the congruity of their doctrines therewith. If we depart from thence, it will be a hard matter to judge of the antiquity and priority of doctrines, especially when we read that the tares and wheat grow together, and also appeared at the same time.

Apollos.—My dear brother—if we go to antiquity as to matters of religion, it would overthrow christianity itself, for paganism is older and more extensive than christianity. This antiquity is a poor figment indeed.

Aquila.—Again, they give as a mark the perpetual and uninterrupted duration of the church. Now it is plain that an assembly of men, apart from doctrine, cannot constitute a church, else Jews and heathens might be such. Papists themselves will not say that any company is a church during the reign of antichrist. At least no judgment can be put on this point until the end of the world, especially as the grossest abuses continue in some churches, theirs in particular, to this day.

Apollos.—But they talk about the multitude and variety of their Catholic believers, who hold what was believed at all times, in all places, and by all persons.

Aquila.—But at first the church, as they call it, did not consist of such a number, nor did it in the time of the Arian heresy, nor will it in the time of antichrist. Besides the greater number or multitude, as shown, are pagans, and the papists themselves are but a small portion when compared with Arminian, Grecian, Ethiopian and protestant christians.

Apollos.—But then they claim a succession of bishops from the apostles.

Aquila.—This is a subject we will notice when on bishops, but at present we may say that they have never yet proved it, and cannot do so. Besides, if they could, what is a succession of men, without a succession of the true doctrine. Surely a succession of persons, is no more an indication of a true than a false church. Doctrine cannot as already proved, be known without strict inquiry, and, moreover, a succession of persons may be in false churches. For instance, in the Jewish church, which crucified our Lord, and the Arians of old, boasted of their succession, yet denied the most fundamental truth of christianity. Did this make them a true church? The Greeks, Arminians, and Abyssinians can plead a succession, and will protestants, for I now, my friend—speak of them, admit that the Roman church is a true one, who pleads this succession. Let them look to it whom it may concern.

Apollos.—But Bellarmine speaks of the agreement between their present and ancient doctrines.

Aquila.—If by doctrines being ancient, he means those held and taught by the apostles, then we admit it to be a good mark. But this will not be discerned by any but those who inquire after the doctrines of the apostles in the Bible, which contrary to God's word, they will not suffer the people to read, generally, and if permitted at all, it is a mutilated version.[1] But if they mean the church immediately succeeding the days of the apostles, this is a very uncertain mark, for all know that very few writings of that period are extant, and all are against the dogmas and claims of the church of Rome.

Apollos.—But it is said that another mark is the unanimity of the members with the pope, their head.

Aquila.—My dear brother—there is unanimity among bad men, Mahometans,

[1] The Doway Bible used by papists is a gross imposition on the world as the word of God.

even Turks agree, and the reasoning of our Lord with the Jews was that Satan was not divided against himself. Devils agree. Besides the evidence is against them, for there are as many differences among them as among protestants. The Dominicans and Franciscans quarrel among themselves about the conception of the virgin Mary. The Jesuits and Sarbonists cannot agree about the pope's infallibility, nor whether the supreme authority is lodged in a pope or a council. There have been notorious schisms in the church of Rome, and not only two, but three popes at one time. Then, where was the union, and who held the infallibility ?[1]

Apollos.—I had actually forgot this.

Aquila.—Bellarmine gives another mark. It is the sanctity of its doctrine. As this is not any thing external, of course the doctrine must be known before it can be judged of. But what is the fact? Are the popish doctrines, as known, so holy ? Let the truth come out. Their superstitions as we have shown, are of the grossest and most destructive kind. Their enormities, both in the priesthood and populace, are beyond endurance. Look at their doctrine of indulgencies, at their doctrine that it is lawful for a prince to slay a heretic, though he has given him a passport of safety. That the pope has power to absolve citizens from their allegiance to the laws and chief magistrate of their country, unless they favour papacy, and discountenance heretics. And that marriages may, by permission of the pope, not only be contracted between parties within the degrees of consanguinity, but contrary to God's law, man and wife divorced from each other without a Scripture cause.[2]

Priscilla.—O! mercy, and is this a holy church ?

Apollos.—Another mark is that their doctrine is propagated and spreading, and that it is not so with other churches.

Aquila.—Admit this were so, is it a strange thing that error has spread ? How far and how wide have the devastating effects of sin spread ? Mahometanism has spread. And papists ought to be the last to speak after this fashion, when it is remembered that their dogmas have spread by fire-faggot, and the sword. When and where were they circulated extensively in the usual and peaceable manner of the gospel of Christ.

Apollos.—In conjunction with this Bellarmine offers the holy lives of its authors as the evidence that their church is true.

Aquila.—Well—they might do this, if Christ and his apostles were its authors. This we have disproved, and have shown that this mark is on the protestant side of the question. As to the holiness of the hearts of their founders and saints, we cannot know their hearts. As to the founders of their nunneries and convents, they were much more superstitious than holy: and some of them the most blood thirsty and cruel persecutors that ever lived.

Priscilla.—O! do you not Apollos, know the history of St. Dominic, the founder of the inquisition ?

Aquila.—But why did not Bellarmine name the holiness of the popes ? Because, my friend—all history proves the abominable wickedness of their lives, their profanity, their debauchery and treachery, and if we are to judge of the body by the head, we may well conclude that it is the worst church that ever did exist.

Apollos.—Bellarmine claims the glory of miracles too, as a mark of his true church.

Aquila.—I have noticed this more than once. When protestants have a new

[1] Limborch.

[2] All these are facts so well attested by history that they cannot be denied by any man who has ever turned his attention to the subject.

doctrine to propagate, they will appeal to miracles. At present they have the word of God, which contains all things necessary to salvation. The miracles of papists, are a standing monument of deception, falsehood, and superstition. And akin to this, is their pretension to the gift of prophecy. Bellarmine has named several other things, unworthy indeed of notice, as are those already named. We may however just give them a passing observation. He speaks of the confessions of others as to the character of their church. This was an unfortunate hit indeed, for according to the testimony of all who are acquainted, their character has been by no means fair. He has also noticed the untimely deaths of protestants, forgetting that the popes on account of the idle, luxurious lives they lead, generally die suddenly, and some have gone off by untimely deaths. And as to the temporal prosperity of those favouring popery, which we deny, if true, this might be pleaded in favour of Mahometanism against popery itself.[1]

Apollos.—The more I hear of, and the more I investigate this subject, the more I am disgusted with such wicked presumption.

Aquila.—I have, my friend—digressed from the thread of our subject, in order to show you the propriety of our exposition of a church, an exposition virtually admitted by all protestants, against the errors of papacy. And those who plead for a church as a body, organized by those who have derived their authority from the apostles, in a regular line through the popes of Rome, could they prove it, would prove their own disgrace.[2] For a moment, let us turn our attention to the duties of the members of a christian church, considered as a body. You have had its first formation by an extraordinary ministry: we have considered it in general, as the flock of Christ. Before we notice particularly its proper governors, 'pastors and teachers,' as appointed originally by those extraordinary messengers, to be its ordinary ministry, for edification, comfort, and reproof, let us consider the duty of its private members considered as the whole.

Apollos.—Do point it out if you please, my friend.

Aquila.—This duty of a christian church, consists of several particulars. The first is, that they should meet in a religious assembly, at stated times, especially on the Sabbath day, according to ancient example, there to make a public profession of their faith, edify one another, and glorify God. Thus, 'for with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation;' 'for Moses in old time hath in every city, them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.' 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching.'

Apollos.—A man cannot be a christian, who never, when in health, assembles with the flock of Christ.

Aquila.—The necessity of this is apparent. The church is a body, a congregation, a society of believers, properly bound together, or a larger body formed of several smaller ones, associated for the confirmation and help of each other on, to holiness. We have seen, that under the Old Testament, there were such assemblies, every Sabbath day: we have also seen, that there is an express command for it, which we have just quoted, 'neglect not,' &c. And its importance is still more obvious, from several considerations.

Apollos.—Name them.

Aquila.—The first end is, that divine truth may be thereby propagated, and preserved; and that prayers and thanksgivings may ascend from all, each adding his influence and example, to encourage the other in discharging a solemn duty of gratitude and love. Again, St. Paul offers as an argument, that each one may

[1] Limborch. [2] Stillingfleet.

be thereby put in mind of his duty: provoking, says he, 'thereby, one another to love and to good works.'

Priscilla—And what a good example to the young, for mothers, and fathers, to be regular attendants at church. O! what a great deal those lose, who seldom or never go to the house of prayer.

Aquila.—But you know we are also commanded to commemorate, in the holy sacrament, the death of Christ, and thus maintain with him and the members of his body, a holy communion and fellowship. Besides, christian discipline, as we shall show, must be exercised on delinquents, which cannot, and ought not to be exercised at the will of one man, but must be considered in the whole, or a number thereof, judiciously selected, for report to the whole. Every member of Christ's church, is a part of his body, and must not be severed from it, until withered and dead. To all this, I may add, my friend—we have the practice of the apostles of old, and the primitive church, for assembling to worship God; indeed the most cruel tortures could not deter them from it.

Apollos.—I remember this fact well. This is then the duty of all, even the most pious and approved christians.

Aquila.—Certainly; for both Christ and his apostles, set the example; and there are good reasons for it. This duty relates to each member of the church, no man is so far experienced, that he may not still experience more, and learn even from his inferiors; and by our example, as already said, we are to influence and excite others.

Apollos.—These are good reasons.

Aquila.—Another duty, is to pay due respect and obedience to those who have the rule over us as ministers and teachers, and pray for them. Christianity knows nothing of a licentious liberty; it breathes order and harmony, but not a servile subjection: 'we are to know them that are over us in the Lord, esteem them highly in love, for their work sake,' and never speak any evil of such, or encourage it in others.

Priscilla.—How often is a minister's character ruined by the crude remarks of some slanderous person.

Aquila.—A third duty set forth in the Scriptures is, freely and cheerfully to contribute, as far as God may have blessed us, to all the expenses necessary for promoting the spread of the gospel. As far as possible, they should aid in the support of that ministry that regularly and constantly serves them. This is taught in the Scriptures, and it is only reasonable when a man abandons all the means of a livelihood for himself and family, and devotes his life to the service of the sanctuary, that he should 'live' by that 'gospel' which he preaches. Mark, my friend—I do not say get rich by it, but live by it, being amply provided for by those whom he serves as the flock of Christ.[1]

[1] Schmucker in his Popular Theology has some excellent remarks on the necessity and obligations of the church to support its ministers. These are worthy the serious perusal of every member of a christian society. In them, in the main, I do most heartily concur. I have often referred to this work, as my notes will show, with both pleasure and profit; and am sorry to feel obliged here to correct an error in that author, and a consequent misrepresentation, doubtless innocently made, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This error has originated in the want of a knowledge of facts. In the first place, the Doctor has not noticed that the regulations of the General Conference are only advisory, not binding on members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. For they are not obliged to give a dollar, much less be taxed for the payment of any amount. Again, he errs in supposing that the salary of a preacher is fixed as to the amount wholly by the General Conference. This is not so, and a subsequent part of the quotation made from the Methodist discipline proves it. A committee of laymen is annually appointed to fix on the allowance for the families of the preachers, from among those whom they serve, for fuel and food. And this is as regularly and as certainly done every year, as a preacher goes to a circuit or station. Besides, the regulation of the general conference, as

Priscilla.—And O! how much do christians owe to the blessed gospel of the Lord Jesus. Well might St. Paul say to Philemon, 'Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me, even thine own self besides.' All we have and all we are, we owe, under grace and God, to a gospel ministry.

Aquila.—And what obligations rest upon us to aid in their support as far as we can. Moreover a christian, as a benevolent man, should be engaged in all acts of benevolence and charity which may tend to the advancement of truth and the benefit of his country. He should aid in building churches, schools and colleges, in which to train and nurture the young and rising generation, that they may, when he is in the grave, love, honour, and glorify God, becoming ornaments of the church, and a benefit to their country.

to an allowance of one hundred dollars to a preacher, and a similar amount to his wife, and a smaller amount to each child, to clothe the parents and educate the children, is not a positive law to the church, in which it is said you shall pay so much, but rather a regulation among the preachers themselves, by which, as represented in the general conference, they say, we will have no more. It is, moreover, notorious that many circuits and some stations do not and cannot give this. I have known hundreds of instances, in the last twenty years, where the amount paid many of the preachers has not been more than from 40 to 60 dollars in this hundred. All contributions of whatever kind, either in Europe or America, among the Methodists are now, and ever have been voluntary. Once a quarter in the country, once a week, sometimes, in the towns, collections are made by the leaders of classes, and whatever each member chooses to give, he does give voluntarily Many are poor, and can contribute nothing. Some are able to do so, but I am sorry to say it, are unwilling. Once a year public collections are made to aid in reducing the amount of deficiencies. I have never known more than sixty cents in the dollar, paid to each claimant. And the peculiar affliction of this is, that it bears upon the widow and the orphan, or poor old worn out ministers. Another conspicuous error is the misapprehension of another regulation. That rule which allowed $266.66, some years before the destruction of the book room, to each annual conference, generally consisting of from fifty to one hundred and fifty preachers, seems here applied to the individual worn out preachers, &c. if I understand the object of the quotation. I would to God this were the true state of the case. Instead of seeing many of my worn out and afflicted brethren, or their distressed widows and destitute orphan children, in penury and want, I should see them at least furnished with a sufficiency for food and raiment. There is, in the remarks of the Doctor, and the application of the quotation, from the discipline, something which has been thought ungenerous and invidious by some. I cannot believe that they were so intended, and I am sure, from the remarks in the body of the Doctor's work, he would not injure the aged minister, the distressed widow, and poor orphan girl, by representing them to the world, as in a condition so different from their true state. As to what the Methodist ministers have said or done, to the Doctor's own knowledge, which induced him to say, 'We have often been surprised that they should still complain of its insufficiency;' I know not, but the Doctor ought to know how difficult it must be to raise by voluntary contributions, often in *cent collections*, an amount sufficient for the expenses of a family. And even if the regulations of the general conference were more than advisory to the church, he may, if unacquainted with facts, easily know the difference between a theory, on paper, and the practice of that theory, especially where money is the object, and that chiefly among the poor. There are several other errors in this note arising from the want of information on this subject. Almost any Methodist preacher who has ever attended a conference can set the Doctor right; and I am confident, should God spare his valuable life to publish another edition of his excellent work, he will correct those errors which are so very conspicuous to all acquainted with facts, which have been construed as invidious, and have prevented, among some, the circulation and perusal of a book whose matter and dress peculiarly commend it to families.

