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1571
COMPARATIVE VIEWS

OF THE

CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN THE

CALVINISTS AND THE ARMINIANS.

BY WILLIAM WHITE, D. D.

**BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA.**

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

On an appearance of such a work as the present, it seems a tribute of respect due to the publick, to state the motive of the Author. Accordingly, he avows it to be the sustaining of what he conceives to be correct views, in the controversy which is the subject of the volumes. His station in the Episcopal church, and the agency to which circumstances have called him in the conducting of its concerns, may be supposed to have added to other sources of obligation, in classing the comprehended questions among the prominent subjects of his attention. For his wish to give the weight of the reasons of his opinions—whatever that may be—to the doctrines which he considers as equally those of the scriptures, and of the church of which he is a minister, is what will not be considered by any reasonable person as needing an apology.

The first part of the ensuing treatise, was drawn up without the design of further progress. But the Author having, at the desire of a friend, consented to the publishing of it in a Periodical Magazine, it was a circumstance prompting to the draft of what makes the second part: which was also published in the same form. While this was in the press, the Author was

sensible of an incitement, to extend his disquisitions through the third and fourth parts: Which would also have appeared in the Magazine, but for its discontinuance. On the occurrence of this, the prospect of further publicity would have been closed, if there had not been, subsequently, the excitement of an extraordinary degree of interest in the discussed subjects, both in England and in the United States of America; and if they had not been treated of, with an especial relation to the Episcopal church: the doctrines of which are here thought to have been in many instances misrepresented. The stating of them in a correct point of view, will of course be a principal object in this work.

The Author, in unfolding what he understands to be the doctrines of his church, is not without sensibility of the danger to which he exposes himself, of being understood as assailing the institutions of other bodies of professing Christians. This is not his object: But in accomplishing what he declares it to be, there occurs the necessity of incidental reference to principles in contrariety to those sustained.

Although he is not disposed to censure any temperate investigation of religious truth; nor to the taking of occasion for this from the circumstance, that what is conceived to be erroneous, has been published to the world by any, whether society or individual; yet, he thinks he perceives too zealous a disposition in some professors

of religion, to construe as an attack on their respective systems, what others publish for the explaining and the sustaining of their own. This is a bias to hostility; which, if it were carried to its consistent extent, would describe the published standard of any religious body, as an attack on all dissenting from them: an idea which places every religious society in a position like that of Ishmael, who had "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him."

In one respect, however, the present performance may wear a stronger appearance of designed controversy, than that of merely exhibiting the Author's views of the institutions of his church; since he has cited and commented not only on the works of known Authors of other communions, but even on the authorized standards of their belief, and of their publick administrations. Let it then be noticed, that this is never done, merely for the sake of calling in question the propriety of them. The form of their introduction, is explanatory. Contradicted positions could hardly have been treated with precision, without adverting to the documents, in which they are the most authoritatively established. And the institutions of the church of England, as framed at the reformation, would have been but imperfectly explained, without reference to other institutions, framed either in opposition, or for the professed purpose of melioration. In short, it

is here conceived, that there should be a mutual bearing of different religious societies with one another, in this respect; in regard to liberties taken with candour, and free, alike from misrepresentation and from uncharitableness. How far the Author has, in those respects, submitted to laws laid down by the holy genius of the Christian calling, it must be for others to judge: but in him it will be allowable to say, that this has been an object of his endeavour. When Calvinistick churches are spoken of, it is not intended to insinuate, what would not be true, that they have taken their name from Calvin, or explicitly adopted his opinions as their standard: but it is because they are such in common estimation, and so spoken of by their members and others. The explanation applies to the naming of Calvinistick divines.

There is another description of persons, who may perhaps disapprove of what is here presented. They are those, who, being of the same communion with the Author, may materially dissent from the views taken by him, of the sense of its institutions. It ought to be sufficient in regard to such, that there having been certain differences, for a long course of years, within their common church, there arises from this a motive to mutual forbearance. It would not have been disagreeable to him, to have continued to esteem the institutions of the church, to be as favourable to a latitude of sentiment here in view, as they once were in his con-

ceptions. He is free to confess, that there was a time, when he thought the articles in particular to have been drawn up, with an accommodation to the opposite opinions treated of in this work. Further inquiry convinced him, that in part he was mistaken; that the reformers of the church of England did indeed accommodate to an opposition of opinion, existing as early as the fifth century of the Christian church; but that subsequently to the period of the reformation, there arose on one of the sides referred to very important superadditions; which could not have been contemplated in the institutions of the church of England, and to which they are directly in opposition.

There is still another class of people, to whom the Author may be thought answerable, on the question of the propriety of the present measure. They are those who censure every publick discussion, of what they consider as mere speculation; disliking all argument on it, and thinking it fertile of mischief in society. Such persons seem not aware that there are various junctures, in which the declining of the field of argument, is an abandonment of ministerial fidelity. Doubtless it is to be lamented, that occasion should have been given for censure, by those whose zeal, outrunning their charity, make faith, or what they think such, the mean of exciting depraved passion, and of impelling to all its pernicious consequences. But however this is to be disapproved of, in whatever cause called forth; it is far

from being an evidently correct position, that religious speculation is as indifferent as some suppose it to be, to the essential interests of society. Religion is one of the operating principles, which exercise a discipline over the mind, and tend to the forming of the inward character. If this be not demonstrated by experience, it is no matter how little there be paid to it of attention of any sort, nor how soon all regard to it be dismissed from the concerns of men. But on the supposition of the truth of what has been above affirmed; it cannot be denied, that while some opinions tend to harmonize; and, in every way, to give an amiable habit to the disposition; there are others, which not only have no such tendency, but have the opposite one, of putting into motion the worst properties of the human frame, and of sanctioning them to the misguided conscience. The obviating of unqualified censure of theological argument, is the only object of this remark. It is not the less true, because of the known fact, that a proportion of mankind act in contrariety to what seem the evident consequences of their opinions: some doing worse and others better, than it is natural to look for from the connexion between a cause and its effect. So long as there shall be an interest taken in religion, it will be fruitful of controversy: And accordingly, it is not the suppressing of this, but the moderating of the manner of conducting it, to which the friends of humanity should direct their efforts. **When more is undertaken,**

it seems a symptom of indifference to all religion; which deceives the possessor of it, under the appearance of the love of peace; as, in the other extreme, furious passion carries with it the imposing pretensions of godly zeal. If the author could perceive any thing in what he has written, the tendency of which is to add to the mass of religious animosity and intolerance; he does not foresee any advantage likely to arise from his production, which would prevent his committing of it to the flames. On the contrary, having endeavoured to cherish a different spirit in himself, and to avoid the exciting of it in others; and having executed, to the best of his ability, a work which seemed to him to be dictated by his relation to the church of Christ; and this, not without looking up for guidance to the source from which all good desires, and thoughts, and works proceed; he commits it with confidence, not of the sufficiency of the execution, but of the integrity of the motive, to the implored blessing of God; and to the serious attention and the candid construction of those, who may happen to peruse it.

NOTE.—In the progress of the work, the Author perceived that there were some relative points, entering materially into different branches of his subject; but requiring more discussion, than was consistent with the continuity of argument. This is the reason of their being attached, as appendices to the several parts, or as a General Appendix to the whole.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry should be clearly documented and verified. The text continues to describe the various methods used to collect and analyze data, highlighting the need for consistency and precision in the reporting process.

In the second section, the author details the specific procedures followed during the data collection phase. This includes the use of standardized forms and the implementation of strict quality control measures to ensure the reliability of the information gathered. The text also mentions the challenges encountered and the steps taken to address them.

The third part of the document focuses on the analysis of the collected data. It explains how statistical techniques were applied to identify trends and patterns within the dataset. The author provides a clear interpretation of the results, linking them back to the initial objectives of the study.

Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the key findings and their implications. It suggests areas for further research and provides recommendations based on the insights gained from the study. The overall tone is professional and objective, reflecting the scientific nature of the work.

ERRATA.

- Page 53, 10th line of note for "αυτεξήσιον" read "αυτεξήσια"
- 87, 10th from bot. for "any," read "Another."
- 135, 4th line from top, the word "author's" ought to come in before the first word of the preceding line.
- 156, 17th line from top, before "much" read "something"
- 161, 12th do. before "last" read "are"
- 175, 15th do. for "his" read "this"
- ib. 16th do. for "fuerunt" read "fuerant"
- 190, 6th do. for "rescience" read "prescience"
- 209, 2d. do. for "by" read "on"
- 248, 3d. from bottom after "much" read "alive"
- 249, 2d. do. for "unregenerate" read "regenerate"
- 252, 15th. do. for "attachment" read "abatement"
- 312, 2d. line of 2d. paragraph, for "included" read "include"
- 412, 2d. line of 3d. paragraph, after "time" read "of."



PART I.

A Comparison of the Controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians with the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.

INTRODUCTION.

The Object of the Inquiry—Mr. Locke's Plan of Studying the Epistle—Unity of Design—Overlooked by Dr. Whitby and Dr. Doddridge—The Epistle is argumentative—Respects Nations—And a Covenant State—But not implying exclusive Possession of the Favour of God.

EVER since the writer of this, supposed himself possessed of an understanding of the Epistle to the Romans, it has appeared to him an extraordinary fact, that, in the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, the book should be constantly appealed to, on both sides; and, by the former, more than any other book of Scripture; when, according to the opinion here entertained, the Epistle contains nothing directly to the purpose of the matter at issue between the litigants. To prove this, is the end of the present undertaking.

The first satisfactory knowledge of the Epistle which the author received, was from the perusal of the exposition of Mr. Locke. This eminent person was not ashamed to confess, that, after having been long conversant in the Epistles of St. Paul, he made the discovery, that he had not understood the doctrinal and discursive parts of them. The most prominent expedient adopted by him, for the obtaining of a right knowledge of the Epistle, was the studying of it under

the recollection of the continued series of its general argument. But besides this, so evidently agreeable to the dictates of right reason, he noticed in the composition some properties which have had their effect on his whole commentary; but which had been overlooked or else regarded slightly, by the commentators who preceded him.

Under impressions similar to those of Mr. Locke, but in a form accommodated to the design of the present work, the author of it goes on to notice, as the first property of the Epistle to his purpose, its being not didactick,* but argumentative. Under this remark, however, there are included the first eleven chapters only: so that all beyond them is foreign to the design. The twelfth and thirteenth chapters are a beautiful delineation of Christian morals. The fourteenth is admonition, not without a degree of censure; probably designed to apply to some of those, whose cause St. Paul had been advocating; although not relatively to the same subject. The fifteenth chapter is partly personal; and partly contains miscellaneous remarks, on the subjects which had gone before. The only remaining chapter is devoted to Christian and friendly salutation; not without a glance, in the conclusion, at the subject which had filled the body of the Epistle; and which seems to have still pressed on the Apostle's mind. But

* The author uses the word "didactick" in what he supposes to be the ordinary sense, as the same with preceptive. This notice is given, on finding, that Professor Michaelis uses the same word, as synonymous with "doctrinal:" correctly affirming, in this sense, that the Epistle to the Romans is "didactick or doctrinal."

as to the first eleven chapters, they are entirely argumentative: and if so, when such a man as Mr. Locke pronounces St. Paul to be a coherent, an argumentative, and a pertinent writer, it must be rash, in any other man, to suppose him continually falling into a kind of disputation, which an understanding of an ordinary size would reject. For instance, when he quotes a passage from the Old Testament; to imagine that he makes a use of it, quite foreign to its sense in the place from which it comes; or to suppose that he reasons from any matter, as a dictate of common sense and not itself requiring proof, while yet the truth of it is more doubtful than the position which it is brought to prove; is not to impute to him a conduct to be looked for, from such a reasoner. And especially, it should be considered, that he was writing to an infant Church, consisting of two descriptions of persons, neither of whom he had seen; and further, that one division of them were far from viewing what might come from him with a partial eye; while yet these were the very people, whose prejudices were to be opposed; who would therefore not be likely to overlook any part of the argument, which might be untenable. Under these circumstances, would St. Paul—would any of the Apostles—would any man of a common share of reason, sustain a disputed truth, by a medium of proof more likely to be contradicted, than that which was to be established by it? We may presume, that they would not.*

* Mr. Locke considered the subject and the design of this Epistle, as much the same with that to the Galatians. But Dr. Taylor—the learned and ingenious Dissenting Minister of that name of Norwich—conceives of the striking difference, that the former was

Next, it is to be remarked concerning this argumentative Epistle—the view being still confined to the first eleven chapters—that there is a unity of design in the argument of it; the Apostle labouring to prove, from the Jewish economy, that the Gentiles were to be partakers with the Jews of the benefits of the Christian covenant, without submitting to the ordinances of the Levitical law.*

opposed to Judaism entire, and the latter, to an intermixture of it with Christianity. It is a matter of delicacy, to decide between two such men. But as the author of this work finds it necessary to his design, he declares his opinion in favour of Mr. Locke; there being understood, however, this difference in the Epistles; which would doubtless have been allowed by Mr. Locke; that in the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle advocated the liberty of the Gentile Christians; whereas, in the Epistle to the Galatians, he censured the same description of people, for being seduced from that liberty, into legal bondage. It must also be acknowledged, that unbelieving Jews are especially the subjects of discourse, in the second and part of the third chapters; and afterwards, in the ninth, tenth and eleventh; yet still, as falling in with the principal design, in favour of the Gentile converts and against the believing Jews. It does not appear, on what ground the unbelieving Jews can be supposed to have interested themselves in the question, concerning the terms of Christian communion, whether it should be accompanied by subjection to the institutions of the Law; or for what purpose the Apostle should to them reason from the extent of the consequences of Adam's sin, to a similar extent of the benefits of the death of Christ; when, in regard to the latter, they had no belief of any benefits resulting from it. It seems alike foreign to the conviction of the same description of persons, that there should be a reasoning from the justification of Abraham by faith, before the giving of the Law, to establish the like justification, without the deeds of the Law, under the Gospel.

* The Dr. Taylor, mentioned in the preceding note, makes an allusion to this effect, in favour of the property of the Epistle here

This unity of design, if conspicuous on an attentive examination of the Epistle, must be a characteristic of it, to be kept in view in the explanation of every part of its contents. For that so close a reasoner as St. Paul, in a composition in which he is confessed the most perseveringly to regard the purpose of his writing, and having before him a controversy known to have existed at the time, should run into speculations,—concerning which there is not the least historick evidence, that they then gave occasion to difference of religious sentiment among Christians,—must be seen, on the first view of the subject, to be altogether improbable. Under such circumstances as those stated, there may, indeed, be incidentally introduced truths, not bearing directly on the point at issue; yet having relation to one or another medium of proof, brought in by the writer for the establishing of it. But authorities, originating in this manner, are an unsure foundation, on which to erect a complicated theory; because the writer, contemplating them in the single point of view in which they relate to his design, cannot be expected to express himself concerning them as perspicuously, as if they were professedly the subjects of his disquisition. But if, to the

stated. He supposes a person to have left him an estate by will; and that some other person disputes the donation; alleging an entail, and that he is heir at law. The legatee has occasion for an advocate, to disprove this claim. St. Paul, says Dr. Taylor, is that advocate.

If, as is here believed, the preceding comparison be correct; how erroneous might be any interpretation of the will, which should rest on passages in the pleadings, not taken in immediate connexion with the points to which the pleader had applied them, particularly the entail!

passages thus incidentally introduced, there be given interpretations, making them quite foreign to the purpose of the writer, there needs not be any better proof—still keeping in view that the writer is St. Paul—of the incorrectness of such interpretations.

That there is in the Epistle the one design here affirmed, and that it is carried on without reference to other matters, any further than as they contributed to it, must depend for proof on such internal evidence, as, it is hoped, will appear in the investigation that is to follow. There may be propriety, however, in stating in this place, such evidence as is obvious on the most cursory reading of the Epistle.

That such is the subject, and that such is the one design under which it is conducted, is continually confirmed by the several parts of the composition; the subjects of which, even when apparently wide of the main subject, are not dismissed without an application to it. For every reader may observe, that it is not in this Epistle of St. Paul, as in the Epistles of some of his fellow-Apostles, for instance, that of St. James, in which the writer, having sundry subjects intended by him to be the groundwork of instruction, passes from one to another, without aiming at a connexion. The same may be said of some of the Epistles of St. Paul himself; for instance, the first Epistle to the Corinthians; in which, however closely he applies to each subject, while it is immediately before him, yet he passes from one subject to another, without any notice of the transition. But in the Epistle to the Romans, from the time that the subject of Gentile communion is introduced, in the sixteenth verse of the first chap-

ter, it is again and again brought up; and not afterwards lost sight of, until the end of the eleventh: nor even altogether then; for there is a short retrospect to it in the twelfth, and again in the fifteenth. What greatly adds to the weight of the present consideration, is the circumstance, that the one design supposed, is the determination of a known difficulty of the day; in regard to the terms on which Gentile converts were to be admitted to Christian communion. They who, from Judaism, had embraced the Gospel, contended stiffly, that it was incumbent on the others to conform to the institutions of the law of Moses; to which they challenged perpetuity. Since then the composition is in a controversial form, why should it not be thought confined to the only known controversy, which shows its head in the course of the Apostle's argument?

Of the many commentators who do not support this unity of design, it is here conceived, that the circumstance has an unfavourable effect on their interpretations, however excellent they may have been in other respects. There shall be named two only; one of them Dr. Whitby, reputed an Arminian; the other of them Dr. Doddridge, a Calvinist, although not in the extreme. Dr. Whitby states two great doctrines, as within the contemplation of the Apostle; one of them, that of justification by faith alone; and the other, the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles. Now, although the former is largely treated of, as may be said of some other subjects; yet, there seems an error in understanding any of them to be treated of in any other point of view, than as aiding to the second point in the state-

ment of Dr. Whitby. And had that learned man considered this as the one point, kept in view always in the Apostle's argument, and claimed the other points as tributary to it, the circumstance would probably have added to the usefulness of his judicious commentary.

Dr. Doddridge, who is here named with respect, states, as the leading subject of the Apostle, the excellency of the Gospel; which he represents as established by five prominent arguments. That the Epistle, immediately after the introductory salutation and expressions of regard, makes the declaration—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ;" and that this is a modest way of glorying in it; is very evident. And further, that not only the general design of the Epistle, but the tendency of each distinct part contributes to the asserted use, may be amply conceded. But the opinion, that the Apostle sat down to indite, under the view of sustaining the sentiment, as the leading one of his intended composition, represents it not only as containing less of argument than of digression; but as presuming a controversy not existing. For surely, the Judaizing Christians, whatever disturbance they had occasioned to their less scrupulous brethren of the Gentiles, would not have admitted the imputation, that they were arraigning the excellency of the Gospel; acknowledged alike by the one party and by the other. Dr. Whitby elevates a subordinate design, to a rank that makes it co-ordinate with the principal: while Dr. Doddridge not only depresses the principal design from its proper station, and puts another in its stead; but does not even include the former among the five rea-

sons in his preface, by which the latter is supported: allowing it no further consequence, than that of a posterior discussion in the last three chapters, which have a relation to this, or to any other of the subjects within our view.

The difference between the excellency of the Gospel, contemplated in the Epistle, and the same subject, as assumed by Dr. Doddridge, may be illustrated thus. Let it be supposed, that a man were to propose to write a book, the subject of which were to be the excellency of the common law of England. This would bring before our minds a range of very great extent. But if there were added to the proposal words to this effect—As relative to the equality which it establishes between the nobleman and the commoner, and between the rich man and the poor, in every question involving security of person and of property—there would be a limitation of the subject, which must be expected to have great effect on the disquisitions of the proposer. Now it is here conceived, that just such an effect should be produced, not only by evidence pervading the Epistle, of the limited design asserted; but by an intimation of it in the beginning; when the Apostle, after glorying in the Gospel as “the power of God unto salvation,” immediately adds—“To the Jew first and also to the Gentile.” He was, indeed, about to prove the excellency of the Gospel; but it was with an especial relation to the point stated.

It is next to be remarked, concerning this argumentative composition; that the one subject of the argument, already described as affecting Jews and Gentiles, is intended of them in their collective, and not in

their individual capacities. For although a community is composed of individuals, yet it is evident, that there may be predicated a matter of the former, which does not apply to every of the latter. What shows, in a very strong point of view, this characteristick of national designation, is, that the Calvinistick writers generally, who disregard it until they reach the eleventh chapter, are obliged to admit it there; although applying it to the very expressions, to which they had denied it in the preceding chapters. The distinction here sustained, may be made the more clear by the following comparison. It has been affirmed, of the French writers and of the English, that the former are the most distinguished by sprightliness, and the latter by solidity of thought. Now, it might be expected of any person, who should engage to demonstrate this characteristick difference by writing or by discourse, that he would occasionally speak of the Frenchman and of the Englishman, as if individually designated; and again make use of general terms, including, literally and strictly taken, all French men and all Englishmen in the position, although nothing would be further from his intention. As far from the Apostle's intention is a similar universality, when he introduces the Jew on one hand, and the Gentile on the other; and when he seems to affirm of all Jews and of all Gentiles, what the connexion shows to be true of each description of persons, no further than collectively and nationally.

Another property of the Epistle, in relation to the collective bodies of men comprehended under the argument of it, is its speaking of their respective privileges, as belonging to a state of covenant with God in

this world; and not to a state of reward and punishment hereafter. No doubt, the kingdom of God on earth being instituted with a view to a better kingdom in the heavens, it is natural to expect of a writer, especially of one under the influence of inspiration, that, in unfolding what belongs to the former, he should have his heart warmed and his thoughts elevated, by the contemplating of the more transcendent glories of the latter. Accordingly, we find such an effect of the foretaste of heaven, in this Epistle of St. Paul. Still the subjects, although kindred, are not the same: and therefore the Apostle never loses sight of his proper subject; which is the Messiah's spiritual reign on earth, over a people calling on and called by his name. It may not only be remarked under this head, as under the preceding, that the Calvinistick writers, generally, are sure to adopt, in the eleventh chapter, what they had rejected in the chapters preceding; but of Dr. Doddridge in particular, that although he had rejected the other allied principle of national designation, as supported by Mr. Locke; yet, so early as in his interpretation, in the ninth chapter, of the expressions applied by Calvinists to the conditions in another life of the persons mentioned—such is the candour of the man—he gives some of them the construction here contended for; and avoids, in regard to others, the awful emphasis which his system seems to call for.

The distinction here affirmed, may be elucidated in the following manner. If we were asserting the common right of a coheir, with another coheir, to an interest in a large estate; and if both of them were minors, it would be natural, to have some reference in our

discourse to the great value of the possession; and to the honours and enjoyments hereafter to be attached to it, in the tenure of him for whom we claim. And yet there could be no absolute certainty, that, if there should be an acknowledgment of his right, he would live to enter on the inheritance. In like manner, there may be contemplated a connexion between the covenant state on earth, and the blessedness of heaven, to which it is introductory; although it may happen of any present subject of the former, that he shall not reach the latter.

The last particular of the Epistle to be stated, is the implication in it, of a distinction between the state of covenant with God, affirmed under the preceding head; and the exclusive possession of the divine favour, in reference to another life, while that covenant continued; a distinction which will of course apply, under the Christian economy also: that is, neither in the one nor in the other, is salvation limited to a state of visible covenant. As the passages of the Epistle, on the ground of which the affirmation is here made, will not come under review in the comparison that is to follow, there may be a propriety in offering them in this place.

There are the first two verses of the third chapter, from which the position to be now maintained is an obvious inference. The Apostle had been asserting the admission of the Gentiles within the pale of the Gospel, on equal terms with the Jews. These are supposed to object—"What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there in circumcision?" Had there been no possibility of salvation, during the existence of the Jewish economy, except to those who were the sub-

jects of it, this would have been their pre-eminent advantage; although to be enjoyed henceforward by the Gentiles also. But the answer of the Apostle rests on a very different foundation—"Much," says he, "every way; chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." Great had been the benefit to them of the deposite here mentioned, as a manifestation of the divine perfections; as a directory of life; and as figurative, in a variety of ways, of a promised seed, in which all mankind were interested. But had the Apostle conceived of the legal covenant, as the only dispensation of providence admitting of salvation, there would seem an inconsistency, in the assigning of so limited a sphere, to the advantage of having been exclusively in the possession of it.

Another passage, is in the fourth and fifth verses of the ninth chapter; in which the past pre-eminence of the Jews is more amplified, thus—"Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the Fathers; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, God blessed for ever; Amen." All this might have been more briefly and pointedly given in the remark, that the Jews only had been the proper subjects of salvation, were it applicable. But no: they had been the chosen people of God, for the accomplishing of a purpose, which runs through the whole series of his dispensations to mankind, from the creation to the consummation of all things. They and all others will be responsible for an improvement of whatever light has been afforded them.

But the passage in the Epistle speaking the most strongly to the point, is in the second chapter, from the eighth verse to the sixteenth. The Apostle, having denounced the threatening of “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile,” adds—“But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” There is no plausible way of evading the application of this, except by supposing, that the Apostle speaks of the converted Gentiles. But this is inconsistent with the evident tenour of the passage, taken in connexion with what went before; in which it had been said of the divine Being—“Who will render to every man according to his deeds.” There may, indeed, be taken another course; the supposing that the Apostle speaks of a perfect obedience, not paid by any: but this would be to represent him as speaking to no purpose. By well-doing, he must have meant a good life and conversation, according to the ideas annexed by common use, to the expression. He goes on—“For there is no respect of persons with God:” that is, say some, no respect to any man, on account of his riches, or of his station, or of any other of the advantages of life; intimating, that the proposition is intended of these subjects only. But this does not consist with the sense, which respects morality of action; and that of men under different dispensations of providence. The words must have the same meaning here, as when used by St. Peter, in the tenth chapter of the Acts; where this Apostle, after saying—“God is no respecter of persons,” adds—“for in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.”

That the same is the sentiment in the place before us, is evident in what follows—“For as many as have sinned without Law shall also perish without Law; and as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law.” There is no reason, why there should be different rules of judgment in the different cases; unless on a principle, which shall establish different standards of duties respectively required. The thread of the discourse is continued thus—“For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.” “The doers of the Law;” meaning in a sense, in which alone such a description of persons could have been introduced; that is, as applying to every upright and religious person under the Law; and not doers in the sense of sinless perfection; there having been no such persons. In what follows, a question may arise, whether the words by “nature”* should be attached to the second clause of the sentence, as in the present translation, or to the word “Gentiles” in the first clause; which will make it descriptive of the converted Gentiles. But this is going very far back, for a verbal connexion; besides that the purpose for which it is done is inconsistent with the Apostle’s design, demonstrated throughout the passage. It is therefore here concluded, that the passage should be agreeably to the translation—“When the Gentiles who have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law”—by nature, not as distinguished from grace, but as descriptive of their condition, without the benefit of revelation;”† “these, having not the Law,” that is,

* *φύσει.*

† The expression “by nature” is used in this sense in Gal. ii. 15.

the Mosaick, “are a Law unto themselves:” not that it is less the Law of God than the other, although described as a part of themselves, in respect to its being an inward and not an outward Law: “Which show the work of the Law written in their hearts;” their conformity to it being the result of their judgment and the object of their desire: “Their conscience also bearing witness,” on a comparison of their actions with that inward Law; “and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another,” by mutual reasonings on the innocency or the guilt of their conduct. The passage concludes thus—“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel:” these words being connected with the twelfth verse; for the intermediate verses are a parenthesis; which is so evident, as to permit no colour to the absurd sense, imagined by some, that, in the great day, the Gospel will be the rule of judgment indiscriminately laid on all.

It should be remarked concerning this passage, for the sake of the effect of the remark on what will hereafter be observed on the passages before and following, that, whereas these are descriptive of national depravity of manners, the intermediate passage speaks of individual character and conduct. So that while heathen communities exhibited evidences of all the enormous crimes displayed in the first chapter; and while the Jewish community was chargeable with consenting to and imitating the heathen practices, which their law condemned, there were, both among the heathen and among the Jews, individual characters free from the prevalent contagion; and not labouring under the judg-

ment which the justice of God had pronounced “against every soul of man that doeth evil.”*

Of the five particulars included in this introduction, the first four are peculiarly attached to the Epistle, which is to be a subject of this comparison; and must depend for proof, on the Epistle only. But the last particular, if correct, may be expected to appear a distinguishing property of scripture generally: And this, it is here conceived, might be easily proved, if it were within the limits of the design, to travel beyond the bounds of the Epistle.

* The criticism noticed, of connecting the words “by nature,” with the word “Gentiles,” was learned by the author from a tract “on the law of nature,” in the collection called “The Scholar armed.” When he first read it in that ingenious discourse, he thought he perceived some probability in the point intended to be established, that the passage refers to the Gentile Christians. But, on consideration, he judges such an opinion utterly inconsistent with the ground taken by the Apostle; and accordingly follows the sense which has been usual.

It is a pleasure to the writer of this, to remark, that Dr. Doddridge’s interpretation of the whole passage harmonizes with the sense which has been here given. He does not, indeed, unequivocally affirm, that there are virtuous heathen, who will be approved of in the day of final judgment: but what he says seems manifestly to point to that result. It is true, that, when he comes to his improvement, he weakens, in some measure, the force of his interpretation, by saying as follows—“Nor are we concerned to know, how the heathen will fare in it (the judgment.) Let it suffice us, that if they are condemned, they will be righteously condemned; not for remaining ignorant of the Gospel they never had an opportunity of hearing, but for violating those precepts of the Divine Law, which were inscribed on their consciences.” Even under this hypothetical proposition, it is here thought, there may be discerned, in the writer’s mind, more than he held it prudent to declare.

For the same reason of not wishing to take a wider range of disquisition than the design requires, the author proposes, under every point of the contemplated controversy, to fix the attention on the leading matter put to issue between the contending parties; bringing in, however, under the third and fourth points, certain subjects which they involve; although not explicitly declared in the points, as usually stated. The subjects here in view, appear to be intimately connected with large portions of the Epistle.

Perhaps it may be expected of him to deliver, under each point, his own opinion of the sense of scripture, in relation to that department of the controversy. But he is desirous of maintaining, throughout the comparison, the manner which would become a man having no bias, either to Calvinism, or to Arminianism; nor yet, any opinion of his own, on the subject generally; or who, on the other hand, might belong to either of the two parties; yet conceive of his own cause, that it would be injured, as indeed every good cause must, by arguments which do not apply. This line of conduct, however, dictates the requesting of the reader, that he will not consider the author as objecting, or as indifferent to any truth of Christianity, merely on the ground, that he does not find it directly taught in the Epistle.

1. OF PREDESTINATION.

The Question stated—Sense of Chapter 8 verse 29, to end of chapter 9—Of chapter 10 and 11—Connexion of the whole with chapter 12, verse 1.

THERE is no need to say much, in statement of the hinge on which the controversy turns, in relation to this first point of it. The disputants consent in the acknowledging of a predestinating of some to life, while all others are passed over, say some Calvinists; but, say other Calvinists, the reprobation of those not ordained to life is also directly an object of the decree. The difference between both these descriptions of Calvinists and the Arminians consists in this; that the latter found the decree of God in favour of the elect, on his foreknowledge of their faith and obedience; while the former make it independent on that circumstance. There does not appear any thing immediately applicable, until we reach the 29th and 30th verses of the 8th chapter, in which we read as follows: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

Nothing will be here said concerning the meaning of the word “called,” because it will come more properly in another place. When we take up the words, “foreknow,” and “predestinate,” they seem to give a great advantage to the Arminians, in relation to the

distinction on which their whole doctrine of predestination rests. And indeed, if the Apostle could be properly considered as speaking principally of individual character, and principally in relation to another life, the authority would seem decisive.* But, according to the principle of interpretation here supported, nothing was further from his thoughts. The spirit of the sentiment seems to be, that, in contrariety to the opinion of there being no admission to a state of covenant with God, except agreeably to the institutions of the law, he had, before the giving of the law, declared his purpose of extending the covenant to the Gentiles; as had

* Two grounds are taken, in order to avoid the effect of there being given the first place to foreknowledge, and the second to predestination, in an enumeration of the divine acts according to the intended order. It is remarked, first, that the expression is simply, "whom he did foreknow," without any mention of their faith and their obedience; and secondly, that the Greek word, "προεγνω" often signifies foreknowing with affection; which is proved by other passages of scripture. Still, on the plan of interpretation adopted in common by the parties, the context seems to give the advantage greatly to the Arminians. For who are the persons spoken of? The answer is, from verse 28—They who love God, and for whose good all things work together. These are they whom God foreknew—whom he foreknew (may the Arminians say) with an affection which occasioned a predestination of them to eternal life, founded on the character of them which had gone before. The passage, here noticed, has been called by Calvinists a golden chain; the links of which are so connected, that he who has hold of one is secure of all; and he who is loose from one, is equally so from the rest. Under this view of the passage, it would seem, that the station of foreknowledge in the chain is favourable to the Arminian scheme. Still, this is said under the persuasion, that there is no reference in the place to the salvation of individuals, either predestinated or foreknown.

been shown in a preceding part of the Epistle: that accordingly, there was a foreknowledge and a predestination of Gentile converts, disengaged from rituals, which had not been ordained, until after the declaration of the said purpose and decree; that not only so, there had been a call given by the ministry of the word; and a compliance with the call, on the part of the then Gentile professors; and that, in addition still—for the Apostle should be considered as now going on, from the matter in dispute, to an undisputed fact—they who were called had been justified, or authoritatively declared righteous in the sight of God; and glorified, by a portion of the Spirit of Glory's resting on them; these two particulars having been demonstrated, by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The difference between justification and glorification, as demonstrated, each of them by miracle, seems to be, that the former relates to the acceptance of persons; and the latter, to the qualifying of some of them to work miracles themselves. Such use of the word makes the passage analogous to many other places of scripture; one of which is, where it is said:* “How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?”—The Apostle could not have intended the glory hereafter, because he spoke of the past; and it is difficult to devise any meaning, besides that here ascribed to the expression.

The reference supposed gives evident pertinency to the inference, that the Gentiles, as such, were owned to be a people admissible to the covenant: And the passage, placed in this point of view, is analogous to St. Peter's use of the same argument, in the 8th verse of

* 2 Cor. iii. 8.

the 15th chapter of the Acts; where he says—“ God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us.” And what he understood, by giving them the Holy Ghost, is evident in the transaction with Cornelius, recorded in the 10th chapter of the same book.

It must be acknowledged, that we have no such formal record of the pouring out of miraculous gifts,* on the Roman Church, as in the case of certain disciples at Ephesus, or as in that here referred to, of Cornelius and his assembled friends. But, the same may be said concerning the churches of Galatia : And yet St. Paul manifestly refers to such an effusion on them, where he says:† “ He, therefore, that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?” That there had been, at the early period when the Apostle wrote to the converts in the capital of the empire, the same grace bestowed on them, is not only in itself highly probable, but seems referred to in several places of the Epistle. The first, worthy of notice, is in the 5th verse of the 5th chapter; where it is said—“ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” —The original word‡ being expressive, elsewhere, of the pouring out of the§ extraordinary gifts, it is a circumstance, which favours the opinion of a reference to the subject here. The Apostle, indeed, denotes a manifestation to the hearts of the believers ; and the having of a view to this is also necessary, to connect the verse with the “ hope” mentioned in the context, which “ maketh not asha-

* *Χαρίσματα.* † Chap. iii. 5. ‡ *εκχεχυται.* § *Χαρίσματα.*

med.” But what could have been more proper, than that such an outward manifestation to the senses should be considered as speaking powerfully to the affections, in a declaration of the love of God, to a people so highly favoured?*

In the 8th chapter, there are sundry expressions tending to the same point. There shall be mentioned only one of them. It is: “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”† It is not the same with a witnessing “to our spirit;” as some delight to consider it, because of the support which it then seems to give to a favourite fancy; but “with our spirit.” There are therefore two witnesses; one inward, which can be no other than the consciousness of a holy conformity to the divine will; and the other outward, which must have been the sensible effusion of the Holy Ghost, who is still a witness at the present day, in the testimony of the word, and in no other way.

The matter is again implied in the 6th verse of the 12th chapter—“Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” Commentators consider this, as significative of extraordinary endowments; although an application of the

* Dr. Whitby and some other commentators consider a sense of the love of God, as that which the Apostle affirms to be shed abroad in the heart. But this is here thought to detract from the weight of a sentiment otherwise very forcible; and besides, to make this one of the many places, in which he is represented as reasoning from insufficient principles. Any consciousness, existing in the minds of believing Gentiles, could be no evidence to believing Jews, of a point denied by them.

† Verse 16.

same to ordinary edification is the principal subject of the lesson given. The word "gifts," throughout the writings of St. Paul, is descriptive of what comes from the miraculous interposition of the Holy Ghost ; standing thus distinguished from "the fruits of the Spirit ;" which are the gracious endowments of the mind, or its moral habits. And there is probably another reference to the same effusion, in the 13th verse of the 15th chapter, where it is said--"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." For although "hope" is one of "the fruits of the Spirit," agreeably to the distinction already taken ; yet it is not probable, that the Apostle would have made such an allusion to its source, if the Romans could have said at this period, what had been said by certain men in Ephesus, at a much earlier period—"We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Ghost."

On the ground of these authorities, there is rested the presumption, that there had been a miraculous effusion on some persons in the Roman Church ; that there being among the persons so favoured, some, of the Gentile side of the question, there is inferred the impropriety of considering any as inadmissible to a participation of ordinary privileges, without a condition dispensed with by God himself, in the recipients of his highest gifts ; and that, on this account, the Apostle should be considered as appealing to a past acknowledged fact, instead of expressing his persuasion of what could not be brought to the test of the knowledge of himself, or of those to whom he wrote.

Unless, indeed, we adopt the construction here given, we seem to involve ourselves in a very considerable

difficulty. For if the justification spoken of had been some process in the mind; and if the glorification spoken of were that of heaven; it might be asked—Had the Apostle a knowledge of the hearts of men, that he could positively affirm concerning such things as were the subjects of their respective consciousness? Or had heaven been so opened to his view, as that he could assuredly determine, on every question of an admission to its mansions? Or supposing him thus informed; was he possessed of such evidence, as must be satisfactory to the persons, whose prejudices he was combating? For we should bear in mind, that the Apostle is not addressing those alone, who were ready to receive what came from him, as the dictates of inspiration. Far from it; he was opposing, by argument, the errors of those, who were raising a clamour against his doctrine of a free admission of the Gentiles. And to suppose that he brought against those opponents, arguments more liable to cavil, than the points which they were brought to prove, is inconsistent, not to say with the dignity of the Apostleship, but with his personal character and accomplishments.

Besides; all that follows to the end of the chapter is in agreement with the interpretation given; while it shows no pertinency to any other sense. For the Apostle, strong in the reasonings which had run through several preceding chapters and bringing them to a point, applies them thus: “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”* That is; if he has thus, by a visible interposition of his power, publicly acknowledged us,

* Verse 31.

Gentiles, to be of his people—for the Apostle, in this place, as elsewhere, often speaks of himself as if he were one of those Gentiles, whose Apostle he had been divinely designated—who shall intervene between us and the gracious effects of this dispensation of providence, in our behalf? “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?”* Here the Apostle, transported by his subject, combines it with the beneficent tendency of the Gospel generally. They against whom he wrote did not deny, that Gentiles might be admitted to Christian communion, although they contended, that it should be through the gate of legal ceremony. But, says the Apostle, when God has manifested his impartial goodness, in so signal a display of it, as that of his Son’s dying for Gentile as well as Jew, what wonder is there, that he should bestow on the former, as well the gifts which have been noticed to be already theirs, as any other which have a relation to their Christian calling; and this freely, without their being encumbered with the burthensome entailment of the Levitical law? He goes on—“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?”† Chosen as we have been, under the publick evidence of a divine designation, what mortal shall presume to accuse us, on the account of our not conforming to what they erroneously imagine essential to the profession of his name? “It is God that justifieth:”‡ “Who is he that condemneth?”§ It is the sovereign Judge, who has signified the acceptance of our persons, by tokens evident to sense: who then shall oppose his prerogative by the opposite judicial sentence of our

* Verse 32. † Verse 33. ‡ Verse 33. § Verse 34.

condemnation? “ It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” It would have been in vain to have called the attention to these encouraging truths, had it been still uncertain, whether they were interesting to those whose cause was pleaded. But this being demonstrated by indisputable fact, the foundation of all Christian faith and hope is consistently introduced, as having been by that fact assured to them. The Apostle, becoming still warmer on his subject, passes from those whose arguments drew a line of separation between Christian communion and the condition of uncircumcised professors of the faith, to another description of persons, meaning the common persecutors of them both: And then he enumerates the variety of trials, to which men were at that time exposed, by the profession of Christianity. There is no need to comment on the affecting passage, because, although it will come in properly under another department of the present work, it is not to the purpose in this place, any further than as a foundation of a remark, for the pointing out of what adds as well to the ornament, as to the argument of the passage, that the Apostle seems to insinuate to the Jewish disturbers of the peace of their Gentile brethren, a lesson to be drawn from the courage and the constancy with which they were enabled, by divine grace, to sustain the worst difficulties of the Christian warfare. This was, in itself, no small evidence of their being within the authorized pale of the profession, especially as those difficulties arose from the prejudice here contested, the opinion which the Jews entertained of the perpetual obligation of their law: the persecutions heretofore sustained hav-

ing been brought on, principally, by the instigations of that people, and not, as afterwards, by heathen persecutors.

It would be rash to affirm, that a correct judgment has been expressed in every particular, as to the sense of the preceding passage. But there can hardly be an error in believing, that the Apostle, through the whole, contemplates persons of one description, opposing, censuring, and condemning those of another; that he occupies himself in sustaining the rights of the latter, and that he appeals to some interposition of Heaven, in their behalf. Now, it seems impossible to imagine of whom the former character was designed, unless of the Jewish converts to Christianity; of whom the latter character was designed, but of the Gentile converts; and of what the divine determination of the controversy was affirmed, but of that baptism of the Holy Ghost, which was to give beginning to the Church. If these things were so, the controversy must have been, the terms of the admission of the Gentiles; they must have been contemplated and spoken of collectively, and the whole must have related to a visible fellowship on earth. If we abandon these points, for those of any other theory, there are no documents which can give us information, of one party setting up pretensions to the prejudice of another; or of any dispute, in which either side would have found it determined against them, by St. Paul's teaching of Calvinism, in contrariety to Arminianism; or this, in preference to the other. In short; on any other hypothesis, he would seem to have given his Epistle a controversial form, when it ought rather to have been didactick. But as the former supposes the writer to have taken in matter quite foreign to his

purpose, if he indeed treated of the subjects of modern controversy here in view, we must presume, that it was a plan which could not have been adopted by such a writer as St. Paul.

The whole subject of this work was entered on with awe; on account of the variety of opinion, which has prevailed on it. But there is felt an increased measure of that affection, on passing to the 9th chapter of the Epistle; which has puzzled so many men, much abler than the present writer; and, what is far more to be deplored, has been the occasion of dejection and of despair to many: this, as is here thought, in consequence of interpretations which have no foundation in the passage. It is not the design to notice the various senses, which have been ascribed to the different verses in the chapter. Far from this, there will not be reviewed or reconsidered, to any considerable extent, what the author has heretofore taken the trouble to peruse; of the much greater proportion of which, he judges it better to be ignorant than to be informed.

The interpretation of part of the 8th chapter, makes a clear connexion of it with the 9th; and it is difficult to devise any other interpretation, under which the connecting circumstance shall be seen. For if predestination, in the usual sense of the word, had been treated of in the latter part of the 8th chapter; and were to be resumed and more largely treated of in the 9th; it was foreign to the subject of those passages, to mix it with that of the rejection of the Jews as a nation; since the predestinating act must still be understood to have included individuals from among them, as well as from among the Gentiles. But let the view be confined to

national character and designation; and then, all is pertinent—all is sound argument.

The Apostle begins with a declaration, exciting the expectation of some afflicting truth to be disclosed. For, after professing his own sincerity in this solemn form—"I say the truth in Christ; I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost"*—he adds—"That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart."† The cause of this great heaviness and continual sorrow was confessedly the rejection of the Jews, declared soon afterwards. Here was great cause, it must be confessed; although in the estimation of a mind susceptible of sympathy, nothing in comparison of the more dreadful and extensive reprobation, which it has been thought the object of this very chapter to affirm. Still, all for whom the Apostle feels in this place, are his countrymen, the Jews. The passage, although partly given in the introduction, is here repeated at full length for the connexion: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the Fathers; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."‡ There have been many ways thought of, to soften the harshness of this wish. The tense of the Greek verb δ admits the translation—I could have wished: meaning if it were right to do so. Even with this softening, it seems impossible to suppose, that the Apostle admitted the idea, in relation to

* Verse 1. † Verse 2. ‡ Verses 3 4, 5. § *νηχόμενον*.

the subject of his eternal damnation. But if we apply it, as the whole spirit of the composition warrants, to an alienation from Christian communion; which, it should be remarked, might have consisted with circumstances excusing, in consideration of ignorance of the subject and want of opportunity of benefiting by it; under such a construction, the Apostle's saying that he could have wished this, if it were lawful, is within the reach of an emotion, descriptive of a mind not vehement to excess, yet vehement as that of St. Paul was; evidences of which are found in various parts of what he has written.

Of the passage the last recited, it ought to be noticed, that it speaks of an adoption, and of covenants, contemplated as comprehensive of a whole nation: so that there may be an adoption, and there may be a covenant state, under which the temper and the life of the individual may be alien from the dispensation.

But even taking the privileges enumerated in the 4th and 5th verses, according to the construction given, it might occur to the advocate of Judaism, that, on the ground of the foregoing argument, the promises of God had now failed. But not so, says the Apostle—for this must be the meaning of the three verses following—since the promise is to have a more liberal construction, than to be confined to descent by natural generation. For if, as he goes on to show, it be clear concerning certain branches deriving their pedigree from the stock to which the promise had been made, that they were cut off from all interest in it, at a very early period; it may the easier be believed, that, agreeably to some intimation given in the promise itself, and to more ex-

press prophecies kept in reserve by the Apostle, to be produced in their proper places of this epistle; even persons, not claiming by descent, may attain to an interest in the promise.

Here, it is worth the while of every reader to make a pause, and seriously to ask the question, whether, consistently with the connexion, there can be any thing to follow in regard to Ishmael and Esau, that can have respect to them personally, rather than to their posterities; or to the one or the other, as to what is to happen to them in a future life? To the writer of this, there seems nothing more unconnected with the past reasoning of the Apostle, than any matter relative to everlasting salvation under the Gospel. The question is of the description of persons, capable of being within its bounds.

As the connexion points out this distinction, so it is further conspicuous in the terms in which the cases are brought before us, when compared with their relative places in the Old Testament. For whereas it is stated, that there had been given to Abraham “the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son;”* the same promised son is declared, by the Apostle, to have been preferred to Ishmael, another son of Abraham—preferred to him, says the Calvinistick system, as an heir of immortality. Now let it be remembered, that the Apostle is framing his argument, to the apprehension of persons acquainted with the Old Testament and believing in its divine authority; and further, that he bestows no pains to prove to them, that such was the sense of the record there found, concerning the setting aside of Ishmael.

* Verse 9.

Was it then so clear to every reader of the Pentateuch, or is there any evidence of such a discovery made by Jews, either of ancient or of modern times, that Ishmael is described in their sacred books, as having been cursed to all eternity? Let the narrative be examined; and let any trace of such an infliction, if found there, be produced. Abraham prefers the modest suit to God—"Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" God answers, that, although Abraham should have another and more favoured son, yet, in regard to Ishmael, it should be as had been desired. Oh faithful Abraham! little didst thou imagine, when thou receivedst this promise, from him who knew thou wouldst "command thy children after thee," that, in the discrimination here made between Ishmael and his brother, there was contained the sentence of the eternal condemnation of the former. And little would it have consoled thee, under such an understanding of the allotment made to him, to have heard it added, that he should "beget twelve princes and become a great nation!"*

* It is probably owing to the evident designation of the posterity of Ishmael in Genesis, that there has been invented by some, as applicable to the passage in the Epistle, the distinction of a typical rejection, which was that of Ishmael and his posterity from an inheritance in Canaan; and an antitypical, which was of Ishmael himself from the possibility of salvation. Whatever ground there might have been for this, had individual election and reprobation been the subject of the Apostle, the national complexion of his argument does away all pretence for it. There has been pressed in to the service of the distinction stated, the allegory drawn by the Apostle, in the latter part of the 4th chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. But that allegory runs a comparison between Sarah and Hagar, as representative, not either of individuals or of

From the case of Isaac and Ishmael, let us go to that of Jacob and Esau; concerning whom, “being not yet 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;”* and “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,”† or esteemed him less.‡ That the elder’s serving of the younger had reference to the present life only, must be evident on the face of the words. And that the hatred extended no further, is equally evident from the interpretation given to the word by the prophet Malachi; where he introduces the Most High speaking thus—“I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau; and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.”§ And to show further, how foreign this is from the use made of it by some, it refers to the fortunes, not of the persons, but of their posterities. For when did Esau serve his brother Jacob?

nations, but of two covenants, the legal and the evangelical. Even what is said of Ishmael—(Gen. xvi. 12) “He will be a wild man, his hand will be against every man and every man’s hand against him,” has been brought in proof of the position of his reprobation. But does not the history of all succeeding ages harmonize with the idea, that this must have been designed to be descriptive of the national character of his descendants? And is not the accomplishment of what was predicted of them continually appealed to by Christians, as a prominent proof of the spirit of prophecy in the scriptures?

* Verses 11, 12. † Verse 13.

‡ That the word “hate” may be understood in this lax sense, may be gathered from St. Matt. vi. 24, and from St. Luke xiv. 26; besides many other places, as well in the Old Testament, as in the New. § i. 2, 3.

Or what evidence is there, of the wasting of the heritage of the former, in his own day? Every thing recorded of the brothers has a contrary appearance; especially their interview described in the 33d chapter of Genesis, and the account given in the 36th chapter, of the splendour of Esau's progeny, just before the mention of the incidents in the family of Jacob, which ended in his retreat to Egypt, where he lived and died dependent. The construction thus given to the 12th verse of the 9th chapter of the epistle, is much confirmed by a reference to the 23d verse of the 25th chapter of Genesis, which the Apostle could never have intended to misquote, or to bend to a sense wide of the true one, but in which, what is said to Rebecca is expressly of "two nations and two manner of people," who were in her womb.*

If we put out of view the national complexion of the composition here affirmed of it, what the Apostle says is much in favour of the Calvinistick, and in contrariety to the Arminian scheme. For he grounds the fortunes of the brothers, not on their faith and their works foreseen, but on sovereign will. The advocates of the latter system seem to have no way of getting over the difficulty, but by the help of the truth here sustained, that individual character and everlasting life are not the direct object of the argument. Indeed, if they be,

* As in the case of the other two brothers, so, in the case of these, it has been contended, that, although there is a reference to their respective descendants, yet, that being the stocks of their families, they were parts of them and included in what is affirmed; and further, that the rejection of the family of Esau was typical of reprobation. And this is said on the presumption, so contrary to fact, that individual and not national allotment was the professed subject of the Apostle.

the authority of this passage extends further than is consistent with the Calvinistick doctrine, and thus proves too much. For, not being willing to admit, that the Divine Being will sentence an innocent person to perdition, the doctrine represents sin as no part of the decree, although a permitted mean for the accomplishing of the end of it. But in the case of Esau, the decree is unconnected with evil works, not only as foreknown, but as the medium, thought essential for the vindication of divine justice.*

The Apostle, however, is not done with the case of Jacob and Esau: for with the view to a prejudice which he supposed possible, he asks—"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with

* Philip á Limborch, who is in general a judicious commentator, has taken pains, to clear this passage from the Calvinistick application of it, in reference to a future life. But to effect this, he is obliged to give a strained interpretation, wide of the Apostle's meaning. For he contends that the disregard of works spoken of in the 11th verse, is merely to show, that, in respect to the election and the calling of any man into the Christian Church, his being within or without the Jewish economy was of no account. Limborch may be considered as a standard commentator of the remonstrant party in the Netherlands. How much must his and their cause have suffered from the having considered this subject as at all connected with the reasonings of the Apostle!

The same respectable writer freely acknowledges, that the choice of Isaac and Jacob was a type of the election of the just; and the rejection of Ishmael and Esau, a type of the reprobation of the wicked. He contends, however, with apparent propriety, that their having been respective types of these subjects does not prove, that they were examples of them. But why admit that they were types? They are only given as instances of the sovereignty of God, in the bestowing of favours incident to the present life.

God?" answering his own question thus—"God forbid!"* It is here evident, that he so far treats the question with respect, as to imply, that the mind of man may lawfully inquire, concerning a mode of proceeding ascribed to God, whether it be consistent with the righteousness which must be an unalienable attribute of his nature. There are, indeed, many places in Scripture, in which the divine Being condescends to reason with his creatures, concerning the equity of his dealings and of his commands. The Calvinistick scheme itself, as already noticed, does not hesitate to judge, that God cannot justly damn his creatures, without previous sin. It must, then, be a mistake to suppose, that the Apostle treats it as an act of arrogancy to compare an asserted effect of the sovereignty of God, with an obvious inference from his justice. No; it is contended, that there is no interference of the attributes. God may be more favourable to one than to another, and yet just to all. But if the subject had respected everlasting salvation, the result would not have been so conspicuous, as is supposed in the Apostle's appeal to unprejudiced reason, for the truth of it.†

* Verse 14.

† Dr. Doddridge is so impartial as to renounce, explicitly, the application of this passage to the eternal states of Jacob and Esau.

There seems to the writer of this, but one exception to the liberality, with which Dr. Doddridge avoided the making of the 9th chapter to the Romans at all tributary to the creed of his publick profession. Throughout the whole of what he says before the 22d, 23d and 24th verses, he not only makes no application of the subject to a future state, but discharges from any such application the case of Esau expressly, in a note; and impliedly the case of Pharaoh, in the interpretation. But in regard to the said three

Nothing inconsistent with these sentiments is to be drawn from the 15th verse of the chapter, where the Almighty is quoted, saying, in Exod. ch. xxxiii. verse 19—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." As the English word "mercy" is so much used in connexion with the forgiveness of sin, it is probable, that even this circumstance may have some-

verses, there is a note and there are some expressions in the improvement, which seem to construe them as of the conditions of individuals. What makes this the more remarkable, he resumes, under the next verse, the idea of national designation; and continues it to the end of the chapter. This respectable writer, in commenting on the three verses, pleases himself with the thought, as was natural for a man of his benevolent disposition, that there was a difference between the turn of the expression, "fitted for destruction," and that of the other—"which he had afore prepared for glory." He seems to have considered this difference, as harmonizing with the distinction between the direct act of predestination, with the effectual grace annexed to it, and the passing by: under which term, there is supposed to be avoided a direct act of reprobation. The preparing of the righteous is ascribed to God; and the fitting of the wicked, is represented as of themselves. But it is here thought, that there is no foundation for the criticism. The marginal reading for "fitted" gives the choice of "made up;" which presumes the act of God. And this is the more strict sense of "*κατηρτισμενα*." There seems no way of drawing the words from their subserviency to the belief of a direct act of reprobation, but by considering them designed, like all the rest of the chapters, of national character and condition.

It is the less to be wondered at, that the Calvinistick Dr. Doddridge should fall off, in a particular instance, from an adherence to the national and temporal properties of the epistle, when even the Arminian Limborch is found occasionally mixing them with remarks individually applying.

times contributed to an undesirable association of ideas, in a reader's mind. But the Hebrew words, in Genesis, and the Greek words, in the epistle, descriptive of certain affections in the divine mind, express grace—pity—kindness, without any especial connexion with pardon. And this makes the declaration the more harmonize with the sentiment here sustained, of a peculiar designation of favour, relatively to the present life. The comment of the Apostle on the whole is—“So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”* This still refers to the relative circumstances of the brothers, particularly, to the elder's running in quest of the venison; and his eagerly coveting of the blessing, though in vain.

Next, is the case of Pharaoh, concerning whom it is said, by the Sovereign of the whole earth—“Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee; and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”† To make it of any use to the Calvinistick scheme, it should have been—“For this purpose I have brought thee into being.” But no; Pharaoh may be supposed to have been found with a mind regardless of the power of God, before he was raised up, for the end stated. Neither is the expression, “raised thee up,” exactly expressive of the words in Genesis; which signify, agreeably to the translation in the margin, “made thee stand up.”‡ Under this construction, which is supported by the translation of the Septuagint, the sentiment is to this effect—“I might have cut thee off with thy subjects,

* Verse 16. † Verse 17. ‡ Exod. ix. 16.

in my judgments already inflicted before thine eyes; but I have sustained thee and made thee stable in thy kingdom, for a heavier judgment still to come." For although the Apostle uses a word, alike pertinent, indeed, to his own purpose, yet varying in sense from the Hebrew, he cannot reasonably be supposed to have designed this, in order to give countenance to an hypothesis, not warranted by the original text. Now, that by the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, the name of God was glorified in the Israelitish nation, is evident in sacred history. And that it was also glorified in the neighbouring nations, may easily be believed; although no record of it is to be found, in the work of the Father of profane history, Herodotus; who had but little transmitted to him, of transactions so early as those of the period here referred to. But, that the name of God had been glorified in the earth, by the eternal damnation of this wicked prince, does not appear; and especially, it cannot be imagined that there is the least allusion to it, in the beautiful strains of poetry, in which Miriam, with her attendant women, gave glory to God for the temporal destruction of their proud oppressor. But in truth, it is impossible to infer, from any part of the narrative in Genesis, or from what is said by St. Paul in the epistle, that this man died impenitent, and thus suffered, in another life, for the crimes which he had committed. Who knows, that, while the waters were returning to their place, in the gradual manner which the narrative implies, this wicked prince, hitherto untouched by calamities which did not affect his person, and beholding his unhappy end inevitable and near, did not lift up his once stub-

born heart, now subdued and softened, in accepted penitence, to the Lord of life and death? Be this as improbable as it may, it must be confessed possible; which excludes all interpretation of St Paul's reasonings, as if grounded on the acknowledged event of his damnation. And if so, there can be no consequence unfavourable to our system, in what is added—“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth:”* this hardening being in agreement with other places of scripture, in which there is ascribed to God that which has its origin in the wickedness of men, and which he permits, with a view of overruling it to a subserviency of his designs. And that no more is here meant, we find confirmed by the circumstance, that in Exodus,† God's hardening of the heart of Pharaoh does not prevent its being also said, that he hardened his own heart.

Here the Apostle conceives of another contradiction, on the part of those who would be watching every step in his process, in order to find a flaw in it. For he supposes a person of this sort lifting up his voice, and asking: “Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?”‡ Well may God find fault with the wickedness of men, even under the punishments inflicted on its account. But the question seems introduced, in peevish discontent at the doctrine, in which, as must have been perceived, the Apostle's argument would end—the rejection of the Jews, from the privilege of being a peculiar people. With evident propriety,

* Verse 18. † viii. 32, and ix. 34. ‡ Verse 19.

therefore, the Apostle turns on the opponent,* with a counter expostulation, as to the replying against God, and the questioning of the prerogatives of his government, for the having made this people or the other people what they are; as if the clay should deny the right of the potter, “to make one lump to honour and another to dishonour.” This similitude is taken from the 6th verse of the 18th chapter of Jeremiah, by which we ought of course to be governed, in the interpretation of it. It is there distinctly applied to the speaking “concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to destroy;” and “concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it.” Will it be said, that Jeremiah had within his contemplation any thing beyond the present life? He surely had not: And if so, there cannot be any reason to imagine, that St. Paul strained the allusion to a subject, so different as his is supposed to have been, from that of the prophet. There was evidently no ground of analogy between the two subjects. A truth which was pertinent to the putting down of one kingdom and the setting up of another, was not equally evident, concerning the respective condition of individuals in another life. And yet it is stated by the Apostle, as a matter in itself evident and not demanding proof.

Now the Apostle advances to the application of his preceding reasoning in verses 22 and 23—“What if God,” (or more strictly, but if God—meaning, that forbearance is no relinquishment of purpose) “willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And

* Verses 20, 21.

that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." In vain shall we look for any reference of these words, to the argument which had gone before, unless, by "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," we understand the unbelieving Jews collectively considered, who were to be no more a peculiar people; but to remain under divine displeasure, for an appointed time: and unless, by "the vessels of mercy prepared for glory," we understand, not only believing Jews and believing Gentiles, as defined by the Apostle himself; but such in their collective capacities, and as the subject respected a state of covenant with God. For in what is said of "the vessels of wrath," the "destruction" to which they are fitted must be a completion of the metaphor; and mean no more, than the national judgments figuratively represented, by the breaking of the vessel spoken of by Jeremiah: And "the vessels of mercy prepared for glory," being put in opposition, must refer to the state of being spoken of in the preceding clause. If there could be any doubt of this sense, it might be cleared up, by what the Apostle immediately proceeds to quote of two prophecies from Hosea and of two others from Isaiah; all of them applicable to the Gentiles as one and to the Jews as another people, and not to be applied, even under a plausible appearance, to any persons as individually interested, or as respecting their condition in another life. For, after applying the metaphor of "vessels of mercy," by declaring them to be—"even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles;"* he goes on to recite the prediction of this call by Hosea, where it is said—"I will call them

* Verse 24.

my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.” “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.”* So much, for “the vessels of mercy,” as a people. And then, showing that “the vessels of wrath” were designated such, as a people also, the Apostle goes on to quote Isaiah predicting the rejection of the Jews—“Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant (meaning this only) shall be saved;” and—“except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma and been made like unto Gomorrha.”† Finally, the Apostle omitting nothing in this whole department of his Epistle, that might show the national complexion by which it was intended to be characterized, winds up his argument thus: He puts the question—“What shall we say then?”‡ He answers, implying it is this which should be said, that “the Gentiles”—he still speaks collectively, the privilege affirmed not belonging to those Gentiles only who at the time believed; but to those also who should believe after their example—that “the Gentiles,” contemplated in that their descriptive character, “have attained to righteousness;” being in a state of acceptance with God, in which they had been miraculously owned by him as a people, and this, through the medium of faith only; considered, not as divested of its fruits, but as opposed to the burthensome ceremonies of the laws. This is one part of his conclusion. The other is, that “Israel,” considered also as a people,—since otherwise, the affirmation concerning them was not strictly true, there being a

* Verses 25, 26. † Verses 27, 29. ‡ Verse 30.

considerable number of the nation to whom it did not apply—that “Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness;”* being kept back from it by their attachment to the abrogated ordinances of their law; the object of which had ceased, not as destroyed, but as fulfilled by the more extensive dispensation of the gospel.

After the chapter the last commented on, there are remaining two of the chapters, which were to come under observation, in this performance. In the first of them, the 10th, there appears nothing set up, as applicable to the doctrine of predestination, either in the sense sustained, or in that which has been objected to. But there are expressions, still illustrative of the Apostle’s preceding argument, as here unfolded. It would seem impossible to read the 11th chapter without being astonished, that it does not cut short all dispute, on the subject, so far as concerns the question of the collective or the individual contemplation of the persons spoken of, as also, that of the period of their existence immediately referred to. So far, indeed, the chapter has its weight in these respects; as that the Calvinistick writers, in treating of it, ascribe to it the very properties, which have been here claimed as belonging to the whole of the epistle. But on this ground, what an incorrect reasoner do they make of the Apostle of the Gentiles representing him as directing his attention to a subject entirely new, when there is every appearance of its being continued to a branch of the old, and applying the terms of this, but in a change of senses, to the other. For, in this 11th chapter, we have still a foreknowledge and an election. But as the latter evidently lights† on the re-

* Verse 31. † Verse 28.

jected people, the disregard of the national construction would be utterly inconsistent with the purpose to which the epistle is applied by Calvinism. There are also explicitly announced a “casting away” and a breaking off;* yet connected with a grafting in again.† Now as these expressions, in the eleventh chapter, have a retrospective view to “the vessels of wrath” spoken of in the ninth; nothing but the supposition of the entire change of subject and of style can prevent a direct hostility of the expressions, against the Calvinistick scheme. There is a still greater difficulty in its way: For when the Apostle had compared real Christians from among the Gentiles, to branches of an olive tree, wild by nature,‡ now “grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree,” and partaking of its fatness; it seems irreconcilable with the doctrine of perseverance, to imply that such persons may be cut off, and, on that account, to admonish them, as God spared not the natural branches, “to take heed, lest, he also spare not thee.”§ But to add to the inconsistency, on the supposition of individual interpretation, there is the assurance, that at last, “all Israel shall be saved;”|| no exception being made of those who were before called “the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction.” The difficulty seems stretched to the utmost, when we find, as the finishing stroke of the whole argument, that “God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all:”¶ that is, according to the opinion here rejected, if the maintainers of it were consistent, on all mankind; none of them being predestinated in any other sense, than will thus extend universally. But they properly consider the “all”

* Verses 15, 17. † Verse 23. ‡ Verse 17—24. § Verse 21.
|| Verse 25. ¶ Verse 32.

as comprehending both the descriptions of persons spoken of: an idea, which if adopted in the beginning of the epistle, and permitted to have its just effect on the whole, would contribute much, as is here conceived, to the proper understanding of it.

If there were, at last, any thing wanting, to convince us of the incorrectness running through the whole interpretation here opposed, it might be supplied by the strains in which the Apostle, after the conclusion of his argument, gives vent to the feelings of his heart. His argument had begun early in the 1st chapter, and closes towards the ending of the 11th. Then looking back, as would seem, on the whole ground gone over, he breaks out in effusions, which could no otherwise have been prompted, than by a glow of admiration of the infinite excellence of the divine Being, which had been displayed; and closes, with the ascribing of due praise and glory to his great name: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory for ever. Amen."*

Had the epistle consisted of such a series of subjects as Calvinism supposes, a writer disclosing them to the world under the influence of inspiration, might fitly bow in submission, under a sense of the fearful sovereignty, illustrating its glory in the damnation of millions of intelligent creatures, appointed to them before their being call-

* Verse 33.

ed into existence, and without any undeservings of their own, further than as these were the contemplated mean, by which the last awful issue should be brought about. But that, in such a writer, the theme should awaken feelings, like those which seem to have possessed the mind of the Apostle, is surely one of the most extraordinary associations that can be imagined. Accordingly, we do not find, in the Calvinistick authors generally read, any thing expressive of the same sensibilities, on the same subjects. They, like other writers, when they discourse of the works of nature, or of the ways of providence, or of redemption, not seen in connexion with those parts of their theory which cast a shade over its beneficence, can indulge emotions, which have their origin in wonder and delight. But it may be doubted, that there are any of them, in whom the like are produced by a survey of the peculiarities of their system: And it is rather to be supposed, that they deem it sufficient to acquiesce, and not set up their reason, in contrariety to what they suppose to have been revealed. Other Christians, indeed, may find the epistle to the Romans to abound with remarks, resulting from the survey of human guilt and the punishments entailed on it: While yet, they may conceive of the composition as giving us, in relation to those gloomy subjects, no information but what we might, in substance, have possessed without the disclosures of the gospel. At the same time; they may think they find, not only in this blessed system generally, but in the book before us in particular, much that has a tendency; to counteract the discouragement, by which the subjects alluded to might otherwise have been attended. But for those persuaded that the doctrines of Calvinism are the doctrines of the gospel, however they may dis-

card the thought of saying to the Supreme—"What dost thou?" still, for the indulging of emotions of delight, to be excited by meditation on the effects of his resistless sovereignty; it is more natural for them to wait until the time, when we shall no longer know but in part, and when there may, perhaps, be given to us sensibilities, differently accommodated to subjects, in which the mind cannot at present find delight; however it may bring itself to submission.*

* Although the writer of this has never met, in any author, transporting views of the subject, Calvinistically understood, as in the instance of St. Paul, in which it is here supposed to be understood otherwise; yet there is some approach to such a rapturous view, related in the life of President Edwards. This acute and respectable author states, that he had been formerly full of objections to the doctrine of predestination, in his own sense of the word; but that at some particular time well remembered, he became satisfied of it, although he could give no account how, or by what means he was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor for a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it. He scarce ever afterwards, however, found so much as a rising in the mind, against God's sovereignty; in showing mercy to whom he will show mercy, and hardening and eternally damning whom he will! Then, he goes on thus—"I have often since, not only had a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine of God's sovereignty has very often appeared an exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet doctrine to me:" these words evidently applying to the salvation and the damnation spoken of before!

We cannot wonder at learning, from the writer of the life of this eminent metaphysician, that he considered those who were trimming off the knots of Calvinism, as paving the way for Arminianism, and even Deism. "For if these doctrines," continues the biographer, in the whole length or breadth of them were relinquished, he did not see, where a man could set his foot with certainty and

It was intimated, in the beginning of this work, that the subject of it ended with the 11th chapter. There will be no impropriety, however, in casting our eyes forward to its connexion with the chapter succeeding, which begins thus: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Had the Apostle been laying down a scheme of general and eternal condemnation, from which a very few only had been rescued, by a predestinating decree, it being at the same time impossible to affirm, concerning the persons to whom the epistle is addressed, that they were of the predestinated few, until death should make their calling and election sure, there would seem an evident unsuitableness of the inference, to the premises from which it was drawn. But if we suppose the argument to have been, all along, concerning the breaking down of a barrier to the covenant, and the laying of it open to all nations, without exacting from them a burthensome obligation, which had been contended for; it may then be seen, that the leading feature of the dispensation is beneficence; and that the Apostle might fitly apply the persuasive motive of the mercies of God, as an incitement to the sublime morality which was to follow.

safety, short of Deism, or even Atheism, or rather universal scepticism!" Life prefixed to the Treatise on religious Affections.

OF REDEMPTION.

The Question stated—Nothing to the purpose of the Controversy
—The Sense of the Latter part of Chapter 5th.

THE difference between the Calvinists and the Arminians, on this point, may be stated in few words. The former believe, that Christ died for those only who are predestinated, agreeably to what they affirm under the preceding point; and that salvation is not possible to others; although offered to them, in order to constitute a ground on which they may be at last condemned. The Arminians believe, that the satisfaction of Christ was for all mankind, and for every one of them in particular; although none reap the benefit, but those who believe and obey the Gospel.

It will not be necessary, however, on the present point, to go into an investigation of the sense of the epistle. Much, indeed, is cited from it by the Calvinists; but nothing which has not already come under the first article; or else, which will not come under the third. All they offer is, as affecting the point, not directly, but by consequence.

As to the Arminians, it is not here recollected, that any thing has been alleged by them to their purpose, unless an exception may be made, of the latter part of the 5th chapter. In that passage, both Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, make the word “many,” the same with “all,” and the word “all,” in the place where it is used, to be intended universally. Not so Dr. Whitby, or Mr. Limborch, both of whom consider the sense of the place, as confining the terms to be-

lievers. The writer of this considers the passage as implying, that the effects of Christ's death are coextensive with those of Adam's sin. Nevertheless, the universality of the propositions seems by him intended concerning the two descriptions of persons of whom they are affirmed. Whether he judges rightly or not in this particular, may be left for determination under the next point, where the passage will come under review.

OF FREE WILL.*

The Meaning of the term, as understood by both parties, who had no difference concerning it—There arises the Question of Original Sin, on which they differ—The Points of difference—Sense of Chapter 3, Verse 3—Sense of Chapter 8, Verse 7, in connexion with Chapter 7, from Verse 7—Interpretation before Austin—And by him.

THE substance of what has been said by Calvinists and by Arminians under the present point, turns on the unhappy effect of the fall of Adam, in consequence

* It has been remarked by Mr. Locke, that freedom is predicable of action only. The applying of it to the will, is conceived by him to be one of the many modes of expression, which occasion confusion of ideas: and he aptly illustrates his distinction by the case of a man, who, being conveyed during sleep into a room in which he awakes in agreeable society, willingly remains in his new situation, whatever hindrance there may be to his retiring from it. But independently on the propriety of the word, the controversy turns on the question of power in the will, called by the Latins "liberum arbitrium," but by the Greeks "αυτεξησιον" and "αυτοκρατορια." It has also been called in Latins "ipsietas." Whenever there may be used the words "free will," in the present work, it must be understood in compliance with custom; and to mean the same with what has been commonly intended to be expressed by the aforesaid Latin and Greek words.

To some it seems, that to concede such a property to man, is to suppose all nature subjected to his wayward will. But this is not a consequence. Let the principle be tested in a kindred line. It is agreed, that the mischief of which he is capable in act, is permitted by the Creator, under a system which shall render it finally subservient to his own glory. It is but to transfer the sentiment from human action to human will; which cannot be, less than the other, under the cognizance and the control of the Divine Mind.

of which, man, besides becoming mortal, is so changed, that he cannot of himself begin or accomplish his recovery from the state of sin and misery, in which nature places him.

It would be a great mistake, to confound the loss of free will, so much spoken of in the controversies occurring in and soon after the era of the reformation, with the necessarian scheme, which, however much a favourite with many modern Calvinists, was not the doctrine contended for by their early predecessors, and has not shown its head in the works of Calvin. Accordingly, when there is stated, that Calvinists and Arminians agreed in the loss of free will, the position is to be understood independently on that metaphysical subtilty, and only means, that with whatever ability for the keeping of the law of the Creator man had been originally clothed, he had become divested of it by the fall: so that his recovery cannot be either begun or perfected, otherwise than under the influence of divine aid.

Although this was always presented, by the Arminians, as one of their points, both before and at the Synod which decided on their cause; yet it does not appear to have made a part of their early controversy. So far as it goes, there was nothing against which the Calvinists could object. For the Arminians, however they may have differed from them as to the extent of the consequences of the fall, have agreed with them in this, that nothing but a new act of grace and new aid founded on it; can restore to the forfeited life and immortality.

But if we extend our view to the writings of the Arminians generally, we find in them sentiments utterly inconsistent with those maintained by the Calvinists, in relation to the apostasy.

The difference between the parties, will be seen by a statement of what the latter superadd to the mortality, to the depraved nature, and to the utter inability acknowledged by the former.

The Calvinists consider the sin of Adam, as made that of all mankind by imputation; so that they are all, on this account, obnoxious to eternal misery; from which a determinate number is rescued, by a predestinating decree. It is however acknowledged, that God cannot condemn to endless misery, a creature innocent in nature and in act. Accordingly it is expected, that mankind will be condemned, for sins committed in their own persons; the result of a propensity to sin, which cannot be counteracted, but by a divine grace not given. As to infants, who cannot have committed actual sin, they are subjected to the same condemnation, by a sinful nature, the principle of all sin in act. Nevertheless, it is common for Calvinists to suppose—although this does not seem to arise out of the system—that they who are exempted by the divine Being from the temptations of the world, have also been predestinated by him to salvation. Falling in with the idea of the permission of sin, for the vindicating of the justice of God, is that other of a federal headship, in which we were represented in the first man. For God is supposed to have established a covenant with him; and in him, with his posterity also: In consequence of which, as, in the event of his obedience, they would have inherited the reward of it, which was to have been everlasting life; so, theirs also was the forfeiture, which is everlasting misery. In regard to the stain descending, likewise, Calvinists declare more than the Arminians. For whereas these

acknowledge, that man is in a sinful condition, from which he cannot relieve himself; and, therefore, stands essentially in need of divine grace, for the accomplishing of the effect; the others pronounce, that until relieved from his state of defilement, all the thoughts which he entertains, and all the actions which he performs are sins. It may be proper to subjoin, that the foregoing doctrine of a federal headship and that of the imputation of Adam's sin, with the consequences attached to them, make no part of the creed of the Arminians.

It is hoped, that a view is given, in substance, of the difference. If so, there is no need to go into the minutiae of the dispute; because the matter undertaken to be established is, that be the one side or the other right; or be the right of either in whole or in part; there is nothing in the epistle to the Romans, relative to any branch of the subject on which the parties are divided. The writer of the epistle, it is here contended, was intent on another subject, which very much interested his mind and the minds of those for whom he wrote. He does, indeed, make a short digression, to the mortality incurred through Adam; but for what purpose? The answer is:—Because of its being a fit medium for the proof of the position, that since the said mortality affected Jew and Gentile alike, it was a ground from which to infer, that the counteracting efficacy of the death of Christ extended to them both. St. Paul has also, in this epistle, referred to a taint of nature. But again let it be asked: For what purpose? Again it must be answered—Not with a reference to the present point, as though the writer were making it the theme

of his argument; but because it fell in with the purpose which he had in view. This was the showing of the insufficiency of an instituted law, to the effect of justification: of a law, which far from restraining our bad propensities, made their sinful nature more conspicuous than before.

But, to go on to the passages which have been thought applicable: The first passage to be here mentioned, is chapter iii. verse 9. But it is to be taken as explaining and to be explained by the greater part of the first and second chapters, and a passage following it in the third.

The Apostle having, in the context, acknowledged the pre-eminent advantages of the Jewish nation, and having guarded against a false inference which might be drawn from his position, casts his eye back to the same advantages, and proposes the question—"What then, are we better than they?"* Or, more literally—"Have we a preference?"† He answers—"No in no-wise:" Or, which would seem a better translation—"Not altogether;" meaning—We have a preference in the matter stated above; but not in the matter which is the subject of this discourse. Why? "Because we have before charged‡ both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."

Let us attend, then, to this charge; and first, as laid against the Gentiles. The Apostle, after having stated§ that they had "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the

* Verse 9. † προεχόμεθα.

‡ As it is in the margin of our Bibles, by a better translation of the Greek word προητίασαμεθα. § Chapter i Verse 25.

Creator," goes on thus—"For this cause" (that is, as an effect of this cause, and not as a necessity of nature laid on them) "God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use, into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient: being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

So stands the charge, as it affected the Gentiles: And the Apostle, immediately after urging it on them, turns to the Jews, and addressing the nation, through the medium of an individual character supposed, he says—"Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou that judgest doest the same things."† After amplifying and illustrating this sentiment, he goes on thus—"Behold, thou art called

* Verse 26, and following. † Verse 1.

a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"*

Thus stands the charge alluded to in the ninth verse of the third chapter. Now, it is to be remarked, that since our present subject concerns human nature as such; and since there are some circumstances in which it may be placed, not admitting of actual crime; under such circumstances, the charge is not laid, because it speaks of actual crime only. But it is further to be remarked, that the Apostle is speaking, not of the human race as such, but of all Jews and all Gentiles, standing each party in their corporate capacity, and each in relation to the question of admission to the covenant of grace. For we run into manifest extravagances, if we consider the words as applicable to every Jew and every Gentile. First, it must be seen, that what the Apostle stated to have been charged, had not been charged on infants, nor on those who die at too early an age, to have committed any of the enormous crimes enumera-

* Verse 17—23.

ted. It will not relieve from the difficulty, to say, that there was a taint of nature. There was so; but it had not been charged; none but actual sins, and those of a very high grade, being found in the catalogue. But further, it is beyond belief, that the Apostle should have designed to charge all adult Jews and all adult Gentiles, with having been guilty of the very bad conduct, truly affirmed to be prevailing among, and tolerated by, their several communities. In regard to the heathen, the grammatical construction fixes every article of the charge on all and every one of them, if considered otherwise than in their collective capacities. Even considered individually, St. Paul would never have accused a Socrates or an Antoninus, of any trait of character which he has set down; and doubtless, the same must be presumed of very many, both named and unnamed, in historick records. As to Jews, it could never have been in his mind, to say to every one of them, that he had committed theft, or murder, or adultery, or sacrilege. And he must, at least, have been conscious, that himself was innocent of them all, when he said to the Sanhedrim—“Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.” But the black catalogue of crimes will receive its proper application, if we keep in view the end of the Apostle’s argument, and not otherwise. The question concerned admission to the gospel covenant. The converted Gentiles did not set up a claim to it, on any other ground than that of mere favour. And therefore, there appears no motive to the making of mention of Gentile wickedness, except that it was a conciliating introduction of what was about to be alleged, for the

abating of the high pretensions of the Jewish converts—that the same wickedness was prevalent in their own nation. Accordingly, preference is here given to the considering of the preposition—“for”* in the beginning of the second chapter, not as illative, but as connective, agreeably to its ordinary signification; although this is discountenanced by the high authority of Mr. Locke. Now, the Jews considered themselves as in covenant with God; which of course they held to be binding on his part, so long as the terms of it were unviolated on the other; and this, not in the sense of the obedience of every individual, or of unsinning obedience in any, the requiring of which would have been inconsistent with every idea of covenant between God and man, and was certainly not stipulated for in the Mo-saick, which pointed out a method of atonement for sins not presumptuous. But when the nation had showed itself corrupt, in the extent of licentiousness laid open by the Apostle, it was in vain for individuals of it to set up a claim on the ground of a covenant, to which the former had been a party. And this might happen, while yet there would be many Jews, coming under the description of the same Apostle, immediately subsequent to his other description of prevalent iniquity. What is here alluded to, are the last two verses of the second chapter, where he says—“He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; whose circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” These words must have some

* γαρ.

meaning. They cannot, then, be designed of such a character, as neither did nor could exist; but must be descriptive of every pious and conscientious Jew, who had lived, between the giving of the law, and the age in which the Apostle wrote.

If the sense here given to the portraiture of Jewish manners, require any further elucidation; it may be obtained from what follows the verse, which is more immediately the subject of the present criticism. For the Apostle, referring to what he had said of his countrymen, justifies his apparent severity, by showing, that it was no more than what had been said concerning the same nation, by the Psalmist in his day—"There is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

These words, indeed, taken without regard to the connexion and the design of them, are indiscriminate. But we know, that in a quotation, there is more regard had to the sense and the spirit of the passage quoted, than to the pertinency of every expression. Now, the words are from the 14th psalm, in which they are descriptive of prevalent and triumphant wickedness, indeed, but not of such as was universal: For the Psalmist immediately adds,

* Verse 10, 18.

concerning the workers of wickedness described—“Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.” He goes on to speak of “the generation of the righteous;” in whose behalf he puts up the devout wish: “Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!” The Apostle’s quoting of the gloomy description above recited, is as if he had said—“What the Psalmist has recorded of the prevalent wickedness of his day, I apply to ours.” And the end of his applying of it was, that, as there could not be any claim on God’s part of the covenant, in favour of a nation who had so flagrantly violated the conditions of it, obligatory on themselves; so, individuals of the same nation could have no pretensions, grounded on the supposed merits of the body of which they were a part; and consequently, must come in for their respective shares of the new covenant, as of grace and not of debt. And to this refers the Apostle’s comment on the passage, which he had quoted from the Psalmist—“Now we know, that what things soever the law saith” (meaning here, by the law, the whole body of Jewish scripture) “it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Guilty, more or less, they doubtless all are in his holy presence, and as such, “subject to his judgments,” as the margin of the Bible more literally translates. But the Jew claimed exemption, in virtue of the covenant. No; says the Apostle, it has no virtue, as to that effect; and therefore the new dispensation contemplates all the world, that is, both Jews and Gentiles, as on a level in regard to pretence of merit.

The next passage to be noticed, is the much litigated one, and confessedly the most difficult in the whole epistle,

which we find in the 5th chapter, from the 12th verse to the 19th. It is unquestionably a digression; but of such a description as is worthy of St. Paul; and not gone into, without the design of making it subservient to his purpose. Its subserviency is here supposed to consist in there being set forth, that, as the mortality of Adam had an effect on the Gentiles, as well as on the Jews; it was the more reasonable to expect, that the death of Christ applied on the like terms to both.

“Wherefore,” says the Apostle,* “as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.” What is the death here spoken of? A spiritual death, say some; consisting in an utter insensibility to good. Be there such a death or not, it is a pity, from zeal for the establishing of it, to spoil the Apostle’s reasoning in this place. The death within his view was a known dispensation, passing before the eyes of all; and not to be involved in metaphysical disquisition. “And so death passed upon all men, for that” (or in whom, meaning Adam) “all have sinned.” Here may be thought to open on us the doctrine of federal headship; since we are said to have all sinned in Adam. But it is frequent with St. Paul, to put the cause for the effect; and he ought to be understood as doing so in this place; because it else contradicts the sentiment with which the passage teems, that of the loss of immortality by Adam’s sin, and not our own. The words can mean no more, than that in him all men became subject to the consequences of sin: And this makes the expression in question analogous to what is said 1. Kings i. 21. “I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders”—literally “be sinners;” besides other instances of the same phraseology in the Old

* Verse 12

Testament.* “For until the law,” that is, during the ages which were before it, “sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” They who confine St. Paul’s sense always to the letter, would do well to consider, how far, on that plan, the last words go; which is even to the doing away of all imputation of sin, where there is no revealed law opposed to it. But this is not the meaning; which is no more, than that as death is the penalty of transgression against a positive law, and as a great proportion of mankind had not been under any law to which the said penalty had been attached, it must have been brought on them by a cause extraneous to themselves.† “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression;” that is, say some, death had extended to infants. It had so; but they cannot be intended in this place, because they had not sinned at all. For if, as St. Paul says in the 9th chapter, the children yet unborn can do neither good nor evil; the same surely may be said of them, for a considerable time subsequent to their births. No, it means those who have sinned against whatever better information they may have possessed; but not against a law, given to them under the sanction of death for disobedience. Such persons are indeed deserving of punishment: Yet, as this particular punishment is represented in scripture to be the appointed infliction on the violation of a positive law, we have no right to consider the subject as applicable to any, who had not sinned in that way. In order to bring the doctrine home to the Apostle’s point, it was important to him, after the mention of Adam, to hold him up as “a figure” (or type) “of

* Verse 13. † Verse 14.

him who was to come." This he does; but although there must, of course, be a resemblance between the antitype and the type; yet he contends, that what is true of the one is more eminently so of the other.

Here comes in the most difficult part of the passage: and the difficulty consists, in determining precisely the points of the dissimilitude affirmed. There shall be given three interpretations; each of them supported by a great name: But as no one of them is entirely satisfactory to the writer of these remarks, he will take the liberty—which he trusts is not presumptuous, when the inquiry is concerning truth—to offer an interpretation of his own.

The first to be named, is that of Dr. Whitby. He thinks, that they who had sinned in their own persons may be said to have died on that account; for instance, those Antediluvians, who were swept away by the flood. On this ground, it is supposed that a deduction being made of all who had sinned in person, the remainder are not so many as those made alive by Christ: in which circumstance consisted the greater abounding of the gift, beyond the punishment. But this does not seem to answer the purpose, since they who sinned and died would have died, if they had never sinned, agreeably to what St. Paul says in another place—"In Adam, all die."*

Accordingly, this sense of Dr. Whitby is objected to by Mr. Locke, who offers another, to the following effect. It is, that the stress of the similarity is in the unity of person, in each of the two cases: that is, as the offence came by one man—Adam; so, the gift came by one man—Christ. But there must be, as a resemblance, so likewise a difference: and accordingly, the latter is supposed to

* 1 Cor. xv. 22.

consist in the contrast between the selfish appetite of Adam, which brought on the death of him and his posterity; and the grace of Christ, which was of his free and abundant goodness. Here the difficulty is—but let it be spoken with due deference to so eminent a person—in the unsuitableness of the comparison drawn between the appetite of Adam, and the benevolence of Christ. In order to square the construction with the argument, it seems needful, that the things compared should not be in entire opposition to one another; but, as to the matter in hand, alike: although one of them is to be supereminent over the other.

The third opinion is that of Dr. Taylor, which lays the stress on whatever grace or benefit there is in the Gospel, beyond the counteracting of the effects of Adam's sin.—For as the comparison introduced by the Apostle, obliged him to prove merely that the one was not more extensive than the other, any particulars, wherein this should be found to exceed, appeared to Dr. Taylor to answer to the abounding of the grace, making it disproportioned to the judgment. But it may be observed of the opinion of this ingenious gentleman, that he would perhaps have found it difficult to have shown, wherein the benefit obtained by the death of Christ went beyond the regaining of what was lost through Adam. For although many and precious are the fruits of the former, in the gifts and the aids of the holy Spirit; yet they are all no more, than was necessary for the object to be accomplished. And besides, the supposed surplusage was at any rate—although great stress is supposed to be laid on it—foreign to the Apostle's argument; which is best satisfied by a strict analogy.

With diffidence, another interpretation is here propos-

ed. The idea which will govern in it is, that although the passage is confessedly a digression, yet the Apostle does not digress to such a length, as to lose sight of the point which he had been labouring, and which it was his purpose to resume. There are two criticisms to be here made on the original. Mr. Locke translates* “the many:” And conformably to such a translation it will be found, that, although the article is seldom joined in the New Testament to the same adjective, yet, when they are given together, the adjective denotes, not an indefinite but a precise many. In regard to the words† translated “much more,” it may be remarked, that they may mean here, not a greater measure, but a higher certainty, as if it had been said “much rather.” And this is agreeable to the sense which the same words evidently bear, in the 15th verse of the chapter now before us.

With the help of the principles laid down, we may now go on with the passage. “But,” says the Apostle, “not as the offence, so also is the free gift”‡—free alike to Jew and Gentile, without the condition of the burthensome institutions of the Levitical law. “For if through the offence of one, the many”—that is, as well they who had sinned against a law denouncing death, as they who had no law to which that precise penalty was annexed; or in other words, both Jews and Gentiles—“be dead;” that is, obnoxious to the event of death; much rather, or, with a higher degree of certainty—“the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the [same] many.” And to give another instance of the evidence of grace over that of punishment, he goes on thus—“Not as it was by one that

* οἱ πολλοί. † πολλῶ μαλλον. ‡ Verse 15.

sinned," meaning, by one man's sinning—"so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation."* And if this could be the infliction of a righteous God, much more may we conceive it to be a part of his dispensation of mercy, that "the free gift is of many offences" (if they had been committed) "unto justification." He goes on "For if by one offence" (as the margin properly has it) "death reigned by one; much rather" may it be, considering God's overflowing mercy in the gospel, that "they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."† In both of the last preceding verses, there is here contemplated a reference to the Jewish prejudices opposed. And it seems an argument in point, that if, as was admitted, all descriptions of men had lost their immortality by another's fault, it might well be believed, concerning a dispensation so beneficent as that of the Gospel, that all descriptions of men might receive under it the fruits of the merits of another—freely: for this is the circumstance, on which the stress is laid, or without the prerequisite of legal initiation and the subsequent burthen of legal works.

In the 18th verse next succeeding, it may seem unfavourable to the interpretation here given, that "the many" are changed to "all." But the interpretation is not to be given up, on that account; because, if the scope of the passage give countenance to the application of "the many" to Jew and Gentile, it is not affected by the varying of the term; since the "all," now spoken of, must be "the many," or both the descriptions spoken of before: especially, as the Apostle will be found to return to his first choice of words.

* Verse 16. † Verse 17.

To go on then with the passage: "Therefore," adds the Apostle, "as by one offence, judgment came upon all men"—Jew and Gentile---"to condemnation; even so, by one righteousness;" that is, one act of it, "the free gift came upon all men," of the same variety of character, "unto justification of life." Then, the Apostle seems desirous of expressing the same truth in varied language, for the greater clearness. "For," says he, "as by one man's* disobedience, the many" (Jews and Gentiles) "were made" (or constituted) "sinners;" that is, subjected to the consequences of another's sin, "so, by the obedience of one, shall [the same] many be made righteous;" that is, not formally so, but as partaking of the blessed effects of his meritorious death. To those not attentive to the peculiarities of St. Paul's writing, it may seem a straining of this verse, to make "sinners" another expression for the being made subject to the consequences of sin. But let those who may be disposed to object to it be aware, not only of the pertinency of it to the argument; but of the consequence of insisting on the strict meaning of the word: which will be, that, as all sinned in Adam, without any subsequent consenting to it; so, all are released from the penalties of sin, by being made righteous in Christ, in virtue of his obedience, without any subsequent act, not to say of obedience of their own, but also of faith.

There has been given, it is trusted, the sense of this much litigated passage. If it should not be accurate in every particular, it may be sufficiently so, for the purpose of the writer. On the ground of the interpretation, the Arminians can draw nothing from it, in favour of their system. For, although there may seem something

* Versé 19.

to this effect, in what is said of "all being made righteous;" and of the free gift to "the many," interpreted by respectable authority to be the same with "all;" yet, if these expressions are so positively applied, as is here affirmed, to different descriptions of collective bodies, little stress is to be laid on the use of them. What should further discourage all application of this sort, is the absolute nakedness of the epistle, as to any evidence of there having been, in the mind of the Apostle, an inquiry into the extent of the offer of salvation, as the subject respected individuals, involving the question of few or many. No, the general argument of it applies "all" and "the many" to the Gentiles, contemplated in combination with the Jews in the enjoyment of the benefits of the Gospel dispensation: And as those two descriptions of persons are kept steadily in view, through all the rest of the discussion; it seems impossible, that, in the digression which has just now been before us, the Apostle should have gone out of his way, in order to decide on a question not moved, so far as we know, at the time; and not involved in the other question, which pressing circumstances had forced on him.

Much less, it is here conceived, has the passage any appearance of being favourable to the Calvinists. For there is nothing in it of federal representation;* nothing

* The acknowledged forfeiture of immortality in Adam, of which the passage is evidently full, has been thought to favour the doctrine of federal representation. But we know of various ways, in which one man, through the fault of another, may forfeit a benefit, to which the right of the latter would otherwise have entitled the former. This happens when a son, by his father's treason, loses an estate, which was held of the sovereignty on the condition of allegiance; or when the like thing happens, on the neglect

of the imputation of sin, except of men's sins to themselves; and nothing of the corruption of human nature, whatever there may be of this in the passage that is to succeed. There is, indeed, in the passage which has been commented on, a death spoken of. And that this word, like other words, is sometimes transferred from its strict signification, and used figuratively, to denote a spiritual subject, must be granted. Even in this epistle we read: "To be carnally minded is death,"* meaning a spiritual one, no doubt. But in the passage which has been before us, it is the dissolution of our mortal nature: and if we give it any other sense, we must take away all consistency from the passage, generally. The Calvinist, in particular, should be aware of giving it this construction; because, considering the parallel which had been drawn by the Apostle, it would then follow, that, as all had been under a spiritual death, including an entire depravation of nature and subjection to everlasting punishment; so, at least an opportunity of attaining to salvation has been bestowed on all; if not rather, that it shall certainly be enjoyed by all: neither of which would be admitted by him, who subjects himself to such a consequence.

We proceed to another passage, weighty in meaning. It ought to be so, indeed, in the estimation of all; but

of a condition provided for under a private tenure. In either of these cases, it would be entirely inconsistent with propriety, to consider the father as the representative of his son. This would be to suppose the son to be possessed of independent right; whereas he could have had none, except what would have been transmitted to him, had there been no forfeiture through the father.

It is set up by one of the parties in view, as the substance of their whole system, so far as it regards the actual state of man. And since the text, be the sense what it may, speaks of something, of which, if it exist, there must be a consciousness in the bosoms of all mankind, except of those who have risen superiour to it by grace, and even of them in a degree; it is to be hoped, that this very circumstance will help to a right understanding of the passage. For it cannot be reasonably supposed of the Apostle, that he describes mankind, otherwise than as each individual knows of himself and observes of others.

The text intended is in the 7th verse of the 8th chapter, where we read—“The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” What is the carnal mind? Doubtless, inordinate desire, expressed in the original by words* which, literally translated, are “the mind of the flesh.” There is a personification of the latter word; and to the figurative person thus brought into view, there is ascribed a will. And what is the enmity against God, here meant? Certainly, the not being subject to his law; as is testified in the latter part of the verse. This is noticed, in order to guard against the construction, that St. Paul, in using the abstract, intended to insinuate the sentiment, that the carnally minded man must be a hater of God, in the proper sense of the expression; that is, of his being and his perfections. No; what it signifies is a contrariety to his perfections, in not being subject to his law: just as a subject may have a mind and manners alien from the laws

* *Φρονημα σαρκος.*

of his sovereign; and, on that account, be under his just displeasure; while yet, he may be never thought or spoken of by the same subject, but with reverence and even with affection. Still, the character of such a subject is to be denominated from his ruling principle; and he must be contemplated, as a continual offender against his prince.

For the understanding of the passage before us, we must look back to the 7th verse of the preceding chapter; from which there is a continuation of kindred sentiment, to the verse before us.

The Apostle, through the whole, opposes the purity of the law to inbred sin; by reason of which, the law, though “ordained to life,”* was “found to be unto death,” by the condemning effect of the penalty annexed to it. He here uses some very strong expressions, as his manner sometimes is, and not in their most obvious senses. Thus he speaks of sin working in him all manner of concupiscence:† not meaning this, surely, as to the direct and designed effect of the law; but to show, that vicious propensities, the criminality of which he would not otherwise have known, or at least not have known in its extent, were displayed to him in all their enormity, by it. And thus it happened; that while compelled to acknowledge—“The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good,”‡ he became subjected by it to the sentence of death in his own conscience; “that sin”§—here the Apostle seems to labour under an effort for the strongest expressions which language could supply—“might become exceeding sinful:” meaning, not that it might become,

* Verse 10. † Verse 8. ‡ Verse 12. § Verse 13.

by circumstances, more aggravated than it was in its own nature, for that was impossible; but that it might press with its whole weight on the awakened conscience.

In going on to the more immediate purpose of the present investigation, it will be necessary to state an opposition of opinion, among commentators and other writers; some ascribing the struggle which the first part of the passage describes, to the stranger to gospel grace; and others to the man subjected to its influence. On the opposite sides of the question, there shall be here mentioned two men, who may be supposed nearly equal in the greatness of their talents—Mr. Locke and Dr. Samuel Clarke. Had the writer of this been left to his own understanding only, he should have supposed it impossible to have entertained any other opinion, than that of the passage being designed of the sinner; partly, because the violence of the struggle seems little consistent with that subjection of passion, which must, in a considerable degree at least, adorn the character of the Saint; and further, because, in the conclusion, there is celebrated a triumph, as the effect of grace, in the struggle which had been described. Dr. Clarke is of the opinion, which has been here expressed. He supposes,* that the Apostle personates a man, who is at first a stranger, both to the law and to the gospel; who, afterwards, is subjected to the law, which lays him under its condemning sentence, and who finally hears the consoling voice and is sensible of the powerful energy of the gospel. The opinion of Dr. Clarke is consented in, by many respectable commentators; of

* Serm. 9. vol. viii.

whom it may be sufficient to mention Dr. Hammond, Dr. Whitby, and Dr. Taylor. In the construction of this passage, Mr. Locke agrees with the Calvinistick writers generally, not excepting Calvin himself; it being important to their system. Accordingly, they give as a reason of their interpretation, that, in the unregenerate man, there can be no such good desire, as St. Paul describes.

We are then to suppose the Apostle speaking to us, not in his own person, but in three supposed characters. The first is that of a man, without either the law or the gospel. The Apostle says, meaning it of such a man—"I was alive without the law once,"* that is—it being designed comparatively, doubtless—I saw no necessary connexion between sin and death. "But," says this man—now under a change of circumstances—"when the commandment came, sin revived;" that is—the knowledge—the conviction—the sense of sin was excited in me in a higher degree than before the prohibitory ordinance—"and I died." that is, perceived myself to be subject to death, under the condemnation of the law. After several remarks, opening this sentiment more distinctly, the passage goes on to describe the conflict between inordinate desire and the commandment set in opposition to it.—"That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me; but how to per-

* Verse 9.

form that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.”*

The Apostle had thus discoursed of man, first in his natural state; and then, as a subject of the Mosaick dispensation. After this, he discourses of a conflict, as belonging to both these states, but applied especially to the latter, which was more immediately connected with his design. Here we perceive two principles; on one hand, a principle allowing, consenting to, and delighting in what is good; and on the other, a principle bringing into captivity to the evil, although a known enemy and hated. Now, this is no other, than that struggle between virtue and vice, which has been observed and lamented in mankind, under all the varieties of their condition; and which, although more emphatically perhaps, described by St. Paul than by any other, is in substance the same with the old and familiar adage†—“I see and approve of the better, but pursue the worse.”

What establishes the interpretation here given of the passage, as applying to the natural and not to the Christian man, is, that the Apostle, after having described the conflicting principles in the breast of the personated character, makes him exclaim, under a sense

* Verse 15—23.

† *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*

of the misery of his estate—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* then making him answer his own question, under the disclosure of gospel grace, supposed just then to open on him—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."† The Apostle, returning to his former point, sums up what he had said concerning it, thus—"So then with the mind, I myself, this man,‡ who has been described, "serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin." With this view of the subject, he contrasts the first verse of the 8th chapter—"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Are these the same persons, who were represented a few verses before, as dragged by fleshly appetite into sin, contrary to better conviction and better inclination? It cannot be: especially as the Apostle goes on, enlarging on the happy deliverance from the captivity, which had been groaned under before. It is one of the instances of the candour of Dr. Doddridge, that he releases this important passage from the claims of Calvinism: expressing himself concerning it, in a note, as follows—"I should not have known sin,' &c. "The Apostle here, by a very dexterous turn, changes the person, and speaks as of himself. This he elsewhere does,§ when he is only personating another character. And the character assumed here, is that of a man, first ignorant of the law, then under it, and sincerely desiring to please God, but finding, to his sor-

* Verse 24. † Verse 25. ‡ *αυτος εγω.*

§ Rom. iii. 6, 1 Cor. x. 30, Ch. iv. 6.

row, the weakness of the motives it suggested, and the sad discouragement under which it left him; and last of all, with transport discovering the gospel, and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy by it. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the confirmed Christian, that he really was, when he wrote this epistle, is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as to what is expressly asserted ch. viii. 2."

The effect which the foregoing passage has on the text more immediately proposed to be commented on, must be obvious. When it is said—"The carnal mind," or, according to the more strict translation, "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God;" the proposition cannot possibly be designed of a settled enmity against the Divine Being; but it relates to the lower principle, comprehended under the preceding delineation of human nature. That principle is, in itself, a necessary part of our present being: but when it breaks loose from its proper subjection to the law of God, it is then contemplated, as in hostility to him. The person thus under its misrule, is then "carnally minded." And to be thus minded is "enmity against God:" or, as it is said in the next verse—"they that are in the flesh"—that is, sunk in its sensualities, so as to be detached from the pursuit of spiritual good—"cannot please God." They are in contrariety to his perfections and his laws, and obnoxious to his judgments.

The passage then, under this view of it, can have no relation to the controversy in question. And in regard to the interpretation which has been given to the immediately preceding passage, beginning in the 7th

chapter; if that interpretation should be rejected, little will be thereby gained. There will then be given a harsh appearance to the description of a conflict between virtue and vice in the breast of an Apostle; in which also, the latter is triumphant and the former born down under it. But all that will follow is, that the conflict must be still more severe, in the heart that is a stranger to the ascendancy of gospel grace. If, in such a heart, there cannot be any good thought or any good desire, it must be proved by some other medium, than that before us: and this is all that has been pledged to be proved, concerning it.

The interpretation which has been given of the passage, agrees perfectly with the design of the Apostle; which was to show the insufficiency of the law, and the efficacy of grace. To the same purpose, tends the immediate connexion of the words which have been made the most prominent in this discussion. For St. Paul speaks of having been “without the law once:” which shows, that he personates another; because he had never been without the law himself. And then, on the contrary supposition, there is the opposition of the character drawn of the regenerate man to many places in scripture; such as—“they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;” with many things to the same effect.

There is a striking fact of early times, showing how much the passage in question has been seen to stand in the way of the doctrine now called Calvinistick. Before the time of St. Austin, it had been generally interpreted—among others by Tertullian, Origen, and Chrysostom—of man first in his natural state, then un-

der the law, and lastly under the gospel. Austin himself had explained it in the same way.* But having afterwards adopted some of the sentiments since called Calvinistick, he revoked the interpretation; and applied the passage to the struggle still subsisting in the regenerate man, between grace and nature. But even under this change, he seems to have shrunk back from the full length of the modern Calvinistick interpretation. For he makes the struggle to consist in a concupiscence, in contrariety to a will drawing another way. Austin's motive in this, seems to have been the avoiding of a sanction for sin, from his novel interpretation; which was to his purpose, in his controversy with the Pelagians. But, in order to bring those things together, he tortured the Greek verb, † translated, "to do," into a motion of the mind, which it never signifies; and not only this, but to represent a will and a counter-will, as operating at the same moment. This appears unreasonable, because, without willing, there can be no concupiscence; while yet this is the very thing, from which Austin describes the man in question as willing to be delivered. Calvin rid himself of all this difficulty; but at the expense of an interpretation, which describes the best of men as under the worst sort of captivity—that of sin. ‡

* In his Confessions, Lib. 7. last paragraph. † *πρασσειν*.

‡ What is here stated concerning St. Austin's interpretation of the passage, is given more at large in Bishop Taylor on Repentance, Ch. viii. Sect. 3

The Apostle's speaking in the present tense, from the 8th to the 25th verse, has been alleged against the interpretation given. Answer. He speaks in the past time from the 7th verse to the 13th; although in each case, the intervening verses unquestionably

Perhaps the evidence, which has been given of the interference of the passage with the Calvinistick scheme, may be considered as passing it to the credit of the Arminian. There is, however, a circumstance unfavourable to this sentiment. The Apostle, where he describes the struggle, makes it between nature and a sense of sin under the law; on which account, it may perhaps be said, that the same thing is not to be predicated of nature simply, on the authority of this passage. For this reason, although the author considers it as subversive of Calvinism, yet he does not discern in it an explicit support of the other system.

If there be any other passages, falling under the question, they have escaped the recollection of the writer of this: And therefore, he goes on to the next department of the work.

apply to the same person, in the same state of mind. The Apostle's disregard of exactness in this matter, is the less surprising, when he is seen, in the verses immediately preceding, exhibiting himself in a character which he never sustained—that of a Heathen.

Another excuse for the applying of the conflict to Christian Paul, is on the ground of the humility, which induces a Christian to magnify the remaining corruptions of his nature. Certainly; but not to describe himself as abandoned to the dominion of sinful passion; under which grace struggles, indeed, but altogether in vain.

4. OF GRACE.

The Question stated—Nothing relative—Some Passages, which may be thought to apply—Relation of the Subject to the Question concerning good Works—Fourth Chapter, with resulting Considerations.

THE Calvinists and the Arminians agree in affirming, that the disorders of our nature can be healed only by the grace of God, which begins, and brings to perfection, whatever is holy and acceptable to God, in man. But the Calvinists say, that saving grace is given only to the elect; in whom it is irresistible and efficacious. The Arminians hold, that grace is bestowed on all; that it is sufficient for their salvation; but that it acts suavisely, and may be resisted.

The principal question, then, is that of resistible or irresistible influence of the Holy Ghost, in conversion. Now, the epistle does not contain any thing which has ever been alleged to be a direct affirmation, concerning his holy influence, in that business. We are, indeed, told of “the spirit’s helping our infirmities,” and of his “making intercession for us.” And it is not denied to be reasonable to argue analogically, that he must exercise an agency over the mind, in the matter now the subject. But, as even this is not directly affirmed in the epistle, much less can it be expected, that there should be found in it any metaphysical distinctions, as to the manner of his operation.

There may, however, be supposed something to the same effect, in those expressions which intimate a call to Christians; since the very address is to persons

“called to be saints;” or, as the margin has it more literally, to “called saints.” And so, the foreknown and predestinated are “called,” before they are “justified.” Here, it is common to make a distinction, between an outward calling by the ministry of the word, and an inward calling by the spirit. It is far from being intended to be said in this place, that the latter is unconcerned, in bringing sinners home to God. But it is affirmed, that, be the sense of scripture what it may in this matter, it has nothing to do in establishing the meaning of the expression; which ought not to be supposed to have different meanings, in different parts of the epistle. For, when it is said in the 11th chapter: “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance;” this applying to the Jews, who were cut off because of their unbelief, and pointing to their being taken in again; it is evident, that the word “called,” to whatever extent it may imply individual application, is used collectively by the Apostle; and that, in whatever degree, it may in its consequences extend to another life, it is here intended of a visible profession in the present. If so, whatever weight there may be in the distinction between a general and an effectual call, there can be no foundation for it in the word itself; which has no relation to any other call, than that intimated in this epistle, where it is said—“How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?”*

* Professor Michaelis remarks, in his Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. 4. Ch. 14. Sec. 1, that “*Κλητη αγια*” is an expression borrowed from the Septuagint, to denote a congregation called together for divine worship.

There is something further, however, to be said of grace, as it respects good works; and of the relation in which the two subjects stand to one another. It is well known, that there have been entertained some opinions, ascribing merit to human works; and thus, detracting from the freedom of the grace of God: And to these opinions, there is generally opposed the doctrine held by Protestants, of justification by faith alone. Now, it has been argued against the representing of our acceptance as dependent on the cooperation of our endeavours, that this detracts from the freedom of the grace; making the effect, in some degree, dependent on our works. It is foreign to the present design, to go fully into this question. Nothing more is exacted, than a proof, that the controverted matter handled by the Apostle, was of a different description from that which has become familiar in modern controversy; that no determination of this can be gathered from reasonings concerning the other; and that therefore, how far the affirming of the cooperation of man is an invasion of the prerogative of sovereign grace, must be left to other authorities of scripture, in entire independence on the book before us.

It is the 4th chapter only, in which this subject has been supposed treated of, in any extent; and in order to form a correct idea of the reasoning of the Apostle in that place, there will be use in noticing a clear distinction between merit, strictly speaking; on the part of the creature, and the claiming of debt from the Creator, as the result of the binding operation of his own gracious promise. When St. Paul says, in another book of scripture: “God is not unrighteous, to forget your work, and labour of love;”* it ought not to be considered as lessening the

* Hebrews, vi. 10.

free grace of the reward; but only as making it claimable, in virtue of unmerited declaration. So, when it is said, in the passage that is now to meet our notice—“ To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;” there cannot be supposed the declaration, which would be contrary to the immensity of the divine perfections, that in the unsinning keeping of the whole law, supposing it were possible, there can be a ground of the claim of merit: And it would be inconsistent with the admonition of our blessed Saviour, that, when we have done all, we must say—“ We are unprofitable servants.”

What then is the debt, implied by the Apostle to be brought forward by the advocates of Judaism, but denied by him? It can be no other, than the kind of debt referred to just now, in the epistle to the Hebrews; supposed to be attached to the laws of the Mosaick economy. And if we consider the reasons on which the Apostle denies this debt; and still more, the consequence which had been drawn from it, of the perpetual obligation of the law; and most of all, the effect of the principle on the condition of the Gentile converts; the present part of the subject will be set in a sufficiently perspicuous point of view.

The first argument used is, that Abraham, who was to be “ a Father of many nations;” that is, who was taken into a state of covenant designed to embrace those many, coming under him to the inheritance of it, was justified with God, before he was placed under the covenant referred to; his faith being counted to him for righteousness:* his faith, considered as contrasted with works done in obedience to a covenanting law, and having no reference to a work, so far as it is morally good in itself and in its motive. Accordingly, St. James consistently

* Verse 5.

considers the offering of Isaac as a work; although, on the plan of reasoning of St. Paul, it was an act of faith, in another sense of the expression. And here, by the way, there may be propriety in noticing the extraordinary use made of the part of the passage now before us, in the doctrine of what is called the imputed righteousness of Christ. The favourers of this doctrine bring in proof of it, what first the history of the Old Testament, and afterwards an Apostle mention, as imputed to a man's self: imputed, certainly, by the free grace of God, although it be not expressly said so. If it be replied, that all grace of God is through Christ, this will not be denied; although it will be contended, that the manner in which the grace is conferred is foreign to the present subject. But to return to the Apostle's argument. The way in which it applies to the purpose, is, as he expresses himself on the same subject in another epistle, that "the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect;"* or render it less favourable to the many nations, than it had been before, in relation to the freedom of the interest which they were to obtain in it.

Any consideration brought to the same effect, is in the temporary duration of the law, which the Apostle does not here go fully into the proof of, as in the epistle to the Galatians; but rather seems to point to it, as a necessary consequence of the dispensation to Abraham, which had been the foundation of all that followed. However, he unequivocally affirms the fact; comparing the circumstance in which the Jewish people had stood, as to the law, to a marriage contract, which is no longer binding, than during the lives of both the parties.

* Gal. iii. 17.

But the Apostle has another argument, and that going directly to the present point, in the very nature of the law itself, which was exclusive of every idea, of there being created a debt on the part of the lawgiver: and the reason was, the law's condemning sentence on the irregular propensities of our nature. For this must be supposed intended in the saying: "The law worketh wrath:"* and when it is added: "Where no law is, there is no transgression;" this must be taken agreeably to the concise writing characteristic of the Apostle; meaning, that the prohibition, and the penalty of the law exhibit, in the strongest point of view, the enormity of irregular desire; while, even without them, there could not but be an apprehension of the crime.

Let there be observed, the way in which the argument is brought to bear on the point before us. Had the Apostle been reproving any such arrogance of the Jewish Christians, as consisted in the plea of actual merit in the sight of God, there was no occasion to have had recourse to such a recondite sense of the law as that stated. Had they been adopting the language of the ostentatious Pharisee in the Gospel—"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are;" he might have shown to them from the same Gospel, that, were their obedience as perfect as they erroneously supposed, they would have done no more than it was their duty to have done. And he might even have asked them, from those ancient scriptures which they so highly valued---"If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." In short, had such been the prejudice to which the reasonings of the Apostle were

* Verse 15.

opposed he would, not have been found treating it as a mental error, but would more probably have assumed the tone suited to an immoral state of mind.

But no; the Jewish Christians supposed, that the divine Being had assumed—if it may be related without presumption—the obligation of his own act, in the law instituted by the ministry of Moses. With the giving of this law, he had entered into a covenant with their nation, under its seals, instituted by himself. And therefore they inferred, that the new covenant, which they had seen established by omnipotence, must be designed to coexist with the obligations of the old. In contradiction of this error, the Apostle shows, that the new covenant was recognised in one older than the Mosaick, even in the Abrahamick; that the Mosaick was never designed to be other than temporary; and that, even during its continuance, it could give no claim; because it showed, more conspicuously than would otherwise have appeared, the imperfection of all those services of men, the claim of which, if there be any, must therefore rest on other grounds, than what could be found established by the law. All this is pertinent. . But to suppose that the Apostle, in order to determine a controversy of a local nature, and to be judged of with the help of circumstances peculiar to a certain plea, should move, as relative to it, a question intimately connected with Christian morals, and regarding all mankind; and not only so, but that, in order to establish his sense of it, he should travel in circuitous argument, when he might come directly to the conscience and to the heart, is a proceeding, of which very strong evidence should appear, to convince us of it in such a writer as St. Paul. But if, in the whole thread of the discourse, there be not a sentence, showing

that the writer designed to speak on the one or on the other side of any question concerning merit inherent to human works; or concerning the share which the human will may be disposed to take in the performance of them; it does not appear, that the decisions of the Apostle, in the places referred to, can with any propriety be introduced into the controversy contemplated in this book.

5 OF PERSEVERANCE.

Opposition of the parties—Sense of Chapter 8, Verse 38, 39—
And of Chapter 11, Verse 29.

THE impossibility of falling finally from grace, is what the Calvinists affirm and the Arminians deny. The object here is to prove, that the epistle has nothing to the purpose of either of the parties.

In favour of the doctrine, there are not recollected more than two passages adduced. The first of them, are the last two verses of the 8th chapter—“For I am persuaded, 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.” Be it confessed, that none of them can separate, in the important matter mentioned: But may not a man be so separated by his voluntary apostasy? That he may not, does by no means follow. It is analogous to a case easily supposed; that of a man, whose right to civil citizenship should be called in question. We may conceive of ourselves as advocating it, on the ground of constitution and law. In so doing, we might properly advert to all the machinations of his opponents; and then affirm, in the warmth of our attachment to his cause, that neither this man, nor another—and so on, mentioning every one of those whose malice we were defying, should deprive our client of his privilege. But it would not follow, nor would we design to affirm, that he might not forfeit it by treason, or lose the benefit of it by expatriation.

The other passage is in the 29th verse of the 11th chapter; where we read—‘ The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.’ Now, even if these words had been spoken of men in their individual capacities, it would not follow, that there might not be a forfeiture of their calling, by apostasy on their part; although they could not lose it by repentance on the part of God. But in truth, the words are intended of the Jews, in their collec'tive capacity; and express, that although in their character of a nation, they were now cast off; yet their original calling stood firm, ensuring their being brought in again.

On the part of the Arminians, there has been adduced the passage of which the last quoted words are part; to show, that persons once in a state of acceptance with God, may be finally rejected by him: because, say they, certain, who were in existence at the time of the casting off, died in their unbelief, before the bringing in again; which will not happen, until “ the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in.” Still, the matter affirmed was of the nation; leaving the case of the individual as it was before.

There ought to be noted, in this place, the ground on which the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints is here considered as a branch of Calvinism. It does not appear to have been the opinion of Calvin, in the extent in which it is now received, and in which it was declared by the Synod of Dort, here adopted as the standard of the opinions of the parties.

Still, it is conceived not to have been, in its present extent, the sentiment of Calvin himself. He treads carefully in the steps of St. Austin; who reconciled his

doctrine of predestination with that of defectibility, by saying, that to others than the elect, God might give all grace, except of perseverance. Agreeably to this, Calvin says in his *Institutions*—“Neither is it from any other cause” (meaning than the grace of God) “that some persevere to the end, while others fall in the course begun: Forasmuch as perseverance itself is the gift of God, which he does not bestow promiscuously on all, but imparts it as seems good to him. If the reason of the difference be demanded, why some constantly persevere and others fall, through instability; no other reason appears to us, than that God sustains the former with a strength effected by his own energy, lest they should perish; and that to the latter he does not furnish the same support, to the end that they may be examples of inconstancy.”*

He also affirms the regeneration of infants, in the ordinance of baptism. For speaking of their case, he says—“The promise, in which we have explained the virtue of the sign to consist, is the same in both” (circumcision and baptism) “consisting in the fatherly favour of God, remission of sins, and eternal life.”† In the 20th section, speaking of future repentance and faith, he says—“Though these graces have not yet been formed in them, the seeds of both are nevertheless implanted in their hearts, by the secret operation of the Spirit.” And he concludes the chapter thus—“Wherefore, unless we are obstinately determined to reject the goodness of God, let us present to him our children, to

* Book ii. chapter v. sec. 3. † Book iv. chapter xvi. sec. 4.

whom he assigns a place in his family, that is, among the members of his church.”*

That there is an inconsistency between the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and that of the final perseverance of the Saints as now held by Calvinists, needs not be proved. Nevertheless, it must be confessed, that Calvin held the latter doctrine, as applicable to all in whom there had been the exercise of faith. In the 2d chapter of the 3d book of his Institutions, he maintains at large, that the least drop† of faith is accompanied by a certainty of election: and in the 20th section, and both before and afterwards, he is express to the point, that of such a faith there cannot be a final failure.

The author has thought it needful to make the preceding discrimination, lest he should be supposed to have ascribed to Calvin an opinion not fully his. It is Calvinism, as explained by the decrees of the Synod of Dort—confessedly the line drawn between them and the Arminians—which is contemplated in this performance.

* There having been recently published a translation of Calvin's Institutes, the author, as a guard against any undue bias, has substituted for his own translations, from the Latin, what he finds in the English edition, although, as far as he can judge, they are substantially the same with his own.

† Gutta.

CONCLUSION.

The points agreed on—Reasons of the form of this discussion—
Remarks on St. Paul's Epistles—And on the Epistle to the
Romans in particular.

THERE has often occurred to the author of this work, during the progress of it, the danger of a reader's suspecting him of an insidious design—that of insinuating concerning certain important subjects of religion, their being foreign to the sense of scripture, under the cover of merely proving, that there is nothing said of them in a particular book of it. At any rate, the inquiry occurs—For what purpose was the investigation gone into?

To lay the foundation for a satisfactory answer to the inquiry, and to remove the preceding apprehension; let there be noticed certain points, on which the Calvinists and the Arminians are agreed; and to which, of course, nothing in the preceding disquisition ought to be construed to apply.

They are agreed, in there being a departure in human nature, from its original righteousness; and this to such an extent, that no man can, of his own strength, raise himself above the condition in which the fall has placed him; or even make the least advance to that effect. It is alike agreed, concerning every step to restoration and every motion of the mind prompting to it, that they are induced by the agency of the divine spirit; the necessity of which is supposed, under all the distinctions and all the disputation, as to the manner

of his operation. And further, it is agreed, that the true and the only ground of acceptance with God, is in the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the sacrifice of the cross; all merit, on the part of man, being utterly excluded and denied.

As these matters are common to the litigants, so, let it be here understood, that they are believed in and now acknowledged, by the writer of these remarks. If, in any thing which he has written, there should be thought a discovery of the contrary, he trusts, that it is through mistaken inference; and at any rate, he disowns all such supposed error.

But at the same time, he believes, that, from the aforesaid truths of scripture, speculations have been educed, concerning which, no data towards reasoning are given to us in the scriptures. Although this has been affirmed and endeavoured to be proved of one book only; yet it is under the persuasion, that the same principles may be applied to the same use, concerning the books of scripture generally: not indeed to prove, that they decide nothing in the controversy; for it is here thought that they decide a great deal; but to show, that there are some metaphysical discussions improperly introduced into theology, and not at all spoken to in the word of truth.

At present, however, the author has no right to affirm further, than to the extent of what he supposes to be the result of the examination of the epistle to the Romans: and his inference from this is, that, in the conducting of the controversy, the book should be considered as not making for one side or for the other; and therefore left entirely out of the account.

As it must have been perceived and will not be denied, that the author is more inclined to the system of the Arminians, than to that of the Calvinists; the inquiry may be made—Why he should endeavour to deprive the former of any aid which they might suppose derived from the epistle to the Romans. His answer is, that, next to his opinion of the true sense of the composition, there is the consideration of the tendency of his argument to show the untenable ground on which Calvinism stands. It is well known, that this system rests its peculiar doctrines more on the epistle to the Romans, than on any other part, and perhaps than on all the rest, of scripture. Accordingly, what are here supposed to be its errors, are less likely to be satisfactorily exposed, by there being proved, if that happened to be the case, that the Apostle spoke more conformably to the Arminian, than to the Calvinistick hypothesis, than by there being proved, as is conceived to be actually the case, that the Apostle had another subject in contemplation; that every part of his argument is strictly pertinent to it; and that there is no evidence in the composition, of there having crossed his mind, during the writing of it, a single thought on either side of any one of the points comprehended in the controversy.

After all, however, the author is aware, that there is a considerable proportion of serious people, who will not be reconciled to any plan of interpretation of this epistle, which shall make the taking in of the whole design of it, a circumstance essential to the right understanding of any considerable part. This brings to mind a passage in the paraphrase of Mr. Locke. “I have heard

sober Christians," says he, "very much admire, why ordinary, illiterate people, who were professors, that showed a concern for religion, seemed much more conversant in St. Paul's Epistles, than in the plainer, and as it seemed to them," meaning the former, "much more intelligible parts of the New Testament. They confessed, that though they read St. Paul's epistles with the best intention, yet they generally found them too hard to be mastered, and they laboured in vain, so far to reach the Apostle's meaning all along in the train of what he said, as to read them with that satisfaction, that arises from a feeling, that we understand and fully comprehend the force and reasoning of an author; and therefore, they could not imagine what those saw in them, whose eyes they thought not much better than their own. But the case was plain. These sober, inquisitive readers, had a mind to see nothing in St. Paul's epistles, but just what he meant; whereas those others of a quicker and gayer sight, could see in them what they pleased." If any reader of the present work should be dissatisfied with it, from a habit of thinking like that complained of by Mr. Locke, an appeal is here entered, from the judgment of such a person. The present writer may be mistaken in his interpretation; but by such a reader, there cannot be obtained the true one, which does not lie near enough for him to the surface. It may be proper, however, to give him from this very epistle and from a part of it foreign to the controversy which has been considered, a proof, how far from being obvious is St. Paul's meaning in the composition. The part of it in view, is his admonition in respect to meats. If there were set aside all reference to peculiar difference of the

time, and if instructions were supposed to be given on the subject simply; it would undeniably follow, that no Christian should indulge himself in the use of meat, so long as there were a wrongheaded fellow Christian, who might be offended by it. But when the true sense is obtained by the consideration of cotemporary circumstances, it appears to be no more, than that the Gentile Christians ought not so to use their exemption from the institutions of the Mosaick law, as to give offence to the Jewish Christians, who supposed themselves thereby bound. In regard to the concluding words of this part of the epistle: "Whatever is not of faith, is sin," the writer of this has heard it seriously contended for, as the sense of the words, and it is indeed so, when they are taken independently on the connexion, that there is no action of a man's life, indifferent in regard to moral good and evil, but that all is sin, except when God's glory is especially contemplated in the act. Every one who attends to the series of the discourse must perceive the meaning to be, that in every important transaction of life, a man's belief of his being right is an essential circumstance of his being so, as to intention and motive.

There may further be noticed, in regard to the epistle to the Romans, as especially applicable to it, a remark made by St. Peter concerning the writings of St. Paul generally, where he says of them: "In which there are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction"* Now,

* 2 Peter iii 16. The passage from St. Peter is here introduced, as especially applicable to the subjects treated of in the epis-

although sincerity of intention will prevent us, under the influence of divine grace, from abusing any part of scripture to our destruction; yet, in regard to the epistle to the Romans, we shall never, without the use of extraneous helps which divine providence has furnished, obtain a clear apprehension of what an Apostle found difficult to be understood: and this itself should induce modesty in our interpretation, be it what it may.

If these sheets should meet the eye of any reader, who, in addition to the love of truth, the most necessary requisite for the study of any book of scripture, possesses the share of erudition and has bestowed the strict attention to the chain of argument, which are exacted in an eminent degree by the book in question; in regard to such a reader, the author is aware, that, by writing on it, he has committed himself to the rigour of criticism; although, as he hopes, not to the severity of censure. At least, he has endeavoured to avoid whatever could justly expose him to this: For while he has exercised his own right of religious inquiry, he has respected the rights of any others whom he has had occasion to advert to, either by name or otherwise; not having criminated or thrown odium, to the best of his recollection, or with design, either on the motives or on the tendency of their writings.

To some it may give offence, that so considerable a book of holy Scripture should be represented as being principally employed on a temporary subject of litigation; not exciting any uneasiness in the Christian world,

tle to the Romans; which is mentioned, because of a construction given to the place, referring it, not to St. Paul's epistles, but to the things spoken of in them.

any longer than during the age in which the book was endited. That this should be no objection to the argument of the present work, might be proved from many parts of scripture; which have evident relation to early errors, of no longer continuance than that of the perpetual obligation of the Mosaick law. In the epistle which has been before us, and extraneous to the portion of it taken into view, there is a whole chapter—the 14th—confessed by all to be intended of a difference of opinion, which soon expired; while yet the record of it remains.

As long as it shall remain, indeed, it will dictate a lesson of mutual forbearance; on points concerning which there may be a difference of opinion and of practice among Christians, without any injury to fundamental truths: a lesson, which, if it had been duly submitted to and acted on, would have prevented a great proportion of the breaches of the Church's peace. In like manner, in regard to the Apostle's argument in the first eleven chapters, there is not a single branch of it, however local and temporary as to its immediate objects, which may not be universal and perpetual, as to the benefit to be derived from it. By the Apostle's melancholy but true portraiture of heathen manners, we may be instructed, that if the lamp of revelation should be extinguished, the same would be again the result of the same depraved passions of human nature. The part of the argument which unveils the aggravation of the criminality of the Jews, in the contrariety of their practice to their law, will for ever admonish professing Christians, of the greater inconsistency of corrupt morals, in contrariety to the holy requisitions of the Gospel.

If the Jews could not consider God as their debtor, in virtue of any obedience which they could pay to the Mosaick law; with still less pretence can we arrogate the claim of merit to any obedience of ours, under a dispensation which takes us up as sinners; and proclaims, in terms not to be misunderstood, that all its benefits are of grace. When we read of collective bodies, not only in their civil existence, but in their visible profession of God's holy and eternal truth, that they are "as clay in the hands of the potter;" it not being, in respect to either, "of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" there will always be presented a theme of gratitude for our being born under the light of Christianity, and for our being made, from infancy, members of Christ's kingdom, the church. And when we learn the rejection of the Jews for their unbelief, accompanied by the solemn intimation to Christian churches—"Take heed, lest, as he spared not the natural branches, he also spare not thee;" it will be, to the end of time, a lesson to every Christian church, to "hold fast the form of sound words delivered to them;" lest there should happen that removing of the "candlestick out of his place," which, in the Apostolick age, was threatened to some Christian churches, then great and flourishing; and was at last awfully inflicted on them. But there is no part of the argument more instructive, than that which carries the expectation forward to a future display of the mighty power of God, in bringing back his people to the true flock and fold; when, as the Apostle quotes the prophet Isaiah, saying—"There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungod-

liness from Jacob.” There is in this a powerful incentive of faith and hope; especially when we observe before our eyes, existing monuments of the accomplishment of the threatening; and when we perceive the train laid, of events pointing to the better accomplishment of the promise; and destined to demonstrate, in regard to the ancient people, that the calling of them is “without repentance.” And it is further obvious, concerning the splendour of the prospect opened to us by this part of the epistle, that it derives additional graces from the association of the event which has been referred to, with the coming in of “the fullness of the Gentiles;” in which, there will be fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi*—“From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

Besides, that the branches of the Apostle’s discourse may be made sources of information by easy and obvious accommodation; there shine forth, in this argumentative part of the epistle, divine truths alike applicable to all times and places. Such as the entailment of death, in consequence of Adam’s sin; the danger of a second death, as the consequence of our own sins; the struggle between natural appetite and the better desire of the mind, which every man finds attested by evidence in himself; the danger of abusing divine grace to a continuance in sin; the duty of a death to sin, exacted by the Christian calling; the Christian sacri-

* Chapter i. verse 11.

fice of a holy and virtuous state of mind, as a necessary accompaniment of a celebration of the sacrifice of the death of Christ; the consequences of being reconciled to God, in the confidence thus obtained of drawing nigh to him with the full assurance of faith; in the love—the peace—the joy which it inspires; in the patient endurance of injuries, to which it disposes; and finally, in the hopes, beyond any the world can give, of which it is the ground. These, and other like to these, are salutary truths, lying conspicuous on the face of the discursive portions of the epistle.

But even had there been nothing of the description stated, imbodyed with the argument, the composition would have been rendered invaluable, by the moral instructions contained in the concluding chapters. How cold are the morals of a Cicero, of a Seneca, and of an Epictetus, when compared with those of St. Paul, in respect to their being accommodated to the renovation of the heart; and their thus savouring of the unction, which the Holy Spirit only can pour out! God forbid! that under the show of zeal for moral rectitude, we should be indifferent to the duty of maintaining Gospel verity. But without endangering ourselves in this respect, we may affirm, that if professing Christians had always contended, under the influence of the morality of the concluding chapter of this epistle, for the views of faith, which they have respectively thought opened to them by the preceding chapters, they would not have been rendered by such contention, what we know to have happened often, the less “meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light.” And this is

a lesson, which the author of the present work especially wishes to be impressed, by divine grace, on his own mind; lest the investigation in which he has been occupied should have the effect, of weakening in him the desire of the cultivation of that charity, which is better than the possession of all "mysteries and all knowledge."

APPENDIX.

ON THE

CASE OF THE HEATHEN,

Calvin and others on the Subject—Calvinistick Churches—The Point of Difference between Christians and the Heathen—Authorities from the Old Testament—The Circumstances of Idolatry—Authorities from the New Testament.

IT was hinted in the introduction to this work, that there attached to the general question of it the subordinate question, how far a state of visible covenant with God in this life, is connected with the blessedness of a future state of existence: and a caution was given against supposing, that, in all circumstances, the one were no otherwise to be attained to, than through the medium of the other. But, as there could not be much said, without going beyond the limits of the epistle, it is judged expedient to add something, in the way of appendix.

It is not rare to find respectable and learned ministers of the Gospel expressing the hope, that God extends his mercy to the virtuous heathen: But some of them entertain this hope in such a manner as proves, that however agreeable the expectation to their own humane minds, they are not without apprehension of their having gone further, than they are warranted by the Oracles of God. The object of this appendix is to prove, that it is a conspicuous truth of Holy Scripture.

As the appendix is designed to supply a defect, because of a point rather presumed than proved in the body of the performance, so there is a trust, that it cannot be deemed superfluous, in reference to the Calvinistick theory; which pronounces a severer sentence on the heathen world, than any here conceived to be found in the word of God, or to be inferred from it. Calvin affirms*—“The end of the law of nature is, that man may be rendered inexcusable;” and again: “To deprive men of the pretext of ignorance, while they are convicted, even by their own testimony.” And just before, commenting on Romans, ii. 14. he had said—“Because it might have seemed absurd, that the Gentiles should perish without any previous knowledge, he” (the Apostle) “immediately subjoins, that their conscience supplies the place of a law to them; and is therefore sufficient for their condemnation.”

Conformably to this, when speaking of predestination in the 5th section of the 21st chapter of his 3d book, he says—“This, God has not only testified in particular persons, but has given a specimen of it in the whole progeny of Abraham:” the subsequent reasoning, through several pages, showing that he considered, first Ishmael and his posterity, and then Esau and his posterity, as under the sentence of reprobation. Turrentine and Witsius deliver themselves in language like that of Calvin: And the same is well known to be common in Calvinistick writers. It is not here unknown, that a language somewhat different from that of Calvin, has been held since his time by Calvinistick churches; which confess, that there are elect persons, not called by the ministry of the word. But

* Book ii. ch. ii. sect. 22.

this distinction will be kept out of view ; partly because the author knows not on what testimonies of scripture it is grounded, but principally, because his remarks will rest on principles, to which the distinction will be foreign. By those from whom he departs, there is held, what is here most heartily acknowledged, that, from the fall of man to the present day, there has been a church or visible body, living in the profession of a divine revelation ; which, as to its great object, has been the same under different dispensations. From the truth stated, it has been inferred—and this is the matter here denied—that beyond the limits of that pale—with the modern exception, perhaps, of some unknown elect—there are none who attain to the favour of God in this life and his presence in another: that this is evident in the general tenour of holy writ ; and that there are no testimonies in it to the contrary.

Let there not be supposed of what is to follow, that it is a result of a low sense of the advantages formerly possessed by the Jewish church, and of the greater advantages since belonging to the Christian. Perhaps, however, it may be properly said of both, what was said by St. Paul of one of them only, that their pre-eminence consisted “ chiefly ” in this, that “ to them were committed the Oracles of God.” Many and inestimable are the benefits now enjoyed by Christian people, over those held by any other. They have more information of the process of the moral government of God, from the creation to the consummation of all things. They have more ample and more excellent instructions for the government of life. They have more persuasive motives to a suitable practice. In the event of falling into sin, they

have stronger incitements to repentance ; especially in the communication made to them of the great sacrifice for sin, and of acceptance through its merits. They have assurances which reason never could have supplied, of the aids of divine grace, to quicken and sustain them: And they have an immortality set before them, which, on the ground of rational deduction, might have been hoped for, but could not have been assured. All these particulars might be amplified to a great extent; but they are merely adverted to, in order to show, that while we thank God, above all his mercies, for the gift of revelation ; and while we lament the awful condition of those, who, from indifference, or from the love of sin, reject it; we need not suppose of our merciful Lord, that in his dispensations to his other servants, he is the “hard man” who “reaps where he has not sown, and gathers where he has not strowed.” No: As the scriptures frequently assure us, all men will be judged according to their works ; according to these, no doubt, as connected with the states of mind from which they issue ; and both being taken in connexion with the lights which have been bestowed.

Although, in the epistle itself, we find the Apostle incidentally speaking to the purpose, as was stated in the introduction; yet it is hardly to be expected, that he should have discoursed of it professedly ; because there was nothing in the economy under which he lived, so circumscribing the divine favour, as to suggest a reasonable doubt concerning the future condition of the virtuous Heathen. To be within the covenant was a distinguishing privilege, in the estimation of a devout Jew. But there was no ground on which he could have pronounced of all who were strangers to it, that they were cut off

from the paternal regard of the great Being, concerning whom St. Paul so pertinently demands—"Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles?"

In inquiring into the sense of the Old Testament concerning this matter, we of course go back to the time of Abraham. The peculiar designation of his family, may be considered as beginning with the call given to him in Ur of the Chaldees, and recorded in the 12th chapter of Genesis—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." The covenant, however, was not established, until the transaction related in the 15th chapter. Now let there be observed the existing proofs, that the contrary of the position here maintained could not have been in the mind either of Abraham, or of the writer of the Pentateuch, as forming a part of the divine dispensation at that time established.

Of the proofs from that period, there may be mentioned three; and the first of them, shall be the not including of Lot and his family, within the covenant. When Abraham, intercedes thus for Sodom—"Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" rising in his demand, until he obtains the promise—"I will not destroy it for ten's sake;" and when we find that Lot and his family, being not ten in number, although they could not save the city, were themselves saved by a permitted flight; what are we to conclude, but that the fugitives are affirmed by scripture history to be righteous? And as to Lot himself, he is expressly so called by St. Peter. 2d. Ep. ii. 8.

Next, when we read of Abimelech King of Gerar, on the occasion of a judgment brought on his subjects, drawing nigh to God with the expostulation—"Lord wilt thou slay also a righteous nation;" and when we find the same Abimelech the subject of a divine admonition and promise, it is not natural to conceive of himself and of his people, as cast off from the love of God.

Another instance is Melchisedeck, King of Salem; a righteous king, as is denoted by his name. This man was evidently without the covenant; and yet, he is called a priest of the most high God, and made a type of the Messiah, who is "a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck."

We may go on, beyond the time of Abraham, to other instances in sacred history. Job was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; and yet he is mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel as one of the three, the most perfect in ancient times, and in the history, he is described by the pen of inspiration, as "perfect and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil." He is generally understood to have been of the posterity of Esau; on all of whom the curse in the 9th chapter of the epistle is supposed by some to have been laid in a spiritual sense. It has, indeed, been conjectured, that Job lived before the giving of the law: But as no such circumstance is mentioned, it must have been indifferent in the mind of inspiration, as to the purpose for which his name is introduced in this place. Even if we should hold with some that the character is fictitious, still we must believe, that it is accommodated to the truth of the circumstances, under which his example was to be displayed.

Equally beyond the limits of the covenant, were Jonadab the son of Rechab and the patriarchal family governed by him; a branch of the family of the father in law of Moses, who maintained their independence in the country to the south of Judea, during the greater part of the Israelitish history, and were owned by Jehovah as a pious and virtuous people, in a message by his prophet.

But perhaps it will be remarked of all the persons mentioned, that they were worshippers of the one true God. Who can affirm, however, that the same may not be applicable to some persons among all the nations of the earth? Individuals might be mentioned, of whom it is undisputed: And it would be unreasonable to doubt of there having been very many, not regardless of the great Being, who “left not himself without witness” in his works.

It may be asked—What excuse is to be made for the abominable idolatries to imaginary deities of an inferior grade, commonly intermixed with the adoration, where it is to be found, of one great Supreme? The answer is—No other excuse, than such as is commonly made under the Christian law, for men upright in general character; but misled, in certain instances, by the errors of their respective times. To mention a single instance: It would be difficult to demonstrate, that the offering of homage to a supposed subordinate divinity, or the worshipping of the one only God after the symbol of an image, is in itself more faulty and more inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, than the taking of life for supposed errors in religion. This corruption of Christianity, is not here laid at the door of

any particular denomination of professing Christians; but is chargeable on Roman Catholicks and on Protestants, and on all the denominations of the latter, who have tasted of the sweets of independent power.* If God hath said, in reference to idolatry—"I will not give my glory to another," he has also given as a reason of his prohibiting of the injurious taking away of life—"In the image of God made he man." But in the present day, when religious rights are better understood than formerly, we are fain to apologize for error in this matter, by the plea of the general prevalence of it: Which is nothing else, than an endeavour—and, it is trusted a successful one—to cover the fault referred to with that very mantle of charity, which St. Paul actually threw over it, when he said to the Athenians—"The times of this ignorance God winked at." This may serve for argument, as well as for example: For

* Persecution by temporal penalties, for errors in religion, is treated in this place, not as an immorality, although it doubtless deserves the name, but as a most pernicious error. If it were more contemplated in this point of view, there would arise an inducement to moderation; and there would be prevented much mutual condemnation, for less destructive errors in opinion: while from circumstances, we are constrained to make a favourable allowance, for this greater one, in characters of former times. Certainly it cannot be incorrect, to consider persecution as the effect of heresy, according to the sense in which the word is usually understood. When men are guilty of theft, or of adultery, or of murder or in any other way, it does not follow that they judge erroneously, concerning the laws against which they are offenders. But persecution has always bottomed itself on a zeal to do God service; and is therefore an offence, not only against Christian morals, but against Christian truth.

although it is a frequent practice to evade the full force of the words, by referring them to God's not sending till then of a revelation against prevalent idolatry, yet, were it not for the effect on the point before us, it could hardly be overlooked, that the natural construction makes them declaratory of his not rigorously punishing, where there was want of better information to prevent.

When we go on to the New Testament, the first instance that meets us, is of the eastern sages. It will not be alleged, that they were under the Old Testament economy; and as to the New, it was not begun. Let it not be objected, that they were brought to Christ and exercised faith in him. The revelation of his birth had been previously made: And was it to persons labouring under the wrath of God, that so signal a favour had been extended?

The parable of the good Samaritan is in point; because what is attached to a fictitious person, must be considered as what might have belonged to a real character of the day. Let it be recollected, then, that the Samaritan was one of those, against whom our Saviour had given his decision on the question concerning the proper place of worship; saying—"Salvation is of the Jews." In respect to the covenant of promise, therefore, there was no more title to it, than among any people professedly pagan. And besides, their worship was much intermixed with idolatry, having had its origin in the apostasy of Jeroboam; when he set up the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan. Yet, of a member of such a community, our Lord records an action, evidently represented to be pure in its motive and acceptable to God: For nothing less can be implied in

the injunction which makes the moral of the parable—
“Go and do thou likewise.”

Perhaps, as decisive a proof as any that can be adduced is in the description of the final judgment, in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel; in which all nations are represented, standing before the Judge. Without laying stress on the original word;* no words can be more comprehensive of the universality of mankind, to be separated under the names of the sheep and the goats. Not only are they inclusive of the virtuous heathen; but there is something especially descriptive of these, in the question—“Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink?” Because Christians would not be ignorant, of what had been assured to them by their master, relative to their needy brethren—“as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”†

When it is said in Luke xii. 47, 48—“That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes;” it is implied, that men will be judged, according to the dispensations under which they have been respectively placed:

* *Εθνοι.*

† The interpretation given on the other side, makes the meaning of the expression, “all nations,” to be the professors of the Christian religion in all nations. It is difficult to say, how far the same position may appear differently to different minds; but were it not known, to how great an extent the diversity may take place; it would be here presumed, that the stating of the above would suffice for the refutation of it.

There being nothing in the declaration, the principle of which does not reach to the full extent of this.

The case of Cornelius is very significant. Let it not be said, for the evasion of the inference to be drawn from it, that this man was converted to the Christian faith, at the expense of a miracle. While he was yet a heathen, his prayers and alms came “up for a memorial before God;” being accepted—for this must be implied—through the merits of him, than whom “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” On the case of Cornelius is grounded the declaration of St. Peter concerning the virtuous heathen generally—“In every nation, he that feareth him,” God, “and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”*

Independently on these authorities, conceived to be directly in favour of the position, it seems essentially involved in all those passages, which speak of the goodness of

* The way of withdrawing Cornelius from the operation of the principle here pleaded for, is by supposing that he was a proselyte of righteousness, or else believed in Christ; although not a word is said to either effect. The circumstances of his case are presumptive of the contrary. That he could not have been, what was called among the Jews, a proselyte of righteousness, is evident: For in that case, there would have not been brought the charge against St. Peter—“Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” His station in the Roman army, his distance from the original seat of Christian doctrine, his having no idea of the information which his visitant was to bring, his taking the Apostle for more than man, and the Apostle’s statement of Christian truths, presumptive indeed that tidings of them had reached Cornelius, but at the same time, that evidence was wanting to him; all these are little suited to the idea, that this heaven favoured man had been of the number of believers, before the miraculous event recorded.

God to mankind generally; as where St. Paul calls him “the Saviour of all men;” and where Christ says of his Almighty Father—“He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” Be it, that such passages speak of the providential care of God in the present life: Still, if that care be extended to men, only to aggravate a condemnation, necessarily resulting from the circumstances in which the same providence had placed them; such declarations, to say the least, are not to the purpose for which they seem to have been made, of magnifying the goodness of the divine Being.

There is another remarkable passage in St. Matthew viii. 11. compared with St. Luke xiii. 29. The words are nearly the same in both Gospels; but in St. Matthew, they are—“Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” It has been made a question, whether this relates to the influx of the heathen into the church; or to the admission of persons of that description, being virtuous, into heaven. It cannot be denied, that some judicious commentators give it the former turn; but as the latter is here preferred, the reasons shall be given.

What has principally led to the supposition, that the passage relates to professors of Christianity, is, that in St. Matthew, the recited words come in just after the healing of the servant of a Roman centurion; with a commendation of his faith, as superiour to any found in Israel: And there seems something very pertinent in the sentiment, that many, of the same description with this centurion, would, like him, exercise faith in the Messiah. In St. Luke, however, the declaration is in almost the same

words; but without the record of any such circumstance, appearing to give a limitation to the meaning.

In both passages, they are said to come “from the east and from the west;” with the addition in the latter passage, of the words, “and from the north and from the south.” But the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen, was not by their coming to the original seat of it: It was by its being carried to them.

The converts to the Christian faith, could not sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, understood in the sense of the church on earth; and therefore, the expression must have been applied to the better kingdom in heaven. And this is especially clear in St. Luke; where, the subject being the final judgment, it is pleaded by some before the Judge “We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.” These, however, “see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God,” and themselves “thrust out:” Then come in the words here remarked on; which of course designate persons opposed to the preceding, in regard to opportunity of receiving instruction and making a profession.

Dr. Taylor gives the following reason—and it seems of great weight—against the interpretation exploded. He says, that according to it, the assertion of our Saviour is not in point. It makes an opposition between the present children of the kingdom, that is, the Jews; and the future children, that is, Christians: Whereas, the opposition ought to be between the former, and such persons as the centurion, that is, heathens.

The manner in which the three passages last quoted are treated by Dr. Doddridge, is worthy of notice. In his

interpretation of that of St. Matthew viii. 11. and that of St. Luke xiii. 29. he has not a word expressive of the sentiment of other writers on his system, limiting the description of the righteous to a proportion of the professors of all nations; but gives an interpretation which implies, but does not positively express the opinion, here sustained. It is more evidently implied, although still not expressed, in his interpretation and improvement of Matthew xviii. 11. But when he comes to the passage in the 10th chapter of the Acts, the opinion is evident in the interpretation, and still more so in a note; in which he comments as follows on the words—“ He that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.”—“ This, for any thing I can see, might be supposed the case of many, who were far from being in any degree Jewish proselytes, and had never heard of the Jews and their religion, as it was certainly the case of many, before the peculiarities of Judaism existed, and even before the institution of the Abrahamick covenant. I think this text proves, that God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the Gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it.”

The above is exactly to the present purpose. But in the remainder of the note, principally intended to distinguish the case of Cornelius, from that of persons who reject Christian light bestowed, Dr. Doddridge seems to have entertained the further design of avoiding a shock to prejudice, by what had gone before. For, speaking of the sense of the passage as opened by him, he continues thus:—“ But far from intimating, that some such persons may be found among those that reject Christianity, when offered to them in its full evidence, it determines

nothing concerning the existence of such in every nation;" (meaning such as Cornelius) "though it tells us, how God regards them, supposing them to exist."

It is here thought a reasonable conclusion from the premises, that no part of the human race are placed, by the condition of their birth, beyond the reach of the mercy of God, through Christ. In regard to the heathen, we may properly speak of them, as being left to the uncovenanted mercies of God. For we know not the grounds on which they shall be judged: while, in regard to ourselves, we have great reason to bear in mind our Lord's decision concerning the talents—"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

PART II.

A Comparison of the Controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, with Holy Scripture generally.

INTRODUCTION.

Dissent from Calvinism—Not on Arminian Principles—Origin of Calvinism—Its Progress—Its Alliance with Philosophical Necessity—Difference between this and Original Calvinism—Not in the Decrees of the Synod of Dort—Since embraced by various Calvinists—Proposal to exclude it from Theology—Result, is the stating of Scripture Doctrine.

THE author, wishing to give an early insight of his design, begins with the intimation, that it will be, principally, to prove what he believes to be the errors of the Calvinistick system; while yet, the opinions which he is about to oppose to them will not be built on the Arminian foundation. He conceives of the peculiarities of Calvinism, that they are human inventions; introduced, at no very early period, into Christian theology. The objects which he proposes to keep in view, throughout the succeeding investigation of passages of scripture, are the following.

In regard to the first link in the chain—predestination, as applied by Calvinists to individual persons and their condition in another life; it is conceived to be a subject, on which the scriptures are silent. If this be correct, it must be evident, that both the parties have acted under an error. The Calvinist thinks, that the glory of the sovereignty of God cannot be supported, otherwise than by the opinion, that he foreordained some of the human race

to everlasting happiness, and others of them to everlasting misery, without reference to any good to be done by them respectively; and even that he called them into existence, for the very purpose of illustrating his mercy and his justice, in these opposite ends appointed to them. On the contrary the Arminian, offended by what he thinks an impeachment of the divine benevolence and justice, supposes that he avoids the difficulty, by founding predestination on prescience: So that, according to him, the different allotments are predicated on the foreseen uses of a liberty to be bestowed on all. Whether the position of a predestination founded on prescience be true or otherwise, considered as matter of human speculation, the author does not inquire. But he proposes to show, that a preceding eternity itself being beyond the grasp of the human understanding; the scriptures, harmonizing with this property of our being, have left all that concerns our destination from eternity, under the dark veil behind which the subject itself lies hid. Or, in other words, there is nothing declared to us, that applies at all to God's eternal decree concerning the everlasting condition, either happy or miserable, of his creatures. If this be fact, it follows, that what is affirmed by the Calvinists on the one hand, or by the Arminians on the other, whether there be truth or falsehood in either of them, is not Christian doctrine, but metaphysical speculation.

Another position to be maintained, in the progress of the inquiry, is, that the doctrine of absolute and unconditional predestination being laid down as scriptural, there followed of course from it, all the other peculiarities of Calvinism; which were indeed called for, in order to render the system consistent and complete. It is not intended

to say any thing in this place, to the merits of the question, any further, than is necessary to the unfolding of the idea adopted and to be pursued. The introduction of the doctrine of predestination, in what is now called the Calvinistick sense, is here supposed to have been with a view to the aid which it was thought to afford, in the argument against the errors of the Pelagians. It was however perceived, that the doctrine would seem to militate against an opinion universally entertained, and for the contradicting of which the minds of men were not prepared; that for God to condemn an innocent creature to everlasting torments, was inