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THE
DOCTRINE

OF

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

STATED AND ASSERTED:

TRANSLATED IN GREAT MEASURE FROM
THE LATIN OF

JÉROM ZANCHIUS:

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE PREFIXED:

AND

AN APPENDIX

CONCERNING THE FATE OF THE ANCIENTS.


ALSO,

A CAVEAT AGAINST UNSOUND DOCTRINES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A LETTER TO THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY.


BY **AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A. B.**

VICAR OF BROAD-HEMBURY, DEVON.

—●●●●●—
NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY **GEORGE LINDSAY.**

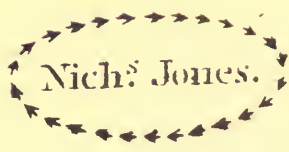
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RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE.



OF all the devices formed by Satan, and employed to sully the glory of divine truth, that which is now commonly called **ARMINIANISM**, is the most ancient, the most dangerous, and the most successful. Since the fall of man, it has existed in the world, in every age and in every country. It may be called *the religion of our fallen nature*; and will never want friends and advocates on earth, so long as the spirit of error and the corrupt heart are permitted to exert their wicked influence. It is a system of principles, stated in direct opposition to the sovereignty of God, displayed in the distribution of his favours among men; and is utterly eversive of the whole plan of grace revealed in the gospel. It proclaims open war against the essential prerogative of Deity—his absolute right of determining the final state

of rational beings, considered as guilty and fallen ; and makes the divine purpose entirely dependent on the creature's will. The great God is impiously dethroned, that the vile idol of free will may be exalted in his room. The proud usurper, being seated on the throne, dares to arraign at his bar, every thing human and divine ; and presumes to judge, approve, or condemn every article of the divine testimony, and every piece of divine conduct, as they appear right or wrong to the corrupt heart—the depraved will.

This is a system founded in ignorance, supported by pride, fraught with atheism, and will end in delusion. But it is well calculated to gain general consent among all who were never thoroughly convinced of the evil of sin, nor felt the burden of guilt pressing their consciences ; nor have seen the purity of the divine law, their own lost and helpless state, and the absolute necessity of Christ's righteousness for justification and eternal life. The carnal heart is naturally proud, and regards, with fond attention, whatever tends to flatter its vanity and self-importance. Such is the palpable tendency of the *Arminianism* scheme. It gently whispers us in the ear, that, even in a fallen state, we retain both the *will* and the *power* of doing what is good and acceptable to God :—that Christ's death is accepted by God as an universal atonement for the sins of all men ; in order that every one *may*, if he *will*, save himself by his own free will, and good works :—that, in

the exercise of our natural powers, we may arrive at perfection even in the present life, &c. These, and the like unscriptural tenets, are so much adapted to the legal bias of the corrupt heart, that we need not wonder at the favourable reception they have met with in every period of the church.

If we consult the history of past ages, it will be found, that this set of corrupt principles has always occupied a chief place in the faith and profession of corrupt churches. In the latter times of the Jewish church, the body of that people were so strongly attached to this legal scheme, that they utterly rejected Christ and his righteousness, and went about to establish a righteousness of their own. The gospel church was no sooner planted, than the spirit of error began to work. The Arminian leaven in the heart was set a working by the Arminian or Judaizing teachers of those days, which produced such a strong fermentation in some churches, that they seem to have almost entirely departed from the faith. Of this melancholy change the church of *Galatia* presents an affecting instance. The apostles and other ministers of Christ, by their sermons, their disputations, and writings, laboured hard to stem the torrent, and prevent the infection from spreading through the church: But alas, this mystery of iniquity continued to work, through the fostering care of the father of lies, and by the craft and assiduity of his numerous emissaries. During the three first centuries of the

Christian church, it was continually on the increase ; and, about the beginning of the fourth, it broke out with open violence under the name of the *Arian* heresy.

This was little else but a new name clapt upon an old mass of error, which had been lying in detached fragments, up and down in the Christian world from the beginning. By *Arius* they were all gathered up and artfully formed into one complete system of falsehood and blasphemy. His opposition was chiefly directed against the doctrines of Christ's *Eternal Sonship*—of his *co-essentiality* and *co-equality* with the Father : but his system included in its bosom the very essence of the Socinian and Arminian errors.

In the year of our Lord 325, the pastors of the church assembled in a general council at *Nice*, in *Bythinia*, to concert measures for checking the spreading infection. They drew up that admirable form of sound words, called the *Nicene Creed*, or *Confession of Faith*. It was subscribed by all present ; and even by *Arius* himself, that temporizing arch-heretic ; merely to serve a present turn, and with a fixed design of throwing off the mask as soon as a favourable opportunity should offer. In a few years he openly retracted ; and, gaining the ear of the Roman emperor, he filled the church with tumult and blood, and attempted to banish truth, and exterminate its professors from the earth.

The spirit of error and delusion seemed to be let loose from all restraint. Multitudes of new

heresies suddenly sprung up in almost every corner of the church. *Pelagius*, a British monk, in the beginning of the 5th century, appeared on the stage to plead the cause of error and decry the doctrines of grace. The Scripture doctrine of absolute and unconditional *Predestination* he boldly denied—asserting that God was directed in determining the final state of sinful men by his foreknowledge of human actions—*Original Sin*, both imputed and inherent, he counted a mere figment—He maintained the modern *Arminian* tenet of Free Will in its utmost extent; affirming that a man retains full power to *chuse* what is good, and to *do* what is well-pleasing to God, without any supernatural aid—That men in the present state may attain *sinless perfection*, if they only suitably improve their natural powers and the common means of grace—That *Justification* before God is by *works*, and not by *faith* in the righteousness of Christ.

This many-headed monster was hatched long before the days of *Pelagius*; but never till then did it assume an aspect so alarming and formidable. Its venom soon overspread the whole continent of Europe, and reached the British Isle. As every poison has its antidote, so the cause of truth did not then want many noble champions, who stood up in its defence. Among others the Lord raised up the justly celebrated Austin, who, with a bold and well directed stroke, cut off this Hydra's head. But the deadly infection had al-

ready spread too wide to be easily cured. It lurked in the bowels of a corrupt and apostatizing church, until it made its way to the papal chair gained the consent of general councils, and became the avowed creed of the antichristian church.

At the commencement of the protestant reformation, the standard was again lifted up in defence of the doctrines of grace. The scriptures, which for many ages had lain concealed in the musty cabinet of dead languages, were now translated into the vulgar tongue of every country where the reformation got footing. The invention of printing greatly accelerated the diffusion of knowledge; and the writings of the ancient fathers, particularly of *Austin*, were eagerly sought after, carefully read, and publicly taught by the most illustrious reformers, such as, *Calvin, Luther, Zulinglius, Bucer, Melancthon, Zanchius*, and others. Men were filled with astonishment of their former ignorance and infatuation. Satan fell, as lightning from heaven, before the preaching of the everlasting gospel. His kingdom was full of darkness; but his heart burned with rage, and he set every engine to work to prevent the total ruin of his interest and empire. He moved earth and hell against the witnesses of Christ, and the earth was soaked with the blood of the saints. But truth prevailed over all the fury of persecution.

The old and more successful method of opposing the cause of God was then tried. Floods

of error broke in upon the church. *Socinus*, a man of great cunning and considerable learning, sent abroad a new edition of the old *Arian* heresy; with additional strokes of bold blasphemy. After him arose *Arminius*, in Holland, who revived in a new dress the old *Pelagian* heresy. It caused great convulsions in the seven United Provinces; and occasioned the meeting of the famous Synod of *Dort*, at which the errors of *Arminius* and his party were solemnly tried, and condemned. But the old leaven continued still to ferment in the bowels of the church. It stole into Britain about the beginning of the last century; but dared not openly to shew its blotched face, until Archbishop *Laud* introduced it to court, and made it the *Shibboleth* of his party. The execution of that haughty and arbitrary prelate, with the dispersion of his powerful faction, had nearly cleared the island of the Arminian plague: when lo, a second inundation broke in upon the land, at the restoration of king Charles II. By his debauched court, every thing serious was treated with buffoonery and scorn; but, because the Arminian clergy were found more pliant tools for the ruling party; divines of this stamp were generally preferred to the more considerable ecclesiastical benefices. *England* was soon overrun with Arminianism, and the old-fashioned doctrines of grace were every where run down as gross *fanaticism*, and their abettors stigmatized with the name of *enthusiasts*.

The noxious weed was openly transplanted into our *Scotch* soil after the restoration; when our Presbyterian pulpits were invaded and forcibly seized by an army of curates of the corrupt communion of the Church of England. The prelati- cal form of church government was indeed pulled down in North Britain, at the revolution: but not a few of the episcopal incumbents were continued in their charges, and embodied into our national church, upon very general and equivocal terms. From this impure source has sprung much of that corruption of doctrine which now overspreads the whole land.

Deism, or absolute Scepticism seem, in the present day, to be the prevailing and fashionable creed among many who move in the higher spheres of life. Socinianism has of late years made very rapid progress among professors of different descriptions. But Arminianism of all others, is the most prevalent; and may be styled the *vulgar error*. It comes soliciting our acceptance with all the false charms of a harlot, decked out in such captivating colours, as too well suit the vitiated and depraved taste of corrupt nature. It finds an advocate in every man's bosom. Its cause is pleaded by all the strength and subtlety of carnal reason.

As a seasonable antidote against this growing evil, the following short treatise and sermon are sent abroad, warmly recommended to the attention of the public. Many volumes have been

wrote, on the Arminian controversy : but I have met with nothing that more completely, and in so concise a manner, cuts it up by the roots. This valuable translation of *Zanchy* on predestination, came into my hands about two years ago, with some other pieces of Mr. *Toplady's* own works. The manly boldness of the learned translator and author, his fervent zeal for purity of gospel doctrine, and his masterly way of dissecting and exposing error very much struck and pleased me.* I felt much regret that his writings should be so little known in Scotland, where they are so much needed. To have republished all his works would have required several volumes, and, consequently put it out of the reach of the poor to become acquainted with them. Besides, they are not all equally adapted to general edification. Some of them are professedly composed for the meridian of England ; and directly pointed against the reigning errors of the English clergy. The two pieces selected are no less suited to the state of matters on this, than on the other side of the Tweed. This edition is chiefly intended for the accommodation of such as are in narrow worldly circumstances,

* The greatest men have their peculiarities, their favourite modes of expression, and are liable to be mistaken in some things. The admirable Augustus Toplady, with all his excellencies, is not an unexceptionable author, either as to matter or manner. But where shall we find such among uninspired men ? *Humanum est errare.*

and can spare very little for the purchase of books. It is put into circulation at one fourth of the original cost of the London edition. May the Divine Spirit make it extensively useful for convincing and reclaiming the erroneous, and for comforting and confirming all the true friends of the precious doctrines of grace, through the churches of Christ.

ALEXANDER PRINGLE.

PERTH,
Nov. 9, 1793.

A

SHORT SKETCH

OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY,

RECTOR OF BROAD-HEMBURY, DEVON.



MR. TOPLADY* was second son to Richard Toplady, Esq. a major in the army. He was born at Farnham, in Surrey, on Tuesday, the 4th of November, 1740. The first rudiments of his education he received at Westminster School. He very early discovered an uncommon vigour of mind, and made proficiency in the languages much beyond most of his contemporaries. He used to employ his by-hours, while at the grammar-school, in writing exercises for such idle or dissipated young nobility as either could not, or would not write them themselves. By this means he sometimes gained three or four shillings a day.

* The substance of this short account of Mr. Toplady's life is taken from the *Christian's Magazine*, for January, 1791, with some additions and alterations.

After his father's death, his mother (having some claims upon an Irish estate) took him with her into that kingdom; and entered him a student in Trinity College, Dublin, where he soon took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. He was an indefatigable student in every branch of literature and science; but, as he very early devoted himself to the service of Christ in the church, he chiefly cultivated those studies which were best calculated to make him (through the divine blessing) an able minister of the New Testament. He took much pains to render himself a proficient in the Hebrew and Greek languages, that he might be qualified to read and study the scriptures of truth in their sacred originals. His writings abundantly shew that he was, in a high degree, master of them both.

About the 15th year of his age, it pleased God to bring him under awakenings of conscience, on account of the guilt and misery of his natural state; and to shew him his absolute need of Christ. He was a considerable time in great perplexity and doubt between the *Arminian* and *Calvinistic* schemes. He read with avidity many books on each side. At last a kind of Providence brought in his way Dr. Manton on the 17th of John: which was made the happy mean of giving his strong Arminian prejudices the first effectual blow. By the time he arrived at his 18th year, he had (through the Spirit's supernatural teaching) attained a clear and settled belief of the doctrines of grace; and continued to the day of his

death a bold and determined enemy to the Arminian heresy. He used often to say among his intimates, "that he should, when in heaven, remember the year 1758, (the 18th of his age) with gratitude and joy."

He entered into orders on Trinity Sunday, the 6th of June, 1762. He was soon after inducted into the living of Blagdon, in Somersetshire, and afterwards into that of Broad-Hembury, in Devonshire. In both charges he shewed himself an able, faithful, and zealous servant of Christ; "a labourer that needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the word of truth." It was during his residence at Broad-Hembury that he composed the greater part of those valuable works, which will perpetuate and endear his memory to all the friends of truth through succeeding ages. He occasionally visited London, and soon contracted an intimacy with an extensive circle of friends there. The lustre of his pulpit talents could not be hid. He was much followed, and much admired. Three years before his death his health began to be much impaired by close study and excessive application. He began to apprehend that the air of Devon was too moist for one of his delicate constitution. By the advice of friends he removed to London in the year 1775. But he had not well arrived, when he was earnestly solicited by his numerous friends, to engage to preach in the chapel belonging to the French Reformed, in Leicester Fields. Their pressing importunities, and an ardent desire of being useful

to immortal souls, prevailed over every other consideration. For a short time he stately supplied that charge. But intense application to study, and late sitting, soon wasted his remaining strength, and accelerated the premature end of his ministry and labours. He fell into a consumption, and entered into his Master's joy on the 11th of August, 1778, the 38th year of his life, and the 16th of his ministry.

His bodily frame seems to have been rather tall and slender; and his natural temper extremely keen and boisterous. Impatient of contradiction, he was in the heat of disputation, apt to be hurried on by the mere impetuosity of his passions, to a degree of warmth bordering on dictatorial insolence.

His mind was endowed with vast powers of conception. His understanding was clear and capacious, his judgment solid and correct, his imagination lively, and his invention uncommonly prompt and fertile. His great natural powers were much improved by a liberal education and close study. His early acquaintance with the power of religion induced him to delight much in the study of the scriptures. He soon acquired, under divine influence, a very accurate and extensive knowledge of the word of God. In his public labours he eminently deserved the noble character of Apollos, "A man mighty in the scriptures." His writings clearly show his intimate acquaintance with the ancient fathers and systematic writers. He seems to have inherited a

large portion of the zeal and spirit of *Austin* and *Broadwardin*: and, like them too, to have bent the whole force of his genius against the *Pelagian* and *Arminian* heresies. The narrow escape which, through the grace of God, he made, from being entangled in the fascinating toils of *Arminianism* might, perhaps, determine him the more to embrace every opportunity of exposing the danger to others. Being born and educated in the bosom of a church which was overrun with *this* error, he boldly stood forth as a resolute defender of the doctrines of grace, from both pulpit and press. *Arminians* of every denomination smarted under his lash. This error seems to have been his favourite game; and, whenever it started, he followed the chace until he run it down. So fully was he versed in this controversy, that he never seems more master of his subject than when dissecting and confuting *Arminianism*. Many a sore drubbing poor *Mr. Wesley*, and his adherents, received from his able pen. Upon the whole, he was a burning and shining light—a skilful champion in the cause of God—and a lively and zealous Christian. He died as he lived—glorying only in the cross of Christ, and triumphing in the freedom and riches of adorable grace.

A little before his death, a report was in circulation, raised and industriously propagated by the *Arminian* faction, that he had recanted those *Calvinistic* doctrines which he had all along publicly maintained with such strength of argument and warmth of zeal. When the false rumour

came to his ears, he was filled with much indignation at this weak and wicked effort of his enemies against him. And, although he was very much weakened through long and severe distress, yet he determined openly to contradict this lying invention from the pulpit, and close his ministry by exhibiting an open testimony in vindication of the doctrines of grace. With the greatest fortitude of soul he executed his resolution; although his voice was now become so weak that he could not be distinctly heard.

Speaking to a friend about this matter, he said, "My dear friend, these great and glorious truths which the Lord, in rich mercy, has given me to believe, and which he has enabled me, though very feebly, to stand forth in the defence of, are not (as those who believe not, or oppose them say) dry doctrines, or mere speculative points—No: but, being brought into practical and heart experience, they are the very joy and support of my soul: and the consolations flowing from them, carry me far above the things of time and sense." In his last moments, he was favoured with much comfortable experience of the divine presence; and finished his course under a strong gale of sensible assurance. "Oh, what a day of sunshine this has been to me!" (would he sometimes say) "I want words to express it—it is unutterable. Oh my friends, how good is God!—almost without interruption, his presence has been with me!—What a great thing it is to rejoice in death!—Christ's love is unutterable!" Some passages of

scripture he frequently repeated; and descanted with peculiar emotions of joy and rapture upon the latter part of Rom. viii. When very near the end of his conflict, on his awaking from a slumber, he cried out, "Oh what delights! who can fathom the joys of the third heavens!—I cannot find words to express the comforts I feel in my soul!—they are past expression. The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant, that he leaves me nothing to pray for but a continuance of them. I enjoy a heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praise.—Nevertheless, I do not forget, that I am still in the body, and liable to all those distressing fears which are incident to human nature, when under temptation, and without any sensible divine support: but so long as the presence of God continues with me, in the degree in which I now enjoy it, I cannot but think that such a desponding frame is impossible."

Within an hour of his death he called his friends and servant, and asked them, If they could give him up? they replied in the affirmative, since it pleased God to be so gracious to him: then said he, "I bless the Lord you are brought so cheerfully to part with me, and give me up into the hands of my dear Redeemer! it will not be long when God will take me; for no mortal man can live, (bursting into tears of joy) after the glories which God has manifested to my soul." Soon after this, he closed his eyes, and slept in Jesus.

Thus died this great and good man. May such striking displays of divine love and sovereign grace encourage all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, to trust him more confidently, to love him more ardently, to follow him more submissively, and to serve him more zealously; in the well-grounded hope, that they too, in the end, shall find death prove their unspeakable gain.

PREFACE.



WHEN I consider the absolute independency of God, and the necessary, total dependence of all created things on him their first cause ; I cannot help standing astonished at the pride of impotent, degenerate man, who is so prone to consider himself as a being possessed of sovereign freedom, and invested with a power of self-salvation ; able, he imagines, to counteract the designs even of *Infinite Wisdom*, and to defeat the agency of Omnipotence itself. Ye shall be as gods, said the tempter, to Eve, in Paradise : and ye are as gods, says the same tempter now, to her apostate sons.—One would be apt to think, that a suggestion so demonstrably false and flattering, a suggestion the very reverse of what we feel to be our state ; a suggestion, alike contrary to scripture and reason, to fact and experience ; could never meet with the smallest degree of credit. And yet, because it so exactly coincides with the natural haughtiness of the human heart ; men not only admit, but even relish the deception, and fondly incline to believe that the father of lies does, in this instance at least, speak truth.

The scripture-doctrine of predetermination, lays the axe to the very root of this potent delusion. It assures us, that all things are of God. That all our times, and all events, are in his hand. Consequently, that man's business below is to fill up the departments, and to discharge the several offices, assigned him in God's purpose, from everlasting : and that, having lived his appointed time, and finished his allotted course of action and suffering, he that moment quits the stage of terrestrial life, and removes to the invisible state.

The late deservedly celebrated Dr. Young, though he affected great opposition to some of the doctrines called Calvinistic ; was yet compelled, by the force of truth, to acknowledge, that " There is not a fly but has had infinite wisdom concerned, not only in its structure, but in its destination."* Nor did the late learned and excellent Bishop Hopkins go a jot too far, in asserting as follows : " A sparrow, whose price is but mean, two of them valued at a farthing (which some make to be the 10th part of a Roman penny, and was certainly one of their least coins,) and whose life, therefore, is but contemptible, and whose flight seems giddy and at random ; yet it falls not to the ground, neither lights any where, without your Father. His all-wise Providence hath *before appointed* what *bough* it shall pitch on ; *what grains* it shall pick up : *where* it shall

* Centaur not Fabulous, Letter II.

lodge, and *where* it shall build ; on what it shall live, and when it shall *die*.—Our Saviour adds, The very hairs of your head are all numbered. God keeps an account, even of that stringy excrescence.—Do you see a thousand little *motes* and *atoms* wandering up and down in a sun-beam? It is God that so peoples it; and he *guides* their innumerable and irregular strayings.

Not a dust rises in a beaten road ; but God raiseth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and, by his particular care, conveys it to the certain place he had before appointed for it : nor shall the most fierce and tempestuous wind hurry it any farther.—Nothing comes to pass but God hath his ends in it, and will certainly make his own ends out of it. Though the world seem to run at random, and affairs to be huddled together in blind confusion and rude disorder ; yet God sees and knows *the concatenation of all causes and effects*, and so governs them, that he makes a *perfect harmony* out of all those seeming jarrings and discords.—It is most necessary, that we should have our hearts well established in the firm and unwavering belief of this truth ; That *whatsoever* comes to pass, *be it good or evil*, we may look up to the hand and disposal of all, to God—In respect of God, there is nothing casual, nor contingent, in the world. If a master should send a servant to a certain place, and command him to stay there till such a time ; and, presently after, should send another servant to the same [place ;] the meeting of these two is wholly casual.

al in respect of themselves, but *ordained* and *foreseen* by the master who sent them. So it is in ALL fortuitous events here below. They fall out *unexpectedly* as to *us*; but not so as to God. He foresees, and he appoints all the vicissitudes of things."*

To illustrate this momentous doctrine, especially so far as God's sovereign distribution of grace and glory is concerned, was the chief motive that determined me to the present publication. In perusing the works of that most learned and evangelical divine, one of whose performances now appears in an English dress; I was particularly taken with that part of his Confession of Faith (presented A. D. 1562, to the Senate of Strasburgh,) which relates to Predestination. It is, from beginning to end, a regular chain of solid argument, deduced from the unerring word of divine revelation, and confirmed by the co-incident testimonies of some of the greatest lights that ever shone in the Christian church. Such were Austin, Luther, Bucer. Names that will be precious and venerable as long as true religion has a friend remaining upon earth.

Excellent as *Zanchy's* original piece is, I yet have occasionally ventured both to *retrench* and to *enlarge* it, in the translation. To this liberty I was induced, by a desire of rendering it as *complete* a treatise on the subject as the allotted com-

* Sermon upon *Providence*; from *Matth.* x. 29, 30.

pass would allow. I have endeavoured rather to enter into the *spirit* of the admirable author; than with a scrupulous exactness to retail his very *words*. By which means the performance will prove, I humbly trust, the more satisfactory to the English reader; and, for the learned one, he can at any time, if he pleases, by comparing the following version with the original Latin, both perceive wherein I have presumed to vary from it; and judge for himself whether my omissions, variations, and enlargements, are useful and just.

The Arminians (I know not, whether through ignorance, or to serve a turn) affect at present to give out, That Luther and Calvin were not agreed in the article of Predestination. A more palpable mistake was never advanced. So far is it from being true, that Luther (as I can easily prove, if called to it) went as heartily into that doctrine as Calvin himself. He even asserted it with much more warmth, and proceeded to much harsher lengths in defending it, than Calvin ever did, or any other writer I have met with of that age. In the following performance, I have for the most part, carefully retained Zanchy's quotations from Luther; that the reader, from the sample there given, might form a just idea of Luther's real sentiments concerning the points in question.

Never was a publication of this kind more seasonable than at present. Arminianism is the grand religious evil of this age and country. It has more or less infected every protestant deno-

mination amongst us, and bids fair for leaving us, in a short time, not so much as the very profession of godliness. The power of Christianity has, for the most part, taken its flight long ago; and even the form of it seems to be on the point of bidding us farewell. Time has been when the Calvinistic doctrines were considered and defended as the palladium of our established church, by her bishops and clergy; by the universities, and the whole body of the laity. It was (during the reigns of Edward VI. Queen Elizabeth, James I. and the greater part of Charles I. as difficult to meet with a clergyman, who did not preach the doctrines of the church of England, as it is now to find one who does.—We have generally forsaken the principles of the reformation; and Ihabod, or Thy glory is departed, has been written on most of our pulpits and church-doors ever since.

“Thou, O God, hast brought a Vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

“Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root; and it filled the land.

“The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.

“She sent out her boughs to the sea, and her branches unto the river.

“Why hastthou then broken down her hedges, so that all they, who pass by the way, do pluck her?

“The boar, out of the wood, doth waste it; and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

“Return, we beseech thee, O God of Hosts! Look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine;

“And the vineyard, which thy right hand hath planted; and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself!

“So will we not go back from thee: quicken us, and we shall call upon thy name.

“Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts! cause thy face to shine, and we shall yet be saved.”
Psalm lxxx.

Never was description more strikingly expressive of the state our national church is at present in! Never was supplication more pertinently adapted to the lips of her genuine sons!

In vain do we lament the progress of Popery; in vain do we shut up a few private mass-houses; while our presses teem, and our pulpits ring, with the Romish doctrines of *merit* and *free will*: doctrines, whose native and inevitable tendency is, to smooth the passage for our fuller coalition with Antichrist. If we are really desirous to shun committing spiritual *adultery* with the mother of harlots and abominations, we must withdraw our feet from the way that leadeth to her house.

Blessed be God, the doctrines of grace are again beginning to lift up their heads amongst us: a sign, it is to be hoped, that the Holy Spirit hath not quite forsaken us; and that our redemption,

from the the prevailing errors of the day, draweth near. Now, if ever, is the time for all who love our church and nation in sincerity, to lend an helping hand to the ark; and contribute, though ever so little, to its return.

The grand objection usually made to that important truth, which is the main subject of the ensuing sheets, proceeds on a supposition of *partiality* in God, should the Calvinistic doctrine be admitted.—If this consequence did really follow, I see not how it would authorize man to arraign the conduct of Deity. Should an earthly friend make me a present of ten thousand pounds, would it not be unreasonable, ungrateful, and presumptuous in me, to refuse the gift, and revile the giver, only because it might not be his pleasure to confer the same favour on my next door neighbour?—In other cases, the value of a privilege or of a profession is enhanced by its scarceness. A virtuoso sets but a little esteem on a medal, a statue, or a vase, so common that every man who pleases may have one of the same kind: he prizes that alone as a rarity, which really is such; and which is not only intrinsically valuable, but which lies in few hands.—Were all men here upon earth, qualified and enabled to appear as kings, the crown, the sceptre, the robe of state, and other ensigns of majesty, would presently sink into things hardly noticeable. The distinguishing grandeurs of royalty, by ceasing to be uncommon would quickly cease to be august and striking. Upon this principle it was, that Henry

IV. of France, said on his birth-day, "I was born as on this day; and, no doubt, taking the world through, thousands were born on the same day with me: yet, out of all those thousands, I am, perhaps, the only one whom God hath made a king. How signally am I indebted to the peculiar bounty of his Providence!"—Similar are the reflections and the acknowledgments of such persons as are favoured with the sense of their election in Christ to holiness and heaven.

"But what becomes of the non-elect?" You have nothing to do with such a question, if you find yourself embarrassed and distressed by the consideration of it. Bless God for his electing love, and leave him to act as he pleases by them that are without. Simply acquiesce in the plain scripture account; and wish to see no farther than revelation holds the lamp. 'Tis enough for you to know, that the Judge of the whole earth will do right.—Yet will you reap much improvement from the view of predestination, in its full extent, if your eyes are able steadfastly to look at all which God hath made known concerning it. But if your spiritual sight is weak, forego the inquiry, so far as reprobation is concerned; and be content to know but in part, till death transmits you to that perfect state, where you shall *know* even as you are known. Say not, therefore, as the opposers of these doctrines did in St. Paul's days: "Why doth God find fault with the wicked? For who hath resisted his will? If he who only can convert them, refrains from doing it, what room

is there for blaming them that perish, seeing it is impossible to resist the will of the Almighty?" Be satisfied with St. Paul's answer: "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" The apostle hinges the matter entirely on God's absolute sovereignty. There he rests it; and there we ought to leave it.*

Were the whole of mankind equally loved of God, and promiscuously redeemed by Christ, the song which believers are directed to sing would hardly run in these admiring strains: To him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings

* Some of the more considerate Heathens treated God's hidden will with an adoring reverence, which many of our modern Arminians would do well to imitate. Thus Bion (Κλεοδ. και Μυρσ. 10.)

Κρινειν δε επεικει θεια ερσα βρολοισι.

'Tis not for man to sit in judgment on the actions of God.

So Theognis (γνομ. 141, 142.)

Ανθρωποι δε μαλαια νομιζομεν, ειδολες υδην.

Θεοι δε καλα σφειλερον παντα τελουσι νοον.

We men are foolish in our imaginations, and know nothing:

But the gods accomplish all things according to their own mind.

And again, (Lin. 687, 688.)

Ουκ εσι θνητοισι προς αθανατης μαχεσασθαι,

υδε δικην ειπειν. υδενι τειλο θεμις.

'Tis not lawful for mortals to enter the lists with the gods, nor to bring in an accusation against them.

and priests unto God, &c. Rev. i. 5, 6. An hymn of praise like this, seems evidently to proceed on the hypothesis of peculiar election on the part of God, and of a limited redemption on the part of Christ; which we find still more explicitly declared, Rev. v. 9: where we have a transcript of that song, which the spirits of just men made perfect are now singing before the throne, and before the Lamb: Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Whence the elect are said to have been redeemed FROM AMONG men. Rev. xiv. 4.

In short, there is no such thing, as casualty, or accident, even in things of temporal concern; much less in matters spiritual and everlasting. If the universe had a Maker, it must have a Governor, and if it has a Governor, his will and Providence must extend to all things, without exception. For my own part, I can discern no medium between absolute predestination and blank Atheism.

Mr. Rollin,* if I mistake not, has, somewhere, a fine observation to this effect: That "It is

* Since the above was written, I have met with the fine passage to which it refers. "Providence delights to conceal its wonders under the veil of human operations." Rollin's Arts and Sciences of the Ancients, vol. 3 p. 480.

Mr. Hervey has likewise a most beautiful and judicious paragraph to the same effect; where, speaking of what is commonly termed accidental death, this admirable writer asks: "Was it then a random stroke? doubtless, the blow came from an aiming, though invisible hand. God presideth over the armies of heaven. God ruleth among the inhabi-

usual with GOD, so carefully to conceal himself, and to hide the agency of his Providence *behind* second causes; as to render that very often undiscernable and undistinguishable from these." Which wisdom of conduct, and gentleness of operation, (not less efficacious, because gentle and invisible,) instead of exciting the admiration they deserve; have, on the contrary, given occasion to the setting up of that unreal idol of the brain, called chance. Whereas, to use the lovely lines of our great moral poet,

All Nature is but Art unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction which thou canst not see.

tants of the earth. And GOD conducteth what men call chance. *Nothing, nothing* comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen, they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels of eternal wisdom. The Lord, with whom are the issues of death, signs the warrant, and gives the high commission. The seemingly fortuitous disaster, is only the *agent*, or *instrument*, appointed to execute the supreme DECREE. When the king of Israel was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot.—A certain man drew a bow at a venture, (1 Kings xxii. 34.) At a venture, as *he* thought. But his hand was strengthened by an omnipotent aid; and the shaft levelled by an unerring eye. So that *what we term CASUALTY, is really PROVIDENCE*; accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition.—How comforting this reflection! Admirably adapted to sooth the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose their spirits into a quiet submission! Excellently suited to dissipate the fears of godly survivors; and create a calm intrepidity, even amidst innumerable perils!"—Hervey's Meditations, vol. 1. p. 27, 28.

Words are only so far valuable, as they are the vehicles of meaning. And meaning, or ideas, derive their whole value from their having some foundation in reason, reality, and fact. Was I, therefore, to be concerned in drawing up an Ex-purgatory Index to language, I would, without mercy, cashier and proscribe such words as chance, fortune, luck, casualty, contingency, and mishap. Nor unjustly—For they are Voces, and præterea nihil. Mere terms without ideas. Absolute expletives, which import nothing. Unmeaning cyphers, either proudly invented to hide man's ignorance of real causes, or sacrilegiously designed to rob the *Deity* of the honours due to his wisdom, providence, and power.

Reason and Revelation are perfect unisons, in assuring us, that GOD is the supreme, independent first cause ; of whom, all secondary and inferior causes are no more than the effects. Else, proper originality and absolute wisdom, unlimited supremacy and almighty power, cease to be attributes of Deity.—I remember to have heard an interesting anecdote of King William and Bishop Burnet. The Arminian prelate affected to wonder “ how a person, of his Majesty's piety and good sense, could so rootedly believe the doctrine of absolute predestination.” The Royal Calvinist replied—Did I not believe absolute *predestination*, I could not believe a *providence*. For, it would be most absurd to suppose that a Being of infinite wisdom would *act* without a *plan* : for which plan, predestination is only another name.

What, indeed, is predestination, but God's determinate plan of action? and what is providence, but the evolution of that plan? In his decree, God resolved within himself what he would do, and what he would permit to be done: By his providence, this effective and permissive will passes into external act, and has its positive accomplishment. So that the purpose of God, as it were, draws the out-lines, and providence lays on the colours. What that designed, this completes: what that ordained, this executes. Predestination is analogous to the mind and intention; providence, to the hand and agency of the artificer. Hence, we are told, that God worketh [there's his *providence*] all things, after the counsel of his own will [there's his *decree*,] Eph. i. 11. And again, he DOTH according to his WILL, in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand [i. e. his will, and the execution of it, are *irresistible*,] nor say unto him, what dost thou? i. e. his purpose and providence are *sovereign*, and for which he will not be accountable to his creatures. Dan. iv. 35.

According, therefore, to the Scripture representation, Providence neither acts vaguely and at random, like a blind archer, who shoots uncertainly in the dark, as well as he can; nor yet *pro re nata*, or as the unforeseen exigence of affairs may require: like some blundering statesman, who plunges (it may be) his country and himself into difficulties, and then is forced to un-

ravel his cobweb, and reverse his plan of operations, as the best remedy for those disasters, which the court-spider had not the wisdom to foresee. But shall we say this of GOD? It were blasphemy. HE that dwelleth in heaven, laugheth all these miserable after-thoughts to scorn. GOD, who can neither be over-reached, nor overpowered, has all these wretched post-expedients in derision. He is incapable of mistake. He knows no levity of will. He cannot be surprised with any unforeseen inconveniences. His throne is in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all. Whatever, therefore, comes to pass, comes to pass as a part of the original plan: and is the offspring of that prolific series of causes and effects, which owes its birth to the ordaining and permissive will of HIM, in whom we all live, and are moved,* and have our being. Providence, in time, is the hand that delivers God's purpose, of those beings and events, with which that purpose was pregnant from everlasting. The doctrine of equivocal generation is not more absurd in philosophy, than the doctrine of unpredestinated events is in theology.

Thus, the long train of things is, though

A mighty maze, yet not without a plan.

God's sovereign will is the first link; his *unalterable decree* is the second; and his all active *providence* the third, in the great chain of causes.

* Κινεμεθα. Acts xvii. 28.

What his will determined, that his decree established, and his providence either mediately or immediately effects. His will was the adorable spring of all; his decree marked out the channel, and his providence directs the stream.

“If so,” it may be objected, “It will follow, that whatever is, is *right*.” Consequences cannot be helped. No doubt, GOD, who does nothing in vain; who cannot do any thing to no purpose, and still less to a bad one; who both acts and permits with design; and who weighs the paths of men, has, in the unfathomable abyss of his counsel, very important (though to us secret) reasons, for permitting the entrance of moral evil, and for suffering both* moral and natural evil still to reign over so great a part of the creation. Unsearchable are his judgments [*κρημαλα*, decrees] and his ways [the methods and dispensations of his providence] past finding out. Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? For, OF him, and THROUGH him, and TO him, are all things. Rom. ii. 33, 34, 36. As to myself, I can, through grace, most heartily adopt the maxim of *Bengelius*, Non plus sumere, non minus accipere :† I neither wish to know more

* *Grotius* himself is forced to own, “*Quæ vero permittuntur Scelera, non carent interim suo Fructu,*” *i. e.* even the crimes which God permits the perpetration of, are not without their good consequences. (*De Veritat. Rel. l. 1. sect. 19.*) A bold saying this! But the sayer was an Arminian: and therefore we hear no outcry on the occasion.

† *Ordo Temporum*, cap. viii. p. 302.

than God has revealed, nor to remain ignorant of what he HAS revealed. I desire to advance, and to halt, just when where the pillar of God's word stays, or goes forward. I am content that the impenetrable veil, divinely interposed between his purposes and my comprehension, be not drawn aside, till faith is lost in sight, and my spirit return to HIM who gave it. But of this I am assured, that echo does not reverberate sound so punctually, as the actual disposal of things answers to God's predetermination concerning them.— This cannot be denied, without dethroning providence, as far as in us lies, and setting up fortune in its room. There is no alternative. I defy all the sophistry of man, to strike out a middle way. He that made all things, either directs all things he has made, or has consigned them over to chance. But what is chance? a name for * nothing. *Arminianism*, therefore, is *Atheism*.

* The late learned and indefatigable Mr. Chambers has, in his valuable Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, under the word chance, two or three observations so pertinent and full to this remark, (viz. of chance being a name for nothing) that I cannot help transcribing them. "Our ignorance and precipitancy lead us to attribute effects to chance, which have a necessary and determinate cause.

"When we say a thing happens by chance; we really mean no more than that its cause is unknown to us: and not, as some vainly imagine, that chance itself can be the cause of any thing. From this consideration, Dr. Bentley takes occasion to expose the folly of that old tenet, the world was made by chance.

I grant that the twin doctrines of Predestination and Providence are not without their difficulties. But the denial of them is attended with ten thousand times more and greater. The difficulties on one side, are but as dust upon the balance: those in the other, as mountains in the scale. To imagine that a Being of boundless wisdom, power, and goodness, would create the universe, and not sit at the helm afterwards, but turn us adrift to shift for ourselves, like an huge vessel without a pilot, is a supposition that subverts every notion of Deity, gives the lie to every page in the Bible, contradicts our daily experience, and insults the common reason of mankind.

Say'st thou, the course of nature governs all?
The course of nature is the art of God.

The whole creation, from the seraph down to the invisible atom, ministers to the supreme will, and is under the special observation, government, and

“The case of the painter, who, unable to express the foam at the mouth of an horse he had painted, threw his sponge in despair at the piece, and by chance did that which he could not before do by design, is an eminent instance of the force of chance. Yet, it is obvious, all we here mean by chance is, that the painter was not aware of the effect: or, that he did not throw the sponge with such a view. Not but that he actually did every thing necessary to produce the effect. Insomuch that, considering the *direction* wherein he threw the sponge, together with its *form*, and specific *gravity*; the *colours* wherewith it was smeered, and the *distance* of the hand from the piece; it was impossible, on the present system of things, that the effect should not follow.”

direction of the *Omnipotent mind*: who sees all, himself unseen; who upholds all, himself unsustained; who guides all, himself guided by none; and who changes all, himself unchanged.

“But does not this doctrine tend to the establishment of fatality?” Supposing it even did, were it not better to be a Christian fatalist, than to avow a set of loose Arminian principles, which if pushed to their natural extent, inevitably terminate in the rankest Atheism? For, without predestination, there can be no Providence; and, without Providence, no God.

After all, What do you mean by fate? If you mean a regular succession of determined events, from the beginning to the end of time; an uninterrupted chain, without a single chasm; all depending on the eternal will and continued influence of the *great First Cause*: this is fate, it must be owned, That *it* and the scripture predestination are, at most, very thinly divided; or, rather, entirely coalesce.—But if by fate is meant, either a constitution of things antecedent to the will of God; by which he himself was bound, *ab origine*; and which goes on of itself, to multiply causes and effects, to the exclusion of the all-pervading power and unintermitting agency of an intelligent, perpetual, and particular Providence: neither reason nor Christianity allows of any such fate as this. Fate, thus considered, is just such an extreme, on one hand, as chance is on the other. Both are alike, unexistable.

It having been not unusual with the Arminian writers to tax us with adopting the *fate* of the ancient Stoics; I thought it might not be unacceptable to the English reader, to subjoin a brief view of what those philosophers generally held, (for they were not all exactly of a mind) as to this particular. It will appear to every competent reader, from what is there given, how far the doctrine of fate as believed and taught by the Stoics, may be admitted upon Christian principles. Having large materials by me for such a work, it would have been very easy for me to have annexed a dissertation of my own upon the subject: but I chose to confine myself to a small extract from the citations and remarks of the learned *Lipsius*, who seems in his *Physiologia Stoicorum*, to have almost exhausted the substance of the argument, with a penetration and precision which leave little room either for addition or amendment. In a cause, therefore, where the interest of *truth* is so eminently concerned, I would rather retain the ablest counsel when it can be had, than to venture to be myself her sole advocate.

For my own particular part, I frankly confess that, as far as the coincidence of the Stoical *fate*, with the Bible *predestination*,* holds good; I

* "Now I am in some measure enlightened," (says the Rev. Mr. Newton, of Olney,) "I can easily perceive, that it is in the adjustment and concurrence of seemingly fortuitous circumstances, that the ruling power and wisdom of God are

see no reason why we should be ashamed to acknowledge it. St. Austin, and many other great and excellent men, have not scrupled to admit both the word [viz. the word *fate*] and the thing properly understood.* I am quite of *Lip-*

most evidently displayed in human affairs. How many such casual events may we remark in the history of Joseph, which had each a necessary influence in his ensuing promotion!—*If* the Midianites had passed by a day sooner, or a day later;—*If* they had sold him to any person but Potiphar;—*If* his mistress had been a better woman;—*If* Pharaoh's officers had not displeased their Lord; or, *if* any, or all these things had fallen out in any other manner or time than they did, all that followed had been prevented: the promises and purposes of God concerning Israel, their bondage, deliverances, polity, and settlement, must have failed: and as all these things tended to and centred in CHRIST, the promised Saviour; the desire of all nations would *not* have appeared. Mankind had been still in their sins, without hope; and the counsels of God's eternal love, in favour of sinners, defeated. Thus we may see a *connexion* between Joseph's first dream and the death of our Lord Christ, with all its glorious consequences. So strong, though secret, is the *CONCATENATION* between the greatest and the smallest events!—What a comfortable thought is this to a believer, to know, that amidst all the various, interfering designs of men, the Lord has one constant design, which he cannot, will not miss: namely, his own glory, in the complete salvation of his people! And that he is wise, and strong, and faithful, to make even those things, which seem contrary to this design, subservient to promote it!" See p. 96. and seq. of a most entertaining and instructive piece, entitled An authentic Narrative of some remarkable and interesting Particulars, in the Life of ***** , in a Series of Letters, 1765.

* For a sample, the learned reader may peruse the judicious chapter, De Fato, in Abp. Bradwardin's immortal book De Causa Dei, lib. i. cap. 28.

sius's mind: "*Et vero non aversabor Stoici nomen; sed Stoici Christiani*: I have no objection to being called a Stoic so you prefix the word *Christian* to it."*

Here ended the first lesson: i. e. here ended the preface to the former edition of this tract. A tract, whose publication has raised the indignant quills of more than one Arminian porcupine.

Among those enraged porcupines, none has hitherto bristled up so fiercely as the high and mighty Mr. John Wesley. He even dipt his quills in the ink of forgery on the occasion; as Indians tinge the points of their arrows with poison, in hope of their doing more effectual execution. The quills, however, have reverberated, and with ample interest, on poor Mr. John's own pate. He felt the unexpected pain, and he has squeaked accordingly. I will not here add to the well deserved chastisement he has received: which, from more than one quarter, has been such, as will probably keep him sore, while his surname begins with W. Let him, for his own sake, learn, as becomes a very sore man, to lie still. Rest may do him good: motion will but add to his fever, by irritating his humours already too peccant. *Predestination* is a stone, by rashly falling on which, he has more than once been lamentably broken. I wish him to take heed, in

* Oper. tom. i. Def. Posthum. cap. ii. p. 118.

due season, lest that stone at length fall on *him*. For, notwithstanding all his delinquencies, I would still have him avoid, if possible, the catastrophe of being ground to powder.

Received of the Treasurer of the
Board of Education the sum of
Twenty Dollars for the year
1880


2000

RECEIPTS

From the Treasurer of the Board of Education
for the year 1880
Twenty Dollars
Total
Twenty Dollars

Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of
January 1880

SOME ACCOUNT OF
THE LIFE
OF
JEROM ZANCHIUS.



IT has been asserted,* that this great divine was born at Alzano, a town of Italy, situate in the valley of Seri, or Serio. But the learned *John Sturmius*, who was not only Zanchy's contemporary, but one of his most intimate friends, expressly affirms in a *speech delivered on a public and important occasion, That he was *nobilis familia Bergami*; born of an illustrious family at Bergamo, the capital of a little province in the north-west of Italy, anciently a part of Gallia Cispadana; but A. D. 1428, made a parcel of the Venetian territory, as it still continues. † I look upon Sturmius's testimony as

* Melch. Adam Vit. Theolog. Exterior. p. 148. and Bayle's Hist. Dict. under the article Zanchius.

† Addressed by Sturmius, to the senate of Stratsburg, March 20, 1562. and inserted afterwards into the works of Zanchy, Tom. vii. part 2. col. 408.

‡ Complete Syst. of Geog. vol. 1. p. 843.

decisive : it being hardly credible, that he could mistake the native place of a colleague, whom he so highly valued, who was living at the very time, and with whom he had opportunity of conversing daily. Sturmius adds, That there was then remaining at Bergamo, a fortress (built probably by some of Zanchy's ancestors) known by the name of The Zanchian Tower.

In this city was our author born, Feb. 2, 1516. At the time of his birth, part of the public service, then performing, was, *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, &c. And by God's good providence the *reformation* broke forth the very next year in Germany, under the auspices of Luther; and began to spread far and wide.

At the age of twelve years, Zanchy lost his father,* who died of the plague, A. D. 1528. His mother† survived her husband but three years. Deprived thus of both his parents, Zanchy resolved on a monastic life; and accordingly, joined himself to a society of Canons Regular.‡ He did this partly to improve himself in literature, and partly for the sake of being with some of his relations, who had before entered themselves of that house. Here he continued

* Francis Zanchius; who seems to have been a native of Venice, and was by profession a counsellor.

† Barbara; sister to Marc Antony Mutius, a nobleman of great worth and distinction.

‡ At Lucca. See the Biogr. Dict. vol. viii. p. 267, under the article Peter Martyr.

nineteen years; chiefly devoting his studies to Aristotle, the languages, and school-divinity.

It was his happiness to become acquainted very early in life with Celsus Maximian, count of Martinengo; who, from being like Zanchy, a bigoted papist by education, became afterwards a burning and shining light in the reformed church. Of our author's intimacy with this excellent nobleman, and its blessed effects, himself gives us the following account:* "I left Italy for the gospel's sake; to which I was not a little animated by the example of count Maximian, a learned and pious personage, and my most dear brother in the Lord. We had lived together under one roof, and in a state of the strictest religious friendship for the greater part of sixteen years; being both of us Canons Regular, of nearly the same age and standing, unisons in temper and disposition, pursuing the same course of studies, and which was better still, joint hearers of Peter Martyr, when that apostolic man publicly expounded St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and gave private lectures on the Psalms to us his monks." From this memorable period we are evidently to date the æra of Zanchy's awakening to a true sight and experimental sense of divine things. His friend, the count, and the learned Tremellius, were also converted about the same time, under the ministry of Martyr.

* Zanchii Epist. ad Lantgrav. Operum. Tom. vii. part. 1. col. 4.

This happy change being effected, our author's studies began to run in a new channel. "The count," says he, "and myself betook ourselves to a diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures; to which we joined a perusal of the best of the fathers, and particularly St. Austin. For some years we went on thus in private, and in public we preached the gospel as far as we were able in its purity. The count, whose gifts and graces were abundantly superior to mine, preached with much greater enlargement of spirit, and freedom of utterance than I could ever pretend to: it was therefore, no wonder that he found himself constrained to fly his country before I was. The territory of the Grisons was his immediate place of retreat; from whence removing soon after, he settled at Geneva, where he commenced the first pastor of the protestant Italian church in that city. Having faithfully executed this sacred office for some years, he at length comfortably fell asleep in Christ*," A. D. 1558, after having, on his death-bed, commended the oversight of his flock to the great *Calvin*.

It was in the year 1550, that Peter Martyr himself was obliged to quit Italy; where he could no longer preach, nor even stay with safety. Toward the latter end of the same year, eighteen of his disciples were forced to follow their master from their native land; of which number Zanchy

* Zanch. ut supra.

was one. Being thus a refugee, or, as himself used to express it, "delivered from his Babylonish captivity," he went into Grisony, where he continued upwards of eight months; and then to Geneva, where after a stay of near a twelve-month, he received an invitation to England, (upon the recommendation of Peter Martyr, then in this kingdom,) to fill a divinity professorship here; I suppose at Oxford, where Martyr had been for some time settled. Zanchy embraced the offer and began his journey, but was detained on his way by a counter invitation to Strasburgh, where the divinity chair had been lately vacated by the death of the excellent Caspar Hedio.

Zanchy was fixed at Strasburgh, A. D. 1558, and taught there almost eleven years; but not without some uneasiness to himself, occasioned by the malicious opposition of several, who persecuted him for much the same reason that Cain hated righteous Abel, 1 John iii. 12. Matters however went on tolerably during the life-time of Sturmius, who was then at the head of the university, and Zanchius's fast friend. At Strasburgh it was, that he presented the famous declaration of his faith concerning *Predestination*, *Final Perseverance* and the *Lord's Supper*. He gave it in to the Senate, October 22, 1562. Of this admirable performance, (i. e. of that part of it which respects the first of these points) the reader may form some judgment by the following translation.

In proportion as the old senators and divines died off, one by one, Zanchy's situation at Strasburgh, grew more and more uncomfortable. Matters at length came to that height, that he was required to subscribe to the Augsburgh confession, on pain of losing his professorship. After mature deliberation, he did indeed subscribe; but with this declared restriction, *modo orthodoxe intelligatur*. Notwithstanding the express limitation with which he fettered his subscription, still this great and good man seems, for peace sake, to have granted too much concerning the manner of Christ's presence in the Lord's supper; as appears by the first of the three theses, maintained by him at this time: 1. *Verum Christi corpus, pro nobis traditum; & verum ejus sanguinem, in peccatorum nostrorum remissionem effusum; in Cæna vere manducari & bibi.* Though the other two positions do effectually explain his meaning: 2. *Verum id, non ore, & dentibus corporis, sed vera fide.* 3. *Ideoque, a solis fidelibus.* I shall here beg leave to interpose one question naturally arising from the subject. What good purpose do the imposition and the multiplication of unnecessary subscriptions, to forms of human composition tend to promote? It is a fence far too low to keep out men of little or no principle; and too high, sometimes, for men of real integrity to surmount. It often opens a door of ready admission to the abandoned; who, ostrich like, care not what they swallow, so they can but make subscription a bridge to secular

interest : and, for the truly honest, it frequently either quite excludes them from a sphere of action, wherein they might be eminently useful, or obliges them to testify their assent in such terms, and with such open professed restrictions, as render subscription a mere nothing.

Not content with Zanchy's concessions, several of the Strasburgh bigots* persisted in raising a controversial dust. They tendered accusations against him, of errors in point of doctrine ; particularly for his supposed heterodoxy concerning the nature of the Lord's supper ; his denial of the ubiquity of Christ's natural body, and his protesting against the lawfulness of images, &c. Nay, they even went so far, as to charge him with unsound opinions concerning predestination and the perseverance of the truly regenerate ; so early did some of Luther's pretended disciples, after the death of that glorious reformer (and he had not been dead at this time above fifteen years,) begin to fall off from the doctrines he taught, though they still had the effrontery to call themselves by his name !

* Particularly John Marbach, a native of Schawben, or Swabia ; a turbulent, unsteady theologian ; pedantic and abusive ; a weak but fiery disputer, who delighted to live in the smoke of contention and virulent debate. He was, among the rest of his good qualities, excessively loquacious ; which made Luther say of him, on a very public occasion, *Ori hujus Suedi nunquam aranæ poterunt telas texere* ; " This talkative Swabian need not be afraid of spiders ; for he keeps his lips in such constant motion, that no spider will ever be able to weave a cobweb on his mouth."

A grand occasion of this dissention was a book concerning the Eucharist, and in defence of Consubstantiation, written by one Heshusius; a fierce, invidious preacher, who lavished the opprobrious names of heretic and atheist on all without distinction, whose religious system went an hair's breadth above or below his own standard. In his preface, he grossly reflected* on the Elector Palatine, (Frederic III.) Peter Martyr, Bullinger, Calvin, Zuinglius, Œcolampadius, and other great divines of that age. Zanchy, in mere respect to these venerable names, did, in concert with the learned Sturmius, prevail with the magistrates of Strasburgh to prohibit the impression. Mr. Bayle is so candid as to acknowledge, That "Zanchy caused this book to be suppressed, not on account of its doctrine, which he left to the judgment of the church, but for the calumnies of the preface." Zanchy was a zealous friend to religious liberty. He had too great a share of good sense and real religion, to pursue any measures which simply tended either to restrain men from declaring their principles with safety, or to shackle the human mind in its inquiries after truth. But he ardently wished to see the contending parties of every denomination carry on their debates with christian meekness, modesty, and benevolence; and, where these amiable ingredients were wanting, he looked upon disputation as a malignant

* Vide Zanc. Op. Tom. vii. part 2. col. 250, 251.

fever, endangering the health, peace, and safety of the church. When candour is lost, truth is rarely found. Zanchy's own observations,* subjoined below, exhibit a striking picture of that moderation, detachment from bigotry, and liberality of sentiment, which strongly characterize the Christian and the Protestant.

Notwithstanding the precautions taken by the magistrates, Heshusius's incendiary piece stole through the press: and Zanchy's efforts to stifle its publication, were looked upon by the author's party, as an injury never to be forgiven. They left no methods unassayed, to remove him from his professorship. Many compromising expedients were proposed by the moderate of both parties. The chapter of St. Thomas (of which Zanchy himself was a canon) met to consider what course should be pursued. By them it was referred to a select committee of thirteen. Zanchy offered to debate the agitated points in a friendly and peaceable manner with his opponents: which of-

* Si liber iste non fuisset refortus tot calumniis & convitiis, tum in ipsum principem Palatinum, tum in tot præclaras ecclesias & earum doctores; ego non curassem in ejus impressionem impediri. *Licet enim unicuique suam sententiam scribere et explicare.* Sed cum audirem tot ecclesias in libro ista damnari hæreseos & atheismi; idque non propter unum aut alterum articulum fidei, qui impugnaretur, sed solummodo propter interpretationem aliquam verborum, in qua neque tota religio consistit, neque salus periclitatur:—adductus fui, ut libri istius impressionem, &c.

fer not being accepted, he made several journies to other churches and universities in different parts of Germany; and requested their opinions, which he brought with him in writing. Things, however, could not be settled till the senate of Strasburgh convened an assembly from other districts, consisting partly of divines, and partly of persons learned in the laws. These referees, after hearing both sides, recurred to the old fruitless expedient of agreeing on certain articles to which they advised each party to subscribe. Zanchy, desirous of laying these unchristian heats, and, at the same time, no less determined to preserve integrity and a good conscience, subscribed in these cautious terms: *Hanc doctrinae formulam ut piam agnosco, ita etiam recipio*: "I acknowledge this summary of doctrine to be pious, and so I admit it." This condescension on Zanchy's part was not followed by those peaceful effects which were expected. The peace was too loosely patched up to be of any long duration. His adversaries began to worry him afresh; and just as measures were bringing on the carpet, for a new and more lasting compromise, our divine received an invitation to the church of Chiavenna; situate on the borders of Italy, and in the territory of the Grisons.

Augustin Mainard, pastor of that place, was lately dead; and a messenger arrived to let Zanchy know that he was chosen to succeed him. Having a very slender prospect of peace at Strasburgh, he obtained the consent of the senate to

resign his canonry of St. Thomas, and professorship of divinity. Whilst the above debates were pending, he had received separate invitations to Zurich, Geneva, Leyden, Heidelberg, Marpurg and Lausanne; but, till he had seen the result of things at Strasburgh, he did not judge any of these calls sufficiently providential to determine his removal.

He left Strasburgh,* in November, 1563, and entered on his pastoral charge at Chiavenna, the beginning of January following. But he had not long been there, before the town was visited by a dismal pestilence, which, within the space of seven months, carried off twelve hundred of the inhabitants. Zanchy, however, continued to exercise his ministry as long as there was an assembly to preach to. At length, the far greater part of the townsmen being swept away, he retreated for a while with his family to an adjoining mountain. His own account is this (Tom.

* Attended by his servant, Frideric Syllæpurg, a native of Hesse: concerning whom Zanchy thus writes; *Discessi Argentina, una cum fido, non tam famulo, quam amico & fratre, Friderico Syllæpurgio, Hesso; juvene bonorum literarum studioso, & sanæ doctrinæ amanti*: "A learned youth, and a lover of the gospel; whom I look upon, not so much in the light of a domestic, as of a faithful friend, and a Christian brother."

Oper. T. vii. part 1. col. 36.

I hardly know which was most extraordinary: the good qualities of the servant, or the gratitude and humility of the master

vii. part. 1. col. 36, 37.) “Mainard, my pious predecessor, had often foretold the calamity with which the town of Chiavenna has been since visited. All the inhabitants have been too well convinced, that that holy man of God did not prophesy at random.—When the plague actually began to make havoc, I enforced repentance and faith while I had a place to preach in, or any^b congregation to hear.—Many being dead, and others having fled the town, (like ship-wrecked mariners, who, to avoid instant destruction, make toward what coast they can;) but very few remained: and, of these remaining few, some were almost terrified to death, others were solely employed in taking care of the sick, and others in guarding the walls.—They concurred in advising me to consult my own safety, by withdrawing for a time, till the indignation should be overpast. I betook myself, therefore, with all my family, to an high mountain, not a vast way from the town, yet remote from human converse, and peculiarly formed for contemplation and unmolested retirement. Here we led a solitary life for three months and an half. I devoted my time chiefly to meditation and writing, to prayer, and reading the scriptures. I never was happier in my own soul, nor enjoyed a better share of health.” Afterwards, the plague beginning to abate, he quitted his retreat and resumed the public exercise of his function.

After four years continuance at Chiavenna, Frederic III. Elector Palatine, prevailed with

him to accept a divinity professorship in the university of Heidelberg, upon the decease of the famous Zachary Ursin. In the beginning of the year 1568, Zanchy entered on his new situation; and shortly after opened the chair with an admirable oration, *De conservando in ecclesia puro puro verbo Dei*. In the same year he received his doctor's degree; the Elector Palatine, and his son prince Casimir, honouring the ceremony with their presence.

He had not been long settled in the palatinate, when the Elector (one of the most amiable and religious princes of that age) strongly solicited him to confirm and elucidate the doctrine of the Trinity, by writing a professed treatise on that most important subject: desiring him, moreover, to be very particular and explicit in canvassing the arguments made use of by the Socinians, who had then fixed their head quarters in Poland and Transylvania, and were exhausting every artifice of sophistry and subterfuge, to degrade the *Son* and *Spirit* of God to the level of mere creatures. Zanchy accordingly employed his leisure hours in obeying this pious command. His masterly and elaborate treatise, *De Dei natura*; and that *De tribus Elohim uno eodemque Jehova*; were written on this occasion: treatises fraught with the most solid learning and argument, breathing at the same time, the amiable spirit of genuine candour and transparent piety. Among a variety of interesting particulars, he does not omit to inform his readers, that Lælius

Socinus, and other favourers of the Servetian hypothesis, had spared neither pains nor art to pervert his judgment, and win him over to their party; but that, finding him inflexible, they had broke off all intercourse with him, and from artful, adulators, commenced his determined enemies. An event this, which he even looked upon as a blessing, and for which he conceived himself bound to render his best thanks to the supreme head of the church, *Christ Jesus*. He retained his professorship at Heidelberg ten years; when, the elector Frederic being dead, he removed to Newstadt, the residence of prince John Casimir, count Palatine. Here he chose to fix his station for the present, in preference to two invitations he had just received; one from the university of Leyden, then lately opened; the other from the Protestant church at Antwerp. The conduct of Divine Providence respecting Zanchy's frequent removals is very observable. He was a lover of peace, and passionately fond of retirement. But he was too bright a luminary to be always continued in one place. The salt of the earth must be sprinkled here and there, in order to be extensively useful, and to season the church throughout. Hence, God's faithful ministers, like the officers in a monarch's army, are quartered in various places; stationed and remanded hither and thither, as may most conduce to their master's service.

The church of Newstadt enjoyed our author upwards of seven years. Being by that time far advanced in life, and the infirmities of age coming

on him very fast, he found himself obliged to cease from that constant series of labour and intenseness of application, which he had so long and so indefatigably undergone. He was, at his own request, dismissed from public service at Newstadt, by the elector Casimir; receiving at the same time, very substantial marks of respect and favour from that religious and generous prince.

From Newstadt, he repaired once more to Heidelberg; chiefly with a view to see some of his old friends. This proved his last removal on earth; for shortly after, his soul now ripe for glory, dropped the body, and ascended to heaven about six in the morning of November 19, 1590, *Æt.* 75. His remains were interred at Heidelberg, in the college chapel of St. Peter; where a small monumental stone was set up to his memory, with this inscription:

*Hieronymi hic sunt condita ossa Zanchii,
Itali; exulantis, Christi amore, a patria:
Qui theologus quantus fuerit et philosophus,
Testantur hoc, libri editi ab eo plurimi;
Testantur hoc, quos voce docuit in scholis;
Quique audiere eum docentem ecclesias.
Nunc ergo, quamvis hinc migrarit spiritu,
Claro tamen nobis remansit nomine.**

Decessit A. MDXC. Die 19 Novem.

* Here *Zanchy* rests, whom love of truth constrain'd
To quit his own and seek a foreign land.
How good and great he was, how form'd to shine,
How fraught with science human and divine;

I cannot help lamenting, that no more is to be collected concerning this incomparable man, than a few outlines of his life; comprizing little else but a dry detail of dates and removals.

As to his person, I can find no description of it, except from some very old and scarce prints, most of which were struck from engravings on wood. These represent him as extremely corpulent, even to unwieldiness: and yet, from the astonishing extent, profoundness and exquisite activity of his learning, judgment and genius, one might well nigh be induced to imagine, that *he* consisted entirely of soul, without any dead weight of body at all: for, of his *mind*, his writings present us with the loveliest image. He seems to have been possessed, and in a very superior degree, of those graces, virtues and abilities, which ennoble and exalt human nature to the highest elevation it is capable of below. His clear insight into the truths of the gospel is wonderful! especially, considering that the church of God was but just emerging from the long and dismal night of Popish darkness; and himself, previous to his conversion, as deeply plunged in the shades as any. It is a blessing which but few are favoured with, to step, almost at once, out of midnight into meridian day. He was tho-

Sufficient proof his num'rous writings give,
 And those who heard him teach and saw him live
 Earth still enjoys him, tho' his soul is fled:
 His name is deathless tho' his dust is dead.

roughly experienced in the divine life of the soul; and an happy subject of that internal kingdom of God, which lies in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This enabled him to sustain that impetus of opposition, which he almost constantly met with. Few persons have ordinarily borne a larger share of the cross, and perhaps none ever sustained it better. In him were happily centred, all the meek benevolence of charity, and all the adamantine firmness of intrepidity: qualities, alas, not constantly united in men of orthodoxy and learning.

He was intimately conversant with the writings of the fathers, and of the philosophers of that and the preceding times. His modesty and humility were singular. No man was ever more studious to preserve peace in the church of Christ, nor more highly relished the pleasures of learned and religious friendship. For some time before his decease, it pleased God to deprive him of his eyesight: for this I take to be the meaning of the excellent Melchior Adamus;* to whom I am indebted for much of the preceding account. His works, which, with his letters, and some other small pieces included, are divided into nine tomes, were collected and published by his executors some years after his death, and are usually bound together in three volumes, folio. He was twice married, and had several children; none of

* His words concerning Zanchy are *in senecta quæ nunquam sola venit, fato Isaaci obnoxius.*

which, so far as I can find, appear to have survived him.

He is said by Mr. Leigh,* to have been one "of the most scholastical among the Protestants:" which, however, may be questioned; his style and manner of treating an argument being rather plain and solid, than subtil and metaphysical. If scholism be an excellence in a writer, it is certain that the elder Spanhemius, and the great Francis Turretin, have since much exceeded Zanchy in that respect. Our learned countryman, Mr. Matthew Poole, terms him † *Theologus non e multis; cujus commentaria singulari eruditione atque lacumine composita, auctorem suum doctissimum referunt*: "A divine of the first class; whose expositions, written with extraordinary learning and ability, prove him to have been a most accomplished scholar." Even Mr. Bayle, who never seems to have been better pleased, than when he could pick an hole in the gown of an ecclesiastic, though himself was the son of one; yet allows our author to have been "one of the most celebrated Protestant divines, and that few ministers have been so moderate as he."

Nor must I omit the honour put upon him by our university of Cambridge, within five years after his death. One William Barrett, ‡ fellow

* Account of Rel. and Learn. Men, p. 370.

† Synops. Criticor. vol. iv. part 2. in Præloqu. ad Lect.

‡ See Fuller's Hist. of Cambridge, p. 150.

of Gonville and Caius college, ventured, April 29, 1595, to preach an Arminian sermon, in the face of the university, at St. Mary's. I say, ventured; for it was a bold and dangerous attempt, at that time, when the church of England was in her purity, for any man to propagate Arminianism:* and indeed, Barret himself paid dear for his innovating rashness; which ended in his ruin. The university were so highly offended, both at his presumption in daring to avow his novel, heterodox opinions, and for mentioning some great divines, among whom Zanchy was one, in terms of the highest rancour and disrespect, that he was enjoined to make a public recantation in that very pulpit from whence he had so lately vented his

* As every reader may not have a clear determinate idea of what Arminianism precisely is, it may to such be satisfactory to know, that it consists chiefly of five particulars. (1.) The Arminians will not allow election to be an eternal, peculiar, unconditional and irreversible act of God. (2.) They assert, that Christ died equally and indiscriminately for every individual of mankind; for them that perish, no less than for them that are saved. (3.) That saving grace is tendered to the acceptance of every man; which he may, or may not receive, just as he pleases. Consequently, (4.) That the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit is not invincible, but is suspended for its efficacy on the will of man. (5.) That saving grace is not an abiding principle; but that those who are loved of God, ransomed by Christ, and born again of the Spirit, may (let God wish and strive ever so much to the contrary) throw all away, and perish eternally at last.

To these, many Arminians tack a variety of errors beside. But the above may be considered as a general skeleton of the leading mistakes which characterize the sect.

errors. This he did the 5th of May following. Part of his recantation ran* thus: "Lastly, I

* Postremo, temere hæc verba effudi adversis Johannem Calvinum, virum de ecclesia Christi optime meritum; Eum nimirum ansum fuisse sese attollere supra altissimi & omnipotentis Dei vere altissimum et omnipotent Filium. Quibus verbis me viro doctissimo, vereque pio, magnam injuriam fecisse fateor: temeritatemque hanc meam ut omnes condonatis, humillime precor. Tum etiam quod nonnulla adversus P. Martyrem, Theodorum Bezam, HIERONYMUM ZANCHIUM, Franciscum Junium, et cæteros ejusdem religionis, *Ecclesie nostræ lumina & ornamenta*, acerbissime effuderim; eos odioso nomine appellans Calvinistas, & aliis verbis ignominie gravissimam infamie notam inurens. Quos quia *Ecclesia nostra merito reveretur*, non erat æquum, et ego eorum famam violarem, aut existimationem aliqua ratione imminuerem; aut aliquos e nostris dehortarer, ne eorum doctissima scripta legerent.

Strype's Life of Whitgift. Appendix, p. 186.

I cannot help observing one more particular respecting this famous recantation, wherein the recanter thus expressed himself: Secundo, Petri fidem deficere non potuisse, asserui; at aliorum posse, &c. i. e. "I asserted, that Peter's faith indeed could not fail, but that the faith of other believers might; whereas, now being by Christ's own word brought to a better and sounder mind, I acknowledge that Christ prays for the faith of each believer in particular; and, that by the efficacy of Christ's prayer, all true believers are so supported, that their faith cannot fail." Barret asserted, rank Arminian as he was, that Peter's faith did not actually fail. But we have had a recent instance of an Arminian preacher, who avers without ceremony, that Peter's faith DID fail. The passage, verbatim, without adding a jot, or diminishing a tittle, stands thus: "*Peter's faith failed, though Christ himself prayed it might not.*" See a sermon on 1 Cor. ix. 27. preached before the university of Oxford, Feb. 19, 1769, by John Allen, M. A. vice-principal of Magdalen Hall, p. 17.

rashly uttered these words against *John Calvin*, (a person, than whom none has deserved better of the church,) namely, that he had presumed to exalt himself above the Son of God; in saying which, I acknowledge that I greatly injured that most learned and truly pious man; and I do most humbly entreat, that ye will all forgive this my rashness. I also threw out, in a most rancorous manner, some reflections against Peter Martyr, Theodore Beza, *Jerom Zanchy*, Francis Junius, and others of the same religion, who were *the lights and ornaments of our church*: calling them by the malicious name of Calvinists, and branding them with other reproachful terms. I did wrong in assailing the reputation of these persons, and in endeavouring to lessen the estimation in which they are held, and in dissuading any from reading their most learned works; seeing *our church holds these divines in deserved reverence.*"

I would hope, as our articles of religion have not been changed but stand just as they did at that very time, that the church of England, in the year 1769, still considers the above great men (and Zanchy among the rest) as some of HER ancient LIGHTS *and* ORNAMENTS; and that she

This is Arminianism double-distilled. The common simple Arminianism, that served Barret, and Laud, and Heylin, will not do now for our more enlightened divines. Whether Peter's faith failed or not, that Mr. Allen's modesty has failed him, is, I believe, what nobody can deny.

holds *them* and *their writings*, in the same DESERVED REVERENCE, as did the church of England in the year 1595.

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
DIVINE ATTRIBUTES;

NECESSARY TO BE PREMISED, IN ORDER TO OUR
BETTER UNDERSTANDING THE DOCTRINE OF
PREDESTINATION.

ALTHOUGH the great and ever-blessed God is a being absolutely simple, and infinitely remote from all shadow of composition; he is, nevertheless, in condescension to our weak and contracted faculties, represented in scripture, as possessed of divers properties, or attributes, which, though seemingly different from his essence, are in reality essential to him, and constitutive to his very nature.

Of these attributes, those on which we shall now particularly descant (as being more immediately concerned in the ensuing subject,) are the following ones; 1. His eternal-wisdom and fore-knowledge. 2. The absolute freedom and liberty of his will. 3. The perpetuity and unchangeableness both of himself and his decrees. 4. His omnipotence. 5. His justice. 6. His mercy.

Without an explication of these the doctrine of predestination cannot be so well understood: we shall, therefore, briefly consider them, by way of preliminary to the main subject.

I. With respect to the divine wisdom and foreknowledge, I shall lay down the following positions.

Pos. 1. God is, and always was, so perfectly wise, that nothing ever did, or does, or can, elude his knowledge. He knew from all eternity, not only what he himself intended to do, but also what he would incline and permit others to do. Acts xv. 18. "Known unto God are all his works, ἀπ' αἰῶνος, from eternity."

Pos. 2. Consequently, God knows nothing now, nor will know any thing hereafter, which he did not know and foresee from everlasting: his foreknowledge being co-eternal with himself, and extending to every thing that is or shall be done. Heb. iv. 13. All things, which comprises past, present and future, are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Pos. 3. This foreknowledge of God is not conjectural and uncertain, (for then it would not be foreknowledge) but most sure and infallible: so that whatever he foreknows to be future, shall necessarily and undoubtedly come to pass. For his knowledge can no more be frustrated, or his wisdom be deceived, than he can cease to be God. Nay, could either of these be the case, he actually would cease to be God; all mistake and disappointment being absolutely incompatible with the divine nature.

Pos. 4. The influence which the divine foreknowledge has on the certain futurition of the things foreknown, does not render the intervention of second causes needless, nor destroy the nature of the things themselves.

My meaning is, that the prescience of God does not lay any coercive necessity on the wills of beings naturally free. For instance, man, even in his fallen state, is endued with a natural

freedom of will; yet he acts, from the first to the last moment of his life, in absolute subserviency (though, perhaps he does not know it, nor design it) to the purposes and decrees of God concerning him: notwithstanding which, he is sensible of no compulsion, but acts as freely and voluntarily, as if he was *sui juris*, subject to no control, and absolutely lord of himself. This made *Luther**, after he had shown how all things necessarily and inevitably come to pass, in consequence of the sovereign will and infallible foreknowledge of God, say, that "We should carefully distinguish between a necessity of infallibility, and a necessity of coercion; since both good and evil men, though by their actions they fulfil the decree and appointment of God, yet are not forcibly constrained to do any thing but act willingly."

Pos. 5. God's foreknowledge, taken abstractedly, is not the sole cause of beings and events; but his will and foreknowledge together. Hence we find, Acts ii. 23. that his determinate counsel and foreknowledge act in concert; the latter resulting from, and being founded on, the former.

We pass on,

II. To consider the will of God: with regard to which we assert as follows.

Pos. 1. The Deity is possessed not only of infinite knowledge, but likewise of absolute *liberty* of will: so that whatever he does, or permits to be done, he does and permits freely, and of his own good pleasure.

Consequently, it is his free pleasure to permit sin: since, without his permission, neither men nor devils can do any thing. Now, to permit,

* De Scry. Arb. cap. 44.

is, at least, the same as not to hinder, though it be in our power to hinder if we please: and this permission, or non-hindrance, is certainly an act of the divine will. Hence *Austin** says, "Those things which seemingly thwart the divine will, are nevertheless agreeable to it; for if God did not permit them, they could not be done: and whatever God permits, he permits freely and willingly. He does nothing, neither suffers any thing to be done, against his own will." And *Luther*† observes, that "God permitted Adam to fall into sin, because he willed that he should so fall."

Pos. 2. Although the will of God, considered in itself, is simply one and the same; yet, in condescension to the present capacities of men, the divine will is very properly distinguished into secret and revealed. Thus it was his revealed will, that Pharaoh should let the Israelites go; that Abraham should sacrifice his son; and that Peter should not deny Christ, but as was proved by the event, it was his secret will that Pharaoh should not let Israel go, *Exod. iv. 21.* that Abraham should not sacrifice Isaac, *Gen. xxii. 12.* and that Peter should deny his Lord, *Matt. xxvi. 34.*

Pos. 3. The will of God respecting the salvation and condemnation of men, is never contrary to itself; he immutably wills the salvation of the elect, and vice versa: nor can he ever vary or deviate from his own will in any instance whatever, so as that that should be done, which he willeth not; or that not be brought to pass, which he willeth. *Isai. xlv. 10.* My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. *Psalms*

* *Enchir. cap. 100.*

† *De Serv. Art. c. 153.*

xxxiii. 11. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Job xxiii. 13, 14. He is in one mind, who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him. Eph. i. 11. Being predestinated, according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Thus, for instance, Hophni and Phineas hearkened not to the voice of their father, who reproved them for their wickedness, because the Lord would slay them, 1 Sam. ii. 25. and Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not receive the peaceable message sent him by Moses, because the Lord God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into the hand of Israel, Deut. ii. 26, 30. Thus also, to add no more, we find that there have been, and ever will be, some whose eyes God blindeth, and whose hearts he hardeneth, i. e. whom God permits to continue blind and hardened, on purpose to prevent their seeing with their eyes, and understanding with their hearts, and to hinder their conversion to God, and spiritual healing by him, Isai. vi. 9. John xii. 39, 40.

Pos. 4. Because God's *will of precept* may in some instances appear to thwart his *will of determination*; it does not follow, either, 1. that he mocks his creatures, or, 2. that they are excusable for neglecting to observe his will of command.

(1.) He does not hereby mock his creatures; for, if men do not believe his word, nor observe his precepts, the fault is not in him, but in themselves; their unbelief and disobedience are not owing to any ill infused into them by God, but to the vitiosity of their depraved nature, and the

the perverseness of their own wills. Now, if God invited all men to come to him, and then shut the door of mercy against any who were desirous of entering; his invitation would be a mockery, and unworthy of himself: but we insist on it, that he does not invite all men to come to him in a saving way: and that every individual person, who is, through his gracious influence on his heart, made willing to come to him, shall, sooner or later surely be saved by him, and that with an everlasting salvation. (2.) Man is not excusable for neglecting God's will of command. Pharaoh was faulty, and therefore justly punishable for not obeying God's revealed will, though God's secret will rendered that obedience impossible. Abraham would have committed sin, had he refused to sacrifice Isaac; and in looking to God's secret will, would have acted counter to his revealed one. So Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the reprobate Jews, were justly condemned for putting CHRIST to death, inasmuch as it was a most notorious breach of God's revealed will. "Thou shalt do no murder;" yet, in slaying the Messiah, they did no more than God's hand and his counsel, i. e. his secret, ordaining will, determined before should be done, Acts iv. 27, 28. and Judas is justly punished for perfidiously and wickedly betraying Christ, though his perfidy and wickedness were (but not with his design) subservient to the accomplishment of the decree and word of God.

The brief of the matter is this; secret things belong to God, and those that are revealed belong to us: therefore, when we meet with a plain precept, we should simply endeavour to obey it, without tarrying to inquire into God's hidden purpose. Venerable *Bucer*, after taking notice how God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and making some

observations on the Apostle's simile of a potter and his clay; adds,* that "Though God has at least the same right over his creatures, and is at liberty to make them what he will, and direct them to the end that pleaseth himself, according to his sovereign and secret determination; yet it by no means follows, that they do not act freely and spontaneously, or that the evil they commit is to be charged on God."

Pos. 5. God's hidden will is peremptory and absolute: and therefore cannot be hindered from taking effect.

God's will is nothing else than God himself willing: consequently, it is omnipotent and unfrustrable. Hence we find it termed by Austin and the schoolmen, *voluntas omnipotentissima*, because, whatever God wills, cannot fail of being effected. This made Austin say,† "Evil men do many things contrary to God's revealed will; but so great is his wisdom, and so inviolable his truth, that he directs all things into those channels which he foreknew." And again,‡ "No free will of the creature can resist the will of God; for man cannot so will, or nill, as to obstruct the divine determination, or overcome the divine power." Once more§ "It cannot be questioned, but God does all things, and ever did according to his own purpose: the human will cannot resist him, so as to make him do more or less than it is his pleasure to do, *quandoquidem etiam de ipsis hominum voluntatibus quod vult facit*, since he does what he pleases even with the wills of men.

Pos. 6. Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of this absolute, omnipotent will of

* Bucer ad Rom. ix.

† De Civ. Dei. l. 22, c. 1.

‡ De Corr. & Grat. c. 14.

§ Ibid.

God, which is the primary and supreme cause of all things. Rev. ix. 11. "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created." Psalm cxv. 3 "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased." Dan. iv. 35. "He doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?" Psalm cxxxv. 6. "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and deep places." Mat. x. 29. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. To all which *Austin* subscribes when he says,* "Nothing is done but what the Almighty wills should be done, either efficiently or permissively." As does *Luther*†, whose words are these,† "This therefore must stand; to wit the unsearchable will of God, without which nothing exists or acts." And again, c. 160. "God would not be such, if he was not almighty, and if any thing could be done without him." And elsewhere, c. 158. he quotes these words of *Erasmus*: "Supposing there was an earthly prince, who could do whatever he would, and none were able to resist him; we might safely say of such an one, that he would certainly fulfil his own desire: in like manner, the will of God, which is the first cause of all things, should seem to lay a kind of necessity upon our wills." This *Luther* approves of, and subjoins, "Thanks be to God for this orthodox passage in *Erasmus's* discourse! but, if this be true, what becomes of his doctrine of free will, which he at other times so strenuously contends for?"

* Tom. 3. in Enchi.

† De Serv. Arb. c. 143.

Pos. 7. The will of God is so the cause of all things, as to be itself without cause; for nothing can be the cause of that, which is the cause of every thing.

So that the divine will is the *ne plus ultra* of all our inquiries: when we ascend to that we can go no farther. Hence, we find every matter resolved ultimately into the mere sovereign pleasure of God, as the spring and occasion of whatsoever is done in heaven and earth. Mat. xi. 25. "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." Luke xii. 32. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Mat. viii. 3. "I will, be thou clean." Mark iii. 13. "He went up into a mountain, and called unto him whom he would." Jam. i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." John i. 13. "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Rom. ix. 15, 18. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Therefore he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." And no wonder that the will of God should be the main spring that sets all inferior wheels in motion, and should likewise be the rule by which he goes in all his dealings with his creatures; since nothing out of God, i. e. exterior to himself, can possibly induce him to will or nill one thing rather than another. Deny this, and you at one stroke destroy his immutability and independency: since he can never be independent, who acts *pro re nata*, as emergency requires, and whose will is suspended on that of others: not unchangeable, whose purposes vary and take all shapes, according as the persons of

things vary, who are the objects of those purposes. The only reason, then, that can be assigned, *why* the Deity does this, or omits that, is, because it is his own free pleasure. *Luther*,* in answer to that question, "Whence it was, that Adam was permitted to fall, and corrupt his whole posterity, when God could have prevented his falling," &c. says, "God is a Being, whose will acknowledges no cause: neither is it for us to prescribe rules to his sovereign pleasure, or call him to account for what he does. He has neither superior nor equal; and his will is the rule of all things. He did not therefore will such and such things, because they were in themselves right, and he was bound to will them; but they are therefore equitable and right, because he wills them. The will of man indeed may be influenced and moved; but God's will never can. To assert the contrary is to undeify him." *Bucer* likewise observes,† "God has no other motive for what he does, than *ipsa voluntas*, his own mere will; which will is so far from being unrighteous, that it is justice itself."

Pos. 8. Since, as was lately observed, the determining will of God being omnipotent, cannot be obstructed or made void; it follows, that he never did, nor does he now, will that every individual of mankind should be saved.

If this was his will, not one single soul could ever be lost: (for who hath resisted his will?) and he would surely afford all men those effectual means of salvation, without which it cannot be had. Now God could afford these means as easily to all mankind as to some only: but experience proves that he does not; and the reason is

* De Serv. Arb. c. 153.

† Ad Rom. ix.

equally plain, namely, that he will not : for whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that does he in heaven and on earth. It is said, indeed, by the apostle, that God would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth? i. e. as *Austin*,* consonantly with other scriptures, explains the passage, “God will save some out of the whole race of mankind,” that is, persons of all nations, kindreds and tongues. Nay, he will save all men; i. e. as the same father observes, “every kind of men, or men of every kind,” namely, the election of grace, be they bond or free, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, male or female. Add to this, that it evidently militates against the majesty, omnipotence, and supremacy of God, to suppose that he can either will any thing in vain, or that any thing can take effect against his will: therefore *Bucer* observes very rightly, *ad Rom. ix.* “God doth not will the salvation of reprobates, seeing he hath not chosen them, neither created them to that end.” Consonant to which are those words of *Luther*,† “This mightily offends our rational nature, that God should, of his own mere unbiassed will, leave some men to themselves, harden them, and then condemn them : but he has given abundant demonstration, and does continually, that this is really the case; namely, that the sole cause why some are saved, and others perish, proceeds from his willing the salvation of the former, and the perdition of the latter, according to that of Paul, ‘He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.’”

* *Enchir. c. 103. & de Corr. & Gr. c. 14. † De Serv. Arb. c. 161.*

Pos. 9. As God doth not will that each individual of mankind should be saved; so neither did he will that Christ should properly and immediately die for each individual of mankind; whence it follows, that though the blood of Christ, from its own intrinsic dignity, was sufficient for the redemption of all men, yet, in consequence of his Father's appointment, he shed it intentionally, and therefore effectually and immediately, for the *elect only*.

This is self-evident. God, as we have before proved, wills not the salvation of every man: but he gave his Son to die for them whose salvation he willed; therefore his Son did not die for every man. All those, for whom Christ died, are saved; and the divine justice indispensably requires that to them the benefits of his death should be imparted; but only the elect are saved; they only partake of those benefits; consequently, for them only he died and intercedes. The apostle, Rom. viii. asks, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies," i. e. his elect, exclusively of others: "who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died" for them, exclusively of others. The plain meaning of the passage is, that those whom God justifies, and for whom Christ died, (justification and redemption being of exactly the same extent,) cannot be condemned. These privileges are expressly restricted to the elect: therefore God justifies and Christ died for them alone.

In the same chapter, Paul asks; "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, (i. e. for all us elect persons) how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?" i. e. salvation, and all things necessary to it. Now, it is certain that these are not given to

every individual; and yet, if Paul says true, they are given to all those for whom Christ was delivered to death; consequently, he was not delivered to death for every individual. To the same purpose St. Austin argues, in *Johan. tract. 45. col. 335.* Hence that saying of Ambrose,* “*si non credis, non tibi passus est,*” i. e. if you are an unbeliever, Christ did not die for you. Meaning, that whoever is left under the power of final unbelief, is thereby evidenced to be one of those for whom Christ did not die: but that all for whom he suffered, shall be, in this life, sooner or later, endued with faith. The church of Smyrna, in their letter to the diocese of Pontus, insist every where on the doctrine of special redemption.† Bucer, in all parts of his works, observes, that “Christ died restrictively for the elect only; but for them universally.”

Pos. 10. From what has been laid down, it follows, that Austin, Luther, Bucer, the scholastic divines, and other learned writers, are not to be blamed for asserting that “God may, in some sense, be said to will the being and commission of sin.” For, was this contrary to his determining will of permission, either he would not be omnipotent, or sin could have no place in the world: but he is omnipotent, and sin has place in the world; which it could not have, if God willed otherwise; for “who hath resisted his will?” Rom. ix. No one can deny that God permits sin: but he neither permits it ignorantly, nor unwillingly; therefore, knowingly and willingly. Vid *Aust. Enchir. c. 96.* Luther steadfastly maintains this in his book *de Serv. Arbitr.* and Bucer in *Rom. 1.* However, it should be

* Ambros. Tom. 2. de fid. ad. Grat. l. 4. c. i.

† Vid. Euseb. Hist. l. 4. c. 10.

carefully noticed, (1.) That God's permission of sin does not arise from his taking delight in it: on the contrary, sin, as sin, is the abominable thing that his soul hateth: and his efficacious permission of it is for wise and good purposes. Whence that observation of Austin,* "God, who is no less omnipotent than he is supremely and perfectly holy, would never have permitted evil to enter among his works, but in order that he might do good even with that evil," i. e. overrule it for good in the end. (2.) That God's free and voluntary permission of sin lays no man under any forcible or compulsive necessity of committing it: consequently, the Deity can by no means be termed the author of moral evil; to which he is not, in the proper sense of the word, accessory, but only remotely or negatively so, inasmuch as he could, if he pleased, absolutely prevent it.

We should, therefore, be careful not to give up the omnipotence of God, under a pretence of exalting his holiness: he is infinite in both, and therefore neither should be set aside or obscured. To say that God absolutely nills the being and commission of sin, while experience convinces us that sin is acted every day, is to represent the Deity as a weak, impotent being, who would fain have things go otherwise than they do, but cannot accomplish his desire. On the other hand, to say that he willet sin, doth not in the least detract from the holiness and rectitude of his nature; because, whatever God wills, as well as whatever he does, cannot be eventually evil: materially evil it may be; but, as was just said, it must, ultimately, be directed to some

* Enchir. c. 11.

wise and just end, otherwise he could not will it: for his will is righteous and good, and the sole rule of right and wrong, as is often observed by Austin, Luther, and others.

Pos. 11. In consequence of God's immutable will and infallible foreknowledge, whatever things come to pass, come to pass necessarily; though, with respect to second causes, and us men, many things are contingent: i. e. unexpected, and seemingly accidental.

That this was the doctrine of Luther, none can deny, who are in any measure acquainted with his works: particularly with his treatise *De servo Arbitrio*, or free will a slave: the main drift of which book is, to prove, that the will of man is by nature enslaved to evil only, and, because it is fond of that slavery, is therefore said to be free. Among other matters, he proves there, that, "whatever man does, he does necessarily, though not with any sensible compulsion: and that we can only do what God from eternity willed and foreknew he should; which will of God must be effectual, and his foresight must be certain." Hence we find him saying,* "It is most necessary and salutary for a Christian to be assured, that God foreknows nothing uncertainly; but that he determines, and foresees, and acts, in all things, according to his own eternal, immutable, and infallible will;" adding "Hereby, as with a thunderbolt, is man's free will thrown down and destroyed." A little after, he shews in what sense he took the word necessity; "By it," says he, "I do not mean that the will suffers any forcible constraint, or coercion; but the infallible accomplishment of those things, which

* Cap. 17. in Resp. ad. præf.

the immutable God decreed and foreknew concerning us." He goes on: "Neither the divine nor human will does any thing by constraint: but, whatever man does, be it good or bad, he does with as much appetite and willingness, as if his will was really free. But, after all, the will of God is certain and unalterable, and is the governess of ours." Exactly consonant to all which are those words of Luther's friend and fellow-labourer, Melancthon: † "All things turn out according to divine predestination; not only the works we do outwardly, but even the thoughts we think inwardly:" adding, in the same place, "There is no such thing as chance, or fortune; nor is there a readier way to gain the fear of God, and to put our whole trust in him, than to be thoroughly versed in the doctrine of predestination." I could cite, to the same purpose *Austin*, *Aquines*, and many other learned men; but, for brevity sake, forbear. That this is the doctrine of scripture, every adept in those sacred books cannot but acknowledge. See particularly, Psalm cxxxv. 6. Mat. x. 29. Prov. xvi. 1. Mat. xxvi. 54. Luke xxii. 22. Acts iv. 28. Eph. i. 11. Isa. xlvi. 10.

Pos. 12. As God knows nothing now which he did not know from all eternity, so he wills nothing now which he did not will from everlasting.

This position needs no explanation nor enforcement; it being self-evident, that if any thing can accede to God *de novo*, i. e. if he can at any time be wiser than he always was, or will that at one time, which he did not will from all eternity; these dreadful consequences must ensue, (1.) That the knowledge of God is not perfect, since

† In Eph. 1.

what is absolutely perfect *non recipit magis & minus*, cannot admit either of addition or detracting. If I add to any thing, it is from a supposal that that thing was not complete before ; if I detract from it, it is supposed that that detracting renders it less perfect than it was. But the knowledge of God being infinitely perfect, cannot consistently with that perfection be either increased or lessened. (2.) That the will of God is fluctuating, mutable, and unsteady ; consequently, that God himself is so, his will coinciding with his essence, contrary to the avowed assurances of scripture, and the strongest dictates of reason, as we shall presently show when we come to treat of the divine immutability.

Pos. 13. The absolute will of God is the original spring and efficient cause of his people's salvation.

I say the original and efficient ; For *sensu complexo*, there are other intermediate causes of their salvation, which however all result from, and are subservient to, this primary one, the will of God. Such are his everlasting choice of them to eternal life, the eternal covenant of grace entered into by the Trinity in behalf of the elect, the incarnation, obedience, death and intercession of Christ for them all, which are so many links in the great chain of causes ; and not one of these can be taken away without marring and subverting the whole gospel plan of salvation by Jesus Christ. We see then, that the free, unbiassed, sovereign will of God is the root of this tree of life, which bears so many glorious branches, and yields such salutary fruits : He therefore loved the elect, and ordained them to life, because he would, according to that of the apostle, "having predestinated us — according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph. i. 5. Then, next after God's covenant for

his people, and promises to them, comes in the infinite merit of Christ's righteousness and atonement; for we were chosen to salvation in him as members of his mystic body, and through him as our surety and substitute, by whose vicarious obedience to the moral law, and submission to its curse and penalty, all we whose names are in the book of life should never incur the divine hatred, or be punished for our sins, but continue to eternity, as we were from eternity heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. But still divine grace and favour (and God extends these to whom he will) must be considered as what gave birth to the glorious scheme of redemption, according to what our Lord himself teaches us, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. and that of the apostle, 1 John iv. 9. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that he sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him."

Pos. 14. Since this absolute will of God is both immutable and omnipotent, we infer that the salvation of every one of the elect is most infallibly certain, and can by no means be prevented. This necessarily follows from what we have already asserted and proved concerning the divine will, which as it cannot be disappointed or made void, must undoubtedly secure the salvation of all whom God wills should be saved.

From the whole of what has been delivered under this second head, I would observe, That the genuine tendency of these truths is, not to make men indolent and careless, or lull them to sleep on the lap of presumption and carnal security; but, (1.) To fortify the people of Christ against the attacks of unbelief, and the insults of their spiritual enemies: and what is so fit to

guard them against these, as the comfortable persuasion of God's unalterable will to save them, and of their unalienable interest in the sure mercies of David? (2.) To withdraw them entirely from all dependence, whether on themselves or any creature whatever; to make them renounce their own righteousness, no less than their sins in point of reliance, and to acquiesce sweetly and safely in the certain perpetuity of his rich favour. (3.) To excite them from a trust of his good will toward them, to love that God, who hath given such great and numberless proofs of his love to men; and in all their thoughts, words and works, to aim as much as possible at his honour and glory.

We were to consider,

III. The *unchangeableness* which is essential to himself and his decrees.

Pos. 1. God is essentially unchangeable in himself: were he otherwise he would be confessedly imperfect, since whoever changes, must change either for the better or for the worse; whatever alteration any being undergoes, that being must *ipso facto*, either become more excellent than it was, or lose some of the excellency which it had. But neither of these can be the case with the Deity: He cannot change for the better, for that would necessarily imply that he was not perfectly good before; he cannot change for the worse, for then he could not be perfectly good after that change. *Ergo*, God is unchangeable. And this is the uniform voice of scripture. Mal. iii. 6. "I am the Lord, I change not." James i. 17. "With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Psalm cii. 27. "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

Pos. 2. God is likewise absolutely unchangeable with regard to his purposes and promises.

Numb. xxiii. 19. "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?"

1 Sam. xv. 29. "The Strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent." Job xxiii. 13. "He is in one mind, and who can turn him?" Ezek. xxiv. 14. "I, the Lord, have spoken it, it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent." Rom. xi. 29. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." 2 Tim. ii. 13. "He abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself."

By the purpose or decree of God, we mean his determinate counsel, whereby he did from all eternity preordain whatever he should do, or would permit to be done in time. In particular, it signifies his everlasting appointment of some men to life, and of others to death; which appointment flows entirely from his own free and sovereign will. Rom. ix. "The children not yet being born, neither having done any good or evil, (that the purpose of God according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth) it was said, the elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

The apostle then, in the very next words, anticipates an objection which he foresaw men of corrupt minds would make to this: "What shall we say then? is there unrighteousness with God?" which he answers with, God forbid! and resolves the whole of God's procedure with his creatures into his own sovereign and independent will: For he said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

We assert, that the decrees of God are not only immutable as to himself, it being inconsistent with his nature to alter in his purposes, or change his mind ; but that they are immutable likewise with respect to the objects of those decrees ; so that whatsoever God hath determined concerning every individual person or thing, shall surely and infallibly be accomplished in and upon them. Hence we find, that he actually sheweth mercy on whom he decreed to shew mercy, and hardeneth whom he resolved to harden, Rom. ix. 18. " For his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 10. Consequently, his eternal predestination of men and things must be immutable as himself, and, so far from being reversible, can never admit of the least variation.

Pos. 3. " Although," to use the words of Gregory, " God never swerves from his decree, yet he often varies in his declarations : " That is always sure and immoveable ; these are sometimes seemingly discordant. So, when he gave sentence against the Ninevites by Jonah, saying, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown, the meaning of the words is not that God absolutely intended, at the end of that space, to destroy the city ; but that, should God deal with those people according to their deserts, they would be totally extirpated from the earth : and should be so extirpated, unless they repented speedily.

Likewise, when he told King Hezekiah, by the prophet Isaiah, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live ; the meaning was, that with respect to second causes, and considering the king's bad state of health and emaciated constitution, he could not, humanly speaking, live much longer. But still, the event shewed that God had immutably determined that he should live fifteen years more ; and, in order to that, had

put it into his heart to pray for the blessing decreed : just as in the case of Nineveh, lately mentioned, God had resolved not to overthrow that city then ; and in order to the accomplishment of his own purpose in a way worthy of himself, made the ministry of Jonah the means of leading that people to repentance. All which, as it shews that God's absolute predestination does not set aside the use of means ; so does it likewise prove, that however various the declarations of God may appear, (to wit, when they proceed on a regard had to natural causes) his counsels and designs stand firm and immoveable, and can neither admit of alteration in themselves, nor of hindrance in their execution. See this farther explained by *Bucer*, in Rom. ix. where you will find the certainty of the divine appointments solidly asserted and unanswerably vindicated. We now come,

IV. To consider the *Omnipotence* of God.

Pos. 1. God is, in the most unlimited and absolute sense of the word, Almighty. Jer. x. xii. 17. Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. Mat. xix. 26. With God all things are possible. The schoolmen very properly distinguish the omnipotence of God into absolute and actual ; by the former, God might do many things which he does not ; by the latter, he actually does whatever he will. For instance ; God might by virtue of his absolute power, have made more worlds than he has. He might have eternally saved every individual of mankind, without reprobating any : on the other hand, he might, and that with the strictest justice, have condemned all men, and saved none. He could, had it been his pleasure, have prevented the fall of angels and men, and

thereby have hindered sin from having footing in and among his creatures. By virtue of his actual power, he made the universe ; executes the whole counsel of his will, both in heaven and earth ; governs and influences both men and things, according to his own pleasure ; fixes the bounds which they shall not pass ; and, in a word, worketh all in all, Isa. xlv. 7. Amos iii. 6. John v. 17. Acts xvii. 26. 1 Cor xii. 6.

Pos. 2. Hence it follows that, since all things are subject to the divine control, God not only works efficaciously on his elect, in order that they may will and do that which is pleasing in his sight ; but does likewise frequently and powerfully suffer the wicked to fill up the measure of their iniquities, by committing fresh sins. Nay, he sometimes, but for wise and gracious ends, permits his own people to transgress : for he has the hearts and wills of men in his own hand, and inclines them to good, or delivers them up to evil, as he sees fit, yet without being the author of sin ; as Luther, Bucer, Austin and others, have piously and scripturally taught.

This position consists of two parts ; (1.) That God efficaciously operates on the hearts of his elect, and is thereby the sole author of all the good they do. See Eph. iii. 20. Phil. ii. 13. 1 Thess. ii. 13. Heb. xiii. 21. St. *Austin** takes no fewer than nineteen chapters, in proving that whatever good is in men, and whatever good they are enabled to do, is solely and entirely of God ; who, says he, “ works in holy persons all their good desires, their pious thoughts, and their righteous actions ; and yet these holy persons, though thus wrought upon by God, will and do all these things freely : for it is he who rectifies their wills,

* De Grat. & lib. Arb. a c. 1. usque ad c. 20.

which, being originally evil, are made good by him; and which wills, after he hath set them right and made them good, he directs to good actions and to eternal life; wherein he does not force their wills, but makes them willing." (2.) That God often lets the wicked go on to more ungodliness: which he does, 1. Negatively, by withholding that grace, which alone can restrain them from evil. 2. Remotely, by the providential concurrence and mediation of second causes; which second causes, meeting and acting in concert with the corruption of the reprobate's unregenerate nature, produce sinful effects. 3. Judicially, or in a way of judgment. Prov. xxi. 1. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth it whithersoever he will:" And if the king's heart, why not the hearts of all men? Lam. iii. 38. "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good?" Hence we find, that the Lord bid Shimei curse David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. That he moved David himself to number the people, compare 1 Chron. xxi. 1. with 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. Stirred up Joseph's brethren to sell him into Egypt, Gen. l. 20. Positively and immediately hardened the heart of Pharaoh, Ex. iv. 21. Delivered up David's wives to be defiled by Absalom, 2 Sam. xii. 11. and xvi. 22. Sent a lying spirit to deceive Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 20—23. And mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt, i. e. made that nation perverse, obdurate and stiffnecked, Isai. xix. 14. To cite other instances would be almost endless, and, after these, quite unnecessary; all being summed up in that express passage, Isai. xlv. 7. "I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." See farther, 1 Sam. xvi. 14. Psalm cv. 25. Jer. xiii. 12, 13. Acts ii. 23. and iv. 28. Rom. xi. 8.

2 Thess. ii. 11. Every one of which implies more* than a bare permission of sin. *Bucer* asserts this, not only in the place referred to below, but continually throughout his works; particularly on *Mat. vi. s. 2.* where this is the sense of his comments on that petition, lead us not into temptation; "It is abundantly evident, from most express testimonies of scripture, that God, occasionally in the course of his providence, puts both elect and reprobate persons into circumstances of temptation: by which temptation are meant, not only those trials that are of an outward, afflictive nature, but those also that are inward and spiritual; even such as shall cause the persons so tempted actually to turn aside from the path of duty to commit sin, and involve both themselves and others in evil. Hence we find the elect complaining. *Isa. lxiii. 17.* "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" But there is also a kind of temptation, which is peculiar to the non-elect; whereby God, in a way of just judgment, makes them totally blind and obdurate: inasmuch as they are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." See also his exposition of *Rom. ix.*

Luther† reasons to the very same effect: some of his words are these; "It may seem absurd to human wisdom, that God should harden, blind and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil; but the believing, spiritual man sees no absurdity at all in

* Vid. *Augustin*, de Grat. & lib. Arbitr. c. 20. & 21. & *Bucer* in *Rom. i. sect. 7.*

† De Serv. Arb. c. 8. & 146. & 147. usq. ad. c. 165.

this ; knowing that God would be never a whit less good, even though he should destroy all men." And again ; " God worketh all things in men ; even wickedness in the wicked : for this is one branch of his own omnipotence." He very properly explains, how God may be said to harden men, &c. and yet not be the author of their sin ; " It is not to be understood (says he) as if God found men good, wise and tractable, and then made them wicked, foolish and obdurate ; but God finding them depraved, judicially and powerfully excites them just as they are, (unless it is his will to regenerate any of them ;) and, by thus exciting them, they become more blind and obstinate than they were before." See this whole subject debated at large in the places last referred to.

Pos. 3. God, as the primary and efficient cause of all things, is not only the author of those actions done by his elect, *as actions*, but also as they are *good* actions ; whereas, on the other hand, though he may be said to be the author of all the actions done by the wicked, yet he is not the author of them in a moral and compound sense, as they are sinful ; but physically, simply, and *sensu diviso*, as they are mere actions, abstractedly from all consideration of the goodness or badness of them.

Although there is no action whatever, which is not in some sense, either good or bad ; yet we easily conceive of an action, purely as such, without adverting to the quality of it : so that the distinction between an action itself and its denomination of good or evil, is very obvious and natural.

In and by the elect, therefore, God not only produces works and actions through his almighty power ; but likewise through the salutary influ-

ences of his Spirit, first makes their persons good, and then their actions so too : but, in and by the reprobate, he produces actions by his power alone; which actions, as neither issuing from faith, nor being wrought with a view to the divine glory, nor done in the manner prescribed by the divine word, are on these accounts properly denominated evil. Hence we see that God does not immediately and *per se* infuse iniquity into the wicked; but, as Luther expresses it, powerfully excites them to action, and withholds those gracious influences of his Spirit, without which every action is necessarily evil. That God, either directly or remotely, excites bad men as well as good ones, to action, cannot be denied by any but Atheists, or by those who carry their notions of free will and human independency so high as to exclude the Deity from all actual operation in and among his creatures; which is little short of Atheism. Every work performed, whether good or evil, is done in the strength and by the power derived immediately from God himself, in whom all men live, move, and have their being, Acts xvii. 28. As, at first, without him was not any thing made which was made; so now, without him is not any thing done which is done. We have no power or faculty, whether corporeal or intellectual, but what we received from God, subsists by him, and is exercised in subserviency to his will and appointment. It is he who created, preserves, actuates, and directs all things. But it by no means follows from these premises, that God is therefore the cause of sin; for sin is nothing but *ανομία*, illegality, want of conformity to the divine law, 1 John iii. 4. a mere privation of rectitude; consequently, being itself a thing purely negative, it can have no positive or efficient cause, but only a negative and deficient one: as several learned men have observed.

Every action, as such, is undoubtedly good ; it being an actual exertion of those operative powers given us by God for that very end : God therefore may be the author of all actions, (as he undoubtedly is) and yet not be the author of evil. An action is constituted evil three ways ; by proceeding from a wrong principle, by being directed to a wrong end, and by being done in a wrong manner. Now, though God, as we have said, is the efficient cause of our actions, as actions ; yet, if these actions commence sinful, that sinfulness arises from ourselves. Suppose a boy, who knows not how to write, has his hand guided by his master, and nevertheless makes false letters, quite unlike the copy set him ; though his preceptor, who guides his hand, is the cause of his writing at all, yet his own ignorance and unskillfulness are the cause of his writing so badly. Just so, God is the supreme author of our action, abstractedly taken ; but our own vitiosity is the cause of our acting amiss.

I shall conclude this article with two or three observations. And, (1.) I would infer, that if we would maintain the doctrine of God's omnipotence, we must insist upon that of his universal agency : the latter cannot be denied, without giving up the former. Disprove that he is almighty, and then we will grant that his influence and operations are limited and circumscribed. Luther says,* " God would not be a respectable being if he were not almighty, and the doer of all things that are done ; or if any thing could come to pass in which he had no hand." God has, at least a physical influence on whatsoever is done by his creatures, whether trivial or important, good or evil. Judas as truly lived, moved, and

* De Serv. Arb. c. 169.

had his being from God, as Peter; and Satan himself, as much as Gabriel: for, to say that sin exempts the sinner from the divine government and jurisdiction, is abridging the power of God with a witness; nay, is razing it from its very foundations.

(2.) This doctrine of God's omnipotence has a native tendency to awaken in our hearts that reverence for, and fear of the divine Majesty, which none can either receive or retain, but those who believe him to be infinitely powerful, and to work all things after the counsel of his own will. This godly fear is a sovereign antidote against sin; for if I really believe that God, by his unintermitted operation upon my soul, produces actions in me, which, being simply good, receive their malignancy from the corruption of my nature (and even those works that stand opposed to sins, are, more or less, infected with this moral leprosy;) and if I consider that, should I yield myself a slave to actual iniquity, God can, and justly might, as he has frequently done by others, give me up to a reprobate mind, and punish one sin, by leaving me to the commission of another; surely, such reflections as these must fill me with awful apprehensions of the divine purity, power and greatness, and make me watch continually, as well against the inward risings, as the outward appearance of evil.

(3.) This doctrine is also useful, as it tends to inspire us with true humility of soul, and to lay us, as impotent dust and ashes, at the feet of sovereign omnipotence. It teaches us, what too many are fatally ignorant of, the blessed lesson of *self-despair*; i. e. that, in a state of unregeneracy, our wisdom is folly, our strength weakness, and our righteousness nothing worth: that, therefore, we can do nothing either to the glory of

God, or the spiritual benefit of ourselves, and others, but through the ability which he giveth; that in him our strength lieth, and from him all our help must come. Supposing we believe, that, whatsoever is done below or above, God doeth it himself; that all things depend, both as to their being and operation, upon his omnipotent arm and mighty support; that we cannot even *sin*, much less do any good thing, if he withdraw his aid; and that all men are in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter; I say, did we really believe all these points, and see them in the light of the divine Spirit, how can it be reasonably supposed that we could wax insolent against this great God, behave contemptuously and superciliously in the world, or boast of any thing we have or do? *Luther* informs us,* that he “used frequently to be much offended at this doctrine, because it drove him to *self-despair*; but that he afterwards found, that this sort of despair was salutary and profitable, and near akin to divine grace.”

(4.) We are hereby taught not only humility before God, but likewise dependence on him, and resignation to him. For, if we are thoroughly persuaded that, of ourselves, and in our own strength, we cannot either do good or evil; but that, being originally created by God, we are incessantly supported, moved, influenced, and directed by him, this way or that, as he pleases; the natural inference from hence will be, that, with simple faith, we cast ourselves, entirely, as on the bosom of his Providence; commit all our care and solicitude to his hand; praying, without hesitation or reserve, that his will may be

* De Serv. Arb. c. 161.

done in us, on us, and by us ; and that, in all his dealings with us, he may consult his own glory alone. This holy passiveness is the very *apex* of Christianity. All the desires of our great Redeemer himself were reducible to these two ; that the will of God might be done, and that the glory of God might be displayed. These were the highest and supreme marks at which he aimed, throughout the whole course of his spotless life, and inconceivably tremendous sufferings. Happy, thrice happy that man, who hath thus far attained the mind that was in Christ !

(5.) The comfortable belief of this doctrine has a tendency to excite and keep alive within us that fortitude, which is so ornamental to, and necessary for us, while we abide in this wilderness. For, if I believe with the Apostle, that all things are of God, 2. Cor. v. 18. I shall be less liable to perturbation when afflicted, and learn more easily to possess my soul in patience. This was Job's support : he was not overcome with rage and despair, when he received news that the Sabeans had carried off his cattle, and slain his servants, and that the remainder of both were consumed with fire ; that the Chaldeans had robbed him of his camels ; and that his seven sons were crushed to death, by the falling of the house where they were sitting : he resolved all these misfortunes into the agency of God, his power and sovereignty, and even thanked him for doing what he would with his own, Job i. 21. If another should slander me in word, or injure me in deed, I shall not be prone to anger, when, with David, I consider that the Lord hath bidden him, 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

(6.) This should stir us up to fervent and incessant prayer. For, does God work powerfully and benignly in the hearts of his elect ? and is

he the sole cause of every action they do, which is truly and spiritually good? Then it should be our prayer, that he would work in us likewise both to will and to do, of his good pleasure: and if, on self-examination, we find reason to trust, that some good thing is wrought in us; it should put us upon thankfulness unfeigned, and cause us to glory, not in ourselves but in him. On the other hand, does God manifest his displeasure against the wicked, by blinding, hardening, and giving them up to perpetrate iniquity with greediness? which judicial acts of God, are both a punishment for their sin: and also eventual additions to it: we should be the more incited to deprecate these tremendous evils, and to beseech the King of heaven, that he would not thus lead us into temptation. So much concerning the omnipotence of God. I shall now,

V. Take notice of his *Justice*.

Pos. 1. God is infinitely, absolutely, and unchangeably just.

The justice of God may be considered either *immanently*, as it is in himself, which is, properly speaking, the same with his holiness; or transiently and relatively, as it respects his right conduct towards his creatures, which is properly justice. By the former he is all that is holy, just, and good; by the latter, he is manifested to be so, in all his dealings with angels and men. For the first, see Deut. xxxii. 4. Ps. xcii. 15. for the second, Job viii. 3. Ps. cxlv. 17. Hence it follows, that whatever God either wills or does, however it may, at first sight, seem to clash with our ideas of right and wrong, cannot really be unjust. It is certain, that, for a season, he sorely afflicted his righteous servant Job; and, on the other hand enriched the Sabeans, an infidel and lawless nation, with a profusion of wealth

and a series of success ; before Jacob and Esau were born, or had none either good or evil, he loved and chose the former, and reprobated the latter : He gave repentance to Peter, and left Judas to perish in his sin : and, as in all ages, so, to this day, he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth. In all which, he acts most justly and righteously, and there is no iniquity with him.

Pos. 2. The Deity may be considered in a threefold view : as God of all, as Lord of all, and as Judge of all.

1. As *God* of all, he created, sustains, and exhilarates the whole universe : causes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall upon the evil and the good, Mat. v. and is *Σωτηρ παντων ανθρωπων*, the preserver of all men, 1 Tim. iv. 10. For, as he is infinitely and supremely good, so also is he communicative of his goodness ; as appears not only from his creation of all things, but especially from his providential benignity. Every thing has its being from him, as Creator ; and its well-being from him, as a bountiful Preserver. 2. As *Lord*, or sovereign of all, he does as he will (and has a most unquestionable right to do so) with his own ; and, in particular, fixes and determines the everlasting state of every individual person, as he sees fit. It is essential to absolute sovereignty ; that the sovereign have it in his power to dispose of those, over whom his jurisdiction extends, just as he pleases, without being accountable to any : And God, whose authority is unbounded, none being exempt from it ; may, with the strictest holiness and justice, love or hate, elect or reprobate, save or destroy any of his creatures, whether human or angelic, according to his own free pleasure and sovereign purpose. 3. As *Judge* of all, he ratifies what he

does as Lord, by rendering to all according to their works ; by punishing the wicked, and rewarding those whom it was his will to esteem righteous and to make holy.

Pos. 3. Whatever things God wills or does, are not willed and done by him because they were, in their own nature, and previously to his willing them, just and right : or because, from their intrinsic fitness, he ought to will and to do them : but they are therefore just, right and proper, because he, who is holiness itself wills and does them.

Hence Abraham looked upon it as a righteous action to slay his innocent son. Why did he so esteem it, because the law of God authorized murder ? No ; for, on the contrary, both the law of God and the law of nature peremptorily forbid it : but the holy patriarch well knew, that the will of God is the only rule of justice, and that what he pleases to command is, on that very account just and righteous.* It follows,

Pos. 4. That although our works are to be examined by the revealed will of God, and be denominated materially good or evil, as they agree or disagree with it ; yet, the works of God himself cannot be brought to any test whatever : for, his will being the grand, universal law, he himself cannot be, properly speaking, subject to, or obliged by, any law superior to that. Many things are done by him, such as chusing and reprobating men, without any respect had to their works ; suffering people to fall into sin, when, if it so pleased him he might prevent it ; leaving many backsliding professors to go on and perish in their apostacy, when it is in his divine power to sanctify and set them right ; drawing some by

* Compare also Exod. iii. 22. with Exod. xx. 15.

his grace, and permitting many others to continue in sin and unregeneracy; condemning those to future misery, whom, if he pleased, he could undoubtedly save; with innumerable instances of the like nature, (which might be mentioned) and which, if done by us, would be apparently unjust, inasmuch as they would not square with the revealed will of God, which is the great and only safe rule of our practice. But, when HE does these and such like things, they cannot but be holy, equitable, and worthy of himself: for, since his will is essentially and unchangeably just, whatever he does, in consequence of that will, must be just and good likewise. From what has been delivered under this fifth head, I would infer, That they, who deny the power God has of doing as he will with his creatures, and exclaim against unconditional decrees as cruel, tyrannical, and unjust; either know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm; or are wilful blasphemers of his name, and perverse rebels against his sovereignty: to which at last, however unwillingly, then will be forced to submit.

I shall conclude this introduction with briefly considering in the

Sixth and last place, the *Mercy* of God.

Pos. 1. The Deity is, throughout the scriptures, represented as infinitely gracious and merciful, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. *Nehem.* ix. 17. *Psalm* ciii. 8. *1 Pet.* i. 3.

When we call the divine mercy infinite, we do not mean that it is, in a way of grace, extended to all men, without exception; (and supposing it was, even then it would be very improperly denominated infinite on that account, since the objects of it, though all men taken together, would not amount to a multitude strictly and properly infinite) but, that his mercy towards his own elect, as it knew

no beginning, so is it infinite in duration, and shall know neither period nor intermission.

Pos. 2. Mercy is not in the Deity, as it is in us, a passion, or affection; every thing of that kind being incompatible with the purity, perfection, independency and unchangeableness of his nature: but, when this attribute is predicated of him, it only notes his free and eternal will, or purpose, of making some of the fallen race happy, by delivering them from the guilt and dominion of sin, and communicating himself to them in a way consistent with his own inviolable justice, truth, and holiness. This seems to be the proper definition of mercy, as it relates to the spiritual and eternal good of those who are its objects. But it should be observed,

Pos. 3. That the mercy of God, taken in its more large and indefinite sense, may be considered, 1. as general, 2. as special.

His general mercy is no other than what we commonly call his bounty; by which he is, more or less, providentially good to all mankind, both elect and non-elect: Mat. v. 45. Luke vi. 35. Acts xiv. 17. and xvii. 25—28. By his special mercy, he as Lord of all, hath in a spiritual sense, compassion on as many of the fallen race as are the objects of his free and eternal favour: the effects of which special mercy are, the redemption and justification of their persons through the satisfaction of Christ; the effectual vocation, regeneration, and sanctification of them, by his Spirit; the infallible and final preservation of them in a state of grace on earth; and their everlasting glorification in heaven.

Pos. 4. There is no contradiction, whether real or seeming, between these two assertions, 1. That the blessings of grace and glory are peculiar to those whom God hath in his decree of

predestination, set apart for himself; and 2. That the gospel declaration runs, that whosoever willeth, may take of the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17. "Since, in the first place, none can will, or unfeignedly and spiritually desire a part in these privileges, but those whom God previously makes willing and desirous; and, secondly, that he gives this will to, and excites this desire in, none but his own elect.

Pos. 5. Since ungodly men, who are totally and finally destitute of divine grace, cannot know what this mercy is, nor form any proper apprehensions of it, much less by faith embrace and rely upon it for themselves; and since daily experience, as well as the scriptures of truth, teach us that God doth not open the eyes of the reprobate, as he doth the eyes of his elect, nor savingly enlighten their understandings; it evidently follows that his mercy was never, from the very first, designed for them, neither will it be applied to them: but, both in designation and application, is proper and peculiar to those only, who are predestinated to life; as it is written, the election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded, Rom. xi. 7.

Pos. 6. The whole work of salvation, together with every thing that is in order to it, or stands in connexion with it, is sometimes in scripture comprised under the single term *mercy*; to shew that mere love and absolute grace were the grand causes why the elect are saved, and that all merit, worthiness, and good qualifications of theirs were entirely excluded from having any influence on the divine will, why they should be chosen, redeemed, and glorified, above others. When it is said, Rom. ix. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy," it is as much as if the Apostle had said, "God elected, ransomed, justified, re-

generates, sanctifies and glorifies whom he pleases :” every one of these great privileges being briefly summed up, and virtually included, in that comprehensive phrase, “ He hath mercy.”

Pos. 7. It follows, that whatever favour is bestowed on us, or wrought by us, whether in will, word, or deed ; and whatever blessings else we receive from God, from election quite home to glorification ; all proceed merely and entirely from the good pleasure of his will, and his mercy towards us in Christ Jesus. To him, therefore, the praise is due, who putteth the difference between man and man, by having compassion on some, and not on others.

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION
STATED AND ASSERTED.



CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN THE TERMS COMMONLY MADE USE OF IN
TREATING OF THIS SUBJECT, ARE DEFINED AND
EXPLAINED.

HAVING considered the *attributes* of God, as laid down in scripture; and, so far, cleared our way to the doctrine of predestination; I shall, before I enter further on the subject, explain the principal terms generally made use of when treating of it, and settle their true meaning. In discoursing on the divine decrees, mention is frequently made of God's *love* and *hatred*; of *election* and *reprobation*; of the divine *purpose*, *foreknowledge*, and *predestination*; each of which we shall distinctly and briefly consider.

I. When love is predicated of God, we do not mean that he is possessed of it as a passion, or affection. In us it is such; but if, considered in that sense, it should be ascribed to the Deity, it would be utterly subversive of the simplicity perfection, and independency of his being. Love,

therefore, when attributed to him, signifies, 1. his eternal benevolence, i. e. his everlasting will, purpose, and determination to deliver, bless, and save his people. Of this, no good works wrought by them are in any sense the cause. Neither are even the merits of Christ himself to be considered as any way moving or exciting this good will of God to his elect; since the gift of Christ to be their mediator and redeemer, is itself an effect of this free and eternal favour, borne to them by God the Father, John iii. 16. "His love towards them arises merely from the good pleasure of his own good will, without the least regard to any thing *ad extra*, or, out of himself." The term implies, 2. complacency, delight, and approbation. With this love, God cannot love even his elect, as considered in themselves; because in that view, they are guilty, polluted sinners; but they were from all eternity objects of it, as they stood united to Christ, and partakers of his righteousness. Love implies, 3. actual beneficence; which, properly speaking, is nothing else than the effect or accomplishment of the other two: those are the cause of this. This actual beneficence respects all blessings, whether of a temporal, spiritual, or eternal nature. Temporal good things are indeed indiscriminately bestowed in a greater or less degree, on all, whether elect or reprobate; but they are given in a covenant way, and as blessings to the elect only; to whom also the other benefits, respecting grace and glory, are peculiar. And this love of beneficence no less than that of benevolence and complacency, is absolutely free, and irrespective of any worthiness in man.

II. When *hatred* is ascribed to God, it implies, 1. a negation of benevolence; or, a resolution not to have mercy on such and such men,

nor to endue them with any of those graces which stand connected with eternal life. So, Rom. ix. "Esau have I hated, i. e. I did from all eternity, determine within myself, not to have mercy on him." The sole cause of which awful negation is not merely the unworthiness of the persons hated, but the sovereignty and freedom of the divine will. 2. It denotes displeasure and dislike: for sinners who are not interested in Christ, cannot but be infinitely displeasing to, and loathsome in the sight of eternal purity. 3. It signifies a positive will to punish and destroy the reprobate for their sins; of which will the infliction of misery upon them hereafter, is but the necessary effect, and actual execution.

III. The term *election*, that so very frequently occurs in scripture, is there taken in a fourfold sense; 1. and most commonly signifies, "That eternal, sovereign, unconditional, particular, and immutable act of God, where he selected some from among all mankind, and of every nation under heaven, to be redeemed and everlastingly saved by Christ." 2. It sometimes and more rarely signifies, "That gracious and almighty act of the divine Spirit, whereby God actually and visibly separates his elect from the world, by effectual calling." This is nothing but the manifestation and partial fulfilment of the former election; and by it, the objects of predestinating grace are sensibly led unto the communion of saints, and visibly added to the number of God's declared, professing people. Of this our Lord makes mention, John xv. 19. "Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Where, it should seem, the choice spoken of, does not refer so much to God's eternal immanent act of election, as his

open, manifest one; whereby he powerfully and efficaciously called the disciples forth from the world of the unconverted, and quickened them from above, in conversion. 3. By election is sometimes meant, "God's taking a whole nation, community, or body of men, into external covenant with himself, by giving them the advantage of revelation, or his written word, as the rule of their belief and practice, when other nations are without it." In this sense, the whole body of the Jewish nation was indiscriminately called elect, Deut. vii. 6. "because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. Now, all that are thus elected are not therefore necessarily saved; but many of them may be, and are, reprobates: as those of whom our Lord says, Mat. xxiii. 20. "that they hear the word and anon with joy receive it, &c." And the apostle John, 1 Epist. chap. ii. "They went out from us, i. e. being favoured with the same gospel revelation we were, they professed themselves true believers no less than we; but they were not of us, i. e. they were not with us chosen of God unto everlasting life, nor did they ever in reality, possess that faith of his operation, which he gave to us; for, if they had in this sense, been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; they would have manifested the sincerity of their professions, and the truth of their conversion by enduring to the end, and being saved." And even this external revelation, though it is not necessarily connected with eternal happiness, is nevertheless productive of very many and great advantages to the people and places where it is vouchsafed; and is made known to some nations, and kept back* from

* See Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20.

others, according to the good pleasure of him, who worketh all thing after the counsel of his own will. 4. And lastly, election sometimes signifies, "The temporary designation of some person or persons, to the filling up some particular station in the visible church, or office in civil life." So Judas was chosen to the apostleship, John vi. 70. and Saul to be king of Israel, 1 Sam. x. 24. "This much for the use of the word election." On the contrary,

IV. Reprobation denotes either, 1. God's eternal preterition of some men, when he chose others to glory, and his predestination of them to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and then to receive the just punishment of their crimes, even destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. This is the primary, most obvious, and most frequent sense, in which the word is used. It may likewise signify, 2. God's forbearing to call by his grace, those whom he hath thus ordained to condemnation: but this is only a temporary preterition, and a consequence of that which was from eternity. 3. And lastly, the word may be taken in another sense, as denoting God's refusal to grant to some nations the light of the gospel revelation. This may be considered as a kind of national reprobation; which yet does not imply that every individual person, who lives in such a country, must therefore unavoidably perish for ever; any more than that every individual, who lives in a land called Christian, is therefore in a state of salvation. There are no doubt, elect persons among the former; as well as reprobate ones among the latter. By a very little attention to the context, any reader may easily discover in which of these several senses the words elect and reprobate are used, whenever they occur in scripture.

V. Mention is frequently made, in scripture, of the *purpose** of God : which is no other than his gracious intention from eternity of making his elect everlastingly happy in Christ.

VI. When *foreknowledge* is ascribed to God, the word imports, 1. that general prescience, whereby he knew from all eternity, both what he himself would do, and what his creatures, in consequence of his efficacious and permissive decree, should do likewise. The divine foreknowledge considered in this view, is absolutely universal ; it extends to all beings that did, do, or ever shall exist ; and to all actions that ever have been, that are, or shall be done, whether good or

* The *purpose* of God does not seem to differ at all from *predestination* : that being as well as this, an eternal, free, and unchangeable act of his will. Besides, the word *purpose*, when predicated of God in the New Testament, always denotes his design of saving his elect, and that only, Rom. viii. 28. & ix. 11. Eph. i. 11. & iii. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. As does the term *predestination* ; which, throughout the whole New Testament, never signifies the appointment of the non-elect to wrath ; but singly and solely the fore-appointment of the elect to grace and glory : though, in common theological writings, *predestination* is spoken of as extending to whatever God does, both in a way of permission and efficiency ; as in the utmost sense of the term it does. It is worthy of the reader's notice, that the original word *προθεσις*, which we render *purpose*, signifies not only an appointment, but a fore-appointment, and such a fore-appointment as is efficacious, and cannot be obstructed, but shall most assuredly issue in a full accomplishment : which gave occasion to the following judicious remark of a late learned writer ; “ *προθεσις* a Paulo sæpe usurpatur in electionis negotio, ad designandum, consilium hoc Dei non esse inanem quandam & inefficacem velleitatem ; sed constans, determinatum, et immutabile Dei propositum. Vox enim est efficacix summæ, ut notant grammatici veteres ; et signate vocatur a Paulo. *αροθεσις παρ τα παλλα ενεργων* ☉, consilium illius, qui efficaciter omnia operatur ex beneplacito suo.” TURRETIN. Institut. Tom. I. loc. 4. quæst. 7. s. 12.

evil, natural, civil, or moral. 2. The word often denotes that special prescience which has for its objects his own elect, and them alone; whom he is in a peculiar sense said to know and foreknow, Psal. i. 6. John x. 27. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Rom. viii. 29. 1 Pet. i. 2. and this knowledge is connected with, or rather the *same* with love, favour, and approbation.

VII. We come now to consider the meaning of the word *predestination*, and how it is taken in scripture. The verb *predestinate* is of Latin original, and signifies in that tongue, to deliberate beforehand with one's self, how one shall act: and in consequence of such deliberation, to constitute, foreordain, and predetermine, where, when, how, and by whom, any thing shall be done, and when it shall be done. So the Greek verb *προορίζω*, which exactly answers to the English word *predestinate*, and is rendered by it, signifies, to resolve beforehand within one's self what to do, and before the thing resolved on is actually effected, to appoint it to some certain use, and direct it to some determinate end. The Hebrew verb *habhdel*, has likewise much the same signification.

Now, none but wise men are capable (especially in matters of great importance) of rightly determining what to do, and how to accomplish a proper end, by just, suitable, and effectual means: and if this is confessedly a very material part of true wisdom, who so fit to dispose of men, and assign each individual his sphere of action in this world, and his place in the world to come, as the all-wise God? and yet, alas! how many are there who cavil at those eternal decrees, which, were we capable of fully and clearly understanding them, would appear to be as just as they are sovereign, and as wise as they are incomprehen-

ble ! Divine preordination has for its objects, all things that are created : no creature, whether rational or irrational, animate or inanimate, is exempted from its influence. All beings whatever, from the highest angel to the meanest reptile, and from the meanest reptile to the minutest atom, are the objects of God's eternal decrees and particular providence. However the ancient fathers only make use of the word predestination as it refers to angels or men, whether good or evil : and it is used by the apostle Paul in a more limited sense still ; so as by it to mean only that branch of it which respects God's election and designation of his people to eternal life, Rom. viii. 30. Eph. i. 11.

But that we may more justly apprehend the import of this word, and the ideas intended to be conveyed by it, it may be proper to observe, that the term predestination, theologically taken, admits of a fourfold definition : and may be considered as, 1. "That eternal, most wise, and immutable decree of God, whereby he did, from before all time determine and ordain to create, dispose of, and direct to some particular end, every person and thing to which he has given, or is yet to give, being ; and to make the whole creation subservient to, and declarative of, his own glory." Of this decree, actual providence is the execution. 2. Predestination may be considered as relating generally to mankind, and them only : and, in this view, we define it to be, "The everlasting, sovereign, and invariable purpose of God, whereby he did determine within himself, to create Adam in his own image and likeness, and then to permit his fall ; and to suffer him, thereby to plunge himself, and his whole posterity," (inasmuch as they all sinned in him, not only virtually but also federally and representatively) "into the dreadful abyss of sin, misery and

death.” 3. Consider predestination as relating to the elect only, and it is, “That eternal, unconditional, particular, and irreversible act of the divine will, whereby, in matchless love, and adorable sovereignty, God determined within himself to deliver a certain number of Adam’s degenerate* offspring, out of that sinful and miserable estate, into which, by his primitive transgression, they were to fall:” and in which sad condition they were equally involved with those who were not chosen: but, being pitched upon, and singled out by God the Father, to be vessels of grace and salvation (not for any thing in them, that could recommend them to his favour, or entitle them to his notice, but merely because he would shew himself gracious to them,) they were in time actually redeemed by Christ: are effectually called by his spirit, justified, adopted, sanctified, and preserved safe to his heavenly kingdom. The supreme end of this decree is the manifestation of his own infinitely glorious and amiably tremendous perfections: the inferior, or subordinate end, is the happiness and salvation of them who are thus freely elected. 4. Predestination, as it regards the reprobate is, “That eternal, most holy, sovereign, and immutable act of

* When we say, that the decree of predestination to life and death respects man as fallen, we do not mean, that the fall was actually antecedent to that decree: for the decree is truly and properly eternal, as all God’s immanent acts undoubtedly are; whereas the fall took place in time. What we intend, then, is only this, viz. that God, (for reasons, without doubt, worthy of himself, and of which we are, by no means, in this life competent judges) having, from everlasting, preremptorily ordained to suffer the fall of Adam; did likewise, from everlasting, consider the human race as fallen: and, out of the whole mass of mankind, thus viewed

God's will, whereby he hath determined to leave some men to perish in their sins, and to be justly punished for them."

and foreknown as impure, and obnoxious to condemnation, vouchsafed to select some particular persons, (who, collectively, make up a very great, though precisely determinate, number) in and on whom he would make known the ineffable riches of his mercy.

CHAPTER II.

WHEREIN THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION
IS EXPLAINED, AS IT RELATES IN GENERAL
TO ALL MEN.

THUS much being premised, with relation to the scripture terms commonly made use of in this controversy, we shall now proceed to take a nearer view of this high and mysterious article,
And,

I. We, with the scriptures, assert, That there is a predestination of some particular persons to life, for the praise of the glory of divine grace; and a predestination of other particular persons to death: which death of punishment they shall inevitably undergo, and that justly, on account of their sins. 1. There is a predestination of some particular persons to life. So, Mat. xx. 15. "Many are called but few chosen;" i. e. the gospel revelation comes indiscriminately to great multitudes; but few, comparatively speaking, are spiritually and eternally the better for it: and these few, to whom it is the savour of life unto life, are therefore savingly benefited by it, because they are the chosen or elect of God. To the same effect are the following passages, among many others: Mat. xxiv. 22. "For the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he did pre-

destinate, them he also called." And verse 33. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Eph. i. 4, 5. "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, &c. Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself; according to the good pleasure of his will." 2 Tim. i. 9. "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 before the world began." 2. This election of certain individuals unto eternal life was for the praise of the glory of divine grace. This is expressly asserted in so many words, by the apostle, Eph. i. 5, 6. Grace, or mere favour, was the impulsive cause of all: It was the main spring, which set all the inferior wheels in motion. It was an act of grace in God, to choose any, when he might have passed by all: It was an act of sovereign grace, to choose this man rather than that, when both were equally undone in themselves, and alike obnoxious to his displeasure. In a word, since election is not of works, and does not proceed on the least regard had to any worthiness in its objects; it must be of free, unbiassed grace: but election is not of works, Rom. xi. 5, 6. therefore, it is solely of grace. 3. There is, on the other hand, a predestination of some particular persons to death. 2 Cor. iv. 3. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." 1 Pet. ii. 8. "Who stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed." 2 Pet. ii. 12. "These, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed." Jude ver. 4. "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation." Rev. xvii. 8. "Whose names were not written in the book

of life from the foundation of the world." But of this we shall treat professedly, and more at large, in the fifth chapter. 4. This future death they shall inevitably undergo: for, as God will certainly save all whom he wills should be saved; so he will as surely condemn all whom he wills shall be condemned; for he is the Judge of the whole earth, whose decree shall stand, and from whose sentence there is no appeal. "Hath he said, and shall he not make it good? hath he spoken, and shall it not come to pass?" And his decree is this; that *these*, i. e. the non-elect, who are left under the guilt of final impenitence, unbelief, and sin, shall go away into everlasting punishment; and the righteous, i. e. those who, in consequence of their election in Christ, and union to him, are justly reputed, and really constituted such, shall enter into life eternal, Mat. xxv. 46. 5. The reprobate shall undergo this punishment justly, and on account of their sins. Sin is the meritorious and immediate cause of any man's damnation. God condemns and punishes the non-elect, not merely as men, but as sinners: and, had it pleased the great Governor of the universe, to have entirely prevented sin from having any entrance into the world, it should seem as if he could not, consistently with his known attributes, have condemned any man at all. But, as all sin is properly meritorious of eternal death; and all men are sinners; they, who are condemned, are condemned most justly, and those who are saved, are saved in a way of sovereign mercy, through the vicarious obedience and death of Christ for them.

Now, this twofold predestination, of some to life, and of others to death, (if it may be called twofold, both being constituent parts of the same decree) cannot be denied, without likewise deny-

ing, 1. most express and frequent declarations of scripture, and, 2. the very existence of God: for, since God is a being perfectly simple, free from all accident and composition; and yet, a will to save some and punish others, is very often predicated of him in scripture; and an immovable decree to do this in consequence of his will, is likewise ascribed to him; and a perfect foreknowledge, of the sure and certain accomplishment of what he has thus willed and decreed, is also attributed to him; it follows, that whoever denies this will, decree, and foreknowledge of God, does implicitly and virtually, deny God himself: since his will, decree, and foreknowledge are no other than God himself willing, and decreeing, and foreknowing.

II. We assert, that God did from eternity decree to make man in his own image; and also decreed to suffer him to fall from that image in which he should be created, and, thereby to forfeit the happiness with which he was invested: which decree, and the consequences of it, were not limited to Adam only; but included, and extended to all his natural posterity.

Something of this was hinted already in the preceding chapter: we shall now proceed to the proof of it. And, 1. That God did make man in his own image, is evident from scripture, Gen. i. 27. 2. That he decreed from eternity so to make man, is as evident; since, for God to do any thing without having decreed it, or fixed a previous plan in his own mind, would be a manifest imputation on his wisdom: and, if he decreed that now, or at any time, which he did not always decree, he could not be unchangeable. 3. That man actually did fall from the divine image and his original happiness, is the undoubted voice of scripture, Gen. iii. And, 4. That he

fell in consequence of the divine decree,* we prove thus : God was either willing that Adam should fall, or unwilling, or indifferent about it. If God was unwilling that Adam should transgress, how came it pass that he did? Is man stronger, and is Satan wiser, than he that made them? Surely, no. Again; could not God, had it so pleased him, have hindered the tempter's access to paradise? or have created man, as he did the elect angels, with a will invariably determined to good only, and incapable of being biased to evil? or, at least, have made the grace and strength, with which he indued Adam, actually effectual to the resisting of all solicitations to sin? None but atheists would answer these questions in the negative. Surely, if God had not willed the fall, he could, and no doubt would, have prevented it: but he did not prevent it: *Ergo*, he willed it. And, if he willed it, he certainly decreed it: for the decree of God is nothing else but the seal and ratification of his will. He does nothing but what he decreed; and he decreed nothing which he did not will: and both will and decree are absolutely eternal, though the execution of both be in time. The only way to evade the force of this reasoning, is to say, that "God was indifferent and unconcerned, whether man stood or fell." But in what a shameful, unworthy light does this represent the Deity! Is it possible for us to imagine, that God could be an idle, careless spectator, of one of the most important events that ever came to pass? Are not "the very hairs of our head all numbered?" or does "a sparrow fall to the ground, without our hea-

* See this article judiciously stated, and nervously asserted by Witsius, in his *Econ. l. 1. cap. 8. s. 10—25.*

venly Father?" If then things, the most trival and worthless, are subject to the appointment of his decree, and the control of his providence; how much more is *man*, the master-piece of this lower creation? and above all, *that* man Adam, who, when recent from his Maker's hands, was the living image of God himself, and very little inferior to angels! and on whose perseverance was suspended the welfare, not of himself only, but likewise that of the whole world. But, so far was God from being indifferent in this matter, that there is nothing whatever, about which he is so; for he worketh all things without exception, after the counsel of his own will, Eph. i. 11. consequently, if he positively wills whatever is done, he cannot be indifferent with regard to any thing. On the whole, if God was not unwilling that Adam should fall, he must have been willing that he should; since, between God's willing and nilling, there is no medium. And is it not highly rational, as well as scriptural; nay, is it not absolutely necessary, to suppose, that the fall was not contrary to the will and determination of God? since, if it was, his will (which the apostle represents as being irresistible, Rom. ix. 19.) was apparently frustrated, and his determination rendered of worse than none effect. And how dishonourable to, how inconsistent with, and how notoriously subversive of, the dignity of God, such a blasphemous supposition would be, and how irreconcilable with every one of his allowed attributes, is very easy to observe. 5. That man, by his fall, forfeited the happiness with which he was invested, is evident, as well from scripture as from experience; Gen. iii. 7, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24. Rom. v. 12. Gal. iii. 10. He first sinned, (and the essence of sin lies in disobedience to the command of God) and then immediately became miserable; misery be-

ing, through the divine appointment, the natural and inseparable concomitant of sin. 6. That the fall, and its sad consequences, did not terminate solely in Adam, but affect his whole posterity, is the doctrine of the sacred oracles: Ps. li. 5. Rom. v. 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Eph. ii. 3. Besides, not only spiritual and eternal, but likewise temporal death is the wages of sin, Rom. vi. 23. James i. 15. And yet we see that millions of infants, who never, in their own persons, either did or could commit sin, die continually. It follows, that either God must be unjust in punishing the innocent; or that these infants are, some way or other, guilty creatures: if they are not so in themselves, (I mean actually so, by their own commission of sin) they must be so in some other person; and who that person is, let scripture say, Rom. v. 12, 18. 1 Cor. xv. 22. And, I ask, how can these be, with equity, sharers in Adam's punishment, unless they are chargeable with his sin? and how can they be fairly chargeable with his sin, unless he was their *federal* head and representative, and acted in their name, and sustained their persons when he fell?

III. We assert, that as all men, universally, are not elected to salvation; so neither are all men, universally, ordained to condemnation. This follows from what has been proved already: however, I shall subjoin some farther demonstration of these two positions. 1. All men universally are not elected to salvation. And, first, this may be evinced *a posteriori*: it is undeniable, from scripture, that God will not in the last day, save every individual of mankind, Dan. xii. 2. Mat. xxv. 46. John v. 29. Therefore, say we, God never designed to save every individual; since, if he had, every individual would and must be saved, for "his counsel shall stand, and he

will do all his pleasure." See what we have already advanced on this head, in the first chapter, under the second article, Position 8. Secondly, this may be evinced also from God's foreknowledge. The Deity, from all eternity, and consequently, at the very time he gives life and being to a reprobate, certainly foreknew, and knows, in consequence of his own decree, that such an one would fall short of salvation: now, if God foreknew this, he must have predetermined it; because his own will is the foundation of his decrees, and his decrees are the foundation of his prescience; he therefore foreknowing futurities, because, by his predestination, he hath rendered their futurity certain and inevitable. Neither is it possible, in the very nature of the thing, that they should be elected to salvation, or ever obtain it, whom God foreknew should perish: for then the divine act of preterition would be changeable, wavering and precarious; the divine foreknowledge would be deceived; and the divine will impeded. All which are utterly impossible. Lastly, That all men are not chosen to life, nor created to that end, is evident, in that there are some who were hated of God before they were born, Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13. are fitted for destruction, verse 22. and made for the day of evil, Prov. xvi. 4.

But, 2. All men universally are not ordained to condemnation. There are some who are chosen, Mat. xx. 16. An election, or elect number, who obtain grace and salvation, while the rest are blinded, Rom. xi. 7. a little flock, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, Luke xii. 21. A people whom the Lord hath reserved, Jer. l. 20. and formed for himself, Isai. xliii. 21. A peculiarly favoured race, to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom

of heaven; while, to others, it is not given, Mat. xiii. 11. A remnant according to the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. Whom God hath not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. v. 9. In a word, who are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And whose names, for that very end, are in the book of life, Phil. iv. 3. and written in heaven, Luke x. 20. Heb. xii. 23. *Luther** observes, that, in the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of the epistle to the Romans, the apostle particularly insists on the doctrine of predestination; "Because," says he, "all things whatever, arise from, and depend upon, the divine appointment; whereby it was preordained who should receive the word of life, and who should disbelieve it; who should be delivered from their sins, and who should be hardened in them; and who should be justified, and who condemned."

IV. We assert, that the number of the elect, and also of the reprobate, is so fixed and determined, that neither can be augmented or diminished.

It is written of God, that he telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names, Psalm cxlvii. 4. Now it is as incompatible with the infinite wisdom and knowledge of the all-comprehending God, to be ignorant of the names and number of the rational creatures he has made, as that he should be ignorant of the stars and the other inanimate products of his almighty power: and, if he knows all men in gene-

* In Præfat. ad epist. ad Rom.

ral taken in the lump, he may well be said, in a more near and special sense, to know them that are his by election, 2 Tim. ii. 19. And, if he knows who are his, he must, consequently, know who are not his, i. e. whom, and how many he hath left in the corrupt mass, to be justly punished for their sins. Grant this, (and who can help granting a truth so self-evident?) and it follows that the number, as well of the elect as of the reprobate, is fixed and certain: otherwise God would be said to know that which is not true, and his knowledge must be false and delusive, and so no knowledge at all: since that which is in itself, at best but precarious; can never be the foundation of sure and infallible knowledge. But that God does indeed precisely know to a man who are and who are not, the objects of his electing favour, is evident from such scriptures as these, Exod. xxxiii. 17. "Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name." Jer. i. 5. "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee." Luke x. 20. "Your names are written in heaven." Luke xii. 7. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." John xiii. 18. "I know whom I have chosen." John x. 14. "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." 2 Tim. ii. 19. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." And, if the number of these is thus assuredly settled and exactly known, it follows that we are right in asserting,

V. That the decrees of election and reprobation are immutable and irreversible.

Were not this the case, 1. God's decrees would be precarious, frustrable, and uncertain; and, by consequence, no decree at all. 2. His foreknowledge would be wavering, indeterminate, and liable to disappointment; whereas, it always has its accomplishment, and necessarily

infers the certain futurity of the thing or things foreknown: Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." 3. Neither would his word be true, which declares, that, with regard to the elect, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29. that whom he predestinated, them he also glorified, chap. vii. 80. that whom he loveth, he loveth to the end, John xiii. 1. with numberless passages to the same purpose. Nor would his word be true, with regard to the non-elect, if it was possible for them to be saved; for it is there declared, that they are fitted for destruction, &c. Rom. ix. 22. Foreordained unto condemnation, Jude 4. and delivered over to a reprobate mind, in order to their damnation, Rom. i. 28. 2 Thess. ii. 12. 4. If, between the elect and reprobate, there was not a great gulf fixed, so that neither can be otherwise than they are; then, the will of God (which is the alone cause why some are chosen and others are not) would be rendered inefficacious and of no effect. 5. Nor could the justice of God stand, if he was to condemn the elect, for whose sins he hath received ample satisfaction at the hand of Christ; or if he was to save the reprobate, who are not interested in Christ, as the elect are. 6. The power of God (whereby the elect are preserved from falling into a state of condemnation, and the wicked held down and shut up in a state of death) would be eluded, not to say utterly abolished. 7. Nor would God be unchangeable, if they, who were once the people of his love, could commence the objects of his hatred; or if the vessels of his wrath could be saved with the

vessels of grace. Hence that of St. Austin;* “Brethren,” says he, “let us not imagine, that God puts down any man in his book, and then erases him: for, if Pilate could say, what I have written I have written, how can it be thought that the *great God* would write a person’s name in the book of life, and then blot it out again?” And may we not, with equal reason, ask, on the other hand, How can it be thought, that any of the reprobate should be written in that book of life, which contains the names of the elect only? or, that any should be inserted there, who were not written among the living from eternity? I shall conclude this chapter with that observation of Luther,† “This,” says he, “is the very thing that rases the doctrine of free-will from its foundations; to wit, that God’s eternal love of some men, and hatred of others, is immutable and cannot be reversed.” Both one and the other will have its full accomplishment.

* Tom. 8. in Psalm 68. col. 738. † De Serv. Arbitr. cap. 168.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING ELECTION UNTO LIFE; OR PRE-
DESTINATION, AS IT RESPECTS THE SAINTS
IN PARTICULAR.

HAVING considered predestination, as it regards all men in general; and briefly shewn that by it, some are appointed to wrath, and others to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. v. 9. I now come to consider more distinctly that branch of it, which relates to the saints only, and is commonly styled election. Its definition I have given already in the close of the first chapter: what I have further to advance from the scriptures on this important subject, I shall reduce to several positions, and subjoin a short explanation and confirmation of each.

Pos. 1. Those who are ordained unto eternal life were not so ordained on account of any worthiness foreseen in them, or of any good works to be wrought by them; nor yet for their future faith: but purely and solely, of free, sovereign grace, and according to the mere pleasure of God. This is evident, among other considerations, from this; that faith, repentance and holiness, are no less the free gifts of God, than eternal life itself. Eph. ii. 8. "Faith—is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Phil. i. 29. "Unto you it is given to believe." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, for to give repentance." Acts xi. 18. "Then hath God also to the Gen-

tiles granted repentance unto life." In like manner, holiness is called the sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13. because the divine Spirit is the efficient of it in the soul, and, of unholy, makes us holy. Now, if repentance and faith are the gifts, and sanctification is the work of God, then these are not the fruits of man's free will; nor what he acquires of himself; and so can neither be motives to, nor conditions of, his election, which is an act of the divine mind, antecedent to, and irrespective of, all qualities whatever, in the persons elected. Besides, the apostle asserts expressly, that election is "not of works, but of him that calleth;" and that it passed before the persons concerned had "done either good or evil," Rom. ix. 11. Again, if faith or works were the cause of election, God could not be said to choose us, but we to choose him; contrary to the whole tenor of scripture; John xv. 16. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." 1 John iv. 10, 19. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. We love him, because he first loved us." Election is every where asserted to be God's act and not man's, Mark xiii. 20. Rom. ix. 17. Eph. i. 4. 1 Thess. v. 9. 2 Thess. ii. 13. Once more, we are chosen that we might be holy, not because it was foreseen we would be so, Eph. i. 4. Therefore, to represent holiness as the reason why we were elected, is to make the effect antecedent to the cause. The apostle adds, verse 5. "having predestinated us according to the good pleasure of his will:" most evidently implying, that God saw nothing *extra se*, had no motive from without, why he should either choose any at all, or this man before another. In a word, the elect were "freely loved," Hos. xiv. 4. "freely chosen," Rom. xi. 5, 6. and "freely re-

deemed," Isa. lii. 3. they are "freely called," 2 Tim. i. 9. "freely justified," Rom. iii. 24. and shall be "freely glorified," Rom. v. 23. The great *Augustine* in his book of Retractions, ingenuously acknowledges his error in having once thought, that faith foreseen was a condition of election: he owns that that opinion is equally impious and absurd; and proves that faith is one of the fruits of election, and consequently, could not be in any sense a cause of it: "I could never have asserted," says he, "that God, in choosing men to life, had any respect to their faith, had I duly considered that faith itself is his own gift." And, in another treatise of his,* he has these words; "Since Christ says, ye have not chosen me, &c. I would fain ask, whether it be scriptural to say, we must have faith before we are elected; and not rather, that we are elected in order to our having faith!"

Pos. 2. As many as are ordained to eternal life, are ordained to enjoy that life in and through Christ, and on account of his merits alone, 1 Thess. v. 9. Here let it be carefully observed, that not the merits of Christ, but the sovereign love of God only, is the cause of election itself: but then, the merits of Christ are the alone procuring cause of that salvation to which men are elected. This decree of God admits of no cause but of himself; but the thing decreed, which is the glorification of his chosen ones, may and does admit, nay, necessarily requires, a meritorious cause; which is no other than the obedience and death of Christ.

Pos. 3. They who are predestinated to life, are likewise predestinated to all those means

* De Prædest cap. 17.

which are indispensably necessary in order to their meetness for, entrance upon, and enjoyment of, that life : such as repentance, faith, sanctification, and perseverance in these to the end.

Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Eph. i. 4. "He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." Eph. ii. 10. "For we [i. e. the same we, whom he hath chosen before the foundation of the world] are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them." And the apostle assures the same Thesalonians whom he reminds of their election, and God's everlasting appointment of them to obtain salvation, that this also was his will concerning them, even their sanctification. 1 Thess. i. 4. and v. 9. and iv. 3. and gives them a view of all these privileges at once, 2 Thess. ii. 13. "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." As does St. Peter, 1 Pet. 1. 2. "*elect*—through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Now, though faith and holiness are not represented as the cause wherefore the elect are saved ; yet, these are constantly represented, as the means through which they are saved, or as the appointed way wherein God leads his people to glory ; these blessings being always bestowed previous to that. Agreeable to all which is that of Austin :* Whatsoever persons are, through the riches of divine grace, exempted from the original sentence of

* De Corrept. & Grat. cap. 7.

condemnation, are undoubtedly brought to hear the Gospel;* and when heard they are caused to believe it; and are made likewise to endure to the end, in the faith which works by love: and should they at any time go astray, they are recovered and set right again." A little after he adds; "All these things are wrought in them by that God, who made them vessels of mercy, and who, by the election of his grace chose them in his Son, before the world began."

Pos. 4. Not one of the elect can perish, but they must all necessarily be saved. The reason is this; because God simply and unchangeably wills, that all and every one of those whom he hath appointed to life should be eternally glorified; and, as was observed toward the end of the preceding chapter, all the divine attributes are concerned in the accomplishment of this his will. His wisdom which cannot err; his knowledge which cannot be deceived; his truth which cannot fail; his love, which nothing can alienate; his justice, which cannot condemn any, for whom Christ died; his power, which none can resist; and his unchangeableness, which can never vary: from all which it appears that we do not speak at all improperly, when we say, that the salvation of his people is necessary and certain. Now, that is said to be necessary, *quod nequit aliter esse*, which cannot be otherwise than it is: and if all the perfections of God are engaged to preserve and save his children, their safety and salvation must be, in the strictest sense of

* We must understand this in a qualified sense, as intending that all those of the elect, who live where the christian dispensation obtains, are, sooner or later, brought to hear the gospel, and to believe it.

the word necessary. See Psalm ciii. 17. and exxv. 1, 2. Isaiah xlv. 17. and liv. 9, 10. Jer. xxxi. 38. and xxxii. 40. John vi. 39. and x. 28, 29. and xiv. 19. and xvii. 12. Rom. viii. 30, 38, 39, and xi. 29. 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. Phil. i. 6. 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

Thus St. *Austin*,* “Of those whom God hath predestinated, none can perish, inasmuch as they are his own elect.” And, *ib.* “They are the elect, who are predestinated, foreknown, and called according to purpose. Now, could any of these be lost, God would be disappointed of his will and expectations; but he cannot be so disappointed: therefore, they can never perish. Again, could they be lost, the power of God would be made void by man’s sin; but his power is invincible: therefore, they are safe.” And again, cap. 9. “The children of God are written with an unshaken stability, in the book of their heavenly Father’s remembrance.” And, in the same chapter he hath these words; “Not the children of promise but the children of perdition shall perish: for the former are the predestinated, who are called according to the divine determination; not one of whom shall finally miscarry.” So likewise *Luther*,† “God’s decree of predestination is firm and certain; and the necessity resulting from it is, in like manner, immoveable, and cannot but take place. For we ourselves are so feeble, that if the matter was left in our hands, very few, or rather none would be saved: but Satan would overcome us all.” To which he adds: “Now, since this steadfast and inevitable purpose of God cannot be reversed nor

* Tom. 7. De Corr. & Grat. cap. 7.

† In Præfat. ad Epist. ad Rom.

disannulled by any creature whatever; we have a most assured hope, that we shall finally triumph over sin, how violently soever it may at present rage in our mortal bodies."

Pos. 5. The salvation of the elect was not the only, nor yet the principal end of their being chosen; but God's grand end in appointing them to life and happiness, was to display the riches of his own mercy, and that he might be glorified in and by the persons he had thus chosen.

For this reason, the elect are styled vessels of mercy, because they were originally created, and afterwards, by the divine Spirit created anew, with this design, and to this very end, that the sovereignty of the Father's grace, the freeness of his love, and the abundance of his goodness, might be manifested in their eternal happiness. Now God, as we have already more than once had occasion to observe, does nothing in time which he did not from eternity resolve within himself to do: and if he in time creates and regenerates his people, with a view to display his unbounded mercy; he must consequently have decreed from all eternity to do this with the same view. So that the final causes of election appear to be these two: 1. and principally, The* glory

* Let it be carefully observed, that, when with the scriptures we assert the glory of God to be the ultimate end of his dealings with angels and men, we do not speak this with respect to his essential glory, which he has as God, and which, as is infinite it is not susceptible of addition, nor capable of diminution: but of that glory which is purely manifestative, and which Mircroelius in his *Lexic. Philosoph.* col. 471. defines to be, "Clara rei, cum laude, notitia; cum, nempe, ipsa sua eminentia est magna, augusta, et conspicua." And the accurate Mastright, Celebrato, ceu manifestatio, (quæ magis proprie glorificatio, quam gloria, appellatur) qua, agnita intus eminentia, ejusque congrua æstimatio, propalatur & extollitur. *Theolog.* lib. 2. cap. 22. s. 8.

of God; 2. and subordinately, The salvation of those he has elected: from which the former arises, and by which it is illustrated and set off. So, Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." And hence that of Paul, Eph. i. "He hath chosen us—to the praise of the glory of his grace."

Pos. 6. The end of election, which with regard to the elect themselves, it is eternal life; I say this end, and the means conducive to it, such as the gift of the Spirit, faith, &c. are so inseparably connected together, that whoever is possessed of these, shall surely obtain that; and none can obtain that who are not first possessed of these. Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to eternal life," and none else, "believed." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted—to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins:" not to all men, or to those who were not, in the counsel and purpose of God, set apart for himself; but to Israel, all his chosen people, who were given to him, were ransomed by him, and shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation. Tit. i. 1. "According to the faith of God's elect;" so that true faith is a consequence of election, is peculiar to the elect, and shall issue in life eternal. Eph. i. "He hath chosen us—that we might be holy; therefore, all who are chosen, are made holy, and none but they: and all who are sanctified, have a right to believe they were elected, and that they shall assuredly be saved. Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Which shews, that effectual calling and justification are indissolubly connected with election on one hand, and eternal happiness on the other: that they are a proof of

the former, and an earnest of the latter. John x. 26. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep;" on the contrary, they who believe, therefore believe, because they are of his sheep. Faith then is an evidence of election, or of being in the number of Christ's sheep, consequently, of salvation: since all his sheep shall be saved. John x. 28.

Pos. 7. The elect may through the grace of God attain to the knowledge and assurance of their predestination to life; and they ought to seek after it. The Christian may, for instance, argue thus; "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed:" through mercy I believe, therefore I am ordained to eternal life. "He that believeth shall be saved:" I believe, therefore, I am in a saved state. "Whom he did predestinate, he called, justified, and glorified:" I have reason to trust that he hath called and justified *me*: therefore I can assuredly look backward on my eternal predestination, and forward to my certain glorification. To all which frequently accedes the immediate testimony of the divine Spirit, witnessing with the believer's conscience, that he is a child of God, Rom. viii. 16. Gal. iv. 6. 1 John v. 10. Christ forbids his little flock to fear, inasmuch as they might, on good and solid grounds, rest satisfied and assured, that "it is the Father's unalterable good pleasure to give them the kingdom," Luke xii. 28. And this was the faith of the apostle, Rom. viii. 38, 39. :

Pos. 8. The true believer ought not only to be thoroughly established in the point of his own election, but should likewise believe the election of all his other fellow-believers and brethren in Christ. Now, as there are most evident and indubitable marks of election laid down in scripture; a child

of God, by examining himself, whether those marks are found on him, may arrive at a sober and well-grounded certainty of his own particular interest in that unspeakable privilege: and, by the same rule whereby he judges of himself, he may likewise (but with caution) judge of others. If I see the external fruits and *criteria* of election on this or that man; I may reasonably, and in a judgment of charity, conclude such an one to be an elect person. So St. Paul, beholding the gracious fruits which appeared in the believing Thessalonians, gathered from thence, that they were elected of God, 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. and knew also the election of the Christian Ephesians, Eph. i. 4, 5. as Peter also did that of the members of the churches in Pontus, Galatia, &c. 1 Pet. i. 2. It is true indeed, that all conclusions of this nature are not now infallible, but our judgments are liable to mistake: and God only, whose is the book of life, and who is the searcher of hearts, can absolutely know them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. yet, we may without a presumptuous intrusion into things not seen, arrive at a moral certainty in this matter. And I cannot see how christian love can be cultivated, how we can call one another brethren in the Lord, or, how believers can hold religious fellowship and communion with each other, unless they have some solid and visible reason to conclude, that they are loved with the same everlasting love, were redeemed by the same Saviour, are partakers of like grace, and shall reign in the same glory.

But here let me suggest one very necessary caution; viz. that though we may at least very probably infer the election of some persons, from the marks and appearances of grace which may be discoverable in them; yet, we can never judge

any man whatever to be a reprobate. That there are reprobate persons is very evident from scripture, (as we shall presently shew ;) but who they are, is known alone to him who alone can tell who and what men are not written in the Lamb's book of life. I grant that there are some particular persons mentioned in the divine word, of whose reprobation no doubt can be made, such as Esau and Judas : but now the canon of scripture is completed, we dare not, we must not pronounce any man living, to be non-elect, be he at present ever so wicked. The vilest sinner may, for aught we can tell, appertain to the election of grace, and be one day wrought upon by the Spirit of God. This we know that those who die in unbelief, and are finally unsanctified, cannot be saved : because God in his word tells us so, and has represented these as marks of reprobation : but, to say that such and such individuals, whom perhaps we now see dead in sins, shall never be converted to Christ, would be a most presumptuous assertion, as well as an inexcusable breach of the charity which hopeth all things.

CHAPTER IV.

OF REPROBATION ; OR PREDESTINATION, AS IT RESPECTS THE UNGODLY.

FROM what has been said in the preceding chapter concerning the election of some, it would unavoidably follow, even supposing the scriptures had been silent about it, that there must be a rejection of others ; as every choice does most evidently and necessarily imply a refusal : for, where there is no leaving out there can be no choice. But, beside the testimony of reason, the divine word is full and express to our purpose : it frequently, and in terms too clear to be misunderstood, and too strong to be evaded by any who are not proof against the most cogent evidence, attests this tremendous truth, that some are of old foreordained to condemnation. I shall, in the discussion of this awful subject, follow the method hitherto observed, and throw what I have to say into several distinct positions, supported by scripture.

Pos. 1. God did from all eternity decree to leave some of Adam's fallen posterity in their sins, and to exclude them from the participation of Christ and his benefits.

For the clearing of this, let it be observed, that in all ages the much greater part of mankind have been destitute even of the external means of grace ; have not been favoured with

the preaching of God's word, or any revelation of his will. Thus, anciently, the Jews, who were in number the fewest of all people, were nevertheless, for a long series of ages, the only nation to whom the Deity was pleased to make any special discovery of himself: and it is observable, that our Lord himself principally confined the advantages of his public ministry to that people; nay, he forbid his disciples to go among any others, Mat. x. 5, 6. and did not commission them to preach the gospel indiscriminately to Jews and Gentiles till after his resurrection, Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 47. Hence, many nations and communities never had the advantage of hearing the word preached; and consequently were strangers to the faith that cometh thereby. It is not indeed improbable but some individuals, in these unenlightened countries, might belong to the secret election of grace; and the habit of faith might be wrought in these: however, be that as it will, our argument is not affected by it; it is evident that the nations of the world were generally ignorant, not only of God himself, but likewise of the way to please him, the true manner of acceptance with him, and the means of arriving at the everlasting enjoyment of him. Now if God had been pleased to have saved those people, would he not have vouchsafed them the ordinary means of salvation? would he not have given them all things necessary in order to the end? but it is undeniable matter of fact, that he did not; and to very many nations of the earth, does not, at this day. If then, the Deity can, consistently with his attributes, deny to some the means of grace, and shut them up in gross darkness and unbelief; why should it be thought incompatible with his immensely glorious perfections, to exclude some

persons from grace itself, and from that eternal life which is connected with it; especially, seeing he is equally the Lord and sovereign disposer of the end to which the means lead; as of the means which lead to that end? both one and the other are his; and he most justly may, as he most assuredly will, do what he pleases with his own.

Besides, it being also evident, that many, even of them who live in places where the gospel is preached, as well as of those among whom it never was preached, die strangers to God and holiness, and without experiencing any thing of the gracious influences of his Spirit: we may reasonably and safely conclude, that one cause of their so doing, is because it was not the divine will to communicate his grace unto them: since, had it been his will, he would actually have made them partakers thereof; and had they been partakers of it, they could not have died without it. Now, if it was the will of God in time to refuse them this grace; it must have been his will from eternity, since his will is, as himself, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

The actions of God being thus fruits of his eternal purpose, we may safely, and without any danger of mistake, argue from them to that; and infer, that God therefore does such and such things because he decreed to do them; his own will being the sole cause of all his works. So that from his actually leaving some men in final impenitency and unbelief, we assuredly gather, that it was his everlasting determination so to do: and, consequently, that he reprobated some from before the foundation of the world.

And, as this inference is strictly rational, so is it perfectly scriptural. Thus, the judge will in

the last day, declare to those on the left hand, I never knew you. Mat. vii. 23. i. e. "I never, no, not from eternity, loved, approved, or acknowledged you for mine:" or, in other words, "I always hated you." Our Lord, in John xvii. divides the whole human race into two great classes: one he calls the world; the other, the men who were given him out of the world. The latter, it is said, the Father loved even as he loved Christ himself, verse 23. but he loved Christ before the foundation of the world, verse 24. i. e. from everlasting; therefore, he loved the elect so too: and if he loved these from eternity, it follows, by all the rules of antithesis, that he hated the others as early. So, Rom. ix. "The children not being yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God," &c. From the example of the twins, Jacob and Esau, the apostle infers the eternal election of some men, and the eternal rejection of all the rest.

Pos. 2. Some men were from all eternity, not only negatively excepted from a participation of Christ and his salvation; but positively ordained to continue in their natural blindness, hardness of heart, &c. and that, by the just judgment of God. See Exod. ix. 1 Sam. ii. 25. 2 Sam. xvii. 14. Isa. vi. 9, 10, 11. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Nor can these places of scripture, with many others of like import, be understood of an involuntary permission on the part of God; as if God barely suffered it to be so, *quasi invitus*, as it were by constraint, and against his will; for he permits nothing which he did not resolve and determine to permit. His permission is a positive, determinate act of his will; as *Austin, Luther, and Bucer*, justly observe: therefore, if it be the will of God, in time, to permit such and such men to continue in their natural state of ignorance and

corruption ; the natural consequence of which is, their falling into such and such sins ; (observe, God does not force them into sin ; their actual disobedience being only the consequence of their not having that grace which God is not obliged to grant them ;) I say, if it be the will of God thus to leave them in time, (and we must deny demonstration itself, even known, absolute matter of fact, if we deny that some are so left,) then it must have been the divine intention from all eternity so to leave them, since, as we have already had occasion to observe, no new will can possibly arise in the mind of God. We see that evil men actually are suffered to go on adding sin to sin ; and if it be not inconsistent with the sacred attributes actually to permit this, it could not possibly be inconsistent with them to decree that permission before the foundations of the world were laid.

Thus, God efficaciously permitted (having so decreed) the Jews to be, in effect, the crucifiers of Christ ; and Judas to betray him ; Acts iv. 27, 28. Mat. xxvi. 23, 24. Hence we find St. Austin* speaking thus ; “Judas was chosen, but it was to do a most execrable deed : that thereby the death of Christ, and the adorable work of redemption by him, might be accomplished. When, therefore, we hear our Lord say, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?” we must understand it thus, that the eleven were chosen in mercy ; but Judas in judgment : they were chosen to partake of Christ’s kingdom ; he was chosen and pitched upon to betray him, and be the means of shedding his blood.”

* De Corr. & Grat. cap. 7.

Pos. 3. The non-elect were predestinated, not only to continue in final impenitency, sin, and unbelief; but were likewise for such their sins, righteously appointed to infernal death hereafter.

This position is also self-evident: for it is certain, that in the day of universal judgment, all the human race will not be admitted into glory, but some of them transmitted to the place of torment. Now, God does, and will do, nothing, but in consequence of his own decree, Psalm cxxxv. 6. Isai. xlvi. 11. Eph. i. 9, 11. therefore, the condemnation of the unrighteous was decreed of God; and, if decreed by him, decreed from everlasting: for all his decrees are eternal. Besides, if God purposed to leave those persons under the guilt and the power of sin, their condemnation must of itself necessarily follow: Since, without justification and sanctification (neither of which blessings are in the power of man) none can enter heaven, John xiii. 8. Heb. xii. 14. Therefore, if God determined within himself thus to leave some in their sins (and it is but too evident that this is really the case;) He must also have determined within himself to punish them for those sins (final guilt and final punishment being correlatives which necessarily infer each other;) but God did determinate both to leave and to punish the non-elect: therefore there was a reprobation of some from eternity. Thus, Mat. xxv. "Goye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" for Satan and all his messengers, emissaries, and imitators, whether apostate spirits, or apostate men. Now, if penal fire was, in decree, from everlasting, prepared for them; they, by all the laws of argument in the world, must have been, in the counsel of God prepared, i. e. designed, for that fire; which is the point I undertook to

prove. Hence we read, Rom. ix. of vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, *κατηρητισμενα εις απωλειαν*, put together, made up, formed, or fashioned, for perdition; who are, and can be no other than the reprobate. To multiply scriptures on this head would be almost endless: for a sample, consult Prov. xvi. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 12. Jude 4. Rev. xiii. 8.

Pos. 4. As the future faith and good works of the elect were not the cause of their being chosen, so neither were the future sins of the reprobate the cause of their being passed by; but both the choice of the former, and the decreative omission of the latter, were owing merely and entirely to the sovereign will and determinating pleasure of God.

We distinguish between preterition, or bare non-election, which is purely a negative thing; and condemnation, or appointment to punishment: the will of God was the cause of the former, the sins of the non-elect are the reasons of the latter. Though God determined to leave, and actually does leave, whom he pleases, in the spiritual darkness and death of nature, out of which he is under no obligation to deliver them; yet he does not positively condemn any of these merely because he hath not chosen them, but because they have sinned against him: see Rom. i. 21—24. Rom. ii. 8, 9. 2 Thess. ii. 12. Their preterition, or non-inscription in the book of life, is not unjust on the part of God, because, out of a world of rebels, equally involved in guilt, God, (who might, without any impeachment of his justice, have passed by all, as he did the reprobate angels) was most unquestionably at liberty, if it so pleased him, to extend the sceptre of his clemency to some; and to pitch upon whom he would as the objects of it. Nor was this exemp-

tion of some any injury to the non-elect; whose case would have been just as bad as it is, even supposing the others had not been chosen at all. Again, the condemnation of the ungodly (for it is under that character alone that they are the subjects of punishment, and were ordained to it) is not unjust, seeing it is for sin, and only for sin. None are or will be punished but for their iniquities; and all iniquity is properly meritorious of punishment; where then is the supposed unmercifulness, tyranny, or injustice of the Divine procedure?

Pos. 5. God is the creator of the wicked, but not of their wickedness: he is the author of their being, but not the infuser of their sin.

It is most certainly his will, for adorable and unsearchable reasons, to permit sin; but, with all possible reverence be it spoken, it should seem that he cannot, consistently with the purity of his nature, the glory of his attributes, and the truth of his declarations, be himself the author of it. Sin, says the apostle, entered into the world by one man, meaning by Adam: consequently, it was not introduced by the Deity himself. Though, without the permission of his will, and the concurrence of his providence, its introduction had been impossible; yet is he not hereby the author of sin so introduced.* Luther observes, (*De*

* It is a known and very just maxim of the schools, *Effectus sequitur causam proximam*: "An effect follows from, and is to be ascribed to the last immediate cause that produced it." Thus, for instance, if I hold a book, or a stone, in my hand, my holding it is the immediate cause of its not falling; but, if I let it go, my letting it go is not the immediate cause of its falling: it is carried downward by its own gravity, which is, therefore, the *causa proxime effectus*, the proper and immediate cause of its descent. It is true, if I had kept my hold of it, it would not have fallen: yet still, the immediate direct

Serv. Arb. c. 42.) “It is a great degree of faith, to believe, that God is merciful and gracious, though he saves so few, and condemns so many; and that he is strictly just, though in consequence of his own will, he made us not exempt from liability to condemnation.” And *cap. 148.* Although God doth not make sin, nevertheless he ceases not to create and multiply individuals in the human nature, which, through the withholding of his Spirit, is corrupted by sin: just as a skilful artist may form curious statues out of bad materials. So, such as their nature is, such are men themselves; God forms them out of such a nature.”

Pos. 6. The condemnation of the reprobate is necessary and inevitable.

Which we prove thus: It is evident from scripture that the reprobate shall be condemned. But nothing comes to pass (much less can the condemnation of a rational creature,) but in consequence of the will and decree of God. Therefore the non-elect could not be condemned, was it not the divine pleasure and determination that they should. And if God wills and determines their condemnation, that condemnation is necessary and inevitable. By their sins, they have made themselves guilty of death: and, as it is not the will of God to pardon those sins, and grant them repentance unto life; the punishment of such impenitent sinners is as unavoidable as it is just. It is our Lord's own declaration, *Mat. vii.* that

cause of its fall, is its own weight, not my quitting my hold. The application of this to the Providence of God, as concerned in sinful events, is easy. Without God there could have been no creation; without creation, no creatures; without creatures, no sin. Yet is not sin chargeable on God: for *effectus sequitur causam proximam.*

a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit:" or, in other words, that a depraved sinner cannot produce in himself those gracious habits, nor exert those gracious acts, without which no adult person can be saved. Consequently the reprobate must, as corrupt, fruitless trees, (or fruitful in evil only,) be "hewn down, and cast into the fire," Mat. iii. This, therefore, serves as another argument in proof of the inevitability of their future punishment: which argument, in brief, amounts to this; They who are not saved from sin must unavoidably perish: but the reprobate are not saved from sin; (for they have neither will nor power to save themselves, and God, though he certainly can, yet he certainly will not save them :) Therefore, their perdition is unavoidable. Nor does it follow from hence, that God forces the reprobate into sin, and thereby into misery, against their wills; but that in consequence of their natural depravity (which it is not the divine pleasure to deliver them out of, neither is he bound to do it, nor are they themselves so much as desirous that he would,) they are voluntarily biased and inclined to evil: nay, which is worse still, they hug and value their spiritual chains, and even greedily pursue the paths of sin, which lead to the chambers of death. Thus God does not (as we are slanderously reported to affirm) compel the wicked to sin, as the rider spurs forward an unwilling horse: God only says, in effect, that tremendous word, Let them alone, Mat. xv. 14. He need but slacken the reins of providential restraint, and withhold the influence of saving grace; and apostate man will, too soon, and too surely, of his own accord, fall by his iniquity: he will presently be, spiritually speaking, a *felo de se*, and, without any other efficiency, lay violent hands on his soul. So that,

though the condemnation of the reprobate is unavoidable ; yet the necessity of it is so far from making them mere machines, or involuntary agents, that it does not in the least interfere with the rational freedom of their wills, nor serve to render them less inexcusable.

Pos. 7. The punishment of the non-elect was not the ultimate end of their creation ; but the glory of God.

It is frequently objected to us, that, according to our view of predestination, "God makes some persons on purpose to damn them : " But this we never advanced ; nay, we utterly reject it, as equally unworthy of God to do, and of a rational being to suppose. The grand, principal end, proposed by the Deity to himself, in his formation of all things, and of mankind in particular, was the manifestation and display of his own glorious attributes. His ultimate scope in the creation of the elect is to evidence and make known by their salvation, the unsearchable riches of his power and wisdom, mercy and love : and the creation of the non-elect is for the display of his justice, power, sovereignty, holiness, and truth. So that nothing can be more certain, than the declaration of the text we have frequently had occasion to cite, Prov. xvi. "The Lord hath made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil." On one hand, the vessels of wrath are fitted for destruction, in order that God may shew his wrath and make his power known, and manifest the greatness of his patience and long suffering, Rom. ix. 22. On the other hand, he afore prepared the elect to salvation, that on them he might demonstrate the riches of his glory and mercy, verse 23. As, therefore, God himself is the sole author and efficient of all his own actions : so is he, likewise,

the supreme end to which they lead, and in which they terminate.

Besides, the creation and perdition of the ungodly answer another purpose (though a subordinate one,) with regard to the elect themselves; who, from the rejection of those, learn, 1. To admire the riches of the divine love toward themselves, which planned, and has accomplished, the work of their salvation: while others, by nature on an equal level with them, are excluded from a participation of the same benefits. And such a view of the Lord's distinguishing mercy is, 2. A most powerful motive to thankfulness, that, when they too might justly have been condemned with the world of the non-elect, they were marked out as heirs of the grace of life. 3. Hereby they are taught ardently to love their heavenly Father; 4. To trust in him assuredly for a continued supply of grace while they are on earth, and for the accomplishment of his eternal decree and promise by their glorification in heaven; and, 5. To live as becomes those who have received such unspeakable mercies from the hand of their God and Saviour. So *Bucer* somewhere observes, "That the punishment of the reprobate, "is useful to the elect; inasmuch as it influences them to a greater fear and abhorrence of sin, and to a firmer reliance on the goodness of God."

Pos. 8. Notwithstanding God did from all eternity irreversibly choose out and fix upon some to be partakers of salvation by Christ, and rejected the rest) who are therefore termed by the apostle, *οἱ λοιποὶ*, the refuse, or those that remained, and were left out;) acting in both according to the good pleasure of his own sovereign will: yet he did not herein act an unjust, tyrannical, or cruel part; nor yet shew himself a respecter of persons.

1. He is not unjust in reprobating some : neither can he be so ; for " the Lord is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works," Psalm cxlv. But salvation and damnation are works of his : consequently, neither of them is unrighteous or unholy. It is undoubted matter of fact, that the Father draws some men to Christ, and saves them in him with an everlasting salvation ; and that he neither draws nor saves some others : and, if it be not unjust in God actually to forbear saving these persons after they are born, it could not be unjust in him to determine as much, before they were born. What is not unjust for God to do in time, could not, by parity of argument, be unjust in him to resolve upon and decree from eternity. And, surely, if the apostle's illustration be allowed to have any propriety, or to carry any authority, it can no more be unjust in God to set apart some for communion with himself in this life and the next, and to set aside others, according to his own free pleasure ; than for a potter, to make out of the same mass of clay, some vessels for honourable, and others for inferior uses. The Deity, being absolute Lord of all his creatures, is accountable to none for his doings ; and cannot be chargeable with injustice for disposing of his own as he will.

Nor, 2. Is the decree of reprobation a tyrannical one. It is, indeed, strictly sovereign ; but lawful sovereignty and lawless tyranny are as really distinct and different, as any two opposites can be. He is a tyrant, in the common acceptance of that word, who, 1. Either usurps the sovereign authority, and arrogates to himself a dominion to which he has no right : or, 2. Who, being originally a lawful prince, abuses his power, and governs contrary to law. But who dares

to lay either of these accusations to the divine charge? God, as Creator, has a most unquestionable and unlimited right over the souls and bodies of men; unless it can be supposed, contrary to all scripture and common sense, that, in making of man, he made a set of beings superior to himself, and exempt from his jurisdiction. Taking it for granted, therefore, God has an absolute right of sovereignty over his creatures; if he should be pleased (as the scriptures repeatedly assure us that he is) to manifest and display that right, by graciously saving some, and justly punishing others for their sins—Who are we that we should reply against God?

Neither does the ever blessed Deity fall under the second notion of a tyrant; namely, as one who abuses his power by acting contrary to law: for, by what exterior law is HE bound, who is the supreme lawgiver of the universe? The laws promulgated by him are designed for the rule of our conduct, not of his. Should it be objected, that, “His own attributes of goodness and justice, holiness and truth, are a law to himself;” I answer, that, admitting this to be the case, there is nothing in the decree of reprobation as represented in scripture, and by us from thence, which clashes with any of these perfections. With regard to the divine goodness, though the non-elect are not objects of it in the sense the elect are; yet even they are not wholly excluded from a participation of it. They enjoy the good things of providence, in common with God’s children, and, very often, in a much higher degree. Besides, goodness, considered as it is in God, would have been just the same infinite and glorious attribute, supposing no rational beings had been created at all, or saved when created. To which may be added, that the goodness of the

Deity does not cease to be infinite in itself, only because it is more extended to some objects than it is to others : The infinity of this perfection, as residing in God and coinciding with his essence, is sufficiently secured, without supposing it to reach indiscriminately to all the creatures he has made. For, was this way of reasoning to be admitted, it would lead us too far, and prove too much : since, if the infinity of his goodness is to be estimated by the number of objects upon which it terminates, there must be an absolute proper infinity of reasonable beings to terminate that goodness upon : consequently, it would follow from such premises, either that the creation is as truly infinite as the Creator ; or, if otherwise, that the Creator's goodness could not be infinite, because it has not an infinity of objects to make happy.* Lastly, if it was not

* The late most learned and judicious Mr. *Charnock* has, in my judgment at least, proved most clearly and satisfactorily, that the exclusion of some individual persons from a participation of saving grace is perfectly consistent with God's unlimited goodness. He observes, that " The goodness of the Deity is infinite, and circumscribed by no limits. The exercise of his goodness may be limited by himself ; but his goodness, the principle, cannot : for, since his essence is infinite, and his goodness is not distinguished from his essence ; it is infinite also. God is necessarily good in his nature ; but free in his communications of it. He is necessarily good, effective, in regard of his nature ; but freely good, effective, in regard of the effluxes of it to this or that particular subject he pitcheth upon. He is not necessarily communicative of his goodness, as the sun of its light, or a tree of its cooling shade, which chooses not its objects, but enlightens all indifferently, without variation or distinction ; this were to make God of no more understanding than the sun, which shines, not where it pleases, but where it must. He is an understanding agent, and hath a sovereign right to choose his own subjects. It would not be a supreme, if it were not a voluntary goodness. It is agreeable to the nature of the Highest Good to be absolutely free ; and to dispense

incompatible with God's infinite goodness, to pass by the whole body of fallen angels, and leave them under less guilt of their apostacy; much less can it clash with that attribute, to pass by some of fallen mankind, and resolve to leave them in their sins, and punish them for them. Nor is it inconsistent with the divine justice, to withhold saving grace from some; seeing the grace of God is not what he owes to any. It is a free gift to those that have it; and is not due to those that are without it: consequently, there can be no injustice in not giving what God is not bound to bestow.

There is no end of caviling at the divine dispensations, if men are disposed to it. We might, with equality of reason, when our hand is in,

his goodness in what methods and measures he pleases, according to the free determinations of his own will, guided by the wisdom of his mind, and regulated by the holiness of his nature. He will be good to whom he will be good. When he doth act he cannot but act well: So far it is necessary: yet he may act this good or that good, to this or that degree; so it is free; as it is the perfection of his nature, it is necessary: as it is the communication of his bounty, it is voluntary. The eye cannot but see, if it be open; yet it may glance on this or that colour, fix upon this or that object, as it is conducted by the will. What necessity could there be on God to resolve to communicate his goodness [at all?] it could not be to make himself better by it; for he had [before] a goodness incapable of any addition. What obligation could there be from the creature? Whatever sparks of goodness any creature hath, are the free effusions of God's bounty, the offspring of his own inclination to do well, the simple favour of the donor. God is as unconstrained in his liberty, in all his communications, as [he is] infinite in his goodness, the fountain of them." *Charnock's Works*' vol. 1. p. 583, &c. With whom agrees the excellent Dr. Bates (surnamed for his eloquence, the silver-tongued;) and who, if he had a silver-tongue, had likewise a golden pen: "God," says he "is a wise and free agent; and as he is infinite in goodness, so the exercise of it is voluntary, and only so far as he pleases." *Harm. of Div. Attrib.* chap. 3.

presume to charge the Deity with partiality, for not making all his creatures angels, because it was in his power to do so, as charge him with injustice for not electing all mankind. Besides, how can it possibly be subversive of his justice, to condemn, and resolve to condemn, the non-elect for their sins; when those very sins were not atoned for by Christ, as the sins of the elect were? His justice in this case is so far from hindering the condemnation of the reprobate; that it renders it necessary and indispensable. Again, is the decree of sovereign preterition, and of just condemnation for sin, repugnant to the divine holiness? not in the least: so far from it, that it does not appear how the Deity could be holy, if he did not hate sin, and punish it. Neither is it contrary to his truth and veracity. Quite the reverse. For, would not the divine veracity fall to the ground, if the finally wicked were not condemned?

3. God in the reprobation of some does not act a cruel part. Whoever accused a chief magistrate of cruelty, for not sparing a company of atrocious malefactors, and for letting the sentence of the law take place upon them by their execution? If, indeed, the magistrate please to pity some of them, and remit their penalty, we applaud his clemency; but the punishment of the rest is no impeachment of his mercy. Now, with regard to God, his mercy is free and voluntary. He may extend it to, and withhold it from whom he pleases, Rom. ix. 15, 18. and it is sad indeed, if we will not allow the Sovereign, the all-wise Governor of heaven and earth, the same privilege and liberty we allow to a supreme magistrate below.

Nor, 4. Is God, in choosing some and rejecting others, a respecter of persons. He only comes

under that title, who, on account of parentage, country, dignity, wealth, or for any other* exter-

* *προσωποληψια*, *Personæ Acceptio*, quummagis huic favemus, quam illi, ob circumstantiam aliquam, ceu qualitatem, externam, ei adhaerentem; puta genus, dignitatem, opes, patriam, &c. *Scapula*, in voc.

So that elegant, accurate, and learned Dutch divine, *Laurentius*: Hæc vero [i. e. *προσωποληψια*] est, quando persona personæ præfertur ex causa indebita: puta, si judex absolvat reum, vel quia dives est, vel quia potens, vel quia magistratus est, vel quia amicus & prepinquus est, &c. "That is respect of persons, when one man is preferred to another on some sinister and undue account: as when a judge acquits a criminal, merely because he is rich, or powerful, or is his friend, or relation, &c." Comment in Epist. Jacob. p. 92.

Now, in the matter of election and preterition, God is influenced by no such motives: nor, indeed, by any exterior inducement, or any motive, *extra se*, out of himself. He does not, for instance, condemn any persons on account of their poverty: but on the reverse, hath chosen many who are poor in this world, Jam. ii. 5. Nor does he condemn any for being rich; for some even of the mighty and noble are called by his grace. 1 Cor. i. 26. He does not respect any man's parentage, or country; for the elect will be "gathered together from the four winds, from under one end of heaven to the other," Mat. xxiv. 31. and he hath redeemed to himself a select number, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. and vii. 9. So far is God from being in any sense a respecter of persons, that, in Christ Jesus, there is "neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female," Gal. iii. 28. He does not receive one, nor reject another, merely for coming or not coming under any of these characters. His own sovereign will, and not their external or internal circumstances, was the sole rule, by which he proceeded in appointing some to salvation, and decreeing to leave others in their sins: so that God is not herein a respecter of their persons, but a respecter of himself, and his own glory.

And as God is no respecter of persons, because he chooses some as objects of his favour, and omits others; all being on a perfect equality; so neither does it follow, that he is such, from his actually conferring spiritual and eternal blessings on the former, and denying them to the latter: seeing these blessings are absolutely his own, and which he may, therefore without injustice give or not give at his pleasure. Dr.

nal consideration, shews more favour to one person than to another. But that is not the case with God. He considers all men as sinners by nature; and has compassion not on persons of this or that sect, country, sex, age, or station in life, because they are so circumstanced, but on whom, and because he will have compassion. Pertinent to the present purpose is that passage of *St. Austin* :*

Whitby himself, though so strenuous an adversary to every thing that looks like predestination, yet very justly observes (and such a concession, from such a pen, merits the reader's attention,) *Locum non habet* [scil. *προσωποληψια*] in bonis mere liberis & gratuitis; neque in iis, in quibus, unum alteri præferre, nostri arbitrii aut privilegii est. *Ethic Compend.* l. 2. c. 5. sect. 9. i. e. "The bestowing" [and consequently, the withholding] "of such benefits, as are merely gratuitous and undeserved, does not argue respect of persons; neither is it respect of persons to prefer one before another, when we have a right, and it is our pleasure so to do." I shall only add the testimony of *Thomas Aquinas*; a man of some genius, and much application; who, though in very many things, a laborious trifler, was yet, on some subjects, a clear reasoner, and judicious writer. His words are, "Duplex est datio; una quidem pertinens ad justitiam; qua, scilicet, aliquis dat alicui quod ei debetur; & circa tales dationes attenditur personarum acceptio. Ali est datio ad liberalitatem pertinens; qua, scilicet, gratis datur alicui quod ei non debetur. Et talis est Collatio munerum gratiæ, per quæ peccatores assumuntur a Deo. Et, in hac donatione, non habet locum personarum acceptio; qui quilibet, absque injustitia, potest de suo dare quantum vult. & cui vult: secundum illud, *Mat. xx.* Annon licet mihi, quod volo, facere? tolle quod tuum est, & vade." i. e. "There is a twofold rendering or giving; the one a matter of justice, whereby that is paid to a man which was due to him. Here it is possible for us to act partially, and with respect of persons:" [Thus, for example's sake, if I owe money to two men, one of whom is rich, the other poor; and I pay the rich man, because he has it in his power to sue me, but defraud the other, because of his inability to do himself justice; I should be a respecter of persons. But, as *Aquinas* goes on] "There is a second kind of rendering or giving; which is a branch of

* *Tom. 2. Epist. 105. ad Sixtum Presb.*

“Forasmuch as some people imagine, that they must look on God as a respecter of persons, if they believe, that, without any respect had to the previous merits of men, he hath mercy on whom he will, and calls whom it is his pleasure to call, and makes good whom he pleases. The scrupulousness of such people arises from their not duly attending to this one thing, namely, that damnation is rendered to the wicked as a matter of debt, justice, and desert; whereas, the grace given to those who are delivered, is free and unmerited: so that the condemned sinner cannot allege that he is unworthy of his punishment; nor the saint vaunt or boast, as if he was worthy of his reward. Thus, in the whole course of this procedure, there is no respect of persons. They who are condemned, and they who are set at liberty, constituted originally one and the same lump, equally infected with sin, and liable to vengeance. Hence, the justified may learn from the condemnation of the rest, what would have been their own punishment, had not God’s free grace stepped in to their rescue.”

Before I conclude this head, I will obviate a fallacious objection, very common in the mouths of our opponents: “How,” say they, “is the

mere bounty and liberality, by which that is freely bestowed on any man which was not due to him. Such are the gifts of grace, whereby sinners are received of God. In the bestowment of grace, respect of persons is absolutely out of the question; because every one may and can, without the least shadow of injustice, give as much of his own as he will, and to whom he will: according to that passage in Mat. xx. “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will [with my own?] take up that which is thine, and go thy way.” *Aquin. Summ. Theol.* 2—2dæ Qu. 63. A. 1.

On the whole, it is evident, that respect of persons can only have place in matters of justice, and is but another name for perversion of justice: consequently, it has nothing to do with matters of mere goodness and bounty, as all the blessings of grace and salvation are.

doctrine of reprobation reconcilable with the doctrine of a future judgment?" To which I answer, that there need no pains to reconcile these two, since they are so far from interfering with each other, that one follows from the other, and the former renders the latter absolutely necessary. Before the judgment of the great day, Christ does not so much act as the judge of his creatures, as their absolute Lord and Sovereign. From the first creation to the final consummation of all things; he does, in consequence of his own eternal and immutable purpose (as a divine person,) graciously work in and on his own elect, and permissively harden the reprobate. But, when all the transactions of providence and grace are wound up in the last day, he will then properly sit as Judge; and openly publish, and solemnly ratify, if I may so say, his everlasting decrees, by receiving the elect, body and soul, into glory, and by passing sentence on the non-elect (not for their having done what they could not help, but) for their wilful ignorance of divine things, and their obstinate unbelief; for their omission of moral duty, and for their repeated iniquities and transgressions.

Pos. 9. Notwithstanding God's predestination is most certain and unalterable, so that no elect person can perish, nor any reprobate be saved; yet it does not follow from thence, that all precepts, reproofs, and exhortations, on the part of God, or prayers on the part of man, are useless, vain, and insignificant.

1. These are not useless with regard to the elect, for they are necessary means of bringing them to the knowledge of the truth at first: afterwards, of stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance, and of edifying and establishing them in faith, love, and holiness. Hence that of *St. Austin*: "The commandment will

tell thee, O man, what thou oughtest to have ; reproof will shew thee wherein thou art wanting ; and praying will teach thee from whom thou must receive the supplies which thou wantest." Nor, 2. Are these vain with regard to the reprobate : for, precept, reproof, and exhortation may, if duly attended to, be a means of making them careful to adjust their moral, external conduct, according to the rules of decency, justice, and regularity ; and thereby prevent much inconvenience to themselves and injury to society. And, as for prayer, it is the duty of all, without exception. Every created being (whether elect or reprobate, matters not as to this point) is as such dependent on the Creator for all things : and if dependent, ought to have recourse to him, both in a way of supplication and thanksgiving.

But, to come closer still. That absolute predestination does not set aside, nor render superfluous, the use of preaching, exhortation, &c. we prove from the examples of Christ himself and his apostles, who all-taught and insisted upon the article of predestination ; and yet took every opportunity of preaching it to sinners, and enforced their ministry with proper rebukes, invitations, and exhortations, as occasion required. Though they shewed unanswerably, that salvation is the free gift of God, and lies entirely at his sovereign disposal ; that men can of themselves do nothing spiritually good : and that it is God, who of his own pleasure, works in them both to will and to do ; yet, they did not neglect to address their auditors, as beings possessed of reason and conscience, nor omitted to remind them of their duties as such ; but shewed them their sin and danger by nature, and laid before them the appointed way and method of salvation, as exhibited in the gospel. Our Saviour himself, expressly, and *in*

terminis, assures us that no man *can* come to him except the Father draw him: and yet he says, "Come unto me all ye that labour," &c. St. Peter, in the 2d of Acts, told the Jews, that they had fulfilled the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, in putting the Messiah to death; and yet sharply rebukes them for it. St. Paul declares, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth;" and yet exhorts the Corinthians, "so to run as to obtain the prize." He assures us, Rom. viii. that "we know not what we pray for as we ought;" and yet, 1 Thess. v. directs us to "pray without ceasing." He avers, 1 Tim. ii. that the "foundation, or decree of the Lord standeth sure;" and yet cautions him, who "thinks he stands, to take heed lest he fall." St. James, in like manner says, that "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above;" and yet exhorts those who want wisdom, to ask it of God. So, then, all these being means whereby the elect are frequently enlightened into the knowledge of Christ, and by which they are, after they have believed through grace, built up in him; and are means of their perseverance to the end; these are so far from being vain and insignificant, that they are highly useful and necessary, and answer many valuable and important ends, without in the least shaking the doctrine of predestination in particular, or the analogy of faith in general. Thus St. Austin,* "We must preach, we must reprove, we must pray; because they to whom grace is given will hear and act accordingly; though they to whom grace is not given will do neither."

* De Bon. Persev. cap. 14.

CHAPTER V.

SHEWING THAT THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION SHOULD BE OPENLY PREACHED AND INSISTED ON; AND FOR WHAT REASONS.

UPON the whole, it is evident that the doctrine of God's eternal and unchangeable predestination should neither be wholly suppressed and laid aside, nor yet be confined to the disquisition of the learned and speculative only; but likewise should be publicly taught from the pulpit and the press, that even the meanest of the people may not be ignorant of a truth which reflects such glory on God, and is the very foundation of happiness to man. Let it, however, be preached with judgment and discretion: i. e. delivered by the preacher as it is delivered in scripture; and no otherwise. By which means it can neither be abused to licentiousness, nor misapprehended to despair; but will eminently conduce to the knowledge, establishment, improvement and comfort of them that hear. That predestination ought to be preached I thus prove:

1. The gospel is to be preached, and that not partially, and by piecemeal, but the whole of it. The commission runs, "Go forth and preach the gospel; the gospel itself, even all the gospel, without exception or limitation, for so far as the gospel is maimed, or any branch of the evangelical system is suppressed and passed over in

silence, so far the gospel is not preached. Besides, there is scarce any other distinguishing doctrine of the gospel can be preached in its purity and consistency, without this of predestination. Election is the golden thread that runs through the whole christian system; it is the leaven, that pervades the whole lump. Cicero says of the various parts of human learning, "Omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quodam commune vinculum, and quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur: i. e. The whole circle of arts have a kind of mutual bond and connexion; and, by a sort of reciprocal relationship, are held together, and interwoven with each other." Much the same may be said of this important doctrine; it is the bond which connects and keeps together the whole christian system; which without this, is like a system of sand, ever ready to fall to pieces. It is the cement which holds the fabric together; nay, it is the very soul that animates the whole frame. It is so blended and interwoven with the entire scheme of gospel doctrine, that when the former is excluded, the latter bleeds to death. An ambassador is to deliver the whole message with which he is charged. He is to omit no part of it, but must declare the mind of the sovereign he represents, fully and without reserve. He is to say neither more nor less than the instructions of his court require. Else, he comes under displeasure, perhaps loses his head. Let the ministers of Christ weigh this well.

Nor is the gospel to be preached only, but preached to every creature; that is, to reasonable beings promiscuously and at large; to all who frequent the christian ministry, of every state and condition in life; whether high or low, young or old, learned or illiterate. All who at-

tend on the ministrations of Christ's ambassadors have a right to hear the gospel fully, clearly, and without mincing. *Preach it*, says Christ, Mark xvi. 15. *κηρύξατε*, publish it abroad, be its criers and heralds; proclaim it aloud, tell it out, keep back no part of it, spare not, lift up your voices like trumpets. Now, a very considerable branch of this gospel is, The doctrine of God's eternal, free, absolute, and irreversible election of some persons in Christ to everlasting life. The saints were singled out, in God's eternal purpose and choice, *ut crederent*, to be endued with faith, and thereby fitted for their destined salvation. By their interest in the gratuitous, unalienable love of the blessed Trinity, they come to be, subjectively, saints and believers; so that their whole salvation, from the first plan of it in the divine mind, to the consummation of it in glory, is at once a matter of mere grace, and of absolute certainty. While they who die without faith and holiness, prove thereby that they were not included in this elect number, and were not written in the book of life. The justice of God's procedure herein is unquestionable. Out of a corrupt mass, wherein not one was better than another, he might (as was observed before) love and choose whom and as many as he pleased. It was likewise without any shadow of injustice at his option, whom and how many he would pass by. His not choosing them was the fruit of his sovereign will; but his condemning them after death, and in the last day is the fruit (not of their non-election, which was no fault of theirs; but) of their own positive transgressions. The elect, therefore, have the utmost reason to love and glorify God which any beings can possibly have: and the sense of what he has done for them is the strongest motive to obedience. On

the other hand, the reprobates have nothing to complain of, since whatever God does, is just and right, and so it will appear to be (however darkly matters may appear to us now,) when we see him as he is, and know him even as we are known.

And now, why should not this doctrine be preached and insisted upon in public? a doctrine which is of express revelation; a doctrine that makes wholly for the glory of God; which conduces in a most peculiar manner to the conversion, comfort, and sanctification of the elect: and leaves even the ungodly themselves without excuse!

But perhaps you may still be inclined to question, Whether predestination be indeed a scripture doctrine. If so, let me by way of sample beg you to consider the following declarations, 1. Of Christ, 2. Of his Apostles.

Mat. xi. "If the mighty works that have been done in thee had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented," &c. whence it is evident that the Tyrians and Sidonians, at least the majority of them, died in a state of impenitency; but that, if God had given them the same means of grace afforded to Israel, they would not have died impenitent: yet these means were not granted them. How can this be accounted for? only on the single principle of peremptory predestination, flowing from the sovereign will of God. No wonder then, that our Lord concludes that chapter with these remarkable words, "I thank thee, Holy 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.*" Where Christ *thanks* the Father for doing that very

thing which Arminians *exclaim* against as unjust, and *censure* as partial!

Mat. xii. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

Mat. xx. 23. "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, *αλλ' οἷς ἠλοιμασται ὑπο το πατρε μου*, except to them for whom it hath been prepared by my Father:" q. d. Salvation is not a precarious thing: the seats in glory were disposed of long ago in my Father's intention and destination: I can only assign them to such persons as they were prepared for in his decree.

Mat. xxii. "Many are called, but few chosen:" i. e. All who live under the sound of the gospel will not be saved; but those only who are elected unto life.

Mat. xxiv. "For the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened:" and *ibid.* "If it were possible, they should deceive the very elect:" where it is plain Christ teaches two things; 1. That there is a certain number of persons who are elected to grace and glory; and 2. That it is absolutely impossible for these to be deceived into total or final apostacy.

Mat. xxv. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Mark xi. "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to them that are without," i. e. out of the pale of election, "all these things are done in parables; that, seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Luke x. "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

Luke xii. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Luke xvii. "One shall be taken and the other shall be left."

John vi. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me;" as much as to say, These shall, but the rest cannot.

John viii. "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God:" not chosen of him.

John x. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

John xv. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

I come now, 2. To the Apostles.

John xii. 37, 40. "They believed not on him, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake; Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they *could not* believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them." Without certain prescience there could be no prophecy; and without predestination no certain prescience. Therefore, in order to the accomplishment of prophecy, prescience, and predestination, we are expressly told that these persons *could not* believe, *οτι ουδυναντο*, they were not able; it was out of their power. In short, there is hardly a page in St. John's gospel which does not either expressly or implicitly make mention of election and reprobation.

St. Peter says of Judas, Acts i. "Men and brethren, the scriptures *must needs* have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas," So ver.

25. "That he might go to his own place:" to the place of punishment appointed for him.

Acts ii. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain."

Acts iv. "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done: προωρισθε γενεσθαι, predestinated should come to pass."

Acts xiii. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed:" τετασμενοι, designed, destined, or appointed unto life.

Concerning the apostle Paul what shall I say? every one that has read his epistles knows that they teem with predestination from beginning to end.* I shall only give one or two passages: and begin with that famous chain, Rom. viii. "Whom he did foreknow (or forelove, for, to know often signifies in scripture to love) he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren:" that as in all things else, so in the business of election, Christ might have the pre-eminence; he being first chosen as a Saviour, and they in him to be saved by him: "moreover,

* A friend of mine who has a large property in Ireland, was conversing one day with a popish tenant of his upon religion. Among other points they discussed the practice of having public prayers in an unknown tongue. My friend took down a New Testament from his book-case, and read part of 1 Cor. xiv. When he had finished, the poor zealous papist rose up from his chair, and said with great vehemence, "I verily believe St. Paul was an heretic."

Can the person who carefully reads the epistles of that great apostle doubt of his having a thorough-paced *predestinarian*?

whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

The 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of the same epistle are professed dissertations on, and illustrations of, the doctrine of God’s decrees ; and contain likewise a solution of the principal objections brought against that doctrine.

Gal. i. “ Who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace.”

The first chapter of Ephesians treats of little else but election and predestination.

2 Thess. ii. After observing that the reprobates perish wilfully, the apostle, by a striking transition, addresses himself to the elect Thessalonians, saying, “ But we are bound to give thanks unto God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

2 Tim. i. “ 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 before the world began.”

St. Jude, on the other hand, describes the reprobate as “ ungodly men, who were of old fore-ordained to this condemnation.”

Another apostle makes this peremptory declaration ; “ Who stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were *appointed*: but *ye* are a *chosen* generation, [$\gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ $\epsilon\kappa\lambda\epsilon\kappa\tau\omicron\nu$, an elect race] a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, $\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\iota\nu$, a people purchased to be his peculiar property and possession, 1 Pet. ii. 8, 9. To all which may be added,

Rev. xvii. 8. “ Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.”

All these texts are but as an handful to the harvest; and yet are both numerous and weighty enough to decide the point with any who pay the least deference to scripture authority. And let it be observed, that Christ and his apostles delivered these matters, not to some privileged persons only, but to all at large who had ears to hear, and eyes to read. Therefore it is incumbent on every faithful minister to tread in their steps by doing likewise: nor is that minister a faithful one, faithful to Christ, to truth, and to souls, who keeps back any part of the counsel of God, and buries those doctrines in silence which he is commanded to preach upon the house-tops.

The great St. Austin, in his valuable treatise *De Bono Persever.* effectually obviates the objections of those who are for burying the doctrine of predestination in silence. He shews that it ought to be publicly taught; describes the necessity and usefulness of preaching it; and points out the manner of doing it to edification. And since some persons have condemned St. Austin, by bell, book, and candle, for his steadfast attachment to, and nervous, successful defences of, the decrees of God, let us hear what Luther, that great light in the church, thought respecting the argument before us.

Erasmus (in most other respects a very excellent man) affected to think that it was of dangerous consequence to propagate the doctrine of predestination, either by preaching or writing. His words are these: "What can be more useless than to publish this paradox to the world? namely, that whatever we do, is done not by virtue of our own free will, but in a way of necessity, &c. What a wide gap does the publication of this tenet open among men for the commission of all ungodliness! What wicked person

will reform his life? Who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? Who will fight against his own corrupt inclinations? Therefore, where is either the need or the utility of spreading these notions from whence so many evils seem to flow?"

To which Luther replies: "If, my Erasmus, you consider these paradoxes (as you term them) to be no more than the inventions of men, why are you so extravagantly heated on the occasion? In that case your arguments affect not me; for there is no person now living in the world, who is a more avowed enemy to the doctrines of men than myself. But, if you believe the doctrines in debate between us to be, as indeed they are, the doctrines of God, you must have bid adieu to all sense of shame and decency thus to oppose them. I will not ask, Whither the modesty of Erasmus is fled? but, which is much more important, Where, alas! are your fear and reverence of the Deity, when you roundly declare, that this branch of truth, which he has revealed from heaven, is at best useless, and unnecessary to be known? What! shall the glorious Creator be taught by you, his creature, what is fit to be preached, and what to be suppressed? Is the adorable God so very defective in wisdom and prudence as not to know, till you instruct him, what would be useful, and what pernicious? or could not *he*, whose understanding is infinite, foresee previous to his revelation of this doctrine, what would be the consequences of his revealing it, till those consequences were pointed out by you? You cannot, you dare not say this. If, then, it was the divine pleasure to make known these things in his word, and to bid his messengers publish them abroad, and leave the consequences of their so doing to the wisdom and pro-

vidence of him, in whose name they speak, and whose message they declare, who art thou, O Erasmus, that thou shouldest reply against God, and say to the Almighty, What doest thou? St. Paul, discoursing of God, declares peremptorily, Whom he will he hardeneth: and again, God willing to shew his wrath, &c. And the apostle did not write this to have it stifled among few persons, and buried in a corner; but wrote it to the Christians at Rome; which was in effect bringing this doctrine upon the stage of the whole world, stamping an *universal imprimatur* upon it and publishing it to believers at large throughout the earth. What can sound harsher in the uncircumcised ears of carnal men, than those words of Christ, Many are called, but few chosen? and elsewhere, I know whom I have chosen. Now, these and similar assertions of Christ and his apostles, are the very positions which you, O Erasmus, brand as useless and hurtful. You object, "If these things are so, who will endeavour to amend his life?" I answer; Without the Holy Ghost no man *can* amend his life to purpose. Reformation is but varnished hypocrisy unless it proceed from grace. The elect and truly pious are amended by the Spirit of God: and those of mankind who are not amended by him will perish.—You ask moreover, Who will dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven? I answer; It is not in man's own power to believe himself such upon just grounds, till he is enabled from above. But the elect shall be so enabled: they shall believe themselves to be what indeed they are. As for the rest, who are not endowed with faith, they shall perish; raging and blaspheming as you do now. But, say you, These doctrines open a door to ungodliness. I answer; Whatever door they may open to the impious and

prophane, yet they open a door of righteousness to the elect and holy, and shew them the way to heaven, and the path of access unto God. Yet you would have us abstain from the mention of these grand doctrines, and leave our people in the dark as to their election of God: the consequence of which would be, that every man would bolster himself up with a delusive hope of share in that salvation which is supposed to lie open to all; and thus genuine humility, and the practical fear of God, would be kicked out of doors. This would be a pretty way indeed of *stopping up the gap* Erasmus complains of! Instead of closing up the door of licentiousness, as is falsely pretended, it would be in fact opening a gulf into the nethermost hell. Still you urge, Where is either the necessity, or utility, of preaching predestination? God himself teaches it, and commands us to teach it; and that is answer enough. We are not to arraign the Deity, and bring the motives of his will to the test of human scrutiny; but simply to revere both *him* and *it*. He, who alone is all-wise and all-just, can in reality (however things appear to us) do wrong to no man; neither can he do any thing unwisely or rashly. And this consideration will suffice to silence all the objections of truly religious persons. However, let us for argument's sake go a step farther. I will venture to assign over and above, two very important reasons, why these doctrines should be publicly taught: 1. For the humiliation of our pride, and the manifestation of divine grace. God hath assuredly promised his favour to the truly humble. By truly humble, I mean those who are endued with repentance, and despair of saving themselves; for a man can never be said to be really penitent and humble, till he is made to know that his salvation is not suspended in any measure

whatever on his own strength, machinations, endeavours, free-will, or works; but entirely depends on the free pleasure, purpose, determination, and efficiency of another; even of God alone. Whilst a man is persuaded that he has it in his power to contribute any thing, be it ever so little, to his own salvation, he remains in carnal confidence; he is not a self-despairer, and therefore he is not duly humbled before God; so far from it, that he hopes some favourable juncture or opportunity will offer, when he may be able to lend an helping hand to the business of his salvation.—On the contrary, whoever is truly convinced that the whole work depends singly and absolutely on the will of God, who alone is the author and finisher of salvation; such a person despairs of all self-assistance; he renounces his own will, and his own strength; he waits and prays for the operation of God; nor waits and prays in vain. For the elect's sake, therefore, these doctrines are to be preached, that the chosen of God, being humbled by the knowledge of his truths, self-emptied and sunk as it were into nothing in his presence, may be saved in Christ with eternal glory. This, then, is one inducement to the publication of the doctrine; that the penitent may be made acquainted with the promise of grace, plead it in prayer to God, and receive it as their own. 2. The nature of the Christian faith requires it. Faith has to do with things not seen.—And this is one of the highest degrees of faith, steadfastly to believe that God is infinitely merciful, though he saves (comparatively) but few, and condemns so many; and that he is strictly just, though of his own will he makes such numbers of mankind necessarily liable to damnation. Now, these are some of the unseen things whereof faith is the evidence. Whereas, was it in my power to com-

prehend them, or clearly to make out, how God is both inviolably just and infinitely merciful, notwithstanding the display of wrath and seeming inequality in his dispensations respecting the reprobate; faith would have little or nothing to do. But now, since these matters cannot be adequately comprehended by us in the present state of imperfection, there is room for the exercise of faith. The truths, therefore, respecting predestination in all its branches, should be taught and published; they, no less than the other mysteries of Christian doctrine, being proper objects of faith on the part of God's people."*

With Luther the excellent Bucer agrees; particularly on Eph. i. where his words are, "There are some who affirm that election is not to be mentioned publicly to the people. But they judge wrongly. The blessings which God bestows on man are not to be suppressed, but insisted and enlarged upon; and if so, surely the blessing of predestination unto life, which is the greatest blessing of all, should not be passed over." And, a little after he adds, "Take away the remembrance and consideration of our election, and then, good God! what weapons have we left us wherewith to resist the temptations of Satan? As often as he assaults our faith (which he is frequently doing) we must constantly, and without delay, have recourse to our election in Christ as to a city of refuge. Meditation upon the Father's appointment of us to eternal life is the best antidote against the evil surmisings of doubtfulness and remaining unbelief. If we are entirely void of all hope and assurance respect-

* *Lutherus, De Serv. Arbitr. in respons. ad ult præf. t. Erasmi.*

ing our interest in this capital privilege, what solid and comfortable expectation can we entertain of future blessedness? How can we look upon God as our gracious Father, and upon Christ as our unchangeable Redeemer? without which, I see not how we can ever truly love God: and if we have no true love towards him, how can we yield acceptable obedience to him! Therefore, those persons are not to be heard who would have the doctrine of election laid (as it were) asleep, and seldom or never make its appearance in the congregations of the faithful."

To what these great men have so nervously advanced, permit me to add, that the doctrine of predestination is not only useful, but absolutely necessary to be taught or known. For,

1. Without it we cannot form just and becoming ideas of God. Thus, unless he certainly foreknows, and foreknew from everlasting, all things that should come to pass, his understanding would be finite: and a Deity of limited understanding, is no Deity at all. Again, we cannot suppose him to have foreknown any thing which he had not previously decreed; without setting up a series of causes, *extra Deum*, and making the Deity dependent for a great part of the knowledge he has, upon the will and works of his creatures, and upon a combination of circumstances exterior to himself. Therefore, his determinate plan, counsel, and purpose, (i. e. his own predestination of causes and effects, is the only basis of his foreknowledge: which foreknowledge could neither be certain, nor independent, but as founded on his own antecedent decree. 2. He alone is entitled to the name of true God, who governs all things, and without whose will (either efficient or permissive) nothing is or can be done. And such is the God of the

scriptures ; against whose will not a sparrow can die, nor an hair fall from our heads, Mat. x. Now what is predestination, but the determining will of God? I defy the subtlest semi-pelagian in the world to form or convey a just and worthy notion of the Supreme Being, without admitting him to be the great cause of all causes else, himself dependent on none : who willed from eternity, how he would act in time, and settled a regular determinate scheme of what he would do, and permit to be done from the beginning to the consummation of the world. A contrary view of the Deity is as inconsistent with reason itself, and with the very religion of nature, as it is with the decisions of revelation. Nor can we rationally conceive of an independent, all-perfect first cause without allowing him to be, 3. Unchangeable in his purposes. His decrees and his essence coincide : consequently, a change in those would infer an alteration in this. Nor can that being be the true God, whose will is variable, fluctuating, and indeterminate : for his will is himself willing. A Deity without decrees and decrees without immutability, are, of all inventions that ever entered the heart of man, the most absurd. 4. Without predestination to plan, and without providence to put that plan in execution, what becomes of God's omnipotence? It vanishes into air. It becomes a mere non-entity. For what sort of omnipotence is that which may be baffled and defeated by the very creatures it has made ! Very different is the idea of this attribute suggested by the Psalmist, Psalm cxiii. " Whatsoever the Lord willed, that did he in heaven and in earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places : " i. e. He not only made them when he would, but orders them when made. 5. He alone is the true God, according to scripture representation,

who saves by his mere mercy and voluntary grace, those whom he hath chosen, and righteously condemns (for their sins) those whom he thought fit to pass by. But, without predestination there could be no such thing, either as sovereign mercy, or voluntary grace. For, after all, what is predestination but his decree to save some of his mere goodness: and to condemn others in his just judgment?—Now, it is most evident that the scripture doctrine of predestination, is the clearest mirror wherein to see and contemplate these essential attributes of God. Here they all shine forth in their fulness of harmony and lustre. Deny predestination and you deny (though perhaps not intentionally, yet by necessary consequence,) the adorable perfections of the Godhead: in concealing *that*, you throw a veil over *these*; and in preaching *that* you hold up *these* to the comfort, the establishment, and the admiration of the believing world.

II. Predestination is to be preached, because the grace of God (which stands opposed to all human worthiness) cannot be maintained without it. The excellent St. Austin makes use of this very argument. “If,” says he, “these two privileges” [namely, faith itself and final perseverance in faith] “are the gifts of God; and if God foreknew on whom he would bestow these gifts; (and who can doubt of so evident a truth?) it is necessary for predestination to be preached as the sure and invincible bulwark of that true grace of God, which is given to men without any consideration of merit.”* Thus argued St. Austin against the Pelagians, who taught, that grace is offered to all men alike; That God, for

* De Bono Persever. cap. 21.

his part, equally wills the salvation of all; and that it is in the power of man's free will to accept or reject the grace and salvation so offered. Which string of errors do, as Austin justly observes, centre in this grand point, *gratiam secundum nostra merita dari*; that God's grace is not free, but the fruit of man's desert. Now the doctrine of predestination batters down this delusive Babel of free will and merit. It teaches us that if we do indeed will and desire to lay hold on Christ and salvation by him, this will and desire are the effect of God's secret purpose and effectual operation: for he it is who worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure; that he that glorieth should glory in the Lord. There neither is nor can be any medium between predestinating grace, and salvation by human merit. We must believe and preach one or the other: for they can never stand together. No attempts to mingle and reconcile these two incompatible opposites can ever succeed; the apostle himself being judge; "If," says he, "it [namely election] be by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work, Rom. xi. 6. Exactly agreeable to which is that of St. Austin: "Either predestination is to be preached as expressly as the scriptures deliver it, viz. That with regard to those whom he hath chosen, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; or we must roundly declare as the Pelagians do, that grace is given according to merit."† Most certain it is that the doctrine of gratuitous justification through Christ, can only be supported on that of

† De Bono Persever. cap. 16.

gratuitious predestination in Christ: since the latter is the cause and foundation of the former.

III. By the preaching of predestination man is duly humbled, and God alone is exalted: human pride is levelled, and the Divine glory shines untarnished because unrivalled. This the sacred writers positively declare. Let St. Paul be spokesman for the rest, (Eph. i. 5, 6.) Having predestinated us—*To the praise of the glory of his grace.* But how is it possible for us to render unto God the praises due to the glory of his grace without laying this threefold foundation? 1. That whosoever are, or shall be saved, are saved by his alone grace in Christ, in consequence of his eternal purpose, passed before they had done any one good thing. 2. That what good thing soever is begun to be wrought in our souls (whether it be illumination of the understanding, rectitude of will, or purity of affections,) was begun altogether of God alone; by whose invincible agency grace is at first conferred, afterwards maintained, and finally crowned. 3. That the work of internal salvation (the sweet and certain prelude to eternal glory) was not only begun in us of his mere grace; but that its continuance, its progress, and increase are no less free, and totally unmerited, than its first original donation. Grace alone makes the elect gracious; grace alone keeps them gracious; and the same grace alone will render hem everlastingly glorious in the heaven of heavens.

Conversion and salvation must in the very nature of things, be wrought and effected either by ourselves alone;—or, by ourselves and God together;—or *solely by God himself.* The Pelagians were for the first. The Arminians are for the second. True believers are for the last; because the last hypothesis, and that only, is

built on the strongest evidence of scripture, reason, and experience; it most effectually hides pride from man, and sets the crown of undivided praise upon the head, or rather casts it at the feet of that glorious triune God, who worketh all in all. But this is a crown which no sinners ever yet cast before the throne of God, who were not first led into the transporting views of his gracious decree to save freely and of his own will the people of his eternal love. Exclude, therefore, O Christian, the article of *sovereign predestination* from thy ministry, or from thy faith; and acquit thyself, if thou art able, from the charge of robbing God.

When God does by the omnipotent exertion of his Spirit, effectually call any of mankind, in time, to the actual knowledge of himself in Christ; when he likewise goes on to sanctify the sinners he has called, making them to excel in all good works, and to persevere in the love and resemblance of God to their lives end: the observing part of the unawakened world may be apt to conclude that the converted persons might receive such measure of grace from God, because of some previous qualifications, good dispositions, or pious desires, and internal preparations, discovered in them by the all-seeing eye; which, if true, would indeed transfer the praise from the Creator, and consign it to the creature. But the doctrine of predestination, absolute, free, unconditional predestination, here steps in, and gives God his own. It lays the axe to the root of human boasting, and cuts down (for which reason the natural man hates it) every legal, every independent, every self-righteous imagination, that would exalt itself against the grace of God and the glory of Christ. It tells us, That God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in his

Son, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, in order to our being afterwards made holy and blameless before him in love, Eph. i. Of course, whatever truly and spiritually good thing is found in any person, it is the special gift and work of God: given and wrought in consequence of eternal, unmerited election to grace and glory. Whence the greatest saint cannot triumph over the most abandoned sinner, but is led to refer the entire praise of his salvation, both from sin and hell, to the mere good will and sovereign purpose of God, who hath graciously made him to differ from that world which lieth in wickedness. Such being the tendency of this blessed doctrine, how injurious, both to God and man would the suppression of it be? Well does St. Austin argue: "As the duties of piety ought to be preached up, that he who hath ears to hear may be instructed how to worship God aright; and as chastity should be publicly recommended and enforced, that he that hath ears to hear may know how to possess himself in sanctification. And as charity moreover should be inculcated from the pulpit, that he who hath ears to hear may be excited to the ardent love of God, and his neighbour; in like manner, should God's predestination of his favours be openly preached, that he who hath ears to hear may learn to glory, not in himself but in the Lord." *

IV. Predestination should be publicly taught and insisted upon, in order to confirm and strengthen true believers in the certainty and con-

* De Bono Persever. cap. 20.

fidence of their salvation.* For, when regenerate persons are told, and are enabled to believe, that the glorification of the elect is so assuredly fixed in God's eternal purpose, that it is impossible for any of them to perish; and when the regenerate are led to consider themselves as actually belonging to this elect body of Christ; what can establish, strengthen, and settle their faith like this? Nor is such a faith presumptuous; for every converted man may and ought to conclude himself elected: since God the Spirit renews those only who were *chosen* by God the Father, and *redeemed* by God the Son. This is an hope which maketh not ashamed, nor can possibly issue in disappointment, if entertained by those into whose hearts the love of God is poured forth by the Holy Ghost given unto them, Rom. v. 5.

The holy triumph and assurance resulting from this blessed view, are expressly warranted by the apostle, Rom. viii. where he deduces effectual calling from a prior predestination; and infers the certainty of final salvation from effectual calling. Whom he did *predestinate*, them he also *called*; and whom he called, them he also *justified*; and whom he justified, them he also *glorified*. How naturally from such premises, does the apostle add, Who shall lay any thing

* Our venerable reformers in the 17th of our xxxix articles, make the very same observation, and nearly in the same words:—"The godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comforts to godly persons;—because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of everlasting salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, &c."

to the charge of God's elect? Who, and where is he that condemneth them? Who and what shall separate us from the love of Christ?—In all these things we are, and shall be more than conquerors through him who hath loved us: for I am persuaded [*πίπιστοιμαι*,* I am most clearly and assuredly confident,] 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. So, elsewhere, The foundation of the Lord, i. e. his decree or purpose, according to election standeth sure; having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*: which is particularly noted by the apostle, lest true believers might be discouraged, and begin to doubt of their own certain perseverance to salvation, either from a sense of their remaining imperfections, or from observing the open apostacy of unregenerate professors, 2 Tim. ii.—How little obliged, therefore, are the flock of Christ to those persons, who would, by stifling the mention of predestination, expunge the sense and certainty of everlasting blessedness from the list of Christian privileges!

V. Without the doctrine of predestination we cannot enjoy a lively sight and experience of God's special love and mercy towards us in Christ Jesus. Blessings not peculiar, but conferred indiscriminately, on every man without exception, would neither be a proof of peculiar love in the donor, nor calculated to excite peculiar

* Certus sum, Ar. Montan. Cert fide persuasum mihi habeo, Erasm. Victa omni dubitatione Bengel. I am assured, Dutch version.

wonder and gratitude in the receiver. For instance ; rain from heaven, though an invaluable benefit, is not considered as an argument of God's special and peculiar favour to some individuals above others : and why ? because it falls on all alike : as much on the rude wilderness, and the barren rock, as on the cultivated garden, and the fruitful field.—But the blessing of election, somewhat like the Sibylline books, rises in value proportionally to the fewness of its objects. So that when we recollect that in the view of God (to whom all things are at once present,) the whole mass of mankind was considered as justly liable to condemnation on account of original and actual iniquity ; his selecting some individuals from among the rest, and graciously setting them apart in Christ for salvation, both from sin and punishment, were such acts of sovereign goodness, as exhibit the exceeding greatness, and the entire freeness of his love, in the most awful, amiable, and humbling light. In order then, that the special grace of God may shine, predestination must be preached ; even the eternal and immutable predestination of his people to faith and everlasting life. “ From those who are left under the power of guilt,” says St. Austin, “ the person who is delivered from it may learn what he too must have suffered, had not grace stepped in to his relief. And, if it was grace that interposed, it could not be the reward of man's merit, but the free gift of God's gratuitous goodness. Some, however, call it unjust for one to be delivered, while another, though no more guilty than the former, is condemned : If it be just to punish one, it would be but justice to punish both. I grant that both might have been justly punished. Let us therefore give thanks unto God our Saviour, for not inflicting

that vengeance on us, which from the condemnation of our fellow-sinners we may conclude to have been our desert no less than theirs. Had they as well as we been ransomed from their captivity, we could have framed but little conception of the penal wrath due in strictness of justice to sin: and on the other hand, had none of the fallen race been ransomed and set at liberty, how could divine grace have displayed the riches of its liberality*?" The same evangelical father delivers himself elsewhere to the same effect: "Hence," says he, "appears the greatness of that grace by which so many are freed from condemnation: and they may form some idea of the misery due to themselves, from the dreadfulness of the punishment that awaits the rest. Whence those who rejoice, are taught to rejoice, not in their own merits (*quæ paria esse vident damnatis*, for they see that *they have no more merit than the damned*), but in the Lord."† Hence results,

VI. Another reason, nearly connected with the former, for the unreserved publication of this doctrine: viz. That from a sense of God's peculiar, eternal, and unalterable love to his people, their hearts may be enflamed to love him in return. Slender indeed will be my motives to the love of God, on the supposition that my love to him is before hand with his to me; and that the very continuance of his favour is suspended on the weathercock of my variable will, or the flimsy thread of my imperfect affection. Such a precarious dependent love were unworthy of God; and calculated to produce but a scanty and cold

* Epist. 105. ad Sixt. Presb.

† De Predest. Sancto. lib. 1. cap. 9.

reciprocation of love from man. At the happiest of times, and in the best of frames below, our love to God is but a spark (though small and quivering, yet inestimably precious, because divinely kindled, fanned and maintained in the soul, and an earnest of better to come :) whereas love, as it glows in God, is an immense sun, which shone without beginning, and shall shine without end. Is it probable, then, that the spark of human love should give being to the sun of divine? and, that the lustre and warmth of *this* should depend on the glimmering of *that*? yet so it must be if predestination is not true: and so it must be represented if predestination is not taught.—Would you therefore know what it is to love God as your Father, Friend, and Saviour; you must fall down before his electing mercy. Till then you are only hovering about in quest of true felicity. But you will never find the door, much less can you enter into rest, till you are enabled to love him because he hath first loved you, 1 John iv. 19.

This being the case, it is evident, That without taking predestination into the account, genuine morality and the performance of truly good works will suffer, starve, and die away. Love to God is the very fuel of acceptable obedience. Withdraw the fuel, and the flame expires. But the fuel of holy affection (if scripture, experience and observation, are allowed to carry any conviction) can only be cherished, maintained, and increased in the heart, by the sense and apprehension of God's predestinating love to us in Christ Jesus. Now our obedience to God will always hold proportion to our love. If the one be relaxed and feeble, the other cannot be alert and vigorous. And electing goodness being the very life and soul of the former; the latter even

good works, must flourish or decline in proportion as election is glorified or obscured. Hence arises a

VIIth Argument for the preaching of predestination : namely, that by it we may be excited to the practice of universal godliness. The knowledge of God's love to you will make you an ardent lover of God : and the more love you have to God the more will you excel in all the duties and offices of love.—Add to this, that the scripture view of predestination includes the means, as well as the end. Christian predestinarians are for keeping together what God hath joined. He who is for attaining the end, without going to it through the means, is a self-deluding enthusiast. He, on the other hand, who carefully and conscientiously uses the means of salvation as steps to the end, is the true Calvinist. Now, eternal life being that to which the elect are ultimately destined ; faith (the effect of saving grace,) and sanctification (the effect of faith,) are blessings to which the elect are intermediately appointed. “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,” Eph. i. 4. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them,” Eph. ii. 10.—“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God :—Ye became followers of us and of the Lord,” 1 Thess. i. 4. 6.—“God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth,” 2 Thess. ii. 13.—Elect, according to the foreknowledge [or ancient love] of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience,” 1 Pet. i. 2.

Nor is salvation (the appointed end of election) at all the less secure in itself (but the more

so) for standing necessarily connected with the intervening means : seeing both *these* and *that* are inseparably joined, in order to the certain accomplishment of *that* through *these*. It only demonstrates, that without regeneration of heart, and purity of life, the elect themselves are not led to heaven. But then it is incontestable from the whole current of scripture, that these intermediate blessings shall most infallibly be vouchsafed to every elect person in virtue of God's absolute covenant, and through the effectual agency of his almighty Spirit. Internal sanctification constitutes our meetness for the kingdom to which we were predestinated ; and a course of external righteousness is one of the grand evidences, by which we make our election sure to our own present comfort and apprehension of it.*

VIII. Unless predestination be preached, we shall want one great inducement to the exercise of brotherly kindness and charity.

When a converted person is assured on one hand, that *all* whom God hath predestinated to eternal life, shall infallibly enjoy that eternal life to which they were chosen ; and, on the other hand, when he discerns the signs of election, not only in himself, but also in the rest of his fellow-believers, and concludes from thence (as in a judgment of charity he ought,) that they are as

* 1 Pet. i. 10. Give diligence to make your calling and election *βεβαιαν*, undoubted ; that is, to get some solid and incontestable evidence of your predestination to life.—“*Βεβαιον*, is de quo fiducia concipitur ; is de quo nobis aliquid certo persuademus. Unde apud Thuc. 3. *βεβαιον* εἰμι, τειλο ποιησειν. certa fides habetur mihi, hoc facturum me esse.—*Βεβαιως*, certo explorato. *Βεβαιωμαι* fidem facio ; pro comperto habeo.” Scap.—So, *ελπις βεβαια* is an undoubting hope, 2. Cor. i. 7. And *βεβαιότερον* *λαλον* is a more assured and unquestionable word of prophecy, 2 Pet. 1. 19.

really elected as himself, how must his heart glow with love to his Christian brethren! How feelingly will he sympathize with them in their distresses! How tenderly will he bear with their infirmities? How readily will he relieve the former, and how easily overlook the latter!—nothing will so effectually knit together the hearts of God's people in time as the belief of their having been written by name in one book of life from everlasting; and the unshaken confidence of their future exaltation to one and the same state of glory above, will occasion the strongest cement of affection below. This was possibly one end of our Saviour's so frequently reminding his apostles of their election: namely, that from the sense of such an unspeakable blessing, in which they were all equally interested, they might learn to "love one another with pure hearts fervently;" and cultivate on earth that holy friendship which they well knew from the immutability of God's decrees would be eternally matured, to the highest perfection and refinement in heaven. St. Paul likewise might have some respect to the same amiable inference, when treating of the saints collectively, he uses those sweet and endearing expressions, He hath chosen us, He hath predestinated us, &c. that believers, considering themselves as *συνεκλεκτοι*, or coelect in Christ, might be led to love each other with peculiar intenseness, as the spiritual children of one electing Father, brethren in grace, and joint-heirs of glory.—Did the regenerate of the present age but practically advert to the everlasting nearness in which they stand related to each other, how happy would be the effect!

Hence it appears, that since the preaching of predestination is thus evidently calculated to kindle and keep alive the twofold congenial flame.

of love to God and love to man : it must by necessary consequence, conduce

To the advancement of universal obedience, and to the performance of every social and religious duty :* which alone, was there nothing else to recommend it, would be a sufficient motive to the public delivery of that important doctrine.

Lastly, without a due sense of predestination, we shall want the surest and the most powerful inducement to patience, resignation, and dependence on God, under every spiritual and temporal affliction.

How sweet must the following considerations be to the distressed believer ! 1. There most certainly exists an Almighty, all-wise and infinitely

* Our excellent Bishop Davenant instances, particularly in the great religious duty of prayer. "The consideration of election," says this learned and evangelical prelate, "doth stir up the faithful to constancy in prayer : for having learnt that all good tending to salvation is prepared for them out of God's good pleasure, they are hereby encouraged to call for, and as it were, to draw down from heaven by their prayers those good things which from eternity were ordained for the elect.—Moreover, the same spirit of adoption, who beareth witness to our spirit that we are God's chosen children, is also the spirit of prayer and supplication, and enflameth our hearts to call daily upon our heavenly Father. Those, therefore, who, from the certainty of predestination do pretend that the duty of prayer is superfluous, do plainly show that they are so far from having any certainty of their predestination, that they have not the least sense thereof.—To be slack and sluggish in prayer is not the property of those who, by the testimony of God's Spirit, have got assurance of their election ; but rather of such as have either none or very small apprehension thereof. For as soon as any one by believing doth conceive himself to be one of God's elect children, he earnestly desireth to procure unto himself by prayer those good things which he believeth that God prepared for his children before the foundation of the world." Bp. Davenant's *Animadversions on an Arminian treatise, entitled God's Love to Mankind.* p. 526, & seq.

gracious God.—2. He has given me in times past, and is giving me at present, (if I had but eyes to see it,) many and signal intimations of his love to me, both in a way of providence and grace.—3. This love of his is immutable: he never repents of it, nor withdraws it.—4. Whatever comes to pass in time is the result of his will from everlasting.—Consequently, 5. My afflictions were a part of his original plan, and are all ordered in number, weight and measure.—6. The very hairs of my head are every one counted by him: nor can a single hair fall to the ground but in consequence of his determination. Hence, 7. My distresses are not the result of chance, accident, or a fortuitious combination of circumstances: but, 8. The providential accomplishment of God's purpose; and 9. Designed to answer some wise and gracious ends. Nor, 10. shall any affliction continue a moment longer than God sees meet. 11. He who brought me to it, has promised to support me under it, and to carry me through it. 12. All shall most assuredly work together for his glory and my good. Therefore, 13. "The cup which my heavenly Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Yes: I will in the strength he imparts even rejoice in tribulation: and using the means of possible redress which he hath, or may hereafter put into my hands, I will commit myself and the event to him, whose purpose cannot be overthrown, whose plan cannot be disconcerted, and who, whether I am resigned or not, will still go on to work all things after the counsel of his own will.*

* The learned Lipsius thus writes to an unmarried friend, who appears to have referred himself to his judgment and direction; *Sive uxor ducitur, sive omittitur*, &c. Whether

Above all, when the suffering Christian takes his election into the account, and knows that he was by an eternal and immutable act of God appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord

you marry or live single, you will still have something or other to molest you : nor does the whole course of man's present sublunary life afford him a single draught of joy, without a mixture of wormwood in the cup. This is the universal and immutable law; which to resist, were no less vain than sinful and rebellious. As the wrestlers of old had their respective antagonists assigned them, not by their own choice, but by necessary lot; in like manner, each of the human race has his peculiar destiny allotted to him by Providence; To conquer this is to endure it. All our strength in this warfare is to undergo the inevitable pressure. It is victory to yield ourselves to fate." Lips. Epist. miscell. cent. 1. ep-43. opor. tom. 2. p. 54. Edit. Vesaliens. 1675.

About two years after, this celebrated Christian Seneca wrote as follows to the same person, (Theodore Leewius) who had married and just lost his wife in childbed; *Jam fatum quid? Aeterna, an aeterno, in aeternum, Dei Lex*: what is fate? God's everlasting ordinance: an ordinance which he settled in eternity, and for eternity: an ordinance which he can never repeal, disannul, or set aside, either in whole or in part. Now if this his decree be eternal, *a retro* and immovable, *quoad futurum*: why does foolish man struggle and fight against that which must be? Especially, seeing fate is thus the offspring of God, why does impious man murmur and complain? you cannot justly find fault with any thing determined or done by him; as though it were evil or severe: for he is all goodness and benevolence. Was you to define his nature, you could not do it more suitably than in those terms.—Is therefore your wife dead? *debut*: it is right she should be so. But was it right that she should die, and at that very time, and by that very kind of death! Most certainly. *Lex ita lata*: the decree so ordained it. The restless *acumen* of the human mind may sift and canvass the appointments of fate, but cannot alter them. Were we truly wise we should be implicitly submissive, and endure with willingness what we must endure, whether we be willing or not. A due sense of our inability to reverse the disposals of Providence, and the consequent vanity of resisting them, would administer solid repose to our minds, and sheathe, if not remove the anguish of affliction. And why should we even wish to resist? Fate's supreme ordainer is not only the

Jesus Christ; that, of course, he hath a city prepared for him above, a building of God, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens; and that the heaviest sufferings of the present life are “not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in the saints;—what adversity can possibly befall us, which the assured hope of blessings like these will not infinitely overbalance?”

“A comfort so divine,
May trials well endure.”

However keenly afflictions might wound us on their first access; yet, under the impression of such animating views, we should quickly come to ourselves again, and the arrows of tribulation would in a great measure become pointless.—Christians want nothing but absolute resignation to render them perfectly happy in every possible circumstance: and absolute resignation can only flow from an absolute belief, and an absolute acquiescence in God’s absolute providence, founded on absolute predestination.—The apostle himself draws these conclusions to our hand, in Rom. viii. where, after having laid down as most undoubted axioms, the eternity and immutability of God’s purposes; he thus winds up the whole: “What shall we say then to these things, if God be for us, who can be against us?—who

all-wise God, but an all-gracious Father. Embrace every event as good and prosperous, though it may for the present carry an aspect of the reverse. Think you not that he loves and careth for us more and better than we for ourselves. But as the tenderest parent below doth oftentimes cross the inclinations of his children, with a view to do them good; and obliges them both to do and to undergo many things against the bent of their wills, so does the great Parent of all.” *Ibid.* epist. 61. p. 82.

shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?—nay: in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

Such, therefore, among others, being the *USES*, that arise from the faithful preaching, and the cordial reception of *predestination*; may we venture to affirm, with *Luther*, *hac ignorata doctrina, neque fidem, neque ullum Dei cultum, consistere posse?* that “Our faith, and all right worship of God, depend in no small degree, upon our knowledge of that doctrine.”*

The excellent *Melancthon*, in his first common places (which received the sanction of *Luther*’s express approbation,) does, in the first chapter, which treats professedly of free will and predestination, set out with clearing and establishing the doctrine of God’s decrees; and then proceeds to point out the necessity, and manifold usefulness of asserting and believing it. He even goes so far as to affirm roundly, that “A right fear of God, and a true confidence in him, can be learned more assuredly, from no other source than from the doctrine of predestination.” But, *Melancthon*’s judgment of these matters will best appear from the whole passage; which the reader will find in the book and chapter just referred to.

“*Divina Predestinatio*,” says he, “*Libertatem homini adimit*: Divine predestination quite strips man of his boasted liberty: for, all things come to pass according to God’s fore-appointment, even the internal thoughts of all creatures,

* De Serv. Arbitr. cap. 20.

no less than their external works. Therefore, Eph. i. the apostle gives us to understand, that God “performeth all things according to the counsel of his own will.” And our Lord himself asks, Mat. x. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? yet one of them falleth not to the ground, without your Father.” Pray, what can be more full to the point, than such a declaration? So Solomon, Prov. xvi. “The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” And in the xxth chapter, “Man’s goings are of the Lord: how then can a man understand his own way?” To which the prophet Jeremiah does also set his seal, saying, chapter x. “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.” The historical part of scripture teaches us the same great truth. So, Gen. xv. we read that the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. In 1 Sam. ii. we are told, Eli’s sons hearkened not to his reproof, because the Lord *would* slay them. What could bear a stronger resemblance to change and accident than Saul’s calling upon Samuel, only with a view to seek out his father’s asses? (1 Sam. ix.) yet, the visit was foreordained of God, and designed to answer a purpose little thought of by Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 15, 16. [See also a most remarkable chain of predestinated events in reference to Saul, and foretold by the prophet, 1 Sam. x. 2, 8.] “In pursuance of the divine preordination, there went with Saul a band of men, “whose hearts God had touched,” 1 Sam. x. 26.—The harshness of king Rehoboam’s answer to the ten tribes, and the subsequent revolt of those tribes from his dominion, are by the sacred historian expressly ascribed to God’s decree: “wherefore, the king hearkened not unto the people: for the cause was from the

Lord, that he might perform his saying which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite, unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat," 1 Kings xii. 15.—What is the drift of the apostle Paul, in the 9th and 10th of Romans, *quam ut omnia, quæ fiunt, in destinationem divinam referat?* but to resolve all things that come to pass into God's destination? the judgment of the flesh, or of mere unregenerate reason, usually starts back from this truth with horror: but on the contrary, the judgment of a spiritual man will embrace it with affection. *Neque enim vel timorem dei, vel fiduciam in deum, certius aliunde disces, quam ubi imbueris animum hac de predestinatione sententia:* "You will not learn either the fear of God or affiance in him from a surer source than from getting your mind deeply tintured and seasoned with this doctrine of predestination." Does not Solomon in the book of Proverbs, inculcate it throughout; and justly: for how else could he direct men to fear God and trust in him? the same he does in the book of Ecclesiastes: nor had any thing so powerful a tendency to repress the pride of man's encroaching reason, and to lower the swelling conceit of his supposed discretion as the firm belief *quod a Deo fiunt omnia*, that all things are from God. What invincible comfort did Christ impart to his disciples in assuring them that "their very hairs were all numbered" by the Creator? Is there then (may any objector say,) no such thing as contingency? no such thing as chance, or fortune?—No. *Omnia necessario evenire scripturæ docent;* the doctrine of scripture is, that *all things come to pass necessarily*. Be it so, that to you some events seem to happen contingently; you nevertheless must not be run away with by the suggestions of your own narrow-sighted reason. Solomon himself, the wisest of men, was so deep-

ly versed in the doctrine of inscrutable predestination as to leave this humbling maxim on record; "When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth; then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because, though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find; yea, further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it," Eccles. viii. 16, 17.

Melancthon prosecutes the argument much farther; but this may suffice for a specimen. And it is not unworthy of notice, that Luther so highly approved of Melancthon's performance, and especially of the first chapter (from whence the above extract is given;) that he [Luther] thus writes of it in his epistle to Erasmus, prefixed to his book *De Serv. Arb.* "That it was worthy of everlasting duration, and to be received into the ecclesiastical canon." Let it likewise be observed, that Melancthon never to the very last retracted a word of what he there delivers; which a person of his piety and integrity would most certainly have done, had he afterwards (as some have artfully and falsely insinuated) found reason to change his judgment on these heads.

FINIS.

AN
APPENDIX
CONCERNING
THE FATE OF THE ANCIENTS.

FROM THE LATIN OF JUSTUS LIPSIUS.*

FATE, (says Apuleius) according to Plato, is that, "*Per quod, inevitabiles cogitationes Dei atque incepta complentur;*" whereby the purposes and designs of God are accomplished. Hence, the Platonics considered *providence* under a three-fold distinction; 1. The *providentia prima*, or that which gave birth to all effects; and is defined by them to be τὰ πρῶτα Θεοῦ νοήσις, *the intention, or will of the Supreme God*. 2. The *providentia secunda*, or actual agency of the secondary or inferior beings, who were supposed to pervade the heavens, and from thence by their influence, to regulate and dispose of all sublunary things; and especially to prevent the extinction of any one species below. 3. The *providentia tertia*, supposed to be exerted by the *Genii*, whose office it was to exercise a particular care over mankind, to guard our persons, and direct our actions.

But the *stoical* view of providence, or fate, was abundantly more simple, and required no

* Vide Lipsii Physiolog. Stoic. Lib. 1. Dissert. xii.

such nicety of distinction. These philosophers did at once derive all the chain of causes and effects from their true and undoubted source, the *will of the one living and true God*. Hence, with these sages, the words *Deity, Fate, Providence*, were frequently reciprocated, as terms synonymous. Thus Seneca, speaking of God; “Will you call him *fate*? You will call him rightly; for all things are suspended on him. Himself is *causa causarum*, the cause of causes beside.” The laws of the universe are from God; whence the same philosopher elsewhere observes, *Omnia certa et in æternum dicta lege decurrere*; All things go on according to a certain rule or decree ordained for ever; meaning in the law of fate. So Cicero: “All things come to pass according to the sovereignty of the eternal law.” And Pindar probably had an eye to this, where he says, *Νομον παντων βασιλευα, θνατων τε και αθανατων, ειναι*. That the law ruleth all, whether gods or mortals. Manlius most certainly had:

Sed nihil in tota magis est mirabile mole.

Quam Ratio, & certis quod Legibus omnia parent. Where, by *Ratio*, is evidently meant the *decreeing mind* of God; and, by *Leges*, is meant *fate*, or that series of causes and effects which is the offspring of his decree.

Homer cannot begin his *Iliad* without asserting this grand truth: *Διὸ δ' ἐπέλεειο βελη*. The counsel or decree of Jupiter was fulfilled. The divine poet sets out on this exalted principle; he puts it in the front of the noblest poem in the world, as a testimony both of his wisdom and his faith. It was as if he had said, “I shall sing of numberless events, equally grand, entertaining, and important; but I cannot begin to unfold them without laying down *this*, as a first, funda-

mental axiom, that, though brought to pass by the instrumental agency of men, they were the fruit of God's determining will, and of his all-directing providence."

Neither are those minuter events, which seemingly are the result of chance, excluded from this law. Even these do not happen, but come to pass in a regular order of succession, and at their due period of time. "*Causa pendet ex causa: privata ac publica longus ordo rerum trahit,*" says Seneca; "Cause proceeds from cause: the long train of things draws with it all events, both public and private." Excellent is that of Sophocles; (Aj. Flagell.)

Ἐστω μὲν ὄν και ταύτα, και τα παντ' αει,
 Φασκοιμ' αν ανθρωποισι μηχαναν Θεως.
 Ὅτω δε μη ταδ' εσιν εν γνωμη φιλα,
 Κειν ὁ εκεινα σεργελω. κατω ταδε.

i. e. "I am firmly of opinion, that all these things, and whatever else befall us, are in consequence of the divine purpose: Whoso thinks otherwise is at liberty to follow his own judgment, but this will ever be mine."

The *Longus ordo rerum*, mentioned by Seneca, is what he elsewhere styles, *Causarum implexa series*, or a perpetual implication of causes. This, according to Laertius, was called by the Stoics, *αιτια των ολων ειρομενη*, an involved, or concatenate causality of whatever has any existence: for, *ειρημ* is a chain, or implicate connection. Agreeably to this idea, Chrysippus gives the following definition of fate: *'Ειμαρμενην ειναι, φυτικην συνλαξιν των ολων, εξ αιδιδι, των ετερων τοις ελεροις επακαλθθηντων, αμεγαβολα και απαραβαλιθ εσης της τοιαυτης συμπλοκης.* "Fate is that natural, established order and constitution of all things from everlasting, whereby they mutually follow upon each

other, in consequence of an immutable and perpetual complication.”

Let us examine this celebrated definition of *fate*. 1. He calls it natural *συνλαξίς* meaning by nature, the great *Natura Prima*, or God: for by some Stoics, God and nature are used promiscuously. But, because the Deity must be supposed both to decree and to act with wisdom, intelligence, and design, fate is sometimes mentioned by them under the name of *Δογμ*, or *reason*. Thus they define fate, (*Laert* in *Zen.*) *εἰμαρμένην, λόγου, καθ' ὃν ὁ κόσμ* διεξαγέται to be that supreme “reason, whereby the world is governed and directed,” or more minutely, thus; *Λογον, καθ' ὃν ἑα μὲν γεγονότα γεγονε, τα δὲ λινόμενα γινεται, τα δὲ γενήσομενα γενήσεται.* “That reason, whereby the things that have been, were; the things that now are, have a present existence; and the things that are to be shall be. Reason, you see, or wisdom, in the Deity, is an antecedent cause, from whence both providence and inferior nature are derived. It is added in *Stobæus*, *μεταλαμβάνει δὲ τὰ λουα, τὴν ἀληθειαν, τὴν αἰτιαν, τὴν φύσιν, τὴν ἀνασκην.* i. e. that Chrysippus sometimes varies his terms; and, instead of the word reason, substitutes the words truth, cause, nature, necessity: intimating, that fate is the true, natural, necessary cause of the things that are, and of the manner in which they are. 2. This fate is said to be *ἐξ αἰδίου*, from everlasting. Nor improperly: since the constitution of things was settled and fixed in the divine mind (where they had a sort of ideal existence) previous to their actual creation, and therefore considered as certainly future, in his decree, may be said to have been in some sense co-eternal with himself. 3. The *immutable and perpetual complication*, mentioned in the definition, means no more than that reciprocal in-

volution of causes and effects from God downwards, by which things and events, *positis omnibus ponendis*, are necessarily produced, according to the plan which infinite wisdom designed from the beginning. God, the *first cause*, hath given being and activity to an immense number of *secondary* subaltern causes; which are so inseparably linked and interwoven with their respective effects (a connexion truly admirable, and not to be comprehended by man in his present state,) that those things which do in reality come to pass necessarily, and by inevitable destiny seem, to the superficial observer, to come to pass in the common course of nature, or by virtue of human reasoning and freedom. This is that inscrutable method of divine wisdom, “*A qua*” (says St. Austin) “*est omnis modus, omnis species, omnis ordo, mensura, numerus, pondus; a qua sunt semina formarum, formæ seminum, motus seminum atque formarum.*”

Necessity is the consequence of fate. So Trismegistus! Πάντα δε γίνονται φύσει και είμαρμενη, και εκ εσι τοπῶ ερημῶ προνοιας. προνοια δε εσι, αυλοτελης λογῶ τῶ επκρανιῶ θεῶ. δυο δε τῶ αυλοφύεις δυναμεις, ανασκη και είμορμενη. i. e. “All things are brought about by nature and by fate: neither is any place void of providence. Now providence is the self-perfect reason of the super-celestial God; from which reason of his issue two native powers, necessity and fate.” Thus, in the judgment of the wiser Heathens, effects were to be traced up to their *producing causes*; those producing causes were to be farther traced up to the still *higher causes*, by which *they* were produced; and those higher causes, to *God*, the cause of *them*. Persons, things, circumstances, events, and consequences, are the effects of *necessity*: *Necessity* is the daughter of fate: Fate is the offspring of God’s

infinite wisdom and sovereign will. Thus, all things are ultimately resolved into their great primary cause ; by whom the chain was originally let down from heaven, and on whom every link depends.

It must be owned, that *all* the fatalists of antiquity, (particularly among the Stoics) did not constantly express themselves with due precision. A Christian, who is savingly taught by the word and Spirit of God, must be pained and disgusted, not to say, shocked, when he reads such an assertion as *Την πεπρωμενην μοιραν αδυσωτον εσι αποφυσειν και Θιω.* God himself cannot possibly avoid his destiny, (Herodot. 1.) or that of the poet Philemon :

Δυλοι βασιλεων εισιν, οι βασιλεις Θεων,
 'Ο Θεος ανασκης.

Common men are servants to kings ; kings are servants to the gods ; and God is a servant to necessity. So Seneca : “ Eadem necessitas & Deos alligat ; irrevocabilis Divina pariter atque humana cursus vehit. Ille ipse, omnium conditor ac rector, scripsit quidem fata, sed saquitur. Semper paret : Semel jussit.” The self-same necessity binds the gods themselves. All things, divine as well as human, are carried forward by one identical and overpowering rapidity. The supreme Author and Governor of the universe hath indeed written and ordained the fates ; but having once ordained them, he ever after obeys them. He commanded them at first, for once ; but his conformity to them is perpetual. This is, without doubt, very irreverently, and very incautiously expressed.—Whence it has been common with many Christian writers to tax the Stoics with setting up a *first cause* superior to God himself, and on which he is dependent.

But, I apprehend, these philosophers meant in reality no such thing. All they designed to inculcate was, That the *will* of God and his *decrees* are *unchangeable*: that there can be no alteration in the *divine intention*; no new act arise in his *mind*: no reversion of his eternal plan; all being founded in adorable *sovereignty*; ordered by infallible *wisdom*; ratified by *omnipotence*; and cemented with immutability. Thus Lucan:

*Finxis in æternum causas; qua cuncta coercet,
Se quoque lege tenens.*

And this, not through any imbecility in God, or as if he was subject to fate, of which (on the contrary) himself was the ordainer; but because it is his pleasure to abide by his own decree. For, as Seneca observes, “Imminutio majestatis sit, and confessio erroris, mutanda fecissa: Necessesse est et eadem placere, cui nisi optima placere non possunt:” “It would detract from the greatness of God, and look as if he acknowledged himself liable to mistakes, was he to make changeable decrees: his pleasure must necessarily be always the same: seeing that only which is best, can at any time, please an all-perfect being, a good man (adds this philosopher) is under a kind of pleasing necessity to do good; and, if he did not do it, he could not be a good man.”

“Magnum hoc argumentum est firmæ voluntatis, ne mutare quidem posse:” “It is a striking proof of a magnanimous will, to be absolutely incapable of changing.” And such is the will of God, it never fluctuates nor varies. But, on the other hand, was he susceptible of change, could he through the intervention of any inferior cause, or by some untoward combination of external circumstances, be induced to recede from his purpose, and alter his plan, it would be a most incontestable mark of weakness and de-

pendence : the force of which argument made Seneca, though a heathen, cry out “Non externa Deos cogunt ; sed sua illis in legem æterna voluntas est ;” “Outward things cannot compel the Gods ; but their own eternal will is a law to themselves.” It may be objected, that this seems to infer, as if the Deity was still under some kind of restraint : By no means. Let Seneca obviate this cavil, as he effectually does in these admirable words : “Nec Deus ab hoc minus liber aut potens est ; *Ipse enim est necessitas sua.*” God is not hereby, either less free, or less powerful ; *for he himself is his own necessity.*”

On the whole, it is evident that when the Stoics speak, even in the strongest terms, of the obligation of fate on God himself, they may and ought to be understood in a sense worthy of the adorable uncreated Majesty. In thus interpreting the doctrine of fate, as taught by the genuine philosophers of the Portico, I have the great St. Austin on my side ; who, after canvassing, and justly rejecting the bastard, or *astrological fate* ; thus goes on : “At qui omnium connectionem seriemque causarum, qua fit omne quod fit, *fati*, nomine appellant ; non multum cum eis, de verbi controversia, certandum atque laborandam est : quandoquidem ipsum causarum ordinem, and quandam connectionem, *summi Dei* tribuunt *voluntati.*” i. e. “But for those philosophers, [meaning the Stoics] who, by the word fate, mean that regular chain and series of causes, to which all things that come to pass owe their immediate existence : we will not earnestly contend with these persons about a mere term, and we the rather acquiesce in their manner of expression, because they carefully ascribe this

fixed succession of things, and this mutual concatenation of causes and effects, to the *will of the supreme God.*" Austin adds many observations of the same import; and proves from Seneca himself, as rigid a Stoic as any, that this was the doctrine, and the meaning of his philosophic brethren.

A

CAVEAT

AGAINST UNSOUND DOCTRINES:

BEING

THE SUBSTANCE OF

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH

OF

ST. ANN, BLACKFRYARS;

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1770.



BY AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A. B.

VICAR OF BROAD-HEMBURY, DEVON.



Seeing, then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness
of speech...2 Cor. iii. 12.



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1811.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ensuing discourse was first preached at St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, April 22. Some persons then present, to whose judgment and request I pay the highest deference, desired me to retrieve as much of it as I could the Sunday following at St. Ann's; with a view to its being taken in short-hand, and published.

The loss of my nearest relative, soon after this sermon was preached, and the many avocations occasioned by that lamented and unexpected event, account but too well for the delay with which the publication has been attended. Having, however, transcribed it at last from the notes of the person who penned it at the time of its delivery, I now transmit it to the press, most affectionately and respectfully inscribed to my dear London friends, whose favours, equally great, numerous, and unmerited, I have no other public way of acknowledging.

LONDON, July 3, 1770.

A SERMON, &c.

AND IF THERE BE ANY OTHER THING THAT IS CONTRARY TO SOUND DOCTRINE.—1 *Tim.* i. 10.

ST Paul is commonly, and most probably, supposed to have written this epistle about A. D. 65, that is, about two years before his own martyrdom, and about thirty-one after our Lord's ascension—he addressed it to Timothy, who, though a very* young man, had been some time in the ministry, and was then entrusted with the oversight of the church at Ephesus. In the estimation of unprejudiced reason, “honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years: but wisdom is the grey hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is old age.”†

But Timothy, though young, was far from robust. He was only strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His regenerate, heaven-born soul, dwelt in a sickly, infirm body, whence we read of his *πικρὰ ἀσθενεία*, 1 *Tim.* v. 23. or frequent indispositions arising perhaps originally from a natural delicacy of constitution; and certainly increased by a rigid abstemiousness and constant course of ministerial labours. Thus our hea-

* 1 *Tim.* iv. 12.

† *Wisd.* iv. 8, 9.

venly Father, graciously severe, and wisely kind, takes care to infuse some salutary bitter into his children's cup below; since, were they here to taste of happiness absolute and unmingled; were not the gales of prosperity, whether spiritual or temporal, counterpoised, more or less by the needful ballast of affliction, his people (always imperfect here,) would be enriched to their loss and liable to be upset in their way to the kingdom of God. Wherefore, consummate felicity, without any mixture of wormwood, is reserved for our enjoyment in a state where *perfect sanctification* will qualify us to possess it. In heaven, and there only, the inhabitants shall no more say in any sense whatever, I am sick.*

St. Paul in the opening of his apostolic directions to Timothy, adopts the same simple, majestic, and evangelical exordium, with which the rest of his epistles usually begin. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, ordained and sent forth by the head of the Church, the supreme Master of the spiritual vineyard, without whose internal, authoritative commission, none have a real right to minister in sacred things, or to thrust the sickle into God's harvest. For how can men preach to purpose, so as to be instruments of conviction, comfort, and sanctification, except they be sent † of God, and owned of him? whence the apostle adds, By the commandment ‡ of God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope. As an English nobleman who travels to some foreign court, cannot reasonably expect to be received as the representative of his sovereign

* Isai. xxxiii. 24.

† Rom. x. 15.

‡ Κατ' ἐπιαγγελίαν, according to the positive injunction, or express designation.

here, unless charged with an actual delegation, and able to produce the credentials of his mission; no more is any individual authorized to arrogate to himself the honour of a divine ambassage, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* A sufficient degree of gospel light and knowledge, an ardent love of souls, and a disinterested concern for truth, a competent measure of ministerial gifts and abilities, and above all, a portion of divine grace and experience, a saving change of heart, and a life devoted to the glory of God, are essential prerequisites to an evangelical discharge of the sacred function.

The first verse may be read thus: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the express or authoritative designation of Jesus Christ our God, Saviour, and Lord."† So the passage may be rendered: and so perhaps it ought to be understood in its natural and most obvious construction. Now, even supposing that the apostle had not the divinity of Christ immediately in view at the time of his writing these words, yet you must either give up his inspiration, or believe that Christ is, with the Father and the Spirit, God over all, blessed for ever; since, on a subject of such unspeakable consequence, it would have argued a degree of negligence, little short of criminal, had the apostle expressed himself in terms palpably liable to misapprehension. I therefore conclude, that both as a scholar and as a Christian, as Gamaliel's pupil, and as an inspired apostle, our sacred penman would have delivered himself in a far more guarded style, had not the Son of God been indeed God the Son.

* Heb. v. 4.

† Κατ, επιλογην Θου Σωτηρος ημων αι Κυριου, Ιησους Χριστου.

Either Jesus is the God, Saviour and Lord of his people, or St. Paul was guilty of such inexcusable inaccuracy as every writer of common sense and common honesty would be sure to avoid.

He goes on to style the blessed Jesus our hope. Ask almost any man, "Whether he hopes to be saved eternally?" he will answer in the affirmative. But inquire again, "On what foundation he rests his hope?" Here, too, many are sadly divided. The Pelagian hopes to get to heaven by a moral life, and a good use of his natural powers. The Arminian, by a jumble of grace and free will, human works and the merits of Christ. The Deist, by an interested observance of the social virtues. Thus merit-mongers of every denomination, agree in making any thing the basis of their hope, rather than that foundation, which God's own hand hath laid in Zion. But what saith scripture? It avers again and again, that Jesus alone is our hope: to the exclusion of all others. And to the utter annihilation of human deservings. Beware, therefore, of resting your dependence, partly on Christ, and partly on some other basis. As surely as you bottom your reliance partly on the rock, and partly on the sand, so certainly, unless God give you an immediate repentance to your acknowledgment of the truth, will your supposed house of defence fall and bury you in its ruins, no less than if you had raised it on the sand alone: Christ is the hope of glory.* Faith in his righteousness, received and embraced as our sole justifying obedience before God, and the love of Christ (an inseparable effect of that faith operating on our hearts, and shining in our lives;) are

* Col. i. 17.

the most solid evidences we can have below, of our acceptance with the Father, and of our being saved in Jesus with an everlasting salvation.

“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Some have thought that Timothy was not converted under the ministry of St. Paul: and they ground their conjecture on Acts xvi. 1, 2. where Timothy is mentioned as a disciple, and a person well reported of by the Christians at Derbe and Lystra, previous to St. Paul’s visitation of those places. That Timothy was a nominal professor of religion, and a youth of circumspect behaviour, are evident from that passage: which external form of godliness was probably the effect of the religious* education he had the happiness to receive from his earliest childhood. But from St. Paul’s compellation of him as “his own son in the faith,” it may, I think, be reasonably inferred, that the young disciple was led from the outer court of mere external profession, into the sanctuary of heavenly and spiritual experience, either by the private labours, or under the public ministry of this apostle. And none but those ministers whose endeavours have been blest to the conversion of souls; and those persons, who have been born of God by their instrumentality; can form any idea of that spiritual relation, and unspeakably tender attachment, which subsist between spiritual fathers and the children of grace whom God hath given them.

Timothy had been a true believer some considerable time before St. Paul wrote this epistle. Consequently, by the “grace, mercy and peace,”

* 2 Tim. iii. 15.

which he prayed might be the portion of his beloved converts; we are to understand, not the first vouchsafement, but a large increase of those spiritual blessings and comforts: that he might have repeated discoveries, and continued manifestations of the Father's electing grace; of Christ's redeeming mercy; and experience that sweet peace and joy in believing which are fruits of the Holy Spirit's influence, and flow from fellowship with him. Privileges these, which unawakened men will always ridicule; but to which every real Christian will ardently aspire.

Time would fail me should I attempt to consider all the intervenient verses. I find myself at a loss, not what to say, but what to leave unsaid. However, I shall observe as briefly as I can, that one grand reason of St. Paul's writing this epistle, was to put Timothy on his guard against the dissemination of corrupt doctrines, and the insidious arts of corrupt teachers, with which the church of Ephesus, where Timothy was now stationed, seems to have been particularly infested. Unregenerate ministers are much the same in all ages, and in every country: An unconverted preacher in England, and an unconverted preacher in Italy, so far as matters merely spiritual are concerned, stand nearly on a level. These all are what the Ephesian schismatics were desirous to be, teachers of the law, or legal teachers. And all unconverted people, whether their denomination be protestant or popish, desire to be hearers of the law, and are displeased when they hear any thing else. We are naturally fond of that very law, which unless the righteousness of Christ is ours, is the ministration of death, pronounces us accursed, and binds us over to everlasting ruin. The pernicious error against which Timothy was directed to guard his flock,

was a dependence on the law, and the works of it, for salvation. And the reason why this destructive tenet was taught and enforced by some preachers of that day, and has been taught by their successors ever since, is assigned by the apostle; who observes, that those blind guides “understand neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed:” For if they had understood any thing of God’s inviolable holiness; of the law’s inflexible rectitude, extent, and spirituality; of man’s total inability to fulfil it perfectly, (and without perfect obedience the law cannot justify,) they would at once have ceased to be teachers of the law, and simply pointed sinners to that Saviour alone, who “is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

Fashionable as the doctrine of legal, conditional justification is, we may say to every individual that embraces it, “There is one that condemns you, even Moses, in whom you trust.”† and the very law on which you rest: for its language is, “He that breaketh me only in *one* point, is guilty of *all*.‡ And cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”§ Shew me the man who has never offended in one point; who hath continued in all things prescribed by Jehovah’s perfect law; who loves the Lord with all his heart, and his fellow-creatures as himself; shew me the man who from the first to the last moment of his life comes up to this standard; and *then* you will shew me a man who can be justified by works of his own.

* Rom. x. 4.

‡ James ii. 10.

† John v. 45.

§ Gal. iii. 10.

But if no such person could ever be found, Jesus Christ the righteous, singly excepted, St. Paul's conclusion stands unshaken, that they who teach or hold justification by any other obedience than that of Christ, "neither know what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

Yet notwithstanding we neither are nor can be justified by the law still the uses of the law are numerous and important: whence the apostle takes care to add that the law is good, or answers several valuable purposes, if a man use it lawfully. Nothing can be more evident than that by the law in this place is meant the moral law. The ceremonial could not possibly be intended; because it is not now to be adhered to, and is no longer in force: Whereas the apostle speaks of a law which is to this very day unrepealed and of standing use: "The law is good if a man use it lawfully." Of this law there is a two-fold use: Or rather an use and abuse. The use of the law is, among other things, first to convince us of our utter sinfulness; and then secondly, to lead us to Christ, as the great and only fulfiller of all righteousness. Now, the law does not answer these important ends directly and of itself, but in a subserviency to the Holy Spirit's influence;* when that adorable person is pleased to

* "A gracious sight of our vileness," says one of the ablest and most useful writers of the last century, "is the work of Christ only, by his Spirit. The law is indeed a looking-glass; able to represent the filthiness of a person: but the law gives not eyes to see that filthiness. Bring a looking glass and set it before a blind man, he sees no more spots in his face than if he had none at all. Though the glass be a good glass, still the glass cannot give eyes; yet, if he had eyes, he would in the glass see his blemishes. The apostle James compares the law to a looking-glass; and a faculty to represent is all the law possesseth; but it doth

make the law instrumental to the conversion of a sinner. In which case, having shaken us out of our self-righteousness, and reduced us to an happy necessity of closing with the righteousness of Christ; the law has still another and a farther use no less momentous: For, thirdly, It from that moment forward stands as the great rule of our practical walk and conversation: Seeing a true believer is not without law, (*ανωμας* a lawless person,) towards God: but is *ενομος*, within the bond of the law to Christ:* Not exempted from his control, as the standard of moral action, though delivered from its power and execration, as a covenant of works.

These are the three grand, lawful uses of the law. On the other hand, if any of us are so deplorably lost to all sense of Christian duty and gospel privilege, as to suppose that by our own partial conformity to the law, how sincere soever it be, we can work out, and work up a righteousness for ourselves, wherein to stand before the tribunal of God, and for which to obtain any favour at his hand, we use the law unlawfully: we sadly mistake the very end for which the law was promulgated, which was, that under the efficacy of grace, and the teachings of the blessed Spirit it might bring us to a knowledge of our† guilt, and a sense of our‡ danger; convince us of our§ helplessness, and as a schoolmaster, bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith, and *not* by the works of the law: for by

not impart a faculty to see what it represents. It is Christ alone who opens the eyes of men to behold their own vileness and guilt. He opens the eyes, and then in the law a man sees what he is."

* 1 Cor. ix. 21. † Rom. iii. 20 ‡ Deut. xxxiii. 2. Heb. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21. § Psalm cxix. 96. Rom. vii. 3.

the works of the law, as performed by us, shall no flesh be justified.*

That grand error of the heart (for it is an heart-error, as well as an head-error, deeply rooted in our corrupt nature, as well as perniciously pleasing to unassisted reason,) which misrepresents justification as at all suspended on causes or conditions of human performance; will, and must, if finally persisted in, transmit the unbeliever, who has opportunities of better information, to that place of torment, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The apostle goes on: "Knowing that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the disobedient," &c. The phrase, *a righteous man*, means, in its strictly evangelical sense, one that is in Christ; or, who is righteous before God in the righteousness of his Son, apprehended by faith. Now, the law, i. e. the damnatory sentence of it, was not designed for such a person. Weak believers have sometimes a good deal to do with the law, and are apt to hover about mount Sinai; but the law has nothing to do with them any more than a creditor, who has received ample payment from the hand of a surety, can have any remaining claim on the original debtor. The law took, as it were, our heavenly Bondsman by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest," and Jesus acknowledged the demand. He paid the double debt of obedience and suffering to the utmost farthing. So that, as some render the words under consideration, "the law lieth not against a righteous man;"† its claims are satisfied; its sentence is superseded; its con-

* Gal. iii. 24. and ii. 16.

† Δικαιο νόμος ἔκειται.

denying power is abolished. And whoever have been enabled to fly for refuge to the righteousness of Christ, and to lay hold on the hope set before them, may depend on this as a most certain truth, that "Christ hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, having been himself made a curse for them."* Such are not under the law, whether as a covenant of works to be saved by, or as a denunciation of wrath to be condemned by; but they are under grace;† under that sweet dispensation of everlasting love, which, when made known to the believing soul, at once ensures the practice of universal godliness, and refers the entire praise of salvation to the unmerited grace of Father, Son, and Spirit. I said, that the dispensation of grace ensures the practice of universal godliness; for, considered as a rule of moral conduct, the law most certainly is designed for believers. And indeed, only believers *can* yield real, acceptable obedience to the law; for, "Without faith it is impossible to please God:"‡ and "Whatever proceedeth not from faith is sin."§ Therefore, if God hath not wrought living faith in your heart, you have never performed one truly good work in your whole life.

St. Paul next proceeds to draw a catalogue of sins, against which the denunciations of the law are most eminently levelled: closing the list with the words first read, "And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." A plain intimation, that error in principals fundamental, has a very unfavourable influence on practicals; and that, in proportion as the *doc-*

* Gal. iii. 13. † Rom. vi. 14. ‡ Heb. xi. 9. § Rom. xiv. 23.

trines of God are disbelieved, the *commandments* of God will be disobeyed. Doctrinals, therefore, are not of that small significance which the injudicious and the heterodox affect to give out. For, though matters of doctrine are by some considered merely as the *shell* of religion, and experience only as the *kernel*; yet let it be remembered, that there is no coming at the kernel but through the shell; and, while the kernel gives value to the shell, the shell is the guardian of the kernel. Destroy *that*, and you injure *this*. The apostle in the words before us stamps the evangelical doctrines with the seal of dignity, usefulness, and importance; as is evident from the epithet he makes use of. He calls the system of gospel truths, *sound doctrine*: ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία, *salutary, health-giving doctrine*; not only right and sound in itself, but conducing to the spiritual strength and health of those that receive it: Doctrine, that operates like some efficacious restorative on an exhausted constitution; that renders the sin-sick souls of men healthy, vigorous, and thriving: that causes them through the blessing of divine grace, to “grow as the lily, and to cast forth the root as Lebanon, to revive as the corn, and to flourish as the vine, to diffuse their branches, and rival the olive-tree,”* both in beauty and fruitfulness.

On the other hand, unsound doctrine has the very opposite effects. It impoverishes our views of God, withers our hopes, makes our faith languid, blasts our spiritual enjoyments, and lays the axe to the very root of christian obedience. We may say of it as the Jewish students said on another occasion, *there is death in the pot*. If

* Hos. xiv.

you eat it you are poisoned. With the utmost attention, therefore, should we attend to the apostle's caveat, and avoid every thing "that is contrary to sound doctrine."

Many such things there are. I have not time even to recite, much less to expatiate on them all. I shall, therefore, only endeavour, as God may enable me, to point out a few very common, but very capital errors, which are totally inconsistent with sound doctrine.

Previous to my entrance on this part of the subject, I would premise two particulars :

1. That what I am going to observe, does not proceed from the least degree of bitterness against the persons of any, from whom I differ ; and,

2. That I am infinitely remote even from the slightest wish of erecting myself into a *dictator* to others.

The rights of conscience are inviolably sacred ; and liberty of private judgment is every man's birthright. If, however, any like Esau, have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, by subscribing to articles they do not believe, merely for the sake of temporal profit or aggrandisement, they have only themselves to thank for the little ceremony they are entitled to.—With regard to myself, as one whom God has been pleased to put into the ministry ; above all, into the ministry of the best and purest visible church in the whole world ; I should be a traitor to God, to Christ, to the scriptures, and to truth—unfaithful to souls, and to my own conscience, if I did not, without fear or favour, declare the *entire counsel* of God, so far as I apprehend myself led into the knowledge of it. Inconsiderable as I am, many of you are, no doubt, acquainted with the variety of reports that have been spread (especially since this time of my be-

ing in town) concerning me, and the doctrines by which I hold it my indispensable duty to abide. I deem myself, therefore, happy, in having one more opportunity to testify the little that I know concerning that "mystery of the gospel which God ordained before the world for our glory." And I desire in the most public manner to thank the great Author of all consolation, for a very particular instance of his favour, and which I look upon as one of the most felicitating circumstances of my whole life: I mean my early acquaintance with the doctrines of grace. Many great and good men who were converted late in life, have had the whole web of their preceding ministry to unravel, and been under a necessity of reversing all they had been delivering for years before. But it is not the smallest of my distinguishing mercies, that, from the very commencement of my unworthy ministrations I have not had a single doctrine to retract, nor a single word to unsay. I have subscribed to the articles, homilies, and liturgy, five separate times, and that from principle; nor do I believe those forms of sound words because I have subscribed to them, but I therefore subscribed them because I believed them. I set out with the gospel from the very first: and having obtained help from God, I continue to this day witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than Moses and the prophets,"* Jesus, and his apostles, have said before me. And, in an absolute dependence on the divine power and faithfulness, I trust that I shall to the end be enabled to count neither health, wealth, reputation, nor life itself, dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy,

* Acts xxvi. 22.

and fulfil the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."*

“ Careless (myself a dying man)
Of dying men’s esteem :
Happy if thou, O God, approve,
Though all beside condemn.”

If the most accomplished and respectable person of all heathen antiquity could declare, that he “ would rather obtain the single approbation of Cato than have a triumph voted to him by the senate,” much more will a christian minister prefer the approbation of God to all the evanid eclats of an applauding universe.

I shall arm myself this afternoon with a two-fold weapon : with the *bible* in one hand, and our *church articles* in the other. I shall appeal at once for all I have to say to the authority of God’s unerring oracles, and to their faithful epitome, the decisions of the church of England. They who perhaps set light by the scriptures, may yet pay some decent deference to the church : and they who it may be pay little attention to church determinations, will render implicit credit to the scriptures. So that, between the bible and the thirty-nine articles I hope I shall be able to carry my point, and, as far as my subject leads me, enter a successful caveat against whatever things are contrary to sound doctrine. In attempting this I shall fix my foot upon *Arminianism* ; which, in its several branches, is the gangrene of the protestant churches, and the predominant evil of the day.

What think you,

* Acts xx. 24.

I. Of *conditional election*? We have indeed, some who deny there is any such thing as election at all. They start at the very word, as if it were a spectre just come from the shades and never seen before. I shall waste no time on these men. They are out of the pale, to which my allotted plan confines me at present. They cannot be church of England men who proscribe a term that occurs so frequently in her offices and standards of faith; nor can they even be Christians at large who cashier with affected horror, a word which, under one form or other, is to be met with between forty and fifty times at least in the New Testament only.

My business now is with those who endeavour to save appearances by admitting the word, while in reality they anathematize the thing. These profess to hold an election; but then it is a *conditional* one, and founded, as they suppose, on some good quality or qualities foreseen in the objects of it. Thus bottoming the purposes of God on the precarious will of apostate men; and making that which is temporal, the cause of that which was eternal. "The Deity," say persons of this cast, "foreknowing how you and I would behave, and foreseeing our improvements and our faithfulness, and what a proper use we should make of our free will, ordained us, and all such good sort of people, to everlasting life."

Nothing can be more contrary to sound doctrine, and even to sound reason than this. It proceeds on a supposition that man is *before-hand* with God in the business of salvation; and that the resolutions of God's will are absolutely dependent on the will of his creatures: That he has in short created a set of sovereign beings, from whom he receives law; and that his own purpose and conduct are shaped and regulated

according to the prior self-determinations of independent man—What is this but *atheism in a mask*? for where is the difference between the denial of a first cause, and the assignation of a false one?

Quite opposite is the decision of inspiration, Romans xi. 6. where the apostle terms God's choice of his people, 'an *election of grace*, or a gratuitous election; and observes that "If it be of grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace were no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work were no more work." Conditional grace is a most palpable contradiction in terms. Grace is no longer grace than while it is absolute and free. You might with far greater ease bring the two poles together, than effect a coalition between grace and works in the affair of election. As far, and as high as the heavens are above the earth, are the immanent acts of God superior to a dependence on any thing wrought by sinful, perishable man.

Consult our seventeenth article, and you will clearly see whether conditional election be the doctrine of the church of England. "Predestination to life is the *everlasting* purpose of God, whereby *before the foundations of the world were laid*, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath *chosen* in Christ *out of* mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as *vessels made to honour*." Is there a word about conditionality here? On the contrary, is not election or predestination unto life peremptorily declared to be God's own everlasting purpose, decree, counsel and choice? The elect are said to be brought to salvation, not as persons of foreseen virtue and pliability;

but simply and merely “as vessels made to honour.” Add to this that the article goes on to style election a benefit, or gift; “Wherefore, they that be endued with so excellent a benefit.”—But how could predestination or blessedness be so termed, if it were suspended on the foresight of something to be wrought by the person predestinated? For a condition in matters of spiritual concern, is analogous to a price in matters of commerce; and a *purchased gift* is just as good sense as *conditional grace*.

Our venerable reformers were two well acquainted with the scriptures and with the power of God to err on a subject of such unutterable moment. Whence, in the article now cited they took care to lay God’s absolute and sovereign election as the basis of sanctification: so far were they from representing sanctification as the ground-work of election. Our modern inverters of Christianity, the Arminians, by endeavouring to found election upon human qualifications, resemble an insane architect, who, in attempting to raise an edifice, should make tiles and laths the foundation, and reserve his bricks and stones for the roof. Quot sunt hominum virtutes, totidem sunt dei dona, said the learned and excellent Du Moulin: and if sanctification be God’s gift, men’s goodness could not possibly be a motive to their election; unless we can digest this enormous absurdity, viz. that God’s gifts may be conditional and meritorious one of another. Do you imagine that God could foresee any holiness in men, which himself did not decree to give them? You cannot suppose it, without believing at the same time, that God is not the author of *all* good; and that there are, or may be, *some* good and perfect gifts, which do *not* descend from the Father of lights; and that the

apostle was widely mistaken when he laid down this axiom, that "it is God who of his own good pleasure worketh in us both to *will* and to *do*."

According to our church, God's election leads the van; sanctification forms the centre; and glory brings up the rear:* "Wherefore, they that be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called, according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season; they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made the sons of God by *adoption*." Hitherto good works are not so much as mentioned. Why so? Because our reformers were Antimonians, and exploded or despised moral performances? by no means. Those holy persons were themselves living confutations of so vile a suggestion. The tenor of their lives was as blameless as their doctrine. But they had learned to distinguish ideas, and were too judicious, both as logicians and divines, to represent effects as prior to the causes that produce them. They were not ashamed to betake themselves to the scriptures for information, and to deliver out the living water of sound doctrine pure and unmingled as they had drawn it from the fountains of truth. Hence, election, calling, justification, and adoption, are set forth, not as caused *by*, but as the real and leading causes *of* that moral change, which sooner or later takes place in the children of God. For thus the article goes on; 'They be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in *good works*; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.'

This then is the order: 1. *Election*: 2. *Effectual Calling*: 3. *Apprehensive Justification*:

* Art. xvii.

4. *Manifestative Adoption*: 5. *Sanctification*: 6. *Religious walking in good works*: 7. *Continuance* in these to the end: which last blessing must of necessity be included, because the article adds, that these elect, regenerate persons, attain at length to everlasting felicity; which they could not do without final perseverance, any more than you or I, upon our departure from this church, could arrive at our respective homes, if we finally stop short of them by the way.—such, therefore, being the chain and process of salvation, how impious and how fruitless must any attempt be, either to transpose or put asunder what God has so wisely and inseparably joined together!

Unless we take absolute election into the account, we must either suppose that God saves no man whatever, or that those he saves are saved at random, and without design. But his goodness forbids the first, and his wisdom excludes the latter. Absolute election therefore must be taken into the account, or you at once *ipso facto*, strike off either goodness or wisdom from the list of divine perfections.—That scheme of doctrine must necessarily be untrue, which represents the Deity as observing no regular order, no determinate plan, in an affair of such consequence as the everlasting salvation of his people. I cannot acquit of blasphemy, that system which likens the Deity to a careless ostrich, which having deposited her eggs, leaves them in the sand to be hatched or crushed, just as chance happens. Surely *he* who numbers the very hairs of his people's heads, does not consign their souls, and their eternal interests to precarious hazard! the blessings of grace and glory are too valuable and important to be shuffled and dealt out by the hand of chance. Besides, if one thing comes to pass

either without or contrary to the will of God ; another thing, nay, all things may come to pass in the same manner ; and then, good by to providence entirely.

When Lysander the Spartan paid a visit to king Cyrus (at Corinth, if I mistake not,) he was particularly struck with the elegance and order, the variety and magnificence of Cyrus's gardens. Cyrus, no less charmed with the taste and judgment of his guest, told him with visible emotions of pleasure, " These lovely walks with all their beauty of disposition and vastness of extent, were planned by myself ; and almost every tree, shrub, and flower, which you behold, was planted by my own hand."—Now, when we take a view of the church, which is at once the house and garden of the living God ; that church which the Father loved—for which the Son became a man of sorrows—and which the Holy Spirit descends from heaven in all his plentitude of converting power, to cultivate and build anew ; when we survey this living paradise, and this mystic edifice, of which such glorious things are spoken,* and on which such glorious privileges are conferred, must we not acknowledge, Thy sovereign hand, O uncreated love, drew the plan of this spiritual Eden ! Thy hand, almighty power, set every living tree, every true believer, in the courts of the Lord's house. Thy converted people are all righteous ; they shall inherit the land for ever, even the branches of thy planting, the work of thy hands, that thou mayest be glorified ! †

Admitting election to be thus a complete, eternal, immanent act in the divine mind, and consequently irrespective of any thing in the persons

* Psalm lxxxv. 2.

† Isai. lx. 21.

chosen; then (may some say) "Farewell to gospel obedience; all good works are destroyed." If, by destroying good works, you mean that the doctrine of unconditional election destroys the merit of good works, and represents man as incapable of earning or deserving the favour and kingdom of God, I acknowledge the force of the objection. Predestination does, most certainly destroy the merit of our works and obedience, but not the performance of them: since holiness is itself one end of election,* and the elect are as much chosen to intermediate sanctification on their way as they are to that ultimate glory which crowns their journey's end:† and there is no coming at the one but through the other. So that neither the value, nor the necessity, nor the practice of good works is superseded by this glorious truth: our acts of evangelical obedience are no more than marshalled, and consigned to their due place: restrained from usurping that praise which is due to the alone grace of God; and from arrogating that office, which only the Son of God was qualified to discharge.

* Eph. 1. 4.

† "Because we deny salvation by our own deeds," says one of our good old divines, "the Papists charge us with being enemies to good works. But am I an enemy to a nobleman because I will not attribute to him those honours, which are due only to the king? If I say to a common soldier in an army, You cannot lead that army against the enemy, will he therefore say, Then I may be gone; there is no need of me? or if I see a man at his day labour, and say to him, You will never be able to purchase an estate of 10,000*l.* per annum by working in that manner; will he therefore give over his work, and say he is discouraged." Mr. Park's Comm. on Romans, p. 177.

That election as taught by the scriptures (and from thence by our reformers,) not only carries a favourable aspect on universal piety and holiness, but even ensures the practice of both, is evident among many other passages, from that of the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 13. "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning," i. e. from everlasting, "chosen you to salvation through" [not for, but through] "sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." How very opposite were St. Paul's views of the tendency of this doctrine, from those of the Pelagian and Arminian objectors to it? They are perpetually crying out that it "ruins morality, and opens a ready door to licentiousness." He, on the contrary, represents the believing consideration of it as a grand incentive to the exercise of our graces, and to the observance of moral duty. Let us, says he, who are of the day, who are enlightened into the knowledge of this blessed privilege, and can read our names in the book of life; "Let us, who are thus of the day, be sober; putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation: for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 8, 9. Now, if election secures the performance of good works, and upon its own plan, renders them indispensably necessary, I should be glad to know how good works can suffer by the doctrine of election? You may as well say that the *sun*, which now shines into this church, is the parent of frost and darkness. No, it is the source of light and warmth. And you and I want nothing more than a sense of God's peculiar, discriminating favour, "shed abroad

in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us,"* to render us more and more fruitful in every good word and work." As an excellent person† observes, "That man's love to God will be without end, who knows that God's love to him was without beginning."

II. What think you of that fashionable tenet, so contrary to sound doctrine, concerning the supposed dignity and rectitude of human nature in its fallen state? A doctrine as totally irreconcilable to reason and fact, as if an expiring leper should value himself on the health and beauty of his person; or a ruined bankrupt should boast his immensity of wealth.

As soon as we are born we go astray. Nay, I will venture scripture authority to carry the point higher still. All mankind are guilty and depraved before they are born. "Behold I was shapen in wickedness; and in sin did my mother conceive me."‡ A thunderbolt to human pride, and a dagger in every heart of natural excellence. Thus speaks the bible; and thus experience speaks. Our own church likewise delivers her judgment in perfect conformity to both.

ARTICLE 9. *Of original or birth sin.*—"Original sin standeth not in the following [or imitation] of Adam, as the Pelagians§ do vainly

* Rom. v. 5.

† Dr. Arrowsmith.

‡ Psalm li.

§ In this article express mention is made of the Pelagians; but nothing is, by name, said of the Arminians. The reason is plain. At the time when our articles passed the two houses of convocation in the year 1562, Arminius, who was then only two years of age (for he was born A. D. 1560,) had not begun to sow his tares: he was no more than a schismatic in embryo. Arminianism is a mushroom of latter date, than the re-establishment of the Church of England, by Elizabeth. It was not till the latter end of her reign, that Arminianism had any great footing even in Holland the seat

talk ; but it is the fault [by imputation] and corruption [by internal, hereditary derivation] of the nature of every man who naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam : whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil ; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. And therefore in every person born into this world, It," [namely, original or birth sin] "deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

Now what becomes of those plausible, sophistical similes, which compare the natural mind of man to a sheet of white paper ? or to a pliant Ozier, which you may bend with ease this way or that ? Or to a balance in *æquilibrio*, which you may incline to either side, according as you throw more or less weight into the scale ? Or to a wax tablet, on which you may stamp what impressions you please ? Alas ! The impression is already made. The thoughts and purposes of

of its nativity. I say in Holland, for there this grand corruption of the reformation began ; and from thence it found its way to England. It was a Dutch wind that blew Arminianism over to this island many years after our articles were resettled as we now have them. Therefore it is that only Pelagianism is mentioned. However, though Arminianism is younger by about 1200 years than Pelagianism, its nature and tendency are much the same in fact. The seeming difference lies in little more than this : Pelagius spoke out ; Van Harmin (commonly called Arminius,) with more art but less honesty, qualified and disguised the poison, that it might not be quite so alarming. Somewhat like what a good man remarked long ago, concerning the leaven or false doctrines of the Pharisees ; "Christ," says he, "compares the errors of the Pharisees to leaven. Why so ? because of its secret mixture with the wholesome bread. You do not make your bread all of leaven, for then nobody would eat it ; but you mingle it skilfully, and by that means both go down together. Thus our Lord intimates, that the Pharisees mixed their errors with some truths, and therefore he directs them to beware, lest with the truths they swallow the errors also." Gurnall's *Christian Armour*, vol. I. p. 104. Octavo edition.

man's heart, previous to regeneration, are (spiritually considered) only evil and that continually.* When converting grace lays hold of us, there is not only an heart of flesh to be given, but an heart of stone to be taken away.† God must not only write his own law on the minds of his people; but must obliterate the law of sin and death, which has a prior footing in every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam. So much for the spiritual and moral rectitude of man, while unregenerate—What think you,

III. Of *conditional redemption*? Another mo-
dish tenet, and no less contrary to reason and
sound doctrine than the preceding. We are
gravely told by some that “Christ did indeed
die, but he did not die absolutely, nor purchase
forgiveness and eternal life for us certainly: his
death only puts us into a salvable state; making
God placable, and pardon possible.” The whole
efficacy of his sufferings, according to these per-
sons, depends on our beginning towardly and
complying: Which if we are, we then come in
for a share, in the subsidiary and supplementary
merits of Christ; having first qualified our-
selves for his aid, by a performance of certain
conditions required on our part, and entitled
ourselves to the favour and notice of God.—Ac-
cording to this scheme (which is only the reli-
gion of nature spoiled—spoiled by an injudi-
cious mixture of nominal christianity,) the ado-
rable Mediator, instead of having actually ob-
tained eternal redemption‡ for his people, and
secured the blessings of grace and glory to those
for whom he died: is represented as bequeath-
ing to them only a few spiritual lottery-tickets

* Gen. vi. 5.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

‡ Heb. ix. 12.

which may come up blanks or prizes, just as the wheel of chance and human caprice happens to turn. Our own righteousness and endeavours must first make the scale of eternal life preponderate in our favour; and then the merits of Christ are thrown in to make up good weight. The Messiah's obedience and sufferings stand, it seems for mere cyphers; till our own free will is so kind as to prefix the initial figure, and render them of value. I tremble at the shocking consequences of a system, which (as one well observes) considers the whole mediation of Christ as no more than "a pedestal on which human worth may stand exalted:" nay, (to use the language of another) which "sinks the Son of God—how shall I speak it?—into a spiritual huckster, who, having purchased certain blessings of his Father, sells them out afterwards to men upon terms and conditions."

But, my brethren, "I hope better things concerning you; even the things that accompany salvation." We have not, I trust, so learned Christ: or rather, so mislearned him, and the work he came from heaven to accomplish. God forbid that we should be found in the number of those, who adopt a principle so highly derogatory from the glory of divine grace, and so deeply dishonourable to the great Saviour of sinners. *To the law, and to the testimony.* How speaks St. Paul? He avers, that Jesus, "By the one offering of himself, hath *perfected for ever* the salvation of them that are sanctified."* And our Lord expressly declared in the most solemn prayer that ever ascended from earth to heaven, "I have *finished* the work which thou gavest me to do."† Who then, art thou, O man, that darest

* Heb. x. 14

† John xvii. 4

to tack an imaginary supplement of thy own, to the finished work of Christ? Such a conduct were to charge incarnate Truth with uttering a falsehood; and would be equivalent to saying; "No, thou didst not finish the work of redemption which was given thee to do: Thou didst, indeed a part of it, but I myself must add something to it, or the whole of thy performance will stand for nothing."

"He appeared once in the end of the world," or at the close of the Jewish dispensation,—to do what? to render sin barely pardonable on the sinner's fulfilment of previous terms? No: but actually to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* The apostle's expression is, that Christ appeared, *Εἰς αἰετησίην ἀμαρτίας*, unto the utter abolition of sin: so that by virtue of his perfect oblation, sin should neither be charged upon, nor eventually mentioned to, those for whom he was offered up. "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."† In a word, either the death of Christ was not a real and perfect satisfaction for sin; or, if it was, then upon every principle of reason and justice, all that sin must be actually forgiven and done away, which his death was a true and plenary satisfaction for. On the supposition that his redemption was not absolute; it vanishes into no redemption at all. Go over, therefore, fairly and squarely, to the tenets of Socinus, or believe that Christ is the Lamb of God, who in deed and in truth, beareth and taketh away the sins of the world.‡

How speaks the church of England, concerning this important matter? I refer you to her.

* Heb. ix. 26.

† Jer. i. 20.

‡ John i. 29.

31st Article, *Of the one oblation of Christ, finished upon the cross*—"The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is no other sacrifice for sin but that alone."

Do not let that expression, *the whole world*, stumble you. You remember what our *Te Deum* says, "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." So in the above article; The oblation of Christ once made for all the sins of the whole world, i. e. the whole world of believers: for God's elect are a world within a world. The whole world is a scripture term; and the compilers of our articles did well in adopting it. But do you imagine that every individual of mankind is meant? surely, no; for, were redemption thus universal, salvation would and must be of equal extent: otherwise, either God the Father would be unjust, or the blood-shedding of Christ could not be (what our articles affirm it to have been) a *perfect satisfaction* for all sin. Let unlimited redemption be once proved, and I will take upon myself to prove unlimited salvation.

There are many scripture passages where the phrases world, and whole world, are, and must be understood in a restricted sense. So, where St. Paul thus addresses the Roman converts: "Your faith is spoken of, or celebrated, throughout the whole world," i. e. throughout the whole believing world, or christian church: for none but believers would applaud and celebrate the Romans for their faith in Christ. Rom. i. 8. "We are of God," says the apostle John, "and the whole world lieth in the wicked one," John v. 19. Where, if the whole world denote every individual of mankind, it would follow,

that both the apostle himself, and the Christians to whom he wrote, were, at that very time, in the wicked one; and consequently, that he was guilty of self-contradiction, in saying, we are of God. In the book of Revelations, Satan is styled the *deceiver of the whole world*, chap. xii. 9. and *the whole world* are said to *wonder after the beast*, chap. xiii. 3. meaning, *a considerable part of the world*.

Nay, even in daily conversation, it is customary with us to make use of the word world, in a limited signification. So when we speak of the learned world, the busy world, the gay world, the polite world, the religious world, we do not mean that every man in the world is learned, busy, gay, polite, or religious, we only mean, those in the world who are so.

To close this head. Upon the supposition of a random redemption, and a precarious salvation; St. Paul's inference, "who shall condemn? it is Christ that died;" might be easily answered and overthrown: since, if the Arminian hypothesis be true, millions of those for whom Christ died will be condemned; and what heightens the absurdity, condemned on account of those very sins for which Christ did die. A supposition exploded by the apostle as impossible.—Surely, Christ knew for what and for whom he paid the ransom-price of his infinitely precious blood! nor would the Father purchase to himself a church of elect persons for his own peculiar residence, and then leave Satan to run away with as many of the beams and pillars as he pleases. Equally contrary to sound doctrine, is,

IV. The tenet of justification by works.

All human righteousness is imperfect: and to suppose that God, whose judgment is always according to truth, will by a paltry commutation,

which he every where disclaims, and which the majesty of his law forbids, be put off with not only a defective, but even a polluted obedience, and justify men by virtue of such a counterfeit (at most a partial) conformity to his commandments; to imagine that the law accommodates itself to human depravation, and Chameleon like, assumes the complexion of the sinners with whom it has to do, is Antinomianism of the grossest kind. It represents the law as hanging out false colours, and insisting on perfection, while in fact it is little better than a formal patent for licentiousness; and degrades the adorable law-giver himself into a conniver at sin.

Add to this, that if God can consistently with his acknowledged attributes, and his avowed declarations, save guilty, obnoxious creatures, without their bringing such a complete righteousness as the law demands; it will necessarily follow that God, when his hand is in, may save sinners without any righteousness at all, since the same flexibility, which (as the Arminians suppose) induces God to dispense with part of his law, may go a step farther, and induce him to set aside the whole—moreover, if our persons may be justified without a legal (i. e. a perfect) righteousness; it will follow on the same principle, that our sins may be pardoned without an atonement; and then, farewell to the whole scheme of Christianity at once.

There are two grand axioms which enter into the very foundation of revealed religion:

1. That the law will accept no obedience short of perfect, as the condition of justification: and,
2. That ever since Adam's first offence, man has, and can have, no such obedience of his own.

What then must a sinner do to be saved? He must believe in and rest upon that Saviour, who

was by gracious imputation "made sin for us, that we," by a similar exchange, "might be made the righteousness of God in him."* If this be the gospel scheme of salvation, the apostle's assertion will be incontestable: "as many of you as are justified by the law," or seek justification on the footing of your own works, "are fallen from grace,"† revolted and apostatized from that gospel system, which teaches that men are justified by the grace of God, flowing through Christ's righteousness alone.‡ Alas! how hardly are we brought to accept salvation as a gift of mere favour! We are for bringing a price in our hands, and coming with money in our sack's mouth: notwithstanding the celestial direction is, "Buy wine and milk, without money and without price;"§ i. e. take as absolute possession of pardon, holiness and eternal life, as if they were your own by purchase; but remember, that you nevertheless have them gratis, without any desert, nay, contrary to all desert of yours—We did not bribe God to create us, and how is it possible that we should pay him any thing for saving us?

Zeuxis, the celebrated Grecian painter, used towards the latter part of his life; to give away his pictures without deigning to accept of any pecuniary recompense. Being asked the reason, his answer was, "I make presents of my pictures because they are too valuable to be purchased. They are above all price."—And does not God freely give us a part in the book of life, an interest in his Son, and a title to his kingdom; nay, does he not make us a present of himself in Christ; because these blessings are literally above all price? too great, too high, too glorious to be purchased by the works of man? Because we

* 2 Cor. v. † Gal. v. 4. ‡ Rom. v. 21. § Isai. lv. 1.

cannot merit them, God is graciously pleased freely to bestow them. It is equally sad and astonishing to observe the ingredients of that foundation, on which self-justiciaries build their hopes of heaven. First, there is a stratum of free will; then, of good dispositions; then, of legal performances; next, a layer of what they term divine aids and assistances, ratified and made effectual by human compliances; then, a little of Christ's merits; then, faithfulness to helps received: and, to finish the motley mixture, a perseverance of their own spinning. At so much pains is a Pharisee, in going about to establish his own righteousness, rather than embrace the bible way of salvation, by submitting to the righteousness of God the Son.*

Now, what says the church of England, concerning the cause and manner of our acceptance with the Father? Thus she speaks, and thus all her real members believe:

ARTICLE IX. *Of the justification of man.*—“We are *accounted* righteous before God alone for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” One would imagine this might have been enough to establish the point; but utterly to preclude self-righteousness from all possibility of access, the church immediately adds, “And not for our own works or deservings.”

Here the old question naturally recurs, “What then becomes of good works?” The plain truth is, that till a man is justified by faith, he can do no good works at all.

ARTICLE XIII. *Of works done before justification.*—“Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not

* Rom. x. 3.

pleasant to God :” and, if so, how is it possible that he should justify us on account of them? —But, why are they not pleasing to God? “Forasmuch,” adds the article, as they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ.”

“Well but, may some say, “admitting that works done before justification do not properly recommend us to God, they may at least qualify us for believing; and thereby be remotely a condition, *sine qua non*, of justification.” The church will not allow even of this. For, treating in the above article, of works prior to justification, she adds: neither do they make men meet to receive grace.” This clinches the nail, and cuts up self-righteousness, root and branch. But does the church stop here? no: to put the whole matter as far beyond doubt as words can place it, she closes her decision thus; “Yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.” Now, if works wrought previous to justification, are sin, it is absolutely impossible that we should be justified by works, unless sin can be supposed to recommend us to God’s favour. Which, to imagine, were Antimonianism outright—What think you,

V. Of the doctrine of *unefectual grace*? A doctrine which represents Omnipotence itself as wishing and trying, and striving to no purpose. According to this tenet, God, in endeavouring (for it seems it is only an endeavour) to convert sinners, may, by sinners, be foiled, defeated, and disappointed:—He may lay close and long siege to a soul, and that soul can from the citadel of impregnable free will, hang out a flag of defiance to God himself, and by a continued obstinacy of defence, and a few vigorous sallies of free agen-

ty compel him to raise the siege. In a word, the Holy Spirit, after having for years, perhaps, danced attendance on the will of man, may at last, like a discomfited general, or an unsuccessful petitioner, be either put to ignominious flight, or contemptuously dismissed, *re infecta*, without accomplishing the end for which he was sent.

Can then the Lord and giver of life; can he, who, like the adorable Son, is God of God and God with God; shall the blessed Spirit of grace, who is in glory, equal, and in majesty co-eternal, with the other two persons of the Godhead, and has all power both in heaven and in earth;—shall he who hath the key of David; who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;”* shall he knock at the door of the human heart, and leave it at the option of free will to insult him from the window, and bid him go from whence he came? Surely, men’s eyes must be blinded indeed before they can lay down such a shocking supposition for a religious aphorism; and even go so far as to declare that unless God is vanquished by man, “There can be no such thing as virtue or vice, reward or punishment, praise or blame!”

The main root of the error consists greatly in not distinguishing between the gospel of grace, and the grace of the gospel. The gospel of grace may be rejected, but the grace of the gospel cannot. God’s written message in the scriptures, and his verbal message by his ministers, may or may not be listened to; whence it is recorded, “All the day long have I stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people.”† But when God himself comes and takes

* Rev. iii. 7.

† Rom. x. 21.

the heart into his own hand ; when he speaks from heaven to the soul, and makes the gospel of grace a channel to convey the grace of the gospel, the business is effectually done. “ If God makes a change, who can turn him away ? ” * Whatsoever he doth, it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing be taken from it ; and God doth it, that men should fear before him, † and acknowledge that the excellency of converting power is of him and not of us. ‡

A modern schismatic, now living, thought he both showed his wit and gravelled his opponents in saying, that according to the doctrine of our church, “ The souls of men can no more vanquish the saving grace of God, than their bodies can resist a stroke of lightning. ” I would ask the objector, whether he ever knew of any lightning like that which flashed from the Mediator’s eye, when he turned and looked upon Peter ? and something similar is experienced by every converted person. The Lord turns and looks upon a sinner who then relents, and cries out with his whole heart, “ O Lord, my God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over me : ” but now by thee, through the energy of thy renewing influence, “ will I make mention of thy name only. ” § — “ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. ” ¶ — When God says to the heart, seek thou my face : the reply is, and cannot but be, “ Thy face Lord will I seek. ” ** For God, who in the beginning of the creation, com-

* See the marginal translation of Job xi. 10.

† Eccl. iii. 14. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 7. § Isai. xxvi. 13.

¶ Psalm lxxiii. 25.

** Psalm xxvii. 8.

manded the light to shine out of darkness, hath by an exertion of power, equally invincible, and as certainly effectual, shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God as it is manifested in the person and grace of Jesus Christ.* Wherefore, then do men say, we are lords, and we will come no more unto thee,† except we ourselves choose it? Alas, alas! did the master rest with us we should never choose to come to God at all. If we did not first change our wills we should never even will that great change, that internal regeneration, without which no man can see the kingdom of heaven.‡ God, I am bold to declare, would not have been Lord of any hearts now under this roof, had he not, by the constraining power of his own love, effectually gained them over, and invincibly attached them to his blessed self. The glorious and independent Creator made us at first without our leave; and yet, according to the modern system, he must ask and wait for our leave before he can make us anew!

Do you desire to know the judgment of the church upon this point? You have it in her seventeenth Article; where, speaking of God's elect people, she asserts that "They are called, according to his purpose, by his Spirit working in due season;" and immediately adds, that "they, through grace, obey the calling." God's converting call therefore is such as produces obedience to it; i. e. it is triumphantly efficacious; and rendered successful, not by the will and towardliness of the person called, but by the power and grace of him that calleth. Nay, so far is the efficacy of divine influence from being sus-

* 2 Cor. vi. 6.

† Jer. ii. 31.

‡ John iii. 3.

pended on any internal or external ability of the creature, that in our tenth article, concerning free will, the church expresses herself thus: *The condition of man since the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn, nor even prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God.*

VI. What think you of *Antinomianism*?

By Antinomianism, I mean that doctrine which teaches, "that believers are released from all obligation to observe the moral law as a rule of external obedience: that, in consequence of Christ's having wrought out a justifying righteousness for us, we have nothing to do but to sit down, eat, drink, and be merry: That the Messiah's merits supersede the necessity of personal, inherent sanctification; and that all our holiness is in him, not in ourselves: that the aboundings of divine grace give sanction to the commission of sin; and, in a word, that the whole preceptive law of God is not established, but repealed and set aside from the time we believe in Christ." This is as *contrary to sound doctrine* as it is to sound morals; and a man need only act up to these principles to be a devil incarnate. It is impossible, that either the Son of God, who came down from heaven to perform and to make known his Father's will; or that the Spirit of God, speaking in the scriptures, and acting upon the heart, should administer the least encouragement to negligence and unholiness of life. Therefore, that opinion which supposes personal sanctification to be unnecessary to final glorification, stands in direct opposition to every dictate of reason, and to every declaration of scripture.

Indeed, the very nature of election, of faith, and of all covenant-grace whatever, renders holiness absolutely indispensable: forasmuch as,

without a spiritual and moral resemblance of God, there can be no real felicity on earth, nor any future enjoyment of heaven.—Suppose we appeal to experience? I speak now to you who know in whom ye have believed: to you who have received the atonement, and who have been sensibly reconciled unto God by the death of his Son. If, at any time ye have been off your guard, and suffered to lapse into sin; how have ye felt yourselves afterwards? ye have gone with broken hearts and with *broken bones*.* Ye have found it to be indeed “an evil and a bitter thing to depart,” though ever so little, “from the Lord.” Ye know by dismal experience that “The way of transgression is hard:” and that sin, like Ezekiel’s roll, is written within and without, “with lamentation, and mourning, and woe.” The gall of bitterness is inseparable from the bond of iniquity. Upon the principle, therefore, of mere self-interest, (to go no higher,) a true believer cannot help aspiring to holiness and good works.

Heaven must be brought down into the human soul, before the human soul can be fitted for heaven. There must, as the schoolmen speak, be “a congruity and similitude between the faculty and the object,” i. e. there must be an inward meetness for the vision and glory of God, wrought in you by his Holy Spirit, in order to render you susceptible of those exalted pleasures and the fullness of joy, which are in his presence, and at his right hand for ever. Was thy soul, O unconverted sinner, to be this moment separated from thy body, and even admitted into heaven, (supposing it was possible for an unregenerate spirit to en-

* Psalm ii.

ter,) heaven would not be heaven to thee. You cannot relish the blessedness of the new Jerusalem, unless God, in the mean while, make you partaker of a *new nature*. The Father chose his people to salvation; the Son purchased for them the salvation to which they were chosen: and the blessed Spirit fits and qualifies them for that salvation by his renewing influences: for, as a dead man cannot inherit an estate, no more can a dead soul (and every soul is spiritually dead, till quickened and born again of the Holy Ghost) inherit the kingdom of God. Yet, sanctification and holiness of life do not constitute any part of our title to the heavenly inheritance, any more than mere animal life entitles a man of fortune to the estate he enjoys: he could not, indeed, enjoy his estate if he did not live; but his claim to his estate arises from some other quarter. In like manner, it is not our holiness that entitles us to heaven; though no man can enter heaven without holiness. God's gratuitous donation, and Christ's meritorious righteousness, constitute our right to future glory; while the Holy Ghost, by inspiring us with spiritual life, of which spiritual life good works are the evidences and the actings) puts us into a real capability of, and fitness for, that inheritance of endless happiness, which otherwise, we could never, in the very nature of things, either possess or enjoy.

“Let it be observed,” says one of the most learned and judicious writers of this age, “that Christ's active obedience to the law for us, in our room and stead, does not exempt us from personal obedience to it any more than his sufferings and death exempt us from corporal death, or from suffering for his sake. It is true indeed, we do not suffer and die in the sense he did, to satisfy justice, and atone for sin: so neither do we

yield obedience to the law, in order to obtain eternal life by it. By Christ's obedience for us we are exempted from obedience to the law in this sense: but not from obedience to it as a rule of walk and conversation, by which to glorify God and express our thankfulness to him for his abundant mercies."—Travellers inform us, that in Turkey the partisans of the several denominations there are distinguished by the colour of their shoes; so that if you meet any person in the streets, you need only look at his *feet* to know of what religion he is. And may not the truth of grace be discerned, to at least an high degree of probability, by the life and conversation of those who make a religious profession? The man who says that he knows God, and in works denies him; who calls Christ Lord, Lord, but does not the thing that he enjoys; whose voice indeed is Jacob's voice, but his hands are the hands of* Esau; resembles our Saviour's persecutors and murderers of old, who bowed their knees and cried, "Hail, king of the Jews!" while they spit in his face, and smote him with the palms of their hands. The hypocrite's profession is dark and opaque, but that of a real saint is pellucid and transparent. The

* A very capital painter in London, lately exhibited a piece representing a fryar habited in his canonicals. View the painting at a distance, and you would think the fryar to be in a praying attitude: his hands are clasped together, and held horizontally to his breast; his eyes meekly demitted, like those of the publican in the gospel; and the good man appears to be quite absorbed in humble adoration and devout recollection—But take a nearer survey and the deception vanishes; the book which seemed to lie before him, is discovered to be a punch bowl, into which the wretch is all the while in reality only squeezing a lemon.—How lively a representation of an hypocrite!

rays of grace in a genuine believer pervade his whole behaviour, and are transmitted through all the parts of his practical walk. Though every moral man is not therefore a Christian; yet every Christian is necessarily a moral man.

When Flaminius, the Roman general, did at the isthmian games announce freedom to Greece in the name of the senate and people of Rome, the transported Greeks received the glorious news with such acclamations of gratitude, and thunder of applause, that some ravens, which were flying over the Stadium, dropped down to the earth stunned and senseless: the very games and exercises were neglected, and nothing but bursting eclats of admiring joy engrossed the day.—So, when the Holy Spirit of consolation announces gospel liberty, and eternal redemption to the souls of the awakened the love of sin, and the ravens of detested lust, fall before his sacred influence. Both the toils and the pleasures of the world are regarded as insignificant, when set in competition with the one thing needful. Holy wonder, love and joy quite engage the powers of the believer's mind, during the spring-tide consolations of his first manifestive espousals; and a sure foundation is from that moment laid for the performance of all those good works, which are fruits of salvation by grace. While faith is in exercise, and a sense of divine favour is warm upon the heart; a child of God is as much steeled to the allurements of sin, as Octavius was cool to the meretricious charms of Cleopatra.

Thus, conscientious obedience, though neither the cause nor condition of our justification in the sight of God, nor of our admittance into his glory; is, nevertheless, an essential branch both of privilege and duty, as well as a necessa-

ry indication of our acceptance in the beloved. This is the point of view in which our church considers good works: viz. not as preceding conditions of salvation, but as subsequent testimonies and marks of salvation already obtained.

ARTICLE XII. "*Of good works.*—Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith: insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruit."

VII. What think you concerning the tenet of sinless perfection? which supposes that the very inbeing of sin may on earth be totally exterminated from the hearts of the regenerate; and that believers may here be pure as the angels that never fell; yea, (I tremble at the blasphemy)—holy as Christ himself. To hold this heresy is the very quintessence of delusion; but to imagine ourselves really in the state it describes, were the very apex of madness. Yet many such there are: some such I myself have known.

Indwelling sin and unholy tempers do most certainly receive their death's wound in regeneration; but they do not quite expire till the renewed soul is taken up from earth to heaven. In the mean time, these hated remains of depravity will too often, like prisoners in a dungeon, crawl toward the windows, (though in chains) and shew themselves through the grate. Nay, I do not know whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery, be not frequently more violent in a regenerate person, than even in one who is dead in trespasses; as wild beasts are some times the more rampant and furious

for being wounded. A person of the amplest fortune cannot help the harbouring of snakes, toads, and other venomous reptiles on his lands; but they will breed, and nestle, and crawl about his estate, whether he will or no. All he can do is to pursue and kill them, whenever they make their appearance? yet, let him be ever so vigilant and diligent, there will always be a succession of those creatures to exercise his patience and engage his industry. So is it with the true believer in respect of indwelling sin.

Would you see a perfect saint? you "must needs go out of the world," then you must go to heaven for the sight: forasmuch as there only are "the spirits of just men made perfect."* This earth on which we live never bore but three sinless persons; our first parents in the short state of innocence; and Jesus Christ in the days of his abode below. Of the whole human race beside, it always was and ever will be true, that there "is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not." The most forward and towering professors are not always the firmest and most solid Christians. Naturalists tell us, that the oak is a full century in growing to a state of maturity; yet, though perhaps the slowest it is one of the noblest, the strongest, and most useful trees in the world. How preferable to the flimsy, water-shooting willow!

Our church enters an express caveat against the pestilent doctrine of perfection in her 15th article entitled, "Of *Christ alone* without sin:" where she thus delivers her judgment;

"Christ, in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, from

* Heb. xii. 23.

which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and his spirit. He came to be a Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin, as St. John saith, was not in him. But *all we*, the rest (although baptized and born again in Christ) yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

So, it is declared, about the middle of the ninth article, that the "infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that be regenerated."—Let me just mention,

VIII. One more particular, *contrary to sound doctrine*: I mean the assertion of some who would fain persuade us that it is impossible for us to receive "knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin." Such a denial is very opposite to the usual tenor of God's proceeding with his people in all ages. The best believers, and the strongest, may indeed have their occasional fainting-fits of doubt and diffidence, as to their own particular interest in Christ: nor should I have any great opinion of that man's faith, who was to tell me that he never had any doubts at all. But still, there are golden seasons when the soul is on the mount of communion with, God when the Spirit of his Son shines into our hearts, and gives us boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him;* and when *Sunt sine nube dies*, may be the Christian's exulting motto. Moreover, a person who is at all conversant with the spiritual life, knows as certainly whether he indeed enjoys the light of God's countenance,†

* Eph. iii. 12.

† Psalm lxxxix. 15.

or whether he walks in darkness* as a traveller knows whether he travels in sunshine or in rain. And, as a great and good man† observes, “It is no presumption to read what was God’s gracious purpose towards us of old, when he, as it were, prints his secret thoughts, and makes them legible in our effectual calling. In this case we do not go up into heaven and pry into God’s secrets; but heaven comes down to us, and reveals them.”

It may indeed be objected, that the scripture doctrine of assurance, when realized into an actual possession of the privilege, “may tend to foster pride, and promote carelessness.” It cannot lead to pride; for all, who have “tasted that the Lord is gracious,” know by undubitable experience (and one fact speaks louder than a hundred speculations,) that believers are then lowest at God’s footstool, where they are highest on the mount of assurance. Much indulgence from earthly parents may indeed be productive of real injury to their children; but not so are the smiles of God; for the sense of his favour sanctifies whilst it comforts.—Nor can the knowledge of interest in his love tend to relax the sinews of moral diligence, or make us heedless how we behave ourselves in his sight. During those exalted moments, when grace is in lively exercise, when the disciple of Christ experiences

“*The soul’s calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy;*” corrupt nature (that man of sin within,) and every vile affection, are stricken, as it were, with a temporary apoplexy: and the believer can no more, for the time being, commit wilful sin, than an an-

* Isai. l. 10.

† Gurnall, Vol. I. p. 127.

gel of light would dip his wings in mud. No : it is when we come down from the mount, and mix again with the world, that, like Moses, we are in danger of breaking the tables of the law. " But is it not enthusiasm to talk of holding intercourse with God, and of knowing ourselves to be the objects of his special love ?" No more enthusiastical (so we keep within scripture-bounds) than it is for a favourite child to converse with his parents, and to know that they have a particular affection for him. Neither in the strictest reason and nature of things, is it at all absurd to believe and expect, that God can, and does, and will communicate his favour to his people, and " manifest himself to them, as he does not to the world"* at large.

Yet, though God is thus graciously indulgent to many of his people, (I believe, to all of them at some time or other, between their conversion and death) still, if they trespass against him, he will not let their offences pass unnoticed nor uncorrected. Though grace itself is inadmissible, the comfort of it may be sinned away. Salvation is sure to all the redeemed ; but the joy of it may be lost. Psalm li. 12. " Great peace have they that love thy law," and they only. Holiness and consolation are wisely and intimately connected. In proportion as we are enabled to live near to God, to walk humbly and closely with him, and to keep our moral garments clean, we may hope for freedom of intercourse with him, and to assure our hearts before him, † like the happy believers of old, concerning whom it is said, that they walked at once in the *fear* of the Lord, and in the *comfort* of the Holy Ghost. ‡

* John xiv. 21, 22.

† Ibid. iii. 19.

‡ Acts ix. 31.

Let not, however, what has been observed concerning the blessing of assurance, stumble or discourage the feeble of God's flock, on whom, for reasons wise and good, it may not hitherto have been his pleasure to bestow this unspeakable gift. The scripture plainly and repeatedly distinguishes between faith; the assurance of faith; and the *full assurance* of faith: and the first may exist where the other two are not. I know some who have for years together been distressed with doubts and fears, without a single ray of spiritual comfort all the while. And yet, I can no more doubt of their being true believers, than I can question my own existence as a man. I am sure they are possessed not only of faith in its lowest degree, but of that which Christ himself pronounces *great faith* :* for they can at least say, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed." Faith is the eye of the soul; and the eye is said to see almost every object but itself: so that you have real faith without being able to discern it. Nor will God despise the day of small things. Little faith goes to heaven no less than great faith; though not so comfortably, yet altogether as surely. If you come merely as a sinner to Jesus, and throw yourself at all events for salvation on his alone blood and righteousness, and the grace and promise of God in him; thou art as truly a believer as the most triumphant saint that ever lived. And, amidst all your weakness, distresses and temptations, remember that God will not cast out, nor cast off the meanest and unworthiest soul

* Mat. viii. 8, 10.

that seeks salvation only in the name of Jesus Christ the righteous. When you cannot follow the rock, the rock shall follow you; nor ever leave you, for so much as a single moment on this side the heavenly Canaan. If you feel your absolute want of Christ, you may on all occasions, and in every exigence, betake yourself to the covenant love and faithfulness of God for pardon, sanctification and safety, with the same fulness of right and title, as a traveller leans upon his own staff, or a weary labourer throws himself upon his own bed, or as an opulent nobleman draws upon his own banker for whatever sum he wants.—I shall only detain you farther, while I warn you;

IX. Against another limb of Arminianism, totally “contrary to sound doctrine.” I mean that tenet, which asserts *the possibility of falling finally from a state of real grace*. God does not give, and then take away. He does indeed frequently resume what he only lent; such as health, riches, friends, and other temporal comforts; but what he gives, he gives for ever. In a way of grace, “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance:”* He will never repent of bestowing them; and every attribute he has forbids him to revoke them. The blessings of his favour are, “That good part which shall not be taken from those that have it.”†

A parent of moderate circumstances may give his children something to set up with in the world, and address them to this effect; “I have now done for you all that is in my power to do, and gone as far as my circumstances will allow; you must from henceforward stand on your own feet,

* Rom. xi. 29.

† Luke x. 42.

and be good husbands of the old stock. The preservation and improvement of what I have given you must be left to chance and yourselves." In this very view does Arminianism represent the great Father Almighty. But how does scripture represent him? as saying, "I will *never* leave thee, or forsake thee :*—Even to your old age, I am *he*; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you.†—"My sheep 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 pluck them out of my hand."‡ In a word, if any of God's people can be finally lost, it must be occasioned either by their departing from God, or by God's departure from them. But they are certainly and effectually secure against these two, and these only possible sources of apostacy. For, thus runs the covenant of

* Heb. xiii. 5.

† Isa. xlvi. 4.

‡ John x. 28. True, said an Arminian schismatic, grown gray in the service of error, and who still goes up and down sowing his tares, seeking whom he may devour, and compassing sea and land to make proselytes: true, Christ's sheep "cannot be plucked forcibly out of his hand by others, but they themselves may *slip* through his hands, and so fall into hell, and be eternally lost." They may SLIP, may they? as if the Mediator, in preserving his people, held only a parcel of *eels* by the tail! Is not this a shameless way of *slipping* through a plain text of scripture? But I would fain ask the slippery sophister, how we are to understand that part of the last cited passage, which expressly declares concerning Christ's people, that *they shall never perish*? since, perish they necessarily must, and certainly would, if eventually separated from Christ; whether they were to be *plucked* out of his hands, or whether they were only to *slip* through them. I conclude then, that the promise made to the saints that they shall never perish, secures them equally against the possibility of being either wrested from Christ's hand, or of their own falling from it; since, could one or other be the case, perish they must, and Christ's promise would fall to the ground.

grace; "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that *I will not turn away from them*, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that *they shall not depart from me*, Jer. xxxii. 40. Now, if God will neither leave them nor suffer them to leave him; their final perseverance in grace to glory must be certain and infallible.

Having greatly exceeded the limits I designed, I shall forbear to adduce the attestations of the church of England to the doctrines of assurance and perseverance; especially, seeing I have done this somewhat largely elsewhere.*—I must not however conclude without observing, That irreversible justification on God's part, and subjective assurance of indefectibility on ours, do by no means invest an offending Christian with immunity from sufferings and chastisement. Thus Nathan said to David, "The Lord hath put away thy sins; thou shalt not die;" yet was he severely scourged though not disinherited for his transgressions. The tenor of God's immutable covenant with the Messiah, and with his people in him, is this: "His seed will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my

* In a pamphlet entitled, *the church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*: where, concerning the doctrine of assurance, see pages 125, 126; and, concerning the doctrine of perseverance, see pages 127—130.

lips. I have sworn once for all by my holiness, that I will not lie unto" Jesus the anti-typical David, by suffering any of his redeemed people to perish.* Hence, as it is presently added, they shall be established for ever, as the moon; and as the faithful witness in heaven; nay, they shall stand forth and shine, when the sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; when the stars shall drop from their orbits, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. As an excellent person somewhere observes, "Our own unbelief may occasionally tear the copies of the covenant given us by Christ, but unbelief cannot come at the covenant itself. Christ keeps the original deed in heaven with himself, where it can never be lost."

Upon the whole: are these things so? then,

1. How great and how deplorable is the general departure from the scripture doctrines of the church of England, and the first principles of the reformation!

2. How blessed are the eyes that see, how happy are the hearts that feel, the propriety and the energy of these inestimable truths! And,

3. How ought such to demonstrate their gratitude by a practical glorification of God in their bodies and in their spirits, which are his! Resemble thunder in your boldness for God, and your zeal for truth; but let your lives shine as lightning, and flash conviction in the faces of those who falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, and as falsely charge the doctrines of God with a licentious tendency.—But let not your zeal be of the inflammatory kind; let it be tempered with unbounded moderation, gentleness and benevolence; and shine forth as the

* Psalm lxxxix. 29, 35.

sun with healing in its wings. Remember who it is that hath made you to differ from others; and that "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." John iii. 27.

Not unto us, therefore, O Lord, not unto us, but to *thy* name alone be the praise of every gift, and of every grace ascribed; for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Amen.



POSTSCRIPT.



TO THE

PARISHIONERS OF ST. MATTHEW,

BETHNAL GREEN:

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE the preceding sermon could get through the press, the Rev. Mr. *Haddon Smith*, who, it seems, serves you as curate, has thought proper to publish a discourse which he delivered in opposition to this, the Sunday after I had the honour of preaching it before you.

It would render that unthinking, but I would hope well-meaning gentleman, much too considerable, were I either to address him by name, or descend to canvass a performance, wherein heat and scurrility endeavour to supply the total vacuity of argument.—For Mr. Smith to enter

the lists with such exceeding fierceness against a sermon which he did not hear, and which, hitherto, he has had no possible opportunity of reading, discovers a weakness and temerity in him, which sink him as low beneath my notice, as the established doctrines of our excellent church rise superior to his impotence of censure.—When the gentleman shall appear to have at all considered the important articles of faith, on which he has presumed to animadvert; when the sails of his furious zeal shall be counterballasted by some little degree of judgment, and when he has learned to express himself, if not with Christian decency, yet with common grammatical propriety, then, and not till then, shall I deem him a proper object of attention.

You, gentlemen, can testify, that I never once appeared in your pulpit but at your own particular request; a request which I could not possibly have any interested motives for complying with, as I never accepted of the smallest gratuity for my attendance. Is it for this that the enraged curate has repeatedly traduced me from the pulpit, and now insults me from the press?

For my own part, I am so far from entertaining any resentment against Mr. Smith, (with whom I do not remember to have exchanged five words in my life, and whom I should not even know at sight,) or from being deterred by his unmerited abuse, that should I live to see London again, I shall always deem myself happy to wait on you as usual, whenever either your own desire or the interest of your public charity may command. And as so many of you have favoured me with uncommon civility and attention, I am encouraged to offer one request; a request not in behalf of myself, but of Mr. Smith; viz. that his ill-judged and unbecoming

warmth may not so far alienate your affection from his person, as to make you persist in withdrawing those usual proofs of your beneficence, which formerly you have favoured him with, and which, I am sorry to be informed, have of late, through his defect of candour and humility, been considerably lessened.

My sermon and his are now before the public. The rashness and seeming malignity with which he appears desirous to plunge into the depths of an unequal contest, might, in the opinion of some, justify me in the amplest severity of animadversion. But I spare him. I cannot prevail with myself to render "evil for evil, or railing for railing." On the contrary, I wish and pray that divine grace may cause him to partake of the "mind which was in Christ Jesus;" and that he may by the same Almighty influence, be made to experience, to believe, and to preach, the inestimable truths of that gospel which Jesus taught.

Mr. John Wesley, (on whose plan of doctrine your curate seems in great measure to have formed his own) is the only opponent I ever had, whom I chastised with a studious disregard to ceremony. Nor do I in the least repent of the manner in which I treated him. To have refused the forgeries and perversions of such an assailant tenderly, and with meekness, falsely so called; would have been like shooting at a highwayman with a pop-gun, or like repelling the sword of an assassin with a straw. I rather blame myself, on a review, for handling Mr. Wesley too gently, and for not acquainting the world with all I know concerning the man and his communication. I only gave him the *whip*, when he deserved a *scorpion*.

But as to Mr. Smith, he hitherto, amidst all his ignorance and unguardedness, merits a milder

treatment. Want of talents and of thought appear in every paragraph of his sermon: but I am willing to believe him not wholly destitute of integrity. Though he opposes the doctrines of the church of England with virulence, yet he seems to do so from principle. Under this persuasion, I at present give him rope. Hereafter, should he rise into any thing like a respectable antagonist, I may, perhaps, hook him, and pull him in—Till then I take my leave both of the curate and of his preachment, with that justly admired line, which is at once equally picturesque of his behaviour, and expressive of my fixed determination.

Du loqueris Lapides Ego Byssina Verba repopnam.

I am, with much respect and regard,
Gentlemen,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

Broad-Hembury, Aug. 31, 1770.

LETTER

TO THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY:

RELATIVE TO HIS PRETENDED

ABRIDGMENT OF

ZANCHIUS ON PREDESTINATION.

BY AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A. B.

VICAR OF BROAD-HEMBURY, DEVON.

Sic fatus senior, Telumque imbelles sine Ictu
Conjecit: rauco quod protinus aere repulsum;
Et summo Clypei nequicquam Umbone pependit.

Æneid II.

Credulitate, puer; Audacia, juvenis; Delirius, senex.
Mr. De Boze's Epitaph on Hardouin, the French Jesuit.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY GEORGE LINDSAY.

Paul & Thomas, Printers.

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1811.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

By JOHN BURNETT, Esq. of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

LONDON, Printed by J. Sturges, at the Black-Swan in St. Dunstons Church-yard, in the Year 1734.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

PRESENT EDITION.

NINE months are now elapsed since the first publication of this letter: in all which time, Mr. W. has neither apologized for the misdemeanor which occasioned his hearing from me in this public manner, nor attempted to answer the charge entered against him. Judging, probably, that the former would be too condescending in one who has erected himself into the leader of a sect; and that the latter would prove rather too difficult a task, and involve him in a subsequent train of fresh detections; he has prudently omitted both.

Some of his followers, however, have not been so tamely unactive on this occasion as their pastor. Anxious at once to palliate his offence, and to screen his timidity; several penny and two-penny defences have successively appeared: wherein the anonymous scribblers wretchedly endeavoured to gather up, and put together, the fragments of a shattered reputation. The very printers, the midwives who handed these "insects of a day" into public existence, were ashamed to subjoin their names at the bottom of the title pages.

Two Lay-Preachers, in particular, have feebly taken up the cudgels for their master. Of one I shall say very little, as he writes with some degree of decency—Of the other, I shall not say much; for both his talents and his morals sink him far below the dignity of chastisement. This illiterate "haberdasher of small wares" entitles his penny effusion, as well as I remember, "A letter of thanks to the Rev. Mr. Toplady, in the names of all the hardened sinners in London and Westminster." The poor creature, it is plain from his title-page, aims at humour; and yet unhappily for such a design, he is in reality but too literally qualified to act as a secretary in chief to the sinners of London and Westminster. For he has given very numerous and ample proofs of his

own sinnership, and that there can hardly exist in those two cities a more atrocious sinner than himself. I will not pollute this paper with a recital of his crimes. They who know the man are no strangers to his communication. Though a doctrinal Pharisee, his life has long ago evinced him a practical Sadducee. Surely, Arminianism is like to flourish mainly under the auspices of such able and virtuous advocates!

And so much for Mr. Wesley's redoubtable subalterns.

“ What image of their fury can we form?
Dulness and rage. A puddle in a storm.”

If my advice carries any weight with them, they will carefully peruse their Spelling-books, before they make another sally from the press. As to themselves, and their refined productions, I mean to take no farther notice of either. I am quite of Mr. Gay's opinion;

“ To shoot at crows is powder thrown away.”

I had almost forgot the Monthly Reviewers. One word concerning them, and I have done. The two Reverend gentlemen who are hired to dissect and characterize whatever comes within the divinity department, *a Calendis ad Calendas*; would fain have it, in their superficial strictures on the first edition of this letter, that I am angry with Mr. Wesley. If by anger the ingenious animadvertisers mean a just and becoming disapprobation of Mr. Wesley's lying abridgment, and of the surreptitious manner in which he smuggled it into the world; I acknowledge myself in this respect angry. I hope the Reverend Reviewers will not in their turn be angry too, at seeing themselves tacked to the list of Mr. Wesley's allies: since in their mode of representing my dispute (or to adopt their own military term, my battle) with that gentleman, they seem to rank themselves in the number of his seconds. The reason is obvious. Mr. W. is a red-hot Arminian: and the sagacious Doctors can discern, with half an eye, that Arminianism lies within a bow-shot of Socinianism and Deism. Yet notwithstanding the alliance is thus not altogether unnatural, why should these two Divines, who are certainly possessed of abilities which might do honour to human nature, by a narrow, sordid attachment to party, render those abilities less respectable?

Broad-Hembury, Jan. 9, 1772.

LETTER

TO THE

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

SIR,

POSSIBLY, the following letter may fall into the hands of some who are unacquainted with the merits of the occasion on which I write. For the information of such, I must premise, that in November, 1769, I published a two shilling pamphlet, entitled. "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and asserted: With a Preliminary discourse on the Divine Attributes. Translated, in great measure, from the Latin of Jerom Zanchius."

Though you are neither mentioned nor alluded to throughout the whole book, yet it could hardly be imagined, that a treatise, apparently tending to lay the axe to the root of those pernicious doctrines, which, for more than thirty years past you have endeavoured to palm on your credulous followers, with all the sophistry of a Jesuit, and the dictatorial authority of a Pope; should long pass without some censure from the hand of a restless Arminian, who has so eagerly endeavoured to distinguish himself, as the bell-wether of his deluded thousands.

Accordingly in the month of March, 1770, out sneaks a printed paper (consisting of one sheet, folded into twelve pages, price one penny) entitled, "The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and asserted by the Rev. Mr. A. — T—." Wherein you pretend to give an abridgment of the pamphlet above referred to. But,

I. Why did you not make your abridgment truly public? For an apparent reason: That, if possible, it might elude my knowledge, and so escape the rod. Born of a stolen embrace, it was needful for the spurious, pusillanimous performance to steal its way into the world. It privately crept abroad from the Foundry, the seat of its nativity; it was sold indeed, but sold under the rose; it was carefully circulated in the dark; and the friends of Mr. Wesley were designed to be the sole sphere of its acquaintance. Thus "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." In such conduct I can discern much of the Jesuit, but nothing of the saint. I had to this hour remained unapprized of the secret stab, but for the information received from some of superior integrity to yourself.—I will put Christianity quite out of the question, and suppose it to have no kind of influence. But should you not, at least, act as a man of common honour? Come forth openly, Sir, in future, like an honest, generous assailant; and, from this moment forward, disdain to act the ignoble part of a lurking, sly assassin.

II. Why did you not abridge me faithfully and fairly? Why must you lard your ridiculous compendium with additions and interpolations of your own? especially as you took the liberty of

prefixing my name to it? your reasons are obvious. My publication had spread among some of your people; and the longer it continued to diffuse itself the more you trembled for your Diana. Hence, Demetrius like, you found it needful, by the help of a pious fraud, to prejudice your Ephesians against the doctrines of St. Paul. The book was like to give the Arminian Babel a shake; therefore no way so effectual to secure it, as by endeavouring to spike the canon which was planted against it. That you might seem to gratify the curiosity of your partisans, and keep them really hood-winked at the same time, you draw up a flimsy, partial compendium of Zanchius; a compendium which exhibits a few detached propositions, placed in the most disadvantageous point of view, and without including any part of the evidences on which they stand.

But this alone was not sufficient to compass the desired end. Unsatisfied with carefully and totally suppressing every proof alleged by Zanchius in support of his argument, a false colouring must likewise be superinduced, by inserting a sentence or two, now and then, of your own foisting in. After which you close the motley piece, with an entire paragraph, forged every word of it by yourself; and conclude all, as you began, with subjoining the initials of my name; to make the ignorant believe, that the whole, with your omissions, additions, and alterations, actually came from me. An instance of audacity and falsehood hardly to be paralleled!

I am very far from desiring the reader to take my word in proof of the charge alleged against you. As an instance of your want of honour, veracity, and justice, I refer to the following paragraph, 1. As published by me; and 2. As quoted by you.

1.

“When all the transactions of Providence and grace are wound up in the last day; he (Christ) will then properly sit as Judge, and openly publish and solemnly ratify, if I may so say, his everlasting decrees, by receiving the elect, body and soul, into glory: and by passing sentence on the non-elect (*not for having done what they could not help*, but) for their wilful ignorance of divine things, and their obstinate unbelief; for their omissions of moral duty, and for their repeated iniquities and transgressions.” Doctr. of Abs. Pred. page 93.

2.

“In the last day Christ will sit as Judge, and openly publish and solemnly ratify his everlasting decrees, by receiving the elect into glory, and by passing sentence on the non-elect, (*not for having done what they could not help*, but) for their wilful ignorance of divine things, and their obstinate unbelief; for their omissions of moral duty, and for their repeated iniquities and transgressions *which they could not help.*” Wesley’s Abridgment, page 9.

Whether my view of the doctrine itself be, in fact, right or wrong, is no part of the present inquiry: the question is, have you quoted me fairly? Blush, Mr. Wesley, if you are capable of blushing. For once publicly acknowledge yourself to have acted criminally: “Unless,” to use your own words on another occasion, “Shame and you have shook hands and parted.”

Your concluding paragraph, which you have the effrontery to palm on the world as mine, runs

thus: ***“The sum of all this: One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A—— T——.”**

In almost any other case, a similar forgery would transmit the criminal to Virginia or Maryland, if not to Tyburn. If such an opponent can be deemed an honest man, where shall we find a knave?—What would you think of me, was I infamous enough to abridge any treatise of yours, sprinkle it with interpolations, and conclude it thus: **“Reader, buy this book or be damned. Witness my hand, John Wesley!”**

And is it thus you contend for victory? are these the weapons of your warfare? Is this bearing down those who differ from you with meekness? Do you call this binding with cords of love: Away, for shame, with such disingenuous artifices. At least endeavour to conceal that narrow, sectarian spirit, which betrays itself, more or less, in almost every thing you write. Renounce the low, serpentine cunning, which puts you on falsifying what you find yourself unable to refute. And as you regard your character, and the cause you espouse, dismiss those dirty subterfuges, (the last resources of mean, malicious impotence) which degrade the man of parts into a lying sophister, and sink a divine beneath the level of an oyster-woman. Cease to fight, like the French, with old nails and broken glass. Charge fairly, and fire as forcible as you can. But, if you persist to employ the weapons of scurrility and falsehood; the splinters will not

only recoil on yourself, but you will continue to be posted for a theological coward.

And why should you of all people in the world, be so very angry with the doctrines of grace? Forget not the days and months that are past. Remember that it once depended on the toss of a shilling, whether you yourself should be a Calvinist or an Arminian. Tails fell uppermost, and you resolved to be an Universalist. 'Twas an happy throw which consigned you to the tents of Arminius; for it saved us from the company of a man, who, by a kind of religious gambling, peculiarly his own, risked his faith on the most contemptible of all lots; and was capable of tossing up for his creed, as porters or chairmen toss up for an halfpenny.

I have read of princes and other eminent persons who, having risen from ignoble life to greatness, took care to have some striking memorials of their former obscurity frequently in their view, by way of a counterpoise to pride, and as a preservative from being exalted above measure. When, from the pinnacle of your own importance, you look down upon the advocates for free grace, and consider them as reptiles, to be treated as you please; only recollect the humbling circumstance of which I have just reminded you; and repress the complacent swellings of self-adulation, by some such soliloquy as this; "I have been in danger myself of believing that St. Paul says true, when he declares that God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. How precious was the shilling, and above all, how lucky was the throw, which convinced me of St. Paul's mistake!" Forgive us, if we as implicitly determine our faith by the scriptures, as you determined yours by the fall of the splendid shilling.

But, even since this memorable *epocha*, you have by no means proved yourself that steady Arminian you would have the world believe. Proteus like, you disdain to be shackled and circumscribed by any certain form. Her ladyship of Loretto, though she has a different suit for every day in the year, is *semper eadem*, when compared with the *quondam* Fellow of Lincoln College. There are times when you vary as much from your preceding self, as you do at all times from the rest of mankind. Possessed of more than serpentine elability, you cast your slough, not once a year, but almost once an hour. Hence your innumerable inconsistencies, and flagrant self-contradictions, the jarring of your principles (ever at intestine war with each other) and the incoherence of your religious system. Your scheme of doctrines reminds me of the feet of a certain visionary image, which as the sacred penman acquaints, seemed to be composed of iron and clay; heterogeneous materials, which may indeed be put together, but will never incorporate with each other. Somewhat like the necromantic soup, of which you have probably read in the tragedy of Macbeth; your doctrines may be stirred into a chaotic jumble, but witchcraft itself would strive in vain to bring them into coalition. On the contrary, evangelical truth knows nothing of this Harlequin assemblage. It is not, like Joseph's coat, of many colours, nor made up of a patch from Donatus, of another from Pelagius, and a third from Arminius: but is invariably simple, uniform and harmonious; resembling the robe of its adorable teacher, which was without seam, and woven from the top throughout.

On one occasion, you had the candour to own your levity as to points of faith. I am acquaint-

ed with a very respectable person (Mr. J. D.) who, not many years ago, taking the freedom to tell you, that "Your prejudices, like armed men, stood with their swords ready drawn, to guard all the passes of conviction, and hew down every truth as fast as it presented itself to your mind;" you had the usual honesty to answer, "Ah! Sir, if you knew how distressed I have been, what doctrines I should embrace, and how I have been tossed about from system to system, you'd think me the most open to conviction, and the least liable to prejudice, of any man you ever knew." This answer did you real honour, for I am persuaded you spoke true. Yet, why should you, who have been so remarkably tossed about, take upon you to revile those who have been enabled to stand fast? I hope for your own sake, that you will never cease tossing about till you have gained the harbour of truth; and that, amidst all your manifold shifting from system to system, you will at length be enabled to fix on the only right system, which asserts the lawfulness of God's doing what he will with his own.

I am told, the penny-sheet (which occasions this free address) is to be followed some time hence, by a four-penny pamphlet against Zanchius; wherein you are to besiege the doctrine of predestination in form. Commence the siege and welcome. Open your trenches and plant your batteries. Bring forth your strong arguments, and play them off with vigour. I publicly profess and subscribe my name to it, that, if I cannot beat you back, I'll freely capitulate, and own myself conquered. But remember, that if you would do any thing to purpose, you must make a regular attack. You must encounter the whole of Zanchius, and take his arguments in their regular connexion and dependency on each

other. - You must go through with my preface, which I prefixed to my translation of that great man. Having carried and dismantled the out-work, you must next proceed to demolish the Dissertation on the Divine Attributes; which having destroyed, you are then to assail the citadel; I mean, those five stubborn chapters, which make up the body of the treatise itself. All the allies, or the arguments drawn from scripture and reason, must likewise be put to the sword. This should you attempt to do in a manner worthy of a scholar and a divine, I shall have no objection (if life and health continue) to measuring swords, or breaking a pike with you. Controversy, properly conducted, is a friend to truth, and no enemy to benevolence. When the flint and the steel are in conflict, some sparks may issue which may both warm and enlighten. But I have no notion of encountering a wind-mill in lieu of a giant. If, therefore, you come against me (as now) with straws instead of artillery; and with chaff in the room of ammunition; I shall disdain to give you battle: I shall only laugh at you from the ramparts.

Much less, if you descend to your customary recourse of false quotations, despicable invective, and unsupported dogmatisms, shall I hold myself obliged to again enter the list with you. An opponent who thinks to add weight to his arguments by scurrility and abuse, resembles the insane person, who rolled himself in mud in order to make himself fine. I would no more enter into a formal controversy with such a scribbler, than I would contend for the wall with a chimney-sweeper.

When some of your friends gave out, two or three months before your late doughty publication, that Mr. John (as they call you) was shut-

ting himself up,* in order to answer the Translator of Zanchius; I really imagined that something tolerably respectable was going to make its appearance. But

Quid dignum tanto tulit hic Promissor, Hiatus?

After the teeming mountain had been shut up a competent time, long enough to have been brought to bed of an Hercules, forth creeps a puny, toothless mouse, a mouse of heterogeneous kind; having little more than its head and tail† from *you*; and the main of its body made up of some mangled, castrated citations from Zanchius.

—*Currente Rota, cur Urceus exit?*

If I may judge of the future by the past, and unless you amend greatly in a short time, your four-penny Supplement, when it appears, will be no less inconsiderable than the penny sheet already extant. And, as the mouse is not cheap at a penny, I am very apprehensive, the rat, when it ventures out, will be too dear at a groat.

Hitherto, your treatment of Zanchius resembles that of some clumsy, bungling anatomist, who, in the dissection of an animal, dwells much on the larger and more obvious particulars; but quite omits the nerves, the lymphatics, the muscles, and the most interesting parts of the complicate machine. Thus, in your piddling extract

* Dreadful his thunder, while unprinted, roar;
But when once publish'd, they are heard no more.
So, distant bug-bears fright; but nearer draw,
The block's a block, and turns to mirth your awe.

DR. YOUNG.

† The Advertisement, on the back-side of Mr. Wesley's Title-page: and his concluding Paragraph. p. 12.

from the pamphlet you have thought proper to curtail, you only give a few of the larger outlines, without at all entering into the spirit of the subject, or so much as producing (so far from attempting to refute) any of the turning points, on which the argument depends. Wrench the finest eye that ever shone in a lady's head, from its socket, and it will appear frightful and deformed; whereas, in its natural connexion, the symmetry and brilliancy, the expressiveness and the beauty, are conspicuous. So it often fares with authors. A detached sentence, artfully misplaced, or unseasonably introduced; maliciously applied, or unfairly cited; may appear to carry an idea the very reverse of its real meaning. But replace the dislocated passage, and its propriety and importance are restored. I would wish every unprejudiced person, into whose hands your Abridgment of my translation has fallen, to suspend his judgment concerning it, till he sees the translation itself. On comparing the two together, he will at once perceive how candid and honest you are; and what quantity of confidence may be reposed on your integrity as a citer.

When I advert to the unjust and indecent manner in which you attacked the late Mr. Hervey; above all, when I consider how daringly free you have made with *the scriptures* themselves, both in your commentaries, and in your alterations of the text itself; I cease to wonder at the audacious licentiousness of your pen respecting me. I should rather wonder, if you treated any opponent with equity, or canvassed any subject impartially. Rise but once to *this*, and I shall both wonder and rejoice.

You give me to understand, that I am but "a young translator." Granted. Better, however,

to be a young translator, than an old plagiarist. Which of our ancient divines have you not evaporated and spoiled? and made them speak a language, when dead, which they would have started from, with horror, when alive?*

“ Yet Brutus is an honourable man.”

How miserably have you pillaged even my publication? Books, when sent into the world, are no doubt, in some sense, public property. Zanchius, if you chose to buy him, was yours to read; and, if you thought yourself equal to the undertaking, was yours to answer: but he was not yours to mangle. Remember how narrowly you escaped a prosecution some years ago, for pirating the poems of Dr. Young.

I would wish you to keep your hands from literary picking and stealing. However, if you cannot refrain from this kind of stealth, you can abstain from murdering what you steal. You ought not, with Ahab, to kill, as well as take possession; nor giant like, to strew the area of your den with the bones of such authors as you have seized and slain.

On most occasions you are too prone to set up your own infallible judgment as the very *lapis lydius* of right and wrong. Hence the firebrands, arrows, and death, which you hurl at those who presume to vary from the oracles you dictate. Hence, particularly, your illiberal and malevolent spleen against the Protestant Dissenters; † though yourself are, in many respects, a Dissen-

* See almost every part of what Mr. Wesley miscalls, The Christian Library.

† “ How little is the case mended at the meeting? either the teachers are new-light men, denying the Lord that bought them; or they are Predestinarians, and so preach pre-

ter of the worst kind. I would not, however, by this declaration, be understood, as if I meant to dishonour that respectable body, by classing you with *them*; for you stand alone, and are a Dissenter of a cast peculiar to yourself. And yet, like Henry I. you are for making the length of your own arm the standard-measure for every body else. No wonder, therefore, that you eminently inherit the fate of Ishmael: that your "hand is against every man, and every man's hand against you." Strange! that one who pleads so strenuously for universal love in the Deity, should adopt so little of the love for which he pleads! That a person of principles so large, should have an heart so narrow! Bigots of eve-

destination and final perseverance, more or less. Nor is it expedient for any Methodist Preacher, to imitate the Dissenters in their manner of praying; either in his tone, or in his language, or in the length of his prayer. Neither should we sing like them, in a slow, drawling manner. We sing swift, both because it saves time, and because it tends to awaken and enliven the soul."

Mr. Wesley's *Preserv. against unsettled notions*, p. 244.

How much more civilly, not to say cordially, this gentleman shakes hands with the Papists, let his own words declare: "Can nothing be done, even allowing us on both sides to retain our opinions, for the softening our hearts towards each other?—My dear friend consider, I am not persuading you to leave or change your religion: but to follow after that fear and love of God, without which all religion is vain. I say not a word to you about your opinions, or outward manner of worship.—We ought, without this endless jangling about opinions, to provoke one another to love and to good works. Let the points wherein we differ stand aside. Here are enough wherein we agree.—O Brethren, let us not still fall out by the way!"

Mr. Wesley's letter to a Roman Catholic, p. 4, 8, 10.

Far be it from me to charge Mr. Wesley with a fondness for all the grosser parts of Popery. Yet I fear the partition between that church and him, is somewhat thinner than might be wished. Or, rather, like the loving Pyramus and Thisbe, they endeavour to remedy the want of a perfect coalition, by kissing each other through an hole in the wall.

ry denomination are much the same : and of all vices, bigotry is one of the meanest and most mischievous. Its shriveled, contracted breast, leaves no room for the noble virtues to dilate and play. Candour, benevolence, and forbearance become smothered and extinguished ; partly, from being cramped by littleness of mind ; partly from being overwhelmed with intellectual dust. Bigotry is a determined enemy to truth ; inasmuch as it essentially interferes with freedom of inquiry, restrains the grand indefeisible right of private judgment, confines our regard to a party, and, by limiting the extent of moderation and mutual good-will, tears up charity by the very roots. In short, bigotry is the very essence of Popery ; and, too often leads votaries before they are aware, into the bosom of that pretended church, whose doctrines and maxims are the worst corruption of the best religion that ever was. And though this baneful vice is so uncomfortable in itself, so contrary to the genius of the gospel, and so extensively pernicious in its effects ; yet, is it not as common as it is detestable ? May all God's children be enabled to cast it with the rest of their idols, to the moles and to the bats !

You have obliquely given me a sneering lecture upon "modesty, self-diffidence, and tenderness" to opponents : And, it must be owned, that the lesson comes with a peculiar grace, and quite in character from *you*. The words sound well : But, like many other prescribers, you say, and do not. Else, why do you represent me as telling my readers, that they must, upon pain of damnation, believe that only one person in twenty is elected ?" Why do you introduce me as enjoining them to believe, under the same penalty, "That the elect shall be saved, do what they

will ; and the reprobate be damned, do what they can?" This is a sample, indeed, of your own modesty, tenderness, and self-diffidence : but, God forbid, that I should give such dismal proof of mine. I believe and preach, that the chosen and ransomed of the Lord, are "appointed to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:" And, with regard to the rest, that they will be condemned, not for doing what they can in a moral way, but for *not* doing what they can : for not believing the gospel report ; and for not ordering their conversation according to it.

Let me likewise ask you, when or where I ever presumed to ascertain the number of God's elect? Point out the treatise and the page wherein I assert that only "One in twenty of mankind are elected." The book of life is not in your keeping, nor in mine. The Lord, and the Lord only, "knoweth them that are his." He alone, "who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names ;" calleth also "his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out ;" first, from a state of sin into a state of grace, and then into a state of glory. Yet, as the learned and devout Beza expresses himself, "I shall never blush to abide by that simplicity, which the Holy Spirit, speaking in the scriptures, hath been pleased to adopt :"* And 'tis but too certain, that in the scriptures are such awful passages as these ; "Broad is the way, and wide the gate, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat :"[†] While, on the other hand, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—

* Me vero iflius simplicitatis, quam Sp. S. amplexus est, nunquam pudebit, *Beza, in Matth. ii. 2.*

Many are called, but few chosen.—Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.—There is a remnant according to the election of grace." Declarations of this tremendous import, instead of furnishing you with fuel for contention, and setting you on a presumptuous and fruitless calculation of the number that shall be saved or lost; should rather bring you on your knees before God, with your hand upon your breast, and this cry in your lips: "Search me, O Lord, and try me; prove me also, and examine my thoughts. Shew "me to which class I belong. Give me solid proof that my name is in the Lamb's book of life, by making it clear to me that I am in the faith." And ever remember, that true faith utterly disclaims all ground of pretension to justification and eternal life, but on the sole footing of God's absolute grace, and the Messiah's finished redemption. Pelagianism is for serving the Deity, as Pope Celestine III. is said to have treated the Emperor Henry VI. It quite kicks off the crown from the head of sovereign grace, and makes the will of God bend, and truckle, and shape itself to the caprice of man. Arminianism, somewhat more specious, but altogether as pernicious, cuts the crown in two, by dividing the praise of salvation between God and man, and fairly runs away with half. On the contrary, the faith which is of Divine operation, acts like the Emperor Charles V. when he retired from the throne: It resigns the crown entirely, and renounces it for ever, without reserving so much as a single jewel for itself.

Should the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to lead you thus far; you will then no longer be ready to object, "That the elect shall be saved, do what they will:" For you will know by heart-felt experi-

ence, that the converted elect are, and cannot but be, ambitious to perform all those good works, in which God hath ordained them to walk ; and to act worthy of him, who hath graciously and effectually called them to his kingdom and glory.

Your pretended fear of Antinomianism, like your real fear of the Comet, which was expected to have appeared a few years back, is perfectly idle and chimerical. You publicly testified your apprehensions, that the latter would dry up our rivers, and burn up our vegetables, if not reduce the earth itself to a cinder. But your prophecies proved to be, "The baseless fabric of a vision : " and our rivers, trees, and earth, remain as they were.—Nor will the doctrines of grace, experimentally received into the heart, destroy or weaken the obligations of moral* vir-

* Consciousness of guilt, and dread of detection, frequently put bad men upon entering those accusations against their opponents, which, without such a timely precaution, they are justly apprehensive, will be charged upon themselves ; like the apostate spirits in Milton, who were for turning their own torments into weapons against heaven. Such is the prudent conduct of very many Arminians. Fully aware, that their own lives are none of the best, they affect to cry out against Calvinism, as though she was the very mother and nurse of licentiousness. Were she really so, what myriads would desert the standard of Arminius, and flock to the banner of Calvin ! But all, who are capable of discernment know, that the pretended licentious tendency of Calvinism (so called) is no more than idle flourish and empty declamation. Were the doctrines of grace unfavourable to strict morality, we should quickly see them the reigning system of the age. On the contrary, they are therefore at present unfashionable, because they make no allowance for the wickedness of the wicked. 'Tis a fundamental axiom with us, who abide by the principles of the reformation, that holiness of heart and life is (not the cause, price or condition, but which adds infinitely stronger security to the interests of moral virtue) an essential and inseparable part of that very salvation, to which the elect were chosen from everlasting. A Calvinist must, conse-

tue. On the contrary, they will operate on the practice, not like your scorching comet on our globe; but like the genial beams of the sun, which diffuse gladness, and occasion fruitfulness, wherever they arise. Whoever wishes in earnest to lead a new life, must first cordially embrace the true old doctrine of salvation by grace alone.—In short, your own tenet of sinless perfection, leads directly to the grossest Antinomianism. I once knew a lady whom you had inveigled into your pale, and who, in a short space, professed herself perfect. Being in her company some time after, I pointed out a part of her conduct, which to me seemed hardly compatible with a sinless state. Her answer was to this effect: “You are no competent judge of my behaviour. You are not yourself perfectly sanctified; and therefore see my tempers and actions through a false medium. I may to you seem angry: but my anger is only Christian zeal.” I could, moreover, mention the names of some of your *quondam* followers, who from professing themselves sinless, have cast off all appearance of godliness, and are working all manner of iniquity with greediness. If you are in search of Antinomians, truly and justly so called, you must look for them, not among those whom you term Calvinists, but among your own hair-brained*

quently, renounce both the letter and the spirit of his own constitutive principles (i. e. he must cease to be a Calvinist) ere he can, consistently, degenerate into a sensualist.

* I might, with too much justice, add, that some of Mr. W.'s own lay-preachers are indisputably to be numbered among practical Antinomians. These, however, are regarded by their partisans as very excellent men, that have not yet attained to perfection, though they are in a fair way for it. If Mr. Wesley should have the front to deny, that any of his

perfectionists. Had not you yourself (to remind you of but one instance) a proof of it, not very long ago? You formed a scheme of collecting as many perfect ones as you could, to live together under one roof. A number of these flowers were accordingly transplanted from some of your nursery-beds to the hot-house. And an hot-house it soon proved. For, would we believe it? the sinless people quarrelled in a short time at so violent a rate, that you found yourself forced to disband the select regiment. Had you kept them together much longer, that line would have been literally verified in these squabbling members of your church militant;

“The males pull’d noses, and the females caps.”

A very small house I am persuaded would hold the really perfect upon earth. You might drive them *all* into a nutshell: but to return.

I cannot dismiss your objection, concerning the supposed fewness of God’s truly elect people, without observing, that how few soever they may appear, and really be, in a single genera-

preaching mechanics are men of loose lives, I have it in my power to appeal to facts, which a tenderness for those persons, as individuals of mankind, and a concern for the honour of human nature in general, restrain me at present from holding up to public view. Nor would I be thought to hint at these things with pleasurable triumph. I feel too strongly for the interests of christian obedience, and for the happiness of souls, to exult over the vices of the vicious; but, when men whose lives would be a disgrace to heathenism; when men, whom Socrates or Seneca would have blushed to own for disciples; take upon them to arraign the doctrines of the Scriptures, and of our established church, under a pretence of guarding against those immoralities of which they themselves are notorious and noon-day examples. What can such shameless railers expect, but to have their own real crimes deservedly exposed?

tion, and as balanced with the many unrighteous among whom they live below; yet when the whole number of the Redeemer's jewels is made up—when the entire harvest of his saints is gathered in—when his complete mystic body is presented collectively before the throne of his Father: they will amount to an exceeding great multitude, which no man can number. On earth the company of the faithful may to us who know but in part, resemble Elijah's cloud, which at first seemed no "bigger than a man's hand:" whereas in the day of God, they will be found to overspread the whole heavens. They may appear now, to use Isaiah's phrase, but as "two or three berries on the top of a bough, or as four or five in the most fruitful branches thereof;" but they shall then be like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, "the height of which reached unto heaven, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth: the leaves whereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much." The kingdom of glory will both be more largely and more variously peopled than bigots of all denominations are either able to think, or willing to allow.

Go now, Sir, and dazzle the credulous with your mock victory over the supposed reprobation of "nineteen in twenty." Go on to chalk hideous figures on your wainscot; and enjoy the glorious triumph of battering your knuckles in fighting them. But father no more of your hideous figures on me. Do not dress up scarecrows of your own, and then affect to run away from them as mine. I do not expect to be treated by Mr. John Wesley with the candour of a gentleman, or the meekness of a Christian; but I wish him, for his reputation's sake, to write and act with the honesty of an heathen.

You affect to be deemed a minister of the national church. Why then do you decry her doctrines, and as far as in you lies, sap her discipline? That you decry her doctrines needs no proof: Witness for example, the wide discrepancy between her decisions and yours, on the articles of free will, justification, predestination, perseverance, and sinless perfection; to say nothing concerning your new-fangled doctrine of the intermediate state of departed souls.*

That you likewise do not overflow with zeal for the discipline† of the Church of England is manifest not only from the numerous and intri-

* In Mr. Wesley's first edition of his notes on the New Testament, published in 1755, are the two following assertions: than which, even he himself has, perhaps, never given a more striking specimen of presumption and inconsistency. "Enoch and Elijah are not in heaven, but only in paradise;" note on John iii. 13. "Enoch and Elijah entered at once into the highest degree of glory, without first waiting in paradise:" note on Rev. xix. 20. This it is to be wise above what is written!

† Mr. Wesley's rebaptization of some adult persons is another proof of this charge. I could point out by name more than one who have undergone from his hands a reiteration of that sacred ceremony. I shall only at present, mention a single instance, which I had from the person herself, with permission to publish her name at full length, in case Mr. W. should deny the fact. Mrs. L. S. now living in Southwark, was baptized in a bathing tub, in a cellar, by Mr. John Wesley; who, at the time, held her down so very long under water, while he deliberately pronounced the words of the administration, that some friends of her's, who were present, screamed out from an apprehension that she was actually drowned; and she herself was so far gone, that she began to grow insensible, and was lifted out of the water but just time enough to save her life. Yet this is the man, who, in the writings which he has published to the world, professes to hold infant baptism, and that by sprinkling, not by immersion!

Quo teneam Fultus mutantem Protea Nedo?

cate regulations, with which you fetter † your societies, but from the measures you lately pursued, when a foreign mendicant was in England,

† The rules of what Mr. Wesley calls the Band-Societies, demonstrate the miserable servitude of those who are admitted into that gossiping club. The whole of these rules would be too tedious to insert. One or two of them, as samples of the rest, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

“To speak, each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls; with the faults we have committed in thought, word or deed; and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting.”

“To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be concerning their state, sins and temptations.”

Among the questions proposed to such as are candidates for admission into this pretended *sanctum sanctorum*, is the following:

“It is your desire and design to be on this and all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve.”

The printed account from whence these extracts were taken verbatim, adds; that the five following questions are to be asked at every meeting:

1. “What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?”
2. “What temptations have you met with?”
3. “How was you delivered?”
4. “What have you thought, said or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?”
5. “Have you nothing you desire to keep a secret?”

The reader doubtless will, on this occasion, be reminded of the popish practice of auricular confession. For my own part I make no scruple to acknowledge, that confession as managed in the church of Rome, is infinitely preferable to confession, as conducted under the auspices of Mr. Wesley. In those countries, where Popery is established, confession is made only to one person, and he a priest: who, if he divulges what is made known to him under the character of confessor, is liable by law to suffer death. But in these Band Societies, the most open and unreserved confession is, it seems, made in the hearing of a dozen or twenty old wo-

who went by the name of Erasmus, and styled himself Bishop of Arcadia. This old gentleman passed for a prelate of the Greek church; though to me, it seems not improbable that he might rather be a member of the Romish. This much, however, is certain; that the chaplains of the then Russian Ambassador here, knew nothing about him; and that to this day the Greek church in Amsterdam believe him to be an impostor. With regard to this person, I take the liberty of putting one or two queries to you.

1. Did you, or did you not, get him* to ordain several of your lay-preachers, according to the manner of what he called the Greek ritual?

men and boys, who are at liberty to blab out all they hear, without being obnoxious to any penalty at all.

I shall only transcribe from the above account the two following rules, imposed on these same societies:

1. "To wear no needless ornaments; such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.

2. "To use no needless self-indulgence; such as taking snuff or tobacco; unless prescribed by the physician."

* There is something vastly curious in the letter of orders which this vagrant gave to the persons he pretended to ordain. I once saw an original letter, or certificate, of this kind, signed by himself. It was written in very mean Greek: and which added to my persuasion of Erasmus's being an impostor, was drawn up, not in the modern Greek which the Christians of that church now use, but in the ancient: and if I am not greatly mistaken the words were likewise accented. I read it over twice; and most sincerely wish I had taken a copy of it: But at that time I regarded it only as an article of present curiosity.—A friend of mine, however, who improved his opportunity rather better, took a translation of it; which, on my after request, he favoured me with; and upon the strength of memory, I can venture to assure the public, that the version is materially a just one. I believe it to be perfectly so. It runs thus:

"Our measure from the grace, gift and power of the all-holy and life-giving Spirit, given by our Saviour Jesus Christ to his divine and holy apostles, to ordain sub-deacons and deacons; and also to advance to the dignity of a priest!

2. Did these lay-preachers of yours, or did they not, both dress or officiate as clergymen of the church of England, in consequence of that ordination? And under the sanction of your own avowed approbation; notwithstanding, putting matters at the best, they could only be ministers of the Greek church, and which could give them no legal right to act as ministers of the church of England. Nay, did you not repeatedly declare, that their ordination was to all intents and purposes as valid as your own, which you received forty years ago at Oxford?

3. Did you, or did you not, strongly press this supposed Greek Bishop to consecrate you a bishop at large, that you might be invested with a power of ordaining what ministers you pleased to officiate in your societies as clergymen? And did he not refuse to consecrate, alleging this for his reason, that according to the canons of the Greek church, more than one bishop must be

Of this grace, which hath descended to our humility, I have ordained sub-deacon and deacon, at Snow-fields Chapel, on the 19th day of Nov. 1764, and at Wells-street Chapel, on the 24th of the same month, Priest; the Rev. Mr. W. C. according to the rules of the holy Apostles and of our faith. Moreover, I have given to him power to minister and teach, in all the world, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, no one forbidding him in the church of God, wherefore, for that very purpose I have made this present letter of recommendation from our humility, and have given it to the ordained Mr. W. C. for his certificate and security.

“ Given and written at London, in Britain, November 24th, 1774.

“ ERASMUS, Bishop of Arcadia.”

I cannot help suspecting, that his humility, as he styles himself, if the truth was known, nearly related to another certain old gentleman, who no less humbly writes himself, *Servant of the servants of God*.—His humility of Arcadia, and his holiness of Rome, are, I doubt not, sons of one and the same ecclesiastical mother.

present to assist, at the consecration of a new one?

4. In all this, did you or did you not palpably violate a certain oath, which you have repeatedly taken? I mean the oath of supremacy: part of which runs thus;

“And I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm: so help me God.”

Now is not the conferring of orders an act of the highest ecclesiastical power and authority? And was not this man a foreigner? And were not the steps you took, a positive acknowledgment of a foreign power and jurisdiction! And was not such acknowledgment a breach of your oath?

It matters not whether Erasmus was in fact an impostor or a genuine Greek Bishop. Unless you was very insincere, you took him to be what he passed for. If you did not, you was party to a fraud. Either way, pretend no longer to love the church of England! you who so lately endeavoured to set up *imperium in imperio*! If you are honest, you will either publicly confess your fault; or, for ever throw aside your gown and cassock. You will either return to the service of the church, or cease to wear her livery.—You may think, perhaps, that I make too free, in expostulating with you so plainly. And yet on maturer thought, I question whether you may or not. How can Mr. Wesley, who on all occasions makes so very free with others, be angry with young translators for copying (though at a humble distance) so venerable an example. Nor indeed ought a person who, beyond even what truth and decency permit, take so great liberties with

the rest of his contemporaries; to wonder, if so far as decency allow, the rest of his contemporaries take as great liberties with him.

You complain, I am told, that the evangelical clergy are leaving no stone unturned "to raise John Calvin's ghost, in all quarters of the land." If you think the doctrines of that eminent and blessed Reformer to be formidable as a ghost; you are welcome to do all you can toward laying them. Begin your incantations as soon as you please. The press is open: and you never had a fairer opportunity of trying your strength upon John Calvin, than at present. Only take care that you do not, with all your skill in theological magic, get yourself into a circle, out of which you may find it difficult to retreat—And a little to mitigate your wrath against the raisers of Calvin's ghost, remember, that you yourself have been a great ghost-raiser in your time. Who raised the ghosts of John Goodwin, the Arminian regicide; and of Thomas Grantham, the Arminian Baptist? who raised a ghost of Monsieur* De

* As a specimen of Mr. Wesley's regard to, at least the *minutiae* of Popery, I shall select a few passages from his life of this Monsieur De Renty, which now lies before me. The reader will observe, that the sentences enclosed with inverted commas are Mr. Wesley's own words.

He speaks favourably of this French Papist, for his regularly "saying the *Itinerarium*," and then "singing the *Litanies* of our Lord," before he set out on any journey; and for taking due care to "sing the *Vespers*," while he was upon the road—page 3. Among the instances of Monsieur's humility, are reckoned (page 9 and 10.) his not permitting "a cushion to be carried for him" when he went to mass; and his frequently saying "his prayers at the outside of the church." Also his going abroad to visit a monastery "on foot," and that too "in thawing weather:" nay, he would sometimes "traverse, in a manner, all Paris," even when "it poured down with rain." And yet, with all this mad humility, Mr. De Renty, it seems, kept a coach of his own. Had he been

Renty the French Papist ; and of many other Romish enthusiasts ; by translating their lives into English for the edification of Protestant readers ?

consistent, he would have entirely shorn himself of this supernumerary convenience, by laying down his carriage. But then, where would have been the merit of spontaneously traversing all Paris on foot when it poured down with rain ? His dutiful demeanour to the priest, which had the care of his soul, as its father-confessor, is a feature of Mr. De Renty's saintship, on which Mr. Wesley, with peculiar rapture, dwells and dilates. Page 11. "A further proof of his humility, was his carriage to his director. He did nothing that concerned himself without his conduct. To him he proposed whatever he designed either by speaking or writing, clearly and punctually ; desiring his advice, his pleasure, and his blessing upon it ; and that with the utmost respect and submission. And without reply, or disputing, he simply and exactly followed his order." This was good Catholic obedience indeed ! and, no doubt, Mr. Wesley had a view, in proposing such an example to the imitation of his Protestant followers. Under the article of De Renty's "self-denial and mortification," we are informed (page 14.) that "he made but one meal a day for several years," and "always of the worst provisions he could meet with." He would "often step into a baker's shop," and dine on "a piece of bread and a draught of water." From the same principle of gloomy and unthankful superstition, he would do penance, by "passing the night in a chair," or lying down "in his clothes and boots," or sleeping "on a bench till morning." Being at Pontois, "in winter," he desired "the Carmelite Nuns not to make a fire, or prepare a bed" for him. "He parted with several books," (page 16.) "because" they were "richly bound." He "used no gloves in any season ; wore no clothes, but plain and close made ;" and "carried no silver" in his pockets, "except for charity." After which detail of austerities, the biographer gravely adds, "I have seen him in his coach, with a page and footman." His coach, I presume, was to carry him on foot, when it rained ; his page was to hold up his clothes, which were plain and close made ; and the office of the footman was to reach him his gloves, whereof he wore none in any season. Who could ever have surmised, that such a doleful series of mortification and self-denial would end in the fopperies of a coach, a page, and a footman ! Mr. De Renty's vanity, which mixed itself with his very austerities, reminds me of what I am told is common in the streets of

Should you take any notice of this letter I have three requests to make ; or rather, there are three particulars on which I have a right to insist :

1. Don't quote unfairly.
 2. Don't answer evasively.
 3. Don't print clandestinely.
-

Paris ; where you may see many a blind beggar bawling for alms in a bag-wig, his hat under his arm, a wooden sword by his side, and paper ruffles adorning the hand that is extended to receive charity. But to return to the hero of the tale. Having had a quarrel with his mother, and the breach being made up, " he was no sooner returned home, than he caused *Te Deum* to be sung," page 24. " He had great respect to holy persons ; especially to priests. Whenever he met them, he saluted them with profound humility ; and, in his travels, would alight off his horse to do it," page 33. Nor does Mr. Wesley omit to inform us, page 39, of Mr. De Renty's regard to such fugitive Papists, as had either rendered themselves obnoxious to the laws at home, or preferred begging in France, to living under an heretical government in Great-Britain. " He was the first that motioned some relief to the poor English, driven by persecution out of their own country." Nor must his very pilgrimages be overlooked. " Going, one day, to visit the holy place of Montmatre ; after his prayers said in the church, he retired into a desolate part of the mountain, near a little spring : there he kneeled down to prayer ; and that ended, he dined on a piece of bread and a draught of water." Page 45. Would it not have been still more devout, not to have dined at all on such holy ground ? " One day he visited a person, who, from a groundless suspicion, had cruelly used his wife. Mr. De Renty accosted him with such soft language, that he was persuaded, at length to go to confession, which he had not done in twelve years before." Page 47, 48. Himself, says Mr. Wesley, speaking of Mr. De Renty's last illness, " made his confession, almost every day till his death." Page 62.

I dismiss these, and many other passages in this obnoxious performance, without farther remark. Their tendency is self-evident. I shall only add, that, if the reader has a desire to see still more enormous instances of Romish superstition and fanaticism, he will find them in Mr. Wesley's lives of some Spanish monks, (who, more nationally grave, did not imitate the French ascetic, by retaining their coaches, pages, and footmen) in the last volume, or last but one of his compilation, entitled *The Christian Library*.

Canvass the points of doctrine wherein we differ, as strictly as you can. They will stand the test. They scorn disguise. They disdain to sue for quarter. *Truth* like our first parents in a state of innocence, can shew herself naked without being either afraid or ashamed: "And he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

May you at last, begin to act from this principle, and no longer prostitute your time and talents to the wiredrawing of chicanery, and the circulation of error? I am not insensible of your parts: But alas! what is distinguished ability, if not wedded to integrity? No less just, than ingenious, is the remark of a learned and noble writer: "The riches of the mind, like those of fortune, may be employed so perversely, as to become a nuisance and pest, instead of an ornament and support to society."*

I am,

Yours, &c.

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

* Dialogues of the dead, p. 297. edit. 1765.

THE END.



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