COLLOQUY III.

THE ORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—PASTORS AND TEACHERS, TERMS WHICH SET FORTH THE DUTIES OF BISHOPS OR ELDERS, AND DEACONS—THEIR CHARACTER, MISSION, AND OFFICES, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES—THE ENCROACHMENTS OF PAPISTS ON THE ORIGINAL EQUALITY OF ELDERS OR BISHOPS.

Aquila.—Having set forth, my friend—the church of Christ as a company or society of believers, baptized and received into the church by the apostles, and their duties as such, the first thing that strikes the mind is, that the apostles would make some provision for their peace and spiritual instruction. And as God should call from among themselves men fit for official stations, they would regularly appoint them to those offices.

Apollos.—This seems natural.

Aquila.—Hence we are told that pastors and teachers were, according to the order of our Lord, duly and regularly appointed over his flock in every church,

Apollos.—What was the peculiar office of these pastors and teachers?

Aquila.—It has been doubted, whether their office was one of an ordinary or an extraordinary character. It is commonly believed to be ordinary, because the office of teaching and governing the church, belongs certainly to the ordinary rulers of that church.[1] It will therefore appear, from the manner in which they are named by the apostles, that their office must have been of an ordinary kind. Those whom we now call teachers and pastors, were formerly called bishops and elders, and they are properly such; and with them, the regulation of the churches was doubtless deposited, not without checks and guards, the principal of which was in the primitive church, it being a voluntary association.[2]

Apollos.—These then are the ordinary ministers of the christian church, as organized on apostolic authority.

Aquila.—It would seem so; for wherever in Scripture any mention is made of the ordinary governors of the church, as teachers and pastors, they are styled bishops, or presbyters, to whom, in the very days of the apostles, the deacons, appear to have been added. These, the apostles are said to have placed over the several churches: to them are their epistles directed, and to them they prescribed rules, according to which, these officers of the church were to be regularly appointed.[3]

Apollos.—And these ordinary ministers were to remain in the church through all successive ages. And there was a wide difference between them and the extraordinary messengers of Christ, these last being only appointed for a special purpose, and for that particular state and time of the church only?

Aquila.—It is evidently so; and the ordinary ministers may ever be considered a component of each particular part or branch of the christian church, with which they are associated.

Apollos—But my friend—were such ordinary ministers actually appointed by Christ or his apostles in the christian church?

Aquila.—Indeed an answer to this question, would seem almost superfluous; for there are such manifest indications of such appointments in the Scriptures, that it cannot be questioned with any degree of plausibility.

Apollos.—I admit this is apparent to you and to me, but there are some who think that prophesying and teaching, should be left for the promiscuous use of all the members of a church, to set forth publicly their doctrines, if they choose, of every kind. Now I want the arguments by which to disprove a position of this deleterious sort.

[1] Watson and Campbell. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

Aquila.—The appointment and perpetuity of an ordinary ministry, may be proved by several arguments. The first is, that the apostles did actually, in their whole course, constitute such ordinary ministers, over each church. Thus Paul and Barnabas, are expressly said to have ordained elders in every church. And that apostle commands Titus to ordain them in every city in Crete. Wherefore, my friend—in this church, as originally formed by the apostles of our Lord Jesus, we find the first order of ministers named, from among whom, was the first martyr, that bold messenger of Christ, St. Stephen.

Apollos.—What order of ministers do you speak of?

Aquila.—That of deacons, the Greek word διακονος DIAKONOS, meaning a deacon, signifies in general a minister, but when it refers to an officer in the church, it has a two-fold meaning: for first, the word διακονια DIAKONIA, in the abstract, signifies any spiritual ministration; but in a stricter sense, it is taken for those to whom, providing for the poor, and taking care of the church treasury was committed. Of these, considered simply as persons, having the care of the poor, there were employed both males and females. Hence we read, in the concise account which is given of the primitive church, of deacons and deaconesses. It is apparent, both from Scripture and history, that the last named, could not have been so called from being the wives of deacons, but from their being the servants of the church.

Apollos.—This is the proper meaning of the original word, a deaconess being simply a female servant in the church of Christ.

Aquila.—It is so; and in the primitive church, there were women who, in the name of the church, administered to the faithful in such things as related to animal life. This office of deaconesses, has long been out of use, to the disgrace of christianity. I say this, because it had chiefly for its object that care and comfort so much needed by the poor and destitute. It must never be forgot, that this office among christian sisters, was one instituted during the days of the apostles, to meet the exigency of cases like those that still exist.

Apollos.—How were they appointed?

Aquila.—In choosing them, care was taken that a deaconess should be a widow at least sixty years of age, who had been the wife of only one husband. Their duty was to take care of the poor, especially the sick, and strangers, who, having no other support, fled to the church for relief; and to visit sisters imprisoned on account of their religion, and administer to them.[1]

Apollos.—Were not the deacons appointed also for the benefit of the poor?

Aquila.—Originally they were. It will, however, be proper for us to notice particularly this first order of official men, as appointed in a church newly organized by the apostles; and two things are to be considered in regard to them.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—First, their election; and secondly, their office.

Apollos.—Well, do consider their election first.

Aquila.—In this we notice first, what sort of persons were elected. The apostle points out to Timothy, some qualifications that are not mentioned in the character of a bishop or elder. 'Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Except gravity and the last, their character is the same as a bishop. These were evidently the teachers spoken of by St Paul, who being on probation for the office of a bishop or elder, all the same, were to be their equals in piety: the vices from which they are required to be free, are the same as those from which a bishop is expected likewise to abstain; but the apostle adds,

[1] Campbell.

that they are not to be double-tongued, speaking differently of the same thing; and there is a caution in regard to their election.

Apollos.—What is this?

Aquila.—'Let them,' says St. Paul, 'first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon well, being found blameless.'

Apollos.—What was their office?

Aquila.—To take care of the poor; and as that had to be done out of the common stock of the church, their particular office originally appears to have consisted in collecting the money for sacred purposes; in putting the church in mind of what it needed, or any of its members, that all might contribute to the common necessity. This they did at first doubtless keep, and employ it to those uses for which it was given, though not always.[1] They were anciently, on good behaviour, promoted to the station of elders or pastors of the church, in regular charge thereof.

Apollos.—Did deacons ever preach?

Aquila.—I have already my friend—suggested, that this was the first office, after the formation of a christian church by an extraordinary ministry. An occasion occurred for the introduction of this order, which although at first intended simply to be the almoners of the church, became in time, as is most evident, an order of ministers, who were afterward exalted to the station of bishops; and I recollect one of the seven first deacons, named Phillip, afterward became an evangelist.[2]

Apollos.—I remember it well.

Aquila.—When the apostles were harrassed by the murmurs among the Grecians against the Hebrews, as is related in Acts, on account of the supposed neglect of their widows, they answered, 'It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men, of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word.' Here originated the office: seven were chosen, and being placed before the apostles, they were solemnly ordained after prayer, by the imposition of hands. We know that two of these at least, were ministers. Although not at first perhaps chosen in reference to the ministry, yet, in a very little time, they were admitted, and that too doubtless in the days of the apostles, and associated with the pastors of churches, upon their good conduct, after proper trial, procuring to themselves 'a good degree.'

Apollos.—Do you think so?

Aquila.—This is evident, I think. They were admitted to an inferior degree of the ministry, and made the associates or assistants of elders or bishops, in discharging their religious offices, acting under their direction. The deaconship served in fact, as a noviciate or probation to the ministry.[3]

Apollos.—Does the Scripture authorize this opinion?

Aquila.—It does; for St. Paul says to Timothy, 'Likewise,' putting them just after bishops, 'must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Let the deacons be the husband of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' What can be more plain, than that which is here declared. The state of the case, taken in connection with the history of the church, appears to be this: that deacons were admitted to the ministry in the

[1] Campbell and Dick. [2] Ibid. [3] Campbell.

days of the apostles, in the following manner: First, from the remarks of the apostle, they were proved, of course placed on a probation for that office, and regularly, as licentiates, after a trial, without which it is evident they could not be proved, they were admitted to that office. Whenever they used this 'well,' as the apostle declares, they purchased or procured, by discharging it with fidelity, 'a good degree,' being received and admitted to the charge, as an elder in the church of God. In this, most generally, historians agree.[1]

Apollos.—One thing is certain, I have noticed when churches were organized deacons formed a component part thereof.

Aquila.—This is so, and if ministers, of which I have no doubt, they appear to have been on trial from the commencement of their nomination or recommendation by the church, until ordained not only deacons, but afterward elders or bishops, and in regard to this point, their ordination to the ministry the evidence is undoubted, as in the case of Philip and Stephen.

Apollos.—Elders then had special charge of the church, and with deacons they were the proper and ordinary officers and ministers thereof.

Aquila.—They were, and these ministers, I mean elders who had the pastoral care, were called sometimes elders and sometimes bishops. This order of ministers was most certainly the one in charge of all congregations in the original churches. These ordinary ministers were to remain, deacons it would seem to me, being assistants of elders the pastors, in special charge of the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers or bishops.[2]

Apollos.—Tell me, my friend—was it customary to appoint such in charge of the churches.

Aquila.—It most certainly was. Of this fact, indeed, there is such a flood of evidence, that no man can doubt it, unless he shall doubt the positive declarations of the word of God. We have already named the circumstance of Paul and Barnabas having ordained elders in every church, and that Titus was sent by the apostle Paul, and commanded to ordain elders in every city in Crete. Thus 'and when they had ordained them *elders* in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.' And to Titus 'For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.' Who does not see that these were the ordinary ministers of Christ's flock.

Apollos.—But was it intended that these should teach or preach?

Aquila.—Certainly, for they are said to be ordained by God, to feed and watch over 'the flock of Christ,' i e. the church. Thus, at Miletus Paul 'sent to Ephesus and called together the elders of the church,' and among other things said, 'take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' And besides the apostles prescribed rules to be observed in making choice of ministers in future, in 3rd ch. of 1 Timothy, where he delineates the characters of those ministers of both an inferior and a superior order. All which rules would have been wholly insignificant if the office of bishops or elders and deacons, like that of apostles and prophets, was about to cease in the christian church. To the reverse of this, while rules the most explicit are pointed out for the selection of those ordinary ministers, none are given at all for the appointment of apostles and prophets, which were to cease. And the same directions given to Timothy are virtually in regard to these officers given to Titus.[3]

Apollos.—I can easily see how such a ministry would be of infinite value to the

[1] Campbell. [2] Campbell and Watson. [3] Campbell, Limborch, and Watson.

church, and the prosperity of the cause of God, in governing and teaching according to the Scriptures.

Aquila.—This is an excellent argument in favour of such continued appointments. And to all this I may add the constant practice of the christian church, from the apostles down to our time, for although there have been disputes about the degrees and authority of ministers, there is scarcely an individual who does not own the function to be perpetual in the church.[1]

Apollos.—The promiscuous prophesyings then as contended for by some, are not in order, and are not proper?

Aquila.—By no means, for all that is said by St. Paul on this subject may evidently be referred to extraordinary gifts in primitive times, for extraordinary purposes. And while each member has his proper rights, and his liberty, from the very nature of that equality which is taught in the christian system, still all ministerial appointments by the constituted authorities of a church, can only be founded on a selection and call to the ministry by the Holy Spirit, according to the best of their knowledge. So that all things shall be done according to order, even that which God himself has appointed for the ministration of his word. And although every man, as a christian, is authorized from the nature of his religious engagements and relative duties to exhort and warn his fellow-men, both by precept and example, yet, does it specially appertain to a christian ministry, to be devoted to that holy work, and the administration of the ordinances of the church, according to the appointment of him who is the head of that church.

Apollos.—But, my friend—who are these ordinary ministers.

Aquila.—It would seem upon an examination of the New Testament that there are in addition to deacons already named as ministers of the christian church, bishops or elders, names which are frequently used in the holy writings, which are made use of by the fathers, and are at present titles of universal usage in the church of Rome, and in some of the protestant churches. However, after the reformation by Luther and his associates, in Germany, the Lower Countries, and France, in most of the places where the reformation prevailed, the names of teachers, pastors, and preachers, prevailed generally, and this from weighty considerations.

Apollos.—What were these, my friend?

Aquila.—The reformation, began in those parts, without the authority of the civil magistrate, and from motives of prudence, the governors of the church would not take upon them the title of bishop, which was a mark of secular dignity: for then they would have seemed to usurp the rights and dignities of another, and therefore they chose rather to be called teachers, preachers, &c. But in England, where the reformation was carried on by the authority of the king, both the name and dignity of bishop were retained.[2]

Apollos.—What is meant by the terms bishop and elder?

Aquila.—The word επισκοπος EPISCOPOS, a *bishop*, properly means an *overseer*, a superintendant, a visiter. This is set forth, as we shall see, in the character of a bishop, and from this circumstance it was the title of the apostolic office itself. For it is said in the first chapter of Acts, being quoted from the Psalms, as authority for supplying the place of Judas, 'his bishopric let another take,' that is the oversight of the church. πρεσβυτης PRESBUTES, a *presbyter*, properly signifies an *elder*, which term was not only applied to those called bishops, but also to the apostles. Thus, St. Peter says, 'The elders who are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.'

Apollos.—Well—do tell me what is the difference between a bishop and an elder?

[1] Limborch. [2] Ibid.

Aquila.—The difference is about the same as the difference between Simon and Peter. Eusebius informs us that there was a bishop placed over every church. A catalogue of bishops is given, who are said to have succeeded each other in the several churches. It would seem by this, that they reckoned a bishop as the principal officer or chief of the churches, including other elders which though as an order was the same with elders or presbyters, yet as a matter of convenience, became the special title in time, of him who had the oversight and administration of discipline among the several congregations of a whole presbytery.'[1]

Apollos.—But the Scriptures acknowledge no distinction between presbyters, or elders and bishops.

Aquila.—It does not, these terms are equivalent, and are used for the same person, and it is worthy of remark, that Jerom, among the ancients, held firmly to this opinion.[2] That there is the promiscuous use of these terms is most evident. Thus when St. Paul commands Titus to ordain elders in every city, in declaring what sort of presbyters he would have ordained, gives us the character of a bishop. Thus, 'For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders.' Now he goes on to give their character, 'If any be blameless.' &c. 'For,' says he, 'a *bishop*, επισκοπον, EPISCOPON, must be blameless.' Here, unless we shall say, my friend—that the apostle argues very incoherently, we plainly perceive that he must mean the same thing by elder and bishop: and no critic of any note can deny but that these terms are thus used for the same office or order of ministers.[3]

Apollos.—Indeed this seems very plain.

Aquila.—In the Acts of the Apostles, 20th chapter, we are told that from Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* πρεσβυτερουσ, PRESBUTEROUS. In the speech which he made to them when he had convened them, we hear him saying, take heed therefore to yourselves, and all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you επισκοπουσ, EPISCOPOUS, bishops, 'overseers,' here are the Greek and English.

Apollos.—Here there can be no question that the same persons are denominated presbyters and bishops.

Aquila.—Well—in like manner the apostle Peter says, 'the *elders* who are among you I exhort,' &c. 'feed the flock of God which is among you, taking' EPISCOPOUNTES, 'the oversight thereof,' i. e. discharging the office of a bishop. The fact is, my friend—that EPISCOPOS was properly the name of the office, and PRESBUTEROS, *elder*, a title of respect borrowed from the Jewish custom of calling the members of their Sanhedrim ELDERS or senators.[4]

Apollos.—I must declare, as I have been constrained to say more than once, I never noticed these things before.

Aquila.—When St. Paul writes to the church at Philippi he addresses himself 'to all the saints at Philippi, with the *bishops* and *deacons*.' From which it is most evident that the apostle must comprehend the presbyters under the term bishops; for surely, if bishop be, according to modern notions, a dignified office, separate and distinct from a presbyter, there could not have been at Philippi more than one.

Apollos.—This is most evident.

Aquila.—It being manifest then that the ordinary pastors of the church are called *bishops*, superintendants, or overseers, as we have seen in the case of the elders of Ephesus, assembled at the call of St. Paul, and that, according to the present acceptation of the word, there could not be a plurality of bishops in any one city, for although the superior order, it is universally admitted, includes the

[1] Limborch and Eusebius [2] Campbell and Watson. [3] Ibid. [4] Campbell.

inferior, it does not act conversely, for it never can be proved that the inferior, for instance a deacon, includes the office of a bishop or elder. And we may, my friend—say more, there is the strongest possible evidence that the two terms *bishop* and *elder* uniformly mean the same office. For when St. Paul gives directions to Timothy about providing the churches with proper ministers, he notices the two orders and no more, and calls them bishops and deacons. And as in the case of Philippi, all commentators, with an unimportant exception, do admit that, by bishops thus used, the apostle means elders.[1]

Apollos.—This is certainly so.

Aquila.—And the fact that they are ever mentioned in the plural number prove this incontestably, for there could not, according to modern notions, as just hinted, be so many bishops to one church, unless they were, as we say, simply elders. And this is still more apparent from the fact that elders or presbyters, regularly imposed their hands on ministers, ordaining them. And this very thing will lead us to see the propriety of its use as a title, and a presbytery, or simply a collection of elders, any one of whom appointed by them collectively, might be termed the chief elder or superintendant of that association.

Apollos.—O! it is evident that bishops or elders were, by the apostles, placed over each church, among whom, at a very early period, one was distinguished as having the special charge or oversight of all.

Aquila.—Yes—but, my friend—this would not prove bishops and elders a distinct order of ministers, even if it could ever be proved that the power of ordaining was granted to the bishops, separate from the presbyters or elders, it is evident then, we might suppose, a distinction or difference of order. But this would not prove a diocesan episcopacy. And it is remarkable that while St. Paul says that Timothy was ordained by himself, he also affirms that it was by the 'laying on of the hands of the presbytery,' 1 Tim. iv. 14, which evidently shows that the elders were associated with St. Paul in this holy work. And it is possible that these elders, who had the government of the church, found it necessary, in time, to elect one as chief among them, for the transaction of the common business of the church with more convenience and facility, who by way of eminence, as it regarded office only, might be styled, as before suggested, *chief* or general superintendant, or overseer or bishop. These, after a while, might have charge of what is called a diocese, and if it were possible to make out a succession of bishops, in regular order to this day, from the apostles, it would only be a succession to those very bishops, who were indeed but elders.[2]

Apollos.—How apt men are to conceive of things not according to the original meaning of the terms appropriated to them, but according to the present acceptation of those names.

Aquila.—This is too true, and it is most evident that bishops or elders, in whom was originally vested the power of ordination, were not the successors of the apostles, for their pastoral jurisdiction was most evidently limited to a single congregation, and their several charges contiguous to each other.[3]

Apollos.—But even admit that the apostles had instituted any particular form of church government, did that make it binding on all churches which should afterward be created?

Aquila.—It is evident that while they did not impose any particular form; if they had, it would not have affected any church that is orthodox, as it regards

[1] Campbell.

[2] Watson and Campbell, to whose remarks on this subject the reader is referred. Indeed, Campbell's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History ought to be in the hands of every young minister. It is a concise and valuable work.

[3] Stillingfleet and Campbell.

the doctrines of the Scriptures, and not idolatrous in its worship; but as an unscriptural assumption of distinct orders, such as were never authorized at all, cannot be pleaded either from the precepts or example of the apostles, their bishops being only *primi inter equales*, the chiefs among their equals, at most, the succession from them is a most vain and imaginary thing, which has never yet been proved, and cannot be, and if it were, would be proved to come from them, through a line the most corrupt, foul and vile, that ever did exist.[1]

Apollos.—O! this can never be proved, for Eusebius begins his catalogue by saying honestly that it was difficult to say who were the disciples of the apostles that were appointed to feed the churches, &c.[2]

Aquila.—And this is what all have not done, for some pretend to give a long list of bishops as descended from the apostles.

Apollos.—But what do you think of an episcopal government in a church, my friend?

Aquila.—Episcopacy as a matter of prudential regulation, is a government, which any church is at liberty to choose, provided they maintain Jerome's distinction, that bishops are superior to elders, rather by custom, than by any appointment from the Lord, and that still the church ought to be governed, in common, by bishops and presbyters united. It was, my friend—on this ground that Luther placed episcopacy, as useful, but not of divine right. In this, agree Calvin and the divines of the reformed churches, and many of the English divines defend their episcopacy on this ground, and this alone: and indeed, my brother—it is the only tenable one.[3]

Apollos.—It would seem then, that even if their offices be claimed in the church as superior, there are only two orders of ministers, in that ordinary ministration, appointed of the Lord.

Aquila.—This is apparent, not only from what we have seen of this subject; but, various quotations from Clement and others have been adduced to establish this fact. This father dwells on this very point, and names bishops and deacons as the orders duly appointed on apostolic authority. As before remarked, the apostles seem not to have prescribed any particular form of church government. If any was prescribed, the weight of evidence is evidently on the side of a presbyterian government, i. e. a government by elders.[4]

Apollos.—There is another question of moment, my friend—what mission or call is required in order to render the ordinary ministers, whether bishops or presbyters, or others, capable of discharging their duties lawfully?

Aquila.—It would appear proper that the ministers who are to preside over and instruct a church, having been duly appointed thereunto according to the custom of that church, should be solemnly set apart, there being every evidence of their call to the ministry of the spirit of God, by the imposition of hands, according to ancient custom, or some other solemn ceremony for that holy work.

Apollos.—The imposition of hands is not necessary?

Aquila.—O! no—it is only required for order and decency's sake, it being an

[1] Stillingfleet and Campbell.

[2] Eusebius, Cruse's translation, ed. 1833.

[3] Stillingfleet, Watson, and Campbell.

[4] Campbell, who quotes largely in his work from the fathers, also Stillingfleet. A writer, signed Ecclesia, in the Christian Advocate and Journal of New York, has lately proved beyond a doubt, that bishops and presbyters are one and the same order. That to them are committed the government, the ordination, and sacraments of the church. His large quotations from authors, and adroitness in handling this subject, prove how closely he has investigated it. An opinion is ventured, that regular succession and divine right for episcopacy, have received a blow from this author that they will not recover from, in one century.

old custom, and used in the ordination of the apostles and other ministers. 'Thus, and the Holy Ghost said' to the ministers, all of whom are named in the church at Antioch, 'separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.'

Apollos.—Here is evidence that St. Paul's ordination was one of elders also.

Aquila.—According to the forms of a government of a particular church, this setting apart is usually performed by the chief officer, whether you call him bishop or elder, and two or three other elders who may be present. And as the whole church cannot act in this matter, it acts by its constituted authorities, its elders, and this was of apostolic institution.

Apollos.—How vain then, are the oppositions of popery, and the claims of successionists, against the reformers, as lacking legal right, being duly authorized by a company of christian believers, and accepted by them as their pastors, above all moved to the work of this ministry by the Holy Ghost, and all elders or bishops in the church.

Aquila.—Yes—sent of God, who only has the right primarily to call and send forth into his vineyard, 'for no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' When thus called of the Almighty there are two methods spoken of in Scripture, of designating them to their particular work. One by all the church, as in the case of Matthias, who was joined by lot to the eleven, and the other by the appointment of the governors of the church, as was Paul and Barnabas, which we have shown, and Titus was commanded by Paul to ordain elders in all the churches. In this their election, regard should be had only to the glory of God, and the good of man. The most consistent and proper succession of this authority, first instituted in this simple form, and now exercised, is by the election of a general superintendent or bishop, who as the evangelists in days of old, shall visit the societies or churches under the care of elders, lead the ordinations, preside in the deliberations of elders, being set apart by the imposition of their hands for that blessed work. They constitute and appoint by prayer and the imposition of their hands, what is an every day's occurrence in affairs, both civil and ecclesiastical, not only their equals, but those their superiors, as to *office,* not order, for they are of the same order. And there is no Scripture authority for the imposition of hands on them, and though not improper in itself, it does not rest on that for its authority.[1]

Apollos.—What then are the qualifications of a bishop, presbyter, or elder?

Aquila.—They are set forth in the letters of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus. These qualifications as there named, regard either his doctrine or manners. As it respects the former, he is to be apt to teach, of course one well versed in the word of God, and well qualified to impart a knowledge of its doctrines. As it regards the latter, he must be free from the vices of the world, unblameable, no winebiber, not self-willed, not passionate, not avaricious, and no novice, 'lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' Then there are virtues which he is to possess.

Apollos.—What are these?

Aquila.—Piety, that he show himself by his words and deeds, to have the most devout reverence for God, just and equitable, a lover of hospitality, sober, chaste, continent, the husband of one wife.

Apollos.—Taking then bishops and elders as the same order of ministers, and as the proper officers for the administration of ecclesiastical government, point out, if you please the duties of their office.

[1] Watson and Letters in Advocate before named, signed Ecclesia.

Aquila.—These are simply, as we have already suggested, to teach and to govern. In order to this, he must be convinced that it is God's will, and feel that he is moved to the holy work of the ministry by the Holy Ghost, sound in doctrine, and in order thereto he must daily and regularly read the holy Scriptures. Through the fear of man he is never to refrain from teaching and preaching God's holy word. He should not prescribe to the church as necessary what God has not declared to be so. He must have an eye to God's glory, and be free from all ambitious motives. As a teacher he must be both wise and prudent, so as not only to teach,' i. e. instruct, aright, but reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering and diligence, and comfort and strengthen the hearts of the people of God. In order to this, great regard must be had to time, place, and circumstance. Our Lord's advice is, be wise as serpents but harmless as doves, 'beware' therefore 'of men.'

Apollos.—And as governors of the church of God they must rule well.

Aquila.—They should, in order thereto, ever be a good example, 'let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' This example should not only be in preaching but in conversation, doing all things diligently to promote the honour and glory of God. Kindness and conciliation of manners should exist on the one hand, and all sourness and superciliousness be avoided on the other.

Apollos.—O! this must be wrong, very wrong in a christian minister.

Aquila.—It surely is, as a minister is a bishop or overseer of the flock of Christ, it is his duty to watch over that flock, as he that must give an account to God for all he does. The flock of Christ are his children, not the vassals of a privileged priesthood. The minister of God is their servant, and it is his duty day and night to watch over their souls for good, and by private admonitions, as well as public exhortations, earnestly seek to effect their salvation.

Priscilla.—Ah! that minister whose voice is never heard by his flock, but in the pulpit, is a poor shepherd indeed.

Apollos.—He must then be always at work in order to do all these things, and discharge all his duties.

Aquila.—Yes, my friend—always at work. While souls are in danger, he, as the messenger of God has no time to idle.[1]

Apollos.—O! how important this great work, pray God, my friend—to prepare me for it. Has not the church of Rome more orders in it, than those named by you, as forming the ordinary ministry of the christian church?

Aquila.—It has; for the several ecclesiastical functions of the church of Rome, are divided into orders and dignities. As to their orders, as they call them, however useful they may be in the common affairs of a church, they were evidently created by them to support the sacrifice of mass, alluding to the ministration of the priests and Levites, of the Old Testament, which were abolished by the coming of Christ.

[1] The rules which come nearest to the duties of a christian minister of any thing of the kind I have ever seen, those in the Bible excepted, are those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, adopted on the recommendation of the Rev. John Wesley, and by which he lived and laboured. There are 12 of them. I here give the reader a few quotations from them, 'Be diligent, never be unemployed, never be triflingly employed.' 'Never trifle away time.' 'Be serious, let your motto be holiness to the Lord.' 'Avoid all lightness;' 'believe evil of no one without good evidence.' 'Speak evil of no one.' 'Tell every one under your care what you think wrong in his conduct and temper.' 'Be ashamed of nothing but sin.' 'Do every thing exactly at the hour.' 'It is your business to save all you can, therefore spend and be spent in the work of God.' Employ 'your time in preaching and visiting from house to house, in reading, meditation, and prayer.' *Meth. Dis.*

Apollos.—What officers are comprehended under what they call orders?

Aquila.—Orders among them are seven: four minor, called doorkeepers, readers, acolytes, and exorcists; and three greater, sub-deacons, deacons, and priests. The dignities! are bishops, metropolitans, arch-bishops, patriarchs, cardinals, and popes.[1]

Apollos.—Then Episcopacy is the first of their dignities?

Aquila.—It is, and is considered by them as of *divine right.* We have shown that this office is one, as instituted by the apostles, of labour and toil; instead of its being so in the church of Rome, it is converted into a church dignity, with comparatively little ministration of the word, an hierarchical jurisdiction, that can, without the civil authority, make decrees and impose laws on the consciences of men.[2]

Apollos.—Why do they appoint arch-bishops?

Aquila.—These, or as they are called, metropolitans, have the charge or jurisdiction of whole provinces. In the original constitution of the church, it is evident that an evangelist, as we have stated, assisted the apostles. He appears to have been nothing more than a travelling elder or bishop, whose office, if I may so speak, was universal, and who was alike concerned and interested in the whole church, being tied to no particular portion of it. This we have already seen, and this duty of a travelling elder or bishop, for the oversight and assistance of the whole, appears to have been overlooked by many.[3]

Apollos.—I have often noticed this.

Aquila.—The plain matter of fact, from a close observation of the history of the church, will appear. When once the equality of bishops was destroyed; by degrees a way was opened for aspiring to greater dignities, till at last the universal primacy of the church of Rome, was introduced over all other churches, and the unity of the church contended for by them.[4]

Apollos.—And this is the reason why they created so many new and unheard of dignities?

Aquila.—It is evidently so; for as soon as several provinces, over which had been placed metropolitans, or arch-bishops, were reduced into one diocess by Constantine the great, patriarchs or primates, were set over them: the four chief of which, were those of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch; and each of them held a dignity, according to the rank which the city held, in which they were bishops in the Roman empire. And as Rome was the seat of the empire, the bishop of Rome was styled the chief of the patriarchs or primates. When however, the seat of the empire was transferred to Constantinople, which city was called new Rome, by a decree of the council of Chalcedon, Canon 27, equal privileges were granted the See of that city, it having become the capital of the empire.

Apollos.—And who does not see, that all this was not an apostolic regulation?

[1] Campbell and Limborch.

[2] Ibid. and Stillingfleet's Iren.

[3] I believe that a bishop of the Methodist E. church, who as to order, is simply an elder, but as to office, the general superintendent and overseer of the whole church, in all its portions, is both in nature and in practice, the office of an evangelist, as named in the New Testament. Such an evangelist was Mr. Wesley, a travelling elder or bishop, which is the same order. Such he evidently intended the superintendents of the Methodist E. church in America to be; and we have incontestible evidence from the Scriptures, that the ordination of these travelling elders or bishops, having the oversight of the whole, yet bound particularly to no special portion of the church, was a presbyterial ordination. The reader may see the cases of both Timothy and Titus. A methodist bishop, by his incessant labour, care and oversight of the societies and associations, or conferences of ministers, is a true scriptural Evangelist.

[4] Limborch, Campbell, and Stillingfleet's Iren.

Aquila.—In process of time, to advance the influence and power of the See of Rome, the degree of cardinal was added. These originally were deacons, elders at most, and Bellarmine admits, called cardinals because they presided over some cardinal churches: but now, by the subtlety of popery, are exalted over all bishops, or arch-bishops, and have wholly in their hands the appointment of the pope. Thus by degrees, my friend—from small beginnings, we see how the hierarchical dominion of the See of Rome, was effected. The bishop of Rome laid hold on every occasion, to advance his power, and attain a higher post, till at last, by fraud, partly by force, and the assistance of the emperor Phocas, he acquired the title of universal bishop, making himself head of the church, supreme judge of all religious matters, and Christ's vicar.[1]

Apollos.—That an ordinary elder or bishop, should have attempted such things, is extraordinary.

Aquila.—It is much more so, that he should have accomplished his designs; or rather, for it was not the act of a solitary man, that each succeeding bishop of the church of Rome, should have acted in such a jesuitical manner, as to succeed in this point, and that they should accomplish their design,—and, after the destruction of the vast Roman empire, set as lords of all, upon its ruins, is more marvellous than all. Indeed, it shows what superstition may ultimately accomplish.

Apollos.—These facts should be observed closely, and lead men to watch a power that, in its efforts at universal dominion, may prove deleterious to the best interests of man.

Aquila.—Thus, my friend—we have considered the ordinary officers and governors of Christ's church, and close by saying: we believe it never has been, and cannot be proved, that there ever were but two orders of ordinary ministers in Christ's church, viz: deacons, and bishops or elders, all equal, though sometimes one appointed as president, who was simply primus inter pares, or the chief among his equals, being the chairman or moderator, in all the meetings and deliberations of the elders belonging to his presbytery, and introduced into that office, it is probable, on account of age and experience in piety and the ministry, as well as suffering and usefulness in the same, and set apart at an early stage of the church for his work, by the imposition of hands.

COLLOQUY IV.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN GENERAL CONSIDERED—THE VIEWS OF PAPISTS IN REGARD TO THIS SUBJECT—THE SUPREMACY OF PETER AND THE POPE EXAMINED—ANTICHRIST—THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS CONCERNING IT.

Apollos.—I have felt, my friend—desirous to ask you, since you have been on that interesting subject, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, who are properly the governors of the church in matters of faith and conscience? To whom, I mean do these belong: and also, did the original founders of christianity give any particular form of church government, properly so called, to man?

Aquila.—These are questions both interesting and important. Let us concisely and duly examine them. As to the first particular, it is confessed on all hands, I believe, by christians, that the supreme government of the church belongs only to our Lord Jesus Christ, its great head, for in him alone are to be met all the qualifications necessary thereto.

Apollos.—But the question is whether or no there be not some other ministerial

[1] Limborch, Campbell and Watson.

head or universal pastor of the whole church, who is Christ's vicar on earth, an overseer of all pastors, and the visible MONARCH of the church.

Aquila.—Papists affirm this, my friend—but we do, as protestants, most positively deny it.

Apollos.—Bellarmine says that there ought to be such a government and such a prince, as the vicar of Christ, to represent him on earth.[1]

Aquila.—That there is no necessity for such a visible representative of Christ is evident, and that none such can be established consistently is equally evident for several reasons. 1. Because the church, as such, is a spiritual body, and consequently not capable of any visible regimen, for the whole obedience which the church performs consists not in any external act, but in sincerity of heart, a living faith and purity of conscience, over which I aver no man can properly have a dominion, and it is wickedness to pretend to it. 2. But, my friend—this government belongs either to the pastor or the people, if instituted at all. Papists say not to the people—and it is evident that the work of a pastor is simply so to preach and enforce, in public and private, Christ's precepts, by exhorting, persuading, reproving, and announcing the threatenings of the Scriptures, that the people may be instructed in duty, and Christ alone acknowledged, now and forever, the sole head of his Church.

Apollos.—But Bellarmine says that the government of the church ought to be monarchical.[2] His words are, 'That among all the forms of government, simple monarchy, bating some circumstances, is absolutely best: that however a monarchy, mixed with aristocracy and democracy, is more useful in this life than simple monarchy; and that this form of government has prevailed in the church, wherein there is the monarchy of the pope, the aristocracy of the bishops, and the democracy of the inferior clergy.'[3]

Aquila.—I have no doubt but that Bellarmine did think, and that all Roman priests do think, and acknowledge too, that the pope of Rome is their monarch or king. And however these things may not accord with what is professed by them and others, we are not disposed to acknowledge any monarchy in Christ's church other than the Redeemer himself. 1. Because Christ, who only has the right to appoint, has never yet designated such an universal monarch. 2. So far from this he forbade even his apostles from exercising lordship over one another. 'Ye know,' saith our Lord, 'that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you.' These words and all the context establish the point beyond a contradiction, as also does the parallel passage in St Luke.

Apollos.—Indeed this is most decisive.

Aquila.—It is, and besides there is no need for any such office in the church to decide matters of faith and conscience, as we have heretofore proved: and the church is not a body politic. The see of Rome may find it necessary to have its aristocracy, thus declared by Bellarmine, and its priesthood every where present to support this simple monarchy as he calls it, but let us remember, my friend—Christ is every where present in his church, as its spiritual head, and he alone is to decide, by the pure word of life, matters of faith and conscience.

Apollos.—His word and his blessed Spirit are enough.

Aquila.—They are, and while it is absurd and ridiculous to ascribe two heads to one body, two foundations to one building, it must also be apparent that no pope can search any man's heart to determine between hypocrites and the sincere.

Apollos.—O! this is evident, palpably so, but Bellarmine says, for maintaining the excellency of this monarchy, 'No question but our Saviour instituted the best

[1] Bellar. lib. 1. de Pontiff. Rom. cap. 5. [2] Ibid. cap. 9. [3] Ibid. lib. 3 and 4.

form of government, but as monarchy is a form more perfect than aristocray or a democracy, who can deny but that the government of the church is monarchical.'

Aquila.—This is a most impudent and also fallacious argument. Suppose, I say, it would have been best for God to appoint an infallible judge in his church, who could neither err in fact or in right, and therefore he has appointed it. Would this be reasoning? I think not.

Apollos.—O! no you would have both papists and protestants united in the opposition.

Aquila.—But even admit that a monarchy is the first form, which I know no true hearted American, whether priest or layman, ever will admit, it could never, in matters of faith and conscience, be suited to the condition of a spiritual body, subsisting only by faith, and of course to be voluntary and unconstrained; and if this church needs a monarch it has one, Jesus Christ, who is LORD OVER ALL.

Apollos.—But they argue about an hierarchy among the angels, and say that 'besides the Supreme God over all, there is one that governs the rest, which was Lucifer before his fall, and Michael since.'[1]

Aquila.—Well, my friend—I know nothing about this angelical hierarchy, or their degrees, much less any thing certain about the present authority of Michael, or that of Lucifer, who is said to have formerly been a prince, and if I did, I have sense enough to know that there is a vast difference between the nature, as well as the condition of angels and men. Do Romanists know any more than I about them?

Apollos.—I expect not, but they say 'there ought to be still a visible head, else the church at present would not be the same that it was formerly, as Christ its head was here and held the government.'[2]

Aquila.—This I deny, for Christ while here never did visibly assume to be the head of the church, he could not conveniently do this, as the Jewish church had as its head an Aaronical priest. And the christian church was actually not formed or organized until after his crucifixion: and even if he where while here a visible head, it does not follow that after his ascension he substituted another in his stead. As to what has been said by papists also concerning an outward appointment for the spread of the gospel, by one universal bishop, it is obvious that all such plans are devised for the aggrandizement of the see of Rome, and we have more than once proved that there is no need of such an outward mission to capacitate a man to *teach* others, and although he had such authority, if not called of God and moved by the 'Holy Ghost to preach his word,' it is most evident he is no minister of Jesus at all.

Apollos.—But they say 'all men must have this one head to direct in matters of faith and conscience, in order to be of the same mind in matters of faith.'[3]

Aquila.—It is not necessary that men should be of the same mind in order to have the same faith. Faith does not come from the pope of Rome, or any other man, 'it is the gift of God,' and may be implanted by grace in the hearts of many men of diversified minds.

Apollos.—But they say that his government or supremacy was granted first to Peter, and through him to the pope.[4]

Aquila.—Well let us examine all this a little, my brother. Suppose I deny the whole as a popish invention, and call for the proof. Where is it, surely not in his speaking sometimes in the name of the rest. So far from meeting with any thing like his being the monarch of the church, prince of the apostles, and their representative or head, in the Sacred Writings, on the contrary every thing intimates his equality only. Thus, when another apostle was to be chosen in the

[1] Bellarmine. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid de Pontif. Rom. lib. 1. cap. 10.

place of Judas, Peter did not as an infallible head of the church choose him, but the whole assembly by common consent proposed two, and the election was made by lot, the issue being expected of the Lord, and not on the infallibility of Peter, so were also the first deacons recommended by the church and ordained by the apostles, all equally participating therein.

Apollos.—I remember both these cases well.

Aquila.—When the apostles who were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the gospel, *they* sent Peter and John unto them. Surely if Peter were *monarch* and infallible, he should have sent them or have gone voluntarily himself, not be *sent*, and that by them. A superior is not generally sent by his inferiors, but he sends them. And, my friend—when Peter was charged with preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles, he did not produce his infallibility, as an unanswerable argument in his defence, but mentions the vision which he saw.

Apollos.—Surely this would have been the time to name it.

Aquila.—While several are styled in the Scriptures 'chief apostles,' and three are represented as 'στυλοι STULOI, *pillars*,' St. Peter is only ranked in the second place. And he being appointed to preach to the Jews, and St. Paul to the Gentiles, we may fairly infer the equality of their office.

Apollos.—I think this is very obvious.

Aquila.—And, my friend—St. Peter in his epistles so far from arrogating such a supremacy, calls himself συμπρεσβυτερον SUMPRESBUTERON, a *fellow-elder*, and beseeches and exhorts the other elders to feed the flock.

Apollos.—All this seems very far indeed from a monarchial power. But they say that Christ spoke of him as a rock, and the foundation of his church.

Aquila.—The use of the word itself might have been a simple allusion to his name, the meaning of which is a *stone*, and the most critical and learned commentators understand the confession of Peter, or the object rather of it, Jesus Christ, who is alone the foundation of his church. But even suppose that what is there said was designed to point out Peter as a stable and steady teacher in Christ's church, is any thing more declared than was applicable to the other apostles. And the very same may be said in regard to loosing and unloosing the sins of men, and his having the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Apollos.—O! this is all nonsense, for what they affirm Christ says in St. Matthew of Peter, he also says in St. John of the whole.

Aquila.—And even suppose that St. Peter was, by the Saviour, made the chief of the apostles, what would this avail in establishing the popish hierarchy?

Apollos.—They say St. Peter went to Rome and suffered martyrdom there, and delivered the keys to his successor, the bishop of Rome, the pope, and as a monarch ought to have a successor.

Aquila.—This we have disproved; but how comes it that Peter did leave a successor, and if he did, how happened it to be the bishop of Rome? Is there a text from Genesis to Revelations, for any successor to an apostle, whose office and ministry were extraordinary? And besides, to prove it still more uncertain, I call for the record.

Apollos.—But they say he was at Rome, and was the bishop of that church for twenty-five years together, and whoever shall be legally placed on that see, shall by hereditary right, exercise Peter's supremacy.[1]

Aquila.—Well my friend—suppose it so, which I say has never yet been, and can never be proved, I ask who does not here behold a train of mere suppositions? There is no mention in Scripture, that Peter ever was in Rome, much less that he lived there twenty-five years, which is both irreconcileable with Scripture, and the history of the church, and especially the history of Peter, in the Scriptures.

[1] Bellarmine.

Again, in all the epistles wrote by St. Paul from Rome, to different churches and persons, he mentions his fellow-labourers, but not one word about the presence of this '*infallible*' founder of the '*papal monarchy*.'[1] Besides, my friend—it is still more uncertain, whether Peter ever was the bishop of Rome; and admit that he was, and that all they claim for him and say of his presence and stay at Rome, were actually so, which are denied, and never yet have been proved, I ask what record does the pope produce, that is undoubted and certain of his succession to Peter? Let them put a finger on the record,—where is it my brother?

Apollos.—O! they have no record of it under heaven. And he has no more right to supreme ecclesiastical authority, than the bishop of Jerusalem, or that of Antioch.

Aquila.—Indeed not as much; for Peter was certainly in Antioch, and the disciples were there 'first called christians.'

Apollos.—This is true indeed.

Aquila.—As to their infallibility, it is only a robe to cover their abominations. This is easily seen; for, 1. All men are liable while here, to error; for St. Paul says, 'we know in part' only, while in this life. 'Let,' says he, 'God be true, and every man a liar;' that is, God is right, while all may err. Of this we have striking evidence in what he says of St. Peter, who has been called the infallible founder of the infallible papal church. 'But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.' Nor, my friend—is there a mortal exempted from this misfortune. Besides, it is evident that many popes have erred, and even fallen into heresy; nor can the papists themselves deny it: they are indeed in an awful dilemma, when they look at this. Pope John 23, denied a future state, and the resurrection of the flesh; and with all their jesuitism, and the assistance of their doctors, whether *Parisian* or *Italian*, they cannot get over the '*infallibility*' of this heretic.

Apollos.—And if they are in common, liable to err, and have erred most grievously, and departed from the faith, they are unfit to be the universal judges of all matters of faith and conscience.

Aquila.—That is the inevitable conclusion, my brother.

Apollos.—Is not the pope, who has thus grossly usurped an arbitrary power over a church, and resisted the truth, the antichrist of the Scriptures?

Aquila.—Antichrist, is a word compounded of two Greek words, αντι ANTI, *against*, and χριστος CHRISTOS, *Christ*, and simply means against Christ. Various have been the opinions of divines, in regard to the antichrist of the Scriptures. It is evident, that any opposition to Christ, his doctrine, or his people, may be considered as against him; but when we use the word antichrist, to represent him who is prophesied of in the Sacred Writings, we must of course take that description that is therein given, as the only one that is allowable in defining, and pointing out the true antichrist.

Apollos.—I think this is surely correct.

Aquila.—And my friend—although some papists have given a most fanciful and really curious description of antichrist, it is a remarkable fact, as we shall see in the sequel, that both protestants and papists have agreed on the See of Rome, as the true antichrist of the Scriptures.

Apollos.—Is it possible?

Aquila.—It certainly is. The fanciful opinion to which I just alluded, was doubtless invented to prevent the world, including the members of the Roman church, from fastening antichrist on the popes, the description given of whom, answering so particularly to them. The protestant opinion, in the main, is, that

[1] I hope this will not be thought hard. I use the words of Bellarmine, the champion of popery.

antichrist is not a single person, but a series of men setting in the same see, by succession: so that when antichrist is described, a certain kingdom or empire is described, which is successively administered by many, and the prediction suits every single person who presides over this empire or kingdom. That this kingdom is the empire of the pope, because in Revelations the seat thereof is said to be in Rome, which does appear from the 13th and 17th chapters of that book, to be most positively pointed out; and in the 2d chapter of 2d Thessalonians, the pope is described in such a manner, as to leave no doubt of this, on the minds even of considerate papists. You must read these chapters, my friend.

Apollos.—I will do so, though I remember them well.

Aquila.—From these facts, the common opinion of protestants is, that the pope who pretends to be 'Christ's vicar,' on earth, an 'infallible judge of all matters of faith and conscience,' is the notable antichrist of the Sacred Writings. You must my friend—also read those tracts which have been penned expressly on this subject, in order fully to understand it. At present I will only assign a few of the most prominent reasons, which lead me to this conclusion.

Apollos.—Do point them out, my brother.

Aquila.—The first thing is the seat of his empire. I have referred you to two chapters in the Revelations. I will quote a verse or two which will prove it to be Rome. Thus, Rev. xiii. 1. 'I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns,' compared with the 17th chapter, 9–18, where we have this explication of the former passage: 'The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth,' and again, 'the woman which thou sawest in that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.' So that, from these texts, it is plain even to a demonstration where the seat of antichrist is to be, and there can be no dispute but that Rome is the place here designated as situated on seven hills, and the mistress of the world.

Apollos.—O! this is very clear indeed.

Aquila.—In the next place it is foretold of antichrist that he should appear by degrees; and that at first he should work iniquity so secretly, that he should not be perceived until the obstacles which hindered him were removed, as we are told 2 Thess. 2d chapter, 7th and 8th verses, Thus, 'For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed.'

Apollos.—How do you apply this to the see or bishop of Rome?

Aquila.—He arrived at that power which he has assumed not suddenly but by degrees. Even in St. Paul's time some began secretly to spread errors and get the dominion; but after apostolical times, on account of the greatness of the city of Rome as the capital, its bishop began by degrees to lord it over other bishops and their churches, as all history proves, and the emperor's presence only for a time prevented the usurpation of the secular, as well as spiritual power, over the state and the world. At last Constantine removing from Rome, the emperor's authority being lessened there, and the pope's power increased, Boniface the 3rd, under the emperor Phocas, who murdered his predecessor Mauritius, was declared universal bishop.

Apollos.—I recollect this piece of history well.

Aquila.—And Gregory the great had applied the prophecies in the Revelations, the man of sin, and the apostacy from the faith mentioned by St. Paul, to him who should presume to claim the title of universal bishop in the christian church, and yet his immediate successor, this very Bonniface the 3rd, received from this murderer, the tyrant Phocas, the precise title which Gregory, his predecessor, had denounced as indicative of antichrist.

Priscilla.—So much for the '*infallibility* of the pope.'

Aquila.—Afterward pope Stephen the 3rd acquired, from the liberality of king Pepin, secular authority, and had annexed a temporal dominion to his spiritual power.

Apollos.—But even then the popes were not absolute sovereigns until Gregory the 7th wrested out of the emperor's hands all the authority they had over their ecclesiastics, and advanced papacy to its highest pitch of grandeur.

Aquila.—And thus step by step, insidiously as a serpent, did the popes rise to that point where we now find them.

Apollos.—This is too manifest to be concealed.

Aquila.—Another mark of antichrist is given in the 17th chapter, 10th verse of Revelations, 'And there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one is and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space.' Here he is described as the seventh ruler of the city of Rome. This and other characters to be met with here and chapter 13th, seem plainly to represent the bishop of Rome and his empire. Now the explication seems to be that a beast was seen having seven heads, and that by these heads were meant seven kings. By which we are not to understand so many particular persons, but according to Scripture language, a series of kings or governors, succeeding one another in regular succession in the same empire. And by the seven kings the seven forms of government which prevailed in Rome. A king, a lawgiver, a sceptre, &c. being used for the government of a country. Thus there was in Rome, 1. The Kings, 2. Consuls, 3. the consular Decemviri, 4. the Tribunes of the soldiery, invested with consular authority, 5. the Dictators or Triumvirate, 6. the Emperors, and 7. the *christian* Popes. Five of these are said to be fallen, because the emperors were then in authority, and therefore it is added 'that one is and the other is not yet come,' that is the seventh, and when he cometh he must continue 'a short space.' These words are doubtless used of the popes, not as they are bishops, but as they are heads of the papal monarchy, after which they were ever aspiring, yet could not acquire it fully until the 14th century, under the empire of Charles the 4th, who abandoned all pretentions to any authority over the city of Rome.[1]

Apollos.—My dear brother—I am all astonishment. Did I ever think to have a difficult subject just for the want of a proper understanding of terms so easy to be understood.

Aquila.—There are other parts of those chapters which give a description of antichrist that are rather more abstruse. However, my friend—let us look at some things rather more plain. Let us look at 2 Thess. 2d chapter, a little, and see there explicitly described the pope of Rome.

Priscilla.—I have often noticed, even when very young, that chapter, and could but apply it to them.

Aquila.—Antichrist is there styled 'a man of sin,' and 'the son of perdition,' by which phrases is denoted a man most notoriously wicked. All agree in this, and one too who promotes the wickedness of others, and consequently assigned over by God to a just punishment. If we apply this to the popes of Rome, we need only read the histories of Gregory 7th, Boniface 7th, and Alexander 6th, to mention no more. There we shall find such avarice, ambition, cruelty, luxury, and other unheard of vices as never prevailed so notoriously in other men—no not in the pagan emperors themselves, who occupied the seats they now occupy.

Apollos.—And by their dispensations and indulgencies they have given the greatest encouragement to other men's sins.

Aquila.—It is so, and again antichrist is said to be one who opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, i. e. above all the princes of the earth, who in Scripture are called 'gods,' on account of their authority as the

[1] Newton, Faber, Watson, and Limborch.

ministers of God in a government. Now, my friend—is it not notorious that they have usurped the power over all the crowned heads of Europe, and every other land, putting down some, and granting kingdoms to others at option, treading insolently on the necks of emperors to whose authority they were formerly subject?

Apollos.—This is surely so.

Aquila.—It is said of antichrist, that he 'setteth in the temple of God, and shall show himself that he is God,' which is a farther aggravation of his arrogance, as he will not submit to God nor man. And how near this is to the character of a pope, who pretends to infallibility, usurping the power over men's consciences, the prerogative of God alone, and having an adoration paid him, not only by the laity when he appears in public, but obliging even cardinals, prelates, princes, and emperors to fall down before him and kiss his feet.

Priscilla.—Dear me! what insufferable arrogance is this.

Aquila.—In this chapter too, he is called the ανομος ANOMOS, *without law*, a lawless being is this antichrist here set forth. Does not this suit the man who judges all men, but is to be censured by none? He is infallible. His coming is said to be after the 'working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.' In other words, he will make use of all the arts of seduction, and even by himself or ministers, work lying miracles.

Priscilla.—What an apt description.

Aquila.—Certainly, for emperors, kings, princes, and their subjects, have been seduced by him, and have been deluded from the ways of the Lord. Miracles, notoriously false, lies the most glaring, wresting the Scriptures, the liberty to commit the vilest crimes, divorces—above all, the horrid and hellish torments of the inqusition, have been resorted to, to propagate his power, and deceive the world.

Priscilla.—O! my very blood runs cold at the bare mention of the torments of the inqusition.

Aquila.—Yes—and this too was all foretold, for it is said by St. John, 'I saw the woman, drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' Now, if we compare the persecutions of pagan Rome, with Rome papal, we shall find that the latter far surpass the former, both in number and cruelty.

Apollos.—History I believe proves this fact. It is not enough for them to put a heretic to death, but they must invent the most exquisite tortures, to prove their persecuting spirit.

Aquila.—Yes, my friend—excommunications and anathemas have been hurled against private persons, communities of men, kings and princes have been stirred up to drive out all those who rejected their supremacy, and only looked to and relied on Jesus, without regard to sex or age, by the sword, and fire, and faggot. To root out the northern heresy, as they call it, they have resorted to gallies, fines, confiscations, banishments, and death, in forms the most horrid: and on the rack, before an inquisitorial tribunal, the virgin daughter, the only son, the aged matron, the venerable sire, have been tortured to death by those midnight assassins, to wrest from them the convictions of their consciences, and the secrets of their families.

Priscilla.—O! my husband—the very thoughts of such cruelties are sickening.

Aquila.—If these be not the characteristic marks of the woman who was to make herself drunk with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of the Lord Jesus, then I know not where you will find her.

Apollos.—Did you not say that even Roman catholic divines had agreed with protestants that the see of Rome was the antichrist of the Scriptures?

Aquila.—I did, my friend—and I will adduce the proof. At the synod of Rheims, held in the tenth century, Arnulphus, bishop of Orleans, appealed to the whole council, whether or no the bishop of Rome was not the antichrist pointed out by St. Paul, 'sitting in the temple of God,' and perfectly corresponding with the description of him given by that apostle. In the eleventh century, the characteristic marks of antichrist seemed to be so united in the person of pope Hilderbrand, who took the name of pope Gregory 7th, and whom we have named, that Johannes Aventinus, a Roman historian, speaks of it as a subject in which fair, candid, and ingenious writers agreed, that at that time began the reign of antichrist. And the Albigenses and Waldenses, of the thirteenth century, expressly asserted in their declaration of faith, that the church of Rome was the whore of Babylon. And in the council of Gap, in 1603, during the pontificate of pope Gregory 8th, in an article of a confession of faith, the see of Rome was declared the antichrist of the Scriptures.[1]

Apollos.—God will doubtless overthrow a power so destructive to, and so much opposed to the best interests of religion.

Aquila.—He surely will. The exact time when, and the manner how, and the means by which all shall be accomplished, we must leave to him, by whose Almighty power and great grace, a work so vast and of such vital importance to the interests of christianity can only be effected.

COLLOQUY V.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AS SET FORTH IN THE SACRED WRITINGS—CHURCH JUDICATORIES, COUNCILS, SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES, ASSEMBLIES OR CONFERENCES—TOLERATION IN RELIGION, AND THE MEANS TO SECURE IT.

Aquila.—Having considered during our conversations, my friend Apollos—the duties of each particular member of the church of Christ, it is certainly proper for us to enquire, if any man should fail in his duty, and offend against the precepts of the new covenant, what course the church ought to pursue in regard to him.

Apollos.—This is a subject I am sure, of vital importance; for although young, I have often seen much injury originate in permitting the members of a christian church, to infringe the laws of the blessed gospel.

Aquila.—Ecclesiastical discipline, seems to consist of two acts. The first is a brotherly and an affectionate admonition, reproof, and correction of those who shall have fallen into sin, that they may timely repent and return to God. The second is a separation from those who, after being duly admonished, obstinately persevere in their sins, without any signs of repentance.

Apollos.—Then all connection with them, as members of the flock of Christ, should cease?

Aquila.—This, we shall presently see, is not only proper, and reasonable, but according to the word of God.

Apollos.—The first duty though, is to give proper admonition.

Aquila.—Before admonition and reproof, can be properly applied, a certain knowledge of the offence ought to be obtained. It is certainly to be taken for

[1] In refering to authors on this subject I am really at a loss, so great is the number. For although many differ as to the dates whereby to make an application of the prophecies as to antichrist, all agree in their application to the see of Rome, among the Protestants, and very many among the Romanists themselves. I refer the reader to bishop Newton, Faber, Morsley, Ward, Watson, Limborch, Calvin, and Dr. Gill. The four last I have chiefly followed.

granted, that some have sinned, or else it is doubtful and uncertain. If we know they have, then we may proceed accordingly; but if we are uncertain whether they have, or have not done so, then we must acquire evidence that is decisive, before that a reproof be undertaken. But my friend—here there is need of great caution, lest an innocent person should suffer censure. This is too often the case, an evil report is taken up against a brother, without the knowledge of any fact, and it is carried to his injury, though he be innocent, until the inventor himself, almost believes it true.

Priscilla.—Ah! how many innocent persons have had their fair fame, if not their moral characters, blasted, by some such dark hearted wretches.

Aquila.—It is important also, to consider against whom, and when an accusation is to be allowed of, and by what method one ought to enquire after an unknown crime.

Apollos.—This would seem to be all-important.

Aquila.—And even in the admission of any accusation, the apostle has taught us that some distinction of persons ought to be observed; for he says, 'against an elder, receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses:' the meaning of which words certainly cannot be, that an elder may not be convened privately, unless he can be convinced of any crime by two or three witnesses; for if he have committed any offence, he ought to be admonished of it, in order to his amendment; and if falsely accused, then to clear his reputation from the calumny. But, as I understand it, that no person is to be permitted to be heard before an assembly of elders, who exercise discipline in behalf of the whole church, when he accuses an elder, unless he can establish his accusation by two or three witnesses. Against another person, an accuser may be so far heard, as that enquiry may be made, to ascertain the truth of the accusation, by other and more palpable indications. The reason of this is obvious: by the encouragement of accusations, lightly admitted, perhaps got up surreptitiously, and from personal motives, the usefulness and authority of an elder, as a minister of Christ, may be destroyed, while he is innocent.

Apollos.—This is according to Scripture, that 'out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall every word be established.'

Aquila.—Papists, to avoid all discipline among the clergy of the church of Rome, and shun all responsibility to secular authority, have determined that their ecclesiastics are to be held responsible for accusations brought against them, before their own tribunals, and that only when signed by seven witnesses, so as to protect themselves wholly from an investigation of their acts and deeds.[1]

Apollos.—Upon an accusation, any member of the christian church, may be at once arraigned and tried before that church, or any portion thereof appointed for that special purpose, in its regulations.

Aquila.—I think not. There is one thing that ought, and must be done, before any step shall be taken by any man, toward any member of the church of God, however low may be his station, and however poor his circumstances.

Apollos.—What step is this?

Aquila.—I suppose that there is no doubt on the mind of an individual, that his brother is guilty: at least report says so. The Lord Jesus points out the very first step that is to be pursued. I will only premise one thing: that an offence against the precepts delivered for the government of the church, is an offence against christian discipline; and an offence against the whole, is most evidently an offence against all the parts that compose that whole. So that a violation of the rules of a church, where they are founded on the precepts of Christ, is a sin that injures

[1] Limborch.

you or me, or any other member of that church. Now the question is, when I believe a man has thus sinned against God and the church, whether the offence be committed against me personally, or against the whole, and of course me, as a part of that whole, what is to be done?

Apollos.—It would seem that the church should decide it.

Aquila.—No. Our Lord says, 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he shall not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, then tell it to the church.' This, my brother—is the last resort to save an offender. He must never be brought before a church, until the former duties be discharged, especially if the offence be a personal one. Hence says our Lord again, 'Take heed to yourselves;' you may find enough at home: look there first. Then, 'if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent,' for this is not impossible, 'forgive him,' 'and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.'

Apollos.—Well might the disciples say, 'increase our faith,' for this is forbearance indeed.

Aquila.—It is, and the law of charity, as we have seen, requires forbearance, my friend—I have hardly ever known an instance where good men would come together, and understand one another, privately converse of a misunderstanding, or where there was a frank and an honest reproof, with all the forbearance of a christian, in private, but that it had a most salutary effect. Hence says St. John, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.' He is not going to desert to the enemy because his brother does, but as he loves his soul he seeks the appointed means of his cure. Hence says St. Paul, 'them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear,' and while you 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,' 'you are rather to reprove them.'

Apollos.—What an important part of christian discipline!

Aquila.—Yes—my friend—and we are forced to admit that the New Testament laws in regard to this matter are at least as positive, and of equal obligation as those of the Old; and the law of charity in this was, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer,' i. e. bear, 'sin upon him.' 'Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, I am the Lord.' Now, my brother—the duty of the church as to discipline presents itself. Suppose you, that I, a member of a church, whether as minister or a private member, present a case to the church before that tribunal appointed to hear such causes or cases. Before there can, I believe, be any trial, according to the precepts of the new covenant, the accuser or accusers, of whatever station, ought, if members of the church, and if not, the ministers in charge of that soul ought to be asked, has the gospel course been pursued? Did you first privately reprove? Was it done as a christian, and in a christian spirit? If this failed, did you take one or two faithful brethren? Did you all try to save this member? I do not believe that it is proper to bring any case before the church until these steps are pursued, although there may be the clearest conviction on the mind, of the guilt of the accused. And wherefore, my brother?—because the great object is not barely to preserve the character and purity of the church, an important end of discipline, but also to save a poor sinner's soul from hell, and bring him back to God.

Apollos.—O! I see the vast importance of this.

Priscilla.—Yes—and I have often thought, if those who have the care of souls, would, when they hear reports of their wanderings, or find out that they have sinned, go and talk to them, weep over them in secret, beg and entreat them, as did our Lord, 'Will ye also go away?' they might be saved. If he had cut off Peter at once what would have been his state? Richly did he deserve it, but although he had cursed, and swore, and lied, 'Jesus looked upon him;' how that reproof broke his false heart, 'and he went out and wept bitterly.' O! the value of a reproof given in love.

Aquila.—Of one thing I am sure, that no church can, according to the New Testament, hear, much less try and expel from communion any one of its members, till it is well satisfied that all these preliminary steps are taken.

Apollos.—Well—suppose they have been attended to, what then is the duty of the church?

Aquila.—An inquiry ought to be made, according to the custom usually observed in a just and equitable judgment. A copy of all charges having been delivered the accused, and all necessary time having been granted him to procure his witnesses on every point, for piety and justice say, I ought not to keep my brother in the dark, and bring him before a judge without the knowledge of that to which he is to answer. Besides, it is not doing as I would be done by, to give him no opportunity to procure witnesses and attest his innocence. And the great object is his cure and salvation, as well as the credit of the church.

Apollos.—O! a soul is worth a world.

Aquila.—If he plead not guilty on hearing all the evidence, then he or his friends, and I suppose every christian is the friend of every man, should have time for a full explication after the accuser has laid open his case. Then the church, as the judges sitting in the case, should investigate the whole matter, with prayer, holy, fervent, ardent prayer.

Apollos.—Did you say investigate it?

Aquila.—I did, for truth never suffers from investigation, and taking it for granted that all the members of a christian church are anxious to do right, and will honestly do so, to the best of their ability, they should, among themselves, sift every thing, take advantage of the judgment, the experience, and views of each other, they should interchange views, whether the judicatory be small or large, whether the accused be a private member or minister, every light should be sought after, all prejudice must be dismissed. The persons of the accuser or accused are not to be accepted or rejected for love or hatred. And above all, there should be a calm and a close investigation, in order to avoid that rashness which would prevent the weighing well the evidence and arguments for and against. If after all, the case is doubtful, or if there be guilt, but penitence hearty and genuine, whatever reproofs may be administered, a christian church cannot cut off and excommunicate from all the christian privileges of that church.

Apollos.—But if no contrition or reformation?

Aquila.—Then, there must be an expulsion. 'We have delivered our souls,' if clearly convinced that the crime is such as to exclude from the kingdom of grace and glory, i. e. from the favour of God and heaven. If reproofs be administered they should be suited to the offence and peculiar disposition of the offender. And in all trials, a question should arise before judgment, is the offence a solitary or an habitual one? Has there been, since reproof, if ever given, amendment or a perseverance in sin? If the latter, then let him be to you 'as a heathen and a publican.' 1. The church, according to the gospel, is to separate from such: 'We command you, brethren,' says the apostle, 'in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly,' and he tells the Corinthians 'not to keep company, if any man that is called a

brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.'

Apollos.—This would then be a bare separation from such, not an excommunication.

Aquila.—Christians have nothing to do with that old law of the Jews, passed while they were in Babylon, and mentioned in Ezra, 'that whosoever would not come within three days,' when called 'according to the counsel of the princes and elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.' This was done simply to keep all Jews bound together as a body. Papists have kept up this law of the Jews, introduced in the early ages of the church, and have appended to it a form of excommunication of a most terrible kind.

Apollos.—As the church separates from them, the sacrament of the supper is of course withheld?

Aquila.—Certainly, unless the offender become penitent, then we are bound to receive and try him again. Finally, on this subject let me say, my friend—that those appointed by every christian church, which is certainly left to arrange its own government, to administer its discipline, are never to use external force. In enforcing discipline, they are never to be guilty of a breach of charity. They are never to suffer personal feelings, to enter or expel from revenge, that they may bring the offender to disgrace and public odium. Love dictates, that although we cannot associate with such, while living in sin, still we should be ready, on the least prospect of recovery, to lend a hand toward his restoration, remembering what St. James says, 'Brethren if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.' 'Let us,' says St. Paul, 'consider one another, to provoke one another to love, and to good works.'

Priscilla.—O! what an heavenly end is this, to help each other on to endless life. This is so much like the christian spirit.

Aquila.—Men should never be cut off from church privileges and communion, as if we were ready to say, 'ah! I have got you out, I am glad of it.' O! no—my brother. The gospel teaches a different course, and how sorrowful should each member be, at such a mishap. Hear St. Paul, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual,' i. e. still in the favour of God, 'restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'[1]

Apollos.—O! this is an exhortation that must reach the christian's heart.

Aquila.—In order that the discipline of the gospel may be duly and properly exercised, it has been common, in every age of the christian church, to form associations, so that the pious might strengthen and help each other to work out their salvation, and that they may also, aid with their counsel and advice in all matters merely prudential. For as christianity does not interfere in the government of any land, only so far as it may influence the hearts of governors, in common with others, it has become proper, our divine Teacher never having prescribed any particular form of church government, for associations of ministers to consider matters, which are merely of a nature that arise out of the peculiar condition of

[1] All Protestant churches have generally a discipline or church book, which may be considered on the great whole as a compendium of Christ's precepts, for the regulation of the moral conduct of 'his body,' the members of his church. And where there is a voluntary association under those rules, there is a moral obligation to keep them or retire. I would invite the reader to peruse the rules of the united societies, drawn up by the Rev. Mr. Wesley at the request of his followers, and adopted by the Methodists in Europe, and those, both protestant and episcopal in America, as a model worthy the attention of all the pious.

portions of Christ's flock in different lands. Hence, there have been, and now are councils, conventions, synods, presbyteries, assemblies, conferences, associations. And these are general or particular, according to the voluntary acts of all concerned in the same.

Apollos.—The Scripture no where commands that such shall be convened.

Aquila.—Certainly not. They are of an institution wholly human, yet for the reasons already assigned, highly important, and especially advantageous in propagating the true faith.

Apollos.—How so, my brother?

Aquila.—Because, while all who have not departed from this faith, as laid down in the gospels, agree in the fundamentals thereof, and the end to be accomplished by the publication of the gospel, namely, the salvation of man, they may not agree on some minor points, and each one is as much entitled to his opinion as the other. Again they may not agree in the same means to be used, at least on the same time, and associations having been formed under different circumstances, while these exist, it is proper and best for them to remain so associated. Now, while it is no where commanded in Scripture that there shall be such conventions, for if it was absolutely necessary to our well being, it would have been done, and while in the three first centuries there were no councils to impose a special conformity to one set of church regulations; yet as you and I, and others agree and think alike as to this matter, though there be no command for, yet it is not forbid us to associate together, as a prudential matter, the better to advance man's salvation, through the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

Apollos.—It is a voluntary act then for such an association on our part?

Aquila.—It is, and so is all christianity. You cannot make a man a christian by force at all, my friend.

Apollos.—I am aware of this.

Aquila.—There are some affairs that relate to many particular societies, that concern them all, and it is proper that these should discuss together, the best means of managing those affairs. Thus also, the means of union are the better preserved, if many confer together, all being done decently and in order, in a christian spirit, and as in the immediate presence of God, having also in view as an end, his glory.[1]

Apollos.—Who is to call these councils, conventions, synods, assemblies, associations, or conferences?

Aquila.—He or they, who, according to the articles of the association, are duly authorized so to do; or the meetings may be, by those articles, agreed on, stated and regular.

Apollos.—But who are to appear there as members?

Aquila.—All who, according to the articles of association, are authorized so to do, and none others. For it is all a voluntary compact, prudential at most in itself, and only binding on those who are thus voluntarily associated together.

Apollos.—Can these decide upon matters involving faith and conscience, for the government of all men.

Aquila.—No! They dare not do this, for God claims this right, and it belongs to him alone, as we have often proved. The most they can say is, we are of the

[1] I have read with admiration, the recommendations of the Rev. J. Wesley, for a conference, adopted by the M. E. church of the U. States. I am sure the intelligent and pious reader will be pleased with them. 'It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God: that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart. While we are conversing, let us have especial care to set God always before us. In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can, for private exercises. Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on our labour.' How spiritual, and how much to the point are these recommendations?

same opinion, or faith and will, or will not assemble together. In it there should be no parties. Parties, my friend—in the church of God, are dangerous things. The christian man should be, as such, a friend of Jesus, and the lover of all men. He may differ from others in sentiment, but he should learn to think, and let them think too. Truth is the common property of the church, and therefore cannot be the sole right of an individual. Error cannot be transformed into truth, and men may be and are liable to differ and err. But if the great object be, that all things be done for the glory of God, if there be a sincere inquiry after truth, in all matters, that concern the great body associated: if the truth of the Scripture be understood; if that truth be the rule of action; if arguments be fairly weighed, both as to their nature and consequences; if the fallibility of all be admitted; if there be no disposition to lord it over God's heritage, but to give a holy example of life and manners; to think no evil, speak no evil, but to love one another as brethren, then in all convocations, official meetings, conferences, or church assemblies, shall all the servants of God see and feel when assembled on any business connected with any portion of Christ's flock, that he who is in truth its great head, does appear 'in the midst,' and say to each, 'peace be unto you.'

Apollos.—And when this is the case, how easy it will be so to tolerate each other's opinions; and while by reason and Scripture, we maintain our own, we take pleasure in permitting others, without molestation, to think and act for themselves.

Aquila.—It has been affirmed by us, that an establishment of any religion, is not only averse to the liberty and happiness of any state, but destructive of religion itself. The ministers and members of the christian church, are but men, and whenever the world and the church, or rather civil authority, is united to that which is ecclesiastical, both are in danger. Let every citizen do his part, to take care of the state, and leave religion to that God who will certainly take care of it. In the investigation of the various subjects which have come before us, my friend—we have had to introduce sometimes, the opinions of others, and from the open, and I trust, honest and candid manner in which they have been investigated, it may seem as though we allowed ourselves to entertain an opinion, averse to that toleration, so necessary, to the advancement of truth in the world. This is not so, my brother. For although we have openly avowed our sentiments in regard to papacy, and that with an unsparing hand, it has been done, simply because, in its own professions, it is hostile to all liberty, civil and religious; and above all, intolerant in the extreme.

Apollos.—Surely the evidence adduced, has proved this.

Aquila.—But my friend—although the pope of Rome claims, and his representatives, whether legates, bishops or priests, claim for him the dominion of the world, and especially the rule over God's heritage: although we have proved, and are ever ready to adduce other and still more positive proof, of the untoward intolerance of this church, which has slaughtered our brethren, and driven out our fathers and friends from the home of their ancestors, to seek one in the land of savages; yet, God knows, from our hearts we say, and in our actions we would prove it, take shelter with us, under the wide spreading branches of the tree of LIBERTY, and God Almighty give you his blessing.[1]

Apollos.—Yes, the command of Jesus is, bless them that persecute you, and do good to, and pray for them that despitefully use and evil entreat you.

Aquila.—And if, my friend—it is our duty, the duty of christians, protestant christians, protestant christians whose fathers have been persecuted by popery,

[1] The progenitors of the author, by both father and mother's side, were driven out of Europe by popish persecutions, and forced, their estates being confiscated, to seek the preservation of their lives, by flight, in the wilds of America.

even unto death, if it be the duty of protestants who, to this day, by every papist on earth, are denounced as heretics, and with whom they will not associate, even in any of the common charities of human life, and whom at this very hour, in most papal states, they will not suffer to worship God after the dictates of their own consciences; if I say, it is the duty of protestant christians, under all these high-handed and oppressive acts, to tolerate and pray for, and bless those that would oppress and afflict them; what ought to be the tolerant feeling for those our brethren, who agree with us in the fundamentals of the christian religion?

Priscilla.—Tolerate, yes—tolerate a Turk, and show him how a disciple of Jesus can forgive the worst of injuries, and bless the man that would willingly imbrue his hands in that disciple's blood.

Apollos.—O! the superior excellence of true piety over every base principle of the human heart.

Aquila.—It becomes, my brother—protestant christians especially, to love as brethren. In one common mass they are the common objects of papal hatred. Our fundamental doctrines are the same, and as a great man has said, although errors may be demonstrated in any visible church, yet it does not follow that it immediately ceases to be a true church of Christ; provided the errors be such as are not destructive of the faith, or a hindrance to the salvation of the godly, but if any such church shall renounce the faith of the gospel, and the fundamentals of christianity, then, and not till then, ought such a church to be forsaken. It is vain to seek an universal consent in all the doctrines of visible churches of all times and places. That cannot be done, but in the chief and weighty articles of religion all may agree.[1]

Apollos.—This is the spirit of generosity, love, and benevolence, that ought to sway our every heart.

Aquila.—And, my friend—that peace and brotherly communion ought to be maintained and testified by some external symbol for the benefit of the whole world. And at what point may we meet with more propriety than at the table of our common Lord, to participate in his supper and commemorate his death. Surely no protestant christian will say to a brother protestant, I am holier than thou, stand aside. Surely none will say that God has not sons in other churches beside their own, and can any of us say to one of the Lord's children, you shall not come to your Father's table?

Apollos.—I hope not, my friend.

Aquila.—I also hope not, my brother—as once before remarked, it is a common ground where all may meet, it is the table of the Lord, not the Presbyterian, Lutheran, or Baptist table, or that of the Protestant or Methodist Episcopalians. It is the Lord's table, and he has other sheep too which are not of this fold. One of his sons may be named Luther, another Calvin, one Wesley, and another Whitefield, and because they differ in names, and in opinions too, shall they not sit together at their Father's table, and in their Father's house?

Priscilla.—O! yes—they shall, who dare forbid?

Aquila.—Not to tolerate thus is to offend indirectly against God, and wound his cause, at least it is to violate that charity that is due a christian brother, though he may have infirmities. It would seem a breach of brotherly love, but if christians often assembled together at the communion table it would do more toward breaking down that sectarian and intolerant and unfriendly feeling, than any thing perhaps that we could unitedly perform. Herein then we may all agree in holding to and proclaiming the great fundamentals of Christ's religion. The one true and living God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The fallen and ruined state of man by sin, the death and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, applied by faith

[1] Archbishop Usher.

alone through his grace for pardon, regeneration, and eternal life. A holy and an upright life here, and eternal life hereafter, for his sake, my brother—and his sake alone. The eternity of that happiness where we may all live together, and the everlasting duration of that punishment which God shall inflict on sinners. Can we not, my brother—all agree in these points ?[1]

Apollos.—Surely, I think all protestant christians can, and around their Father's board on earth, meet to taste that grace by which they shall be enabled to meet on high.

Aquila.—Although I differ from you in many points, what of this, I freely express my opinion and support it, as I think, by reason and argument, and so do you. Wherein is this a breach of charity ? We both choose to exercise the blessing on us bestowed by heaven, and think for ourselves. At the holy sacramental board let us meet: let us unite in the great Bible cause, to send the word of God in all the world to every man, in missionary efforts, in the Sabbath schools, those blessed nurseries of learning and piety, at the house of God, above all in private prayer, where no eye but the eye of God can behold, let us unite most cordially, and seek to promote and show forth the declarative glory of our common head, the Lord Jesus Christ, 'who gave his life a ransom for the world.' To-morrow night we meet for the last time.

Apollos.—I trust, my brother—I shall never forget the importance of these things, and it shall be the business of my life to cultivate those holy tempers, which 'commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Good night.

COLLOQUY VI.

THE CONCLUSION.

Aquila.—According to notice, my brother Apollos—we meet this evening for the last time. Night after night have we assembled in this little room, to aid each other in an investigation of those truths set forth in the precious word of the living God. In this place we shall meet no more. About to part with one, who has been the instrument of some profit, at least, to myself, I cannot forbear, my young friend,—a few remarks on your future course, and I pray God, that when I am in the grave, you may live to be useful, and serve your generation to the glory of God.

Apollos.—My friend—this is my duty—and I confess the gratitude I feel for that kindness, which induced you to become my instructor in the things of God. Many a winter's night have you and your kind companion, as if my own dear parents, with a patience and forbearance that affect my heart, taught me 'more perfectly' the truths of God. How much I owe to you I am unable to express.

Priscilla.—Apollos—you owe us nothing. I know we have been repaid an hundred fold, and surely, long as have been those winter nights, which we have spent here, they have seemed to me the shortest ever spent. O! how often have I felt sorry when I heard the clock strike ten, and warn us that the time to retire had arrived.

[1] I am aware that some christian brethren, from conscientious motives, do not commune with other denominations, but I believe, and I trust that the day is not distant when this reproach of the protestant cause will be done away. The light is increasing. I myself have administered the Holy Sacrament to Presbyterians, Baptists, Protestant and Methodist Episcopalians, at the same time. I trust at no distant day, among protestants, no such a thing as close communion shall exist.

Aquila—My brother—I hope you will never name your obligations to us again. You owe us nothing, far, very far from it. We are your debtors, and all that grieves me is, that I have not been enabled so to expose the truth, as to carry conviction to the mind, on every point. However, my friend—I have this to comfort me, I have openly and honestly expressed my views, and have frankly assigned the reasons for those convictions on my own mind. It is possible, my brother—that the detailed view which has been exhibited of christian truth, has often operated differently on your mind.

Apollos.—How so, my friend?

Aquila.—You have sometimes, perhaps, been discouraged, while at others you have appeared to be sustained by that blessed consolation, which the truths of God, ever impart to the pious mind.

Apollos.—I assure you I have not only been sustained, but in all my private devotions, which have been regular and fervent, I have felt conscious that I am engaged in the best work in which, as a 'son in the gospel,' I can spend my life. I have preserved, for future improvement, the notes of all our conversations, and by reviewing them, have already made most of them my own. And now that we are going to part, let me ask, my kind friend Aquila—to give me the promised advice, and a course of literary and theological study.

Aquila.—This, my friend—is no easy task, and the difficulty attending it arises in the importance of that work in which you will be engaged. Your work is one beset with many difficulties. Yet, my friend—let not your hands 'hang down.' God will support you, and as your 'day, so shall your strength be.' The young should be stimulated to lead a life of usefulness. Shall the world, my friend—be no better by our living in it?

Apollos.—God! forbid.

Aquila.—Cheer up then, and although so much is embraced in the science of divinity, that you may think you never can so preach it as to benefit man, God will divinely aid you, and grant that reward after which you only seek. I mean the salvation of sinners. The survey we have taken of the christian system will suggest a few thoughts which may profit in future life, and I give them, my friend—with an earnest prayer, that they may be indelibly imprinted on my own mind as well as on yours. The course of study at another time.

Apollos.—O! do tell me how to preach these truths, so as to produce a practical effect on the hearts of my hearers.

Aquila.—We have presented then this system to you, Apollos—as one that has the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great founder of our most holy religion. Do you then want men to enjoy this religion, to feel its powerful influence in their hearts, as brought to God through your instrumentality, and carry out that blessed religion in their lives? If so, let me give you the true key by which to accomplish this blessed end. Study Christ—preach Christ—live Christ. 'He must increase,' said John the baptist, 'but I must decrease.' Let Jesus Christ be 'all in all.' It was said of Ignatius, that he carried Christ about with him, in his heart. And my friend—does not every christian have, and hold him there? O! should not Jesus live in the hearts of his ministers? If to represent the glorious Redeemer, to the love and admiration of all people, be the grand intention of your life; if you are exquisitely studious that the holiness, as well as the gentleness of the Lord Jesus, shall shine in the heart; if in your sermons, you preach Christ; if in your conversation you talk of him, you shall honour your work, and God will make it an honour to you. Yes! my friend—hell itself shall shake at that terrible name, CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

Priscilla.—Ah! how many sermons are lost, because they have no Christ Jesus the Lord in them.

Aquila.—We must exhibit in our lives, that Christ lives in our hearts, and the graces and holiness of our divine master, must shine forth in us. Our souls must be animated with our work, as the very best in which a man can be engaged.[1]

Apollos.—I am convinced of this.

Aquila.—When one was dissuaded from the ministry, as a mean employment, and beneath his dignity, as a man of noble blood, he said, 'though the iniquity of the times has made the sacred name of preacher, contemptible, yet will I labour to make it honourable, by consecrating all my learning, and all my poor abilities, to advance the glory of that God who gave them.'[2]

Apollos.—I trust I may never feel that it is beneath me to be Christ's minister.

Aquila.—An affecting and an overwhelming conviction of the difficulty of that work in which you will be engaged, will make you feel your responsibility to that God to whom you must give an account, and these are eminently calculated to check a vain, indolent, and careless mind. You are a watchman, a christian watchman; read, often read over your ordination vows; look at that which you promise before God to do: there is nothing in any office or service, so serious, so solemn.[3] The ransom provided, shows the value of a soul, which can only be saved by the blood of Christ; and the murder of a fellow man, can bear no comparison with the murder of blood-bought souls.

Apollos.—O! my friend—'who is sufficient for these things?'

Aquila.—Look, my brother—at your work. You are an ambassador for Christ: you are not called to lead a lazy, indolent life. O! no! you are to be a labourer. How can we forbear trembling, when we remember, that we are engaged by the Lord Jesus, called and moved by the Holy Ghost himself, to take upon us what? The ministration of Christ's word to men, as an angel of Jesus, pure, spiritual, in constant application to men by labour, and to God by prayer: like a star full of light, elevated above earth, fixed in his sphere, the church of God, for life, for death; incessantly moving in this, and continually bringing others under the influence of Christ's blessed gospel. And my friend—the temporal concerns of a nation, bear no proportion to the tremendous weight imposed in the charge of the christian ministry.

Priscilla.—O! no, he has charge of immortal souls.

Aquila.—'We are,' says an apostle, 'made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men.' Why then should we care about being called too zealous? Let our consciences speak, did we realize the value of a soul, we should be every moment crying 'deliver me from blood guiltiness, oh my God!'

Apollos.—My dear friend—I do tremble at the vast weight of that duty that devolves on me, O! pray that heaven by his grace may ever assist.

Aquila.—What husbandman would sow his seed without the earnest expectation of reaping a harvest? Should we not desire and look for success in our work? When a man is in earnest nothing will satisfy him, but souls as his hire. But should we fail, let us not be discouraged, my brother—we have an immense work to perform—to visit the sick—relieve the poor and distressed—comfort the mourner—warn the sinner—encourage the believer. Duties are ours—events belong to God. If we fail, let us think is there nothing more that might be done? Is there nothing done defectively, or in a wrong spirit? Labour on, commit the matter to God, wait patiently, and die praying, Lord pity and save the people.

Priscilla.—But God will hear prayer.

Aquila.—O! he will, but you must remember, my brother—that Satan often prevails, as much by persuading ministers to set still, or merely to go on in the beaten round as in any other way.[4]

[1] Bridges. [2] Herbert. [3] Bishop Burnet. [4] Scott.

Apollos.—I remember 'the night is far spent, the day is at hand.' 'I must work while it is day.'

Aquila.—If then, my friend—you love your work, and feel deeply interested for your flock, you must devoutly pray that God may bless them. A holy minister, often in the coldest nights of winter, would rise from his bed, and was found weeping on the cold ground, wrestling in prayer. When asked by his wife what was the cause of such deep distress, he replied, 'I have the souls of three thousand persons to answer for, while I know not how it is with them.'[1] Above all, my brother—retaining the love of God in your own heart, you must be constant—hold out to the end. Never suffer the world, or any consideration, to induce you to cease warning sinners to flee the wrath to come. Be not in a hurry to be ordained. Read and study well those solemn vows before you make them, and making them under a conviction of duty, faithfully keep them for conscience sake. Read the solemn charge of the holy Paul to Timothy and Titus, and keep your eye steadfastly fixed on the glorious work that lies before you. Let the business of your life be to go where providence may call, whether in the torrid, temperate, or frigid zone, and God will go with you. On earth we may not meet again, but in heaven, when the labours of life shall be ended, I trust we shall meet to part no more forever.

Apollos.—O! my friends—I pray you accept my thanks, and pray for me.

Priscilla.—Go, Apollos—but bear in mind the God of peace shall go with you. His promise is, 'Lo! I am with you always.'

Aquila.—During our conversations, my friend—I have but once or twice ventured to throw out in prose, a thought borrowed from some poet. I cannot forbear, when about to part, giving you a few lines in rhyme, which are none the worse for having met the public eye before. They are lines written on St. Paul's plan for dignifying the office of the christian ministry.

'IN ALL THINGS APPROVING OURSELVES AS THE MINISTERS OF GOD.'

'Give me the priest these graces shall possess—
Of an ambassador the first address—
A father's tenderness—a shepherd's care—
A leader's courage which the cross can bear—
A ruler's awe—a watchman's wakeful eye—
A pilot's skill, the helm in storms to ply—
A fisher's patience—and a labourer's toil—
A guide's dexterity to disembroil—
A prophet's inspiration from above—
A teacher's knowledge—and a Saviour's love.'—*Bishop Kenn.*

Farewell, my brother—pray! for us. God! grant thee prosperity in all thy labours—and when thy race shall be ended on earth may we meet in his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed equal and undivided praises evermore. Amen.

[1] Fleming's account of John Welch.

COURSE OF STUDY.

I SEND you, my young friend, Apollos—according to promise, the following, as the foundation of a course of study, calculated to assist a young man in *acquiring* and *imparting* a knowledge of the theology of the Bible.

LANGUAGES.—Every young man ought to seek to acquire a knowledge of not only his native tongue, but of as many others as he can. For the plain reason, that if they be modern, he can through them, impart to various persons the knowledge of christianity. There is too great a neglect of modern languages. The French ought especially to be learned, not only for the above reason, but on account of the valuable works written in that beautiful language, and the German for the same reason, and the vast number of German emigrants to America. The ancient languages ought to be learned if possible. The Latin, because it is the language of the learned, from which is taken *chiefly* the technicality of the sciences, and on account of the derivation of a vast number of English words, and an augmentation of idea. An acquaintance with this language will enable one, at once, to understand the meaning of words derived from it. The Greek and Hebrew should be learned as the originals of the Sacred Writings, as well as for the fact of the derivation, of many words in our own language from them. Indeed, my friend—although commentators are an invaluable class of writers, who, by an application of history, geography, chronology, and the manners and customs of nations, render a passage of Sacred Writ plain; yet, I believe, that the capacity to examine critically, and according to the rules of construction, a text in the original, is a benefit not to be supplied by any commentary, however good. To obtain a knowledge of languages the following works may be studied, with all the assistance that can be obtained. A young man desirous of an education ought never to be ashamed to obtain assistance from any source, though it be from a school boy: and if he will go to bed between nine and ten, and rise between four and five, husband for study, all the time, he can, during the day, he will certainly advance rapidly. It is inexcusable for a young man, who, by diligence may improve himself, not to understand, and to be able to read and write correctly, his native tongue. To assist you in all these I will name a few books.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE.—The Holy Bible should be the first book of every man who can read.—Johnson, Walker, or Webster's Dictionary—Murray's larger Grammar, Key and Exercise, bound together.—Mason on Self-knowledge, and Watts' on the Mind.—Blair's Abridgment of Rhetoric, Duncan's or Watts' Logic.—Tytler's History, and at least one hour every day spent in Hutton or Webber's Course of Mathematics, beginning with common arithmetic. Nothing is so well calculated to break the mind to study, that I know of, as arithmetical calculations. Many young men are not aware of the value, of the study of

mathematics. For miscellaneous reading during this time, the works of Addison, Johnson, and indeed, all the British Essayists. Twice in every week write a piece of composition, and compare it with something in a good author on the same subject, regularly using Crabb's English Synonymes.

Note.—Teachers in most modern languages are frequently changing their text books. To acquire a knowledge of the English, French, or any other language, the last editions of the most approved text books should be used. The grammar, dictionary, and a few books to read and translate from, are all that are necessary with practice, which, can alone make perfect, in any of the modern languages.

Latin Language.—Grammar. Ruddiman, Adams, or Ross.—Dictionary. Ainsworth, Young, or Entick.—Classical Dictionary. Lemprieres, to be regularly consulted.—Mair's Latin exercise.—Kennett's Roman Antiquities, and Tooke's Pantheon. These or similar works are necessary all through the course. After being able to parse pretty well in the grammar, commence and read Historia Sacra and Selectæ Profanis, or some other small works. Then Cornelius Nepos, or Justin.—Four first books of Cæsar.—Four first books of Ovid. All Sallust, Virgil, Cicero, Horace, Livy, Juvenal. Read Virgil's Georgics, as the last part of that book. While you are reading an author, review the one last read, and always read a prose author while you are reading a poet. Practice daily in Mair's exercise, and never suffer yourself to use a translation. Procure books with English notes and a Latin order.

Greek Language.—Valpy's Greek Grammar, the Greek Reader by Jacobs, and the Greek Exercises.—Donnegan or Scrivellius' Lexicon, also have as a common book of reference, Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon. This work is only used for the New Testament, and is a valuable commentary on some texts. Then read Campbell's four gospels, commencing with John. Then the Acts, Revelations, and last of all the Epistles, reading one or two chapters each day, while you are perusing regularly, Græca Minora and Græca Majora. But if these two last works cannot be procured, read Kent's Lucian, Clarke's Homer, Hutchison's Xenophon, and Pearce's Longinus. Then the Septuagint of the Old Testament. Never use in the Greek a translation unless it be in Latin, by which you may improve yourself in that language. In order to improve in any language you must parse a great deal, giving a rule for every thing.

Hebrew Language.—Pike's Grammar and Lexicon, and you may consult and use as an auxiliary a concise grammar of this language by Wesley. Hebrew Bible, the last American edition of Vander Hooght's Hebrew Bible, at Philadelphia, without the Masoretic points, these will be of no real service to *you*. After you find a word according to the rules for ascertaining a root in Pike, or some other good grammar, consult Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon on the word. This work is a valuable commentary on the Old Testament. You will do well to write out a grammar and practice on all its parts daily. In Parkhurst or Pike you will find all the instruction needed in the Chaldee dialect, so as to read with facility Daniel and those who wrote about the time of the Babylonish captivity.

All your reading in the Sacred Writings should, if possible, be in a Polyglott Bible, the Bagsterian London edition, which may now be procured low in Philadelphia.

Now, my friend—do not be afraid to undertake this work. Some young men say I have not time, and I have no teacher; others say I have neither time, teacher, nor books.

You will have plenty of time if you will go to bed early and rise early. As to a teacher, you may find one almost every where you go. As to books, you can get them too, if you are not ashamed. As a poor young man, do not be discouraged, it is not too late for you to get a good education. Go to work, begin

now—do not put it off a day, and when you commence, stick at it. Approach your rich and well educated neighbours—ask them to help you—to lend their books.—Ask any man of learning, he will delight in assisting you.—Ask the teachers in your neighbourhood, even the school-boys to assist you, this has often been done, and in your turn, do you pray for them. You will not find, my friend—one man out of one thousand, who is so devoid of good principle as to refuse you, or think the less of you, on account of your efforts and diligence. Eight or nine hours are enough for eating and sleeping, eight enough for work at the business or trade in which you are engaged, and seven or eight you may have for study, you can do a great deal in that time. At least one-fourth of your time may be spent in study. It only demands resolution on your part.

But as all this is to aid you in obtaining and imparting a knowledge of Bible truths, I will point out what may more particularly help you, to an understanding of the word and truth of God. Some parts of these works may be omitted, however, better read all than lose all.

Modern Geography.—Goodrich or some other, with Finley's Atlas, or the large maps, and Keith on the Globes.

Ancient Geography.—Mayo or Danville, with Smiley's Scripture Geography and an ancient Atlas.

Natural History and Natural Philosophy.—Cavallo's Natural Philosophy, Goldsmith's Natural History, Wesley's Natural Philosophy, Ferguson's Astronomy, Harris' Natural History of the Bible, a valuable work; Buckland or Gomstock's Geology; Horner's Anatomy, and Turner's Chemistry, with all Franklin's Scientific Works.

Mental Philosophy.—Locke, Stewart, and Reid; if only one, read Locke.

Moral Philosophy and Natural Law.—Read the Bible as the foundation of all man's correct notions of order and right. Next to this read Hoffman's Course of Legal Study, particularly that part of it on Ethics and natural law, and all the works and parts of works referred to, in his remarks upon Ethics and the laws of nature and nations. There is hardly a page of this most excellent work that may not be read with profit by any man who now is in, or who is intended for the ministry. If you cannot procure it, read Paley's Moral Philosophy, Beattie and Wayland's Moral Science, Knox's Essays, and Say's Political Economy.

Rhetoric and the Art of Speaking and Writing.—Campbell or Blair's larger work on Rhetoric, and Lake's Maury, with Wesley's directions appended for pronunciation and gesture.

Chronology.—Hale's or Usher's Chronology; the former has been questioned. There is a valuable Geneological, Chronological, and Historical Chart, lately published by Mr. Wood, of Leesburg, Virginia.

History.—Anquetil, is a good abridgment of the great Universal History, written by a company of English gentlemen. Ramsay's History, Rollin, Murphy's Tacitus, Gibbon's Rome, Hume's England, Russell's Modern Europe, and all Robinson's Historical works, especially his History of America, Willard's History of the American Republic, and Marshall's Life of Washington.

Ecclesiastical History.—To the Bible, add Whiston's Josephus, Prideaux or Shuckford's connection of Sacred and Profane History, Fleury's Manners of the Israelites, by Clarke; Cruse's translation of Eusebius, which is only equalled as a translation, by Whiston's Josephus and Murphy's Tacitus. Mosheim and Milner may be profitably read together. Campbell's Ecclesiastical Lectures, a valuable work, and also an abridgment of Ecclesiastical history by Wesley, a good work as a book of reference. To these may be added Cave's Lives of the Fathers, Gillie's Historical Collections, Bishop Burnett's History of his own times, Bennett's History of the Dissenters, with Adams' View of Religions.

Theology—Read in the original, the Holy Bible, daily if possible, on the knees, with the assistance of Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Bible, and a good critical and practical commentary, as Dr. Clarke, Benson, or some other, with a good Biblical and Theological Dictionary, Watson and Buck, or Wood, combined. If only the New Testament be used, get the Bagsterian edition from the Polyglott text, with an English translation, page for page; a Concordance, Greek and English; a Greek and English Lexicon; and tables of various readings, measures, weights, &c. bound together, regularly imported and sold in Philadelphia—this may be conveniently carried in the pocket. Use Taylor or Brown's Concordance.

If a young man purpose to enter the ministry, let him study well Doctor Clarke and Bangs' Letters to a Young Minister, Smith's Lectures on the Sacred Office, and be sure to read a Treatise on the Christian Ministry, by Bridges, B. A. published at New York, 1831. There are some excellent things in this, but let him never dare to undertake this work unless clearly convinced that God has called and moved him to it, by the operations of the Holy Spirit.

There are some particular works that may be read by such a young man, as McEwen on the Types, Horne on the Psalms, Newton or Faber on the Prophecies, Watson's exposition of the Gospels, Bailey on the Parables, and Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, a short but valuable work to a minister. From almost any commentator a biblical student will derive some advantage, therefore he should read the Bible with the assistance of one regularly. He should also read Watson's Apology, Paley and Chalmers' Evidence of the Christian Religion, and Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, in connection with part 1st in Watson's Theological Institutes. Then he may read part 2d in Watson's Theological Institutes, with those parts of Schmucker, Dwight, and Dick on the same subjects; Kidd on the Trinity, Drew on the Immortality and Immateriality of the Soul, and those parts of Wesley, Fletcher, and Hall's works on the subjects contained in this 2nd part of the Institutes, particularly Fletcher's Appeal, Wesley on Original Sin, with all those parts of their works in which are discussed any of the subjects contained in the Institutes; also Alleine and Law's works, and Baxter's Saints Rest. Next should be read Watson's 3d part, on the Morals, and his 4th part, the Institutions of Christianity, with all those parts of the above works which treat of the same subjects: to which may be added Clarke's Theology by Dunn, Clarke on the Eucharist, and on those portions of the subjects discussed in the third and fourth parts of Watson.

Miscellaneous Reading.—*Poets*—Milton, Young, Thomson, Dryden, Pope, Akenside, Hemans, Gray, Heber, Cowper, Pollock, and Montgomery's Poems, with others, as there is opportunity. *Prose*—all those works in prose which generally treat of the arts and sciences should be read, for which, as a common book of reference, you cannot, being a poor young man, do better than to procure some good Encyclopædia or Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences. Nicholson's is a much neglected but valuable work of the kind—edition 1816.

Sermons.—Sherlock, Tillotson, and Wesley pre-eminent—Jay, Saurin, Burder's Village Sermons, &c. Study hard, and then depend only on God—he will help you.

Attend every prayer and experience meeting that you can. Listen to the experience as well as the sermons of others. Take notes of all the plans and arrangements you make of subjects on blank cards, to refresh your memory: write out your views regularly on subjects, but whatever you do, never commit a sermon to memory. As a model for plans, you may read attentively Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon, Benson's Plans, The Sketches, or the Plans of Simeon, not to preach them, but to teach you method.

At your request I have named these works, my friend—which are only a few out of the many that you may and ought to read, and can read, if you will only be diligent. I have named some of them in preference to other and better works, because you can get these, with few exceptions, in almost every town and every private library. I mention them only because you have no regular instructor, and invited it. Above all, as I have often said, pray—most devoutly pray to God to help you. Do not forget—practice makes perfect. Therefore begin, and in every little company for prayer explain and enforce, as an exhortation, some passage of Scripture. Attend to your manner. Some of the best sermons I hear are lost on account of the manner of the preacher. I daily lament the neglect of this when young. Sometimes christianity is presented in a way so sour that most hearers are disgusted. Be kind and condescending in *your* manners to all, and God will raise up for you many friends. Remember—every man is your brother; therefore love, honour, pray for, and, as far as possible, instruct and lead to the Lord Jesus all you can. Adieu!

AQUILA.

THE END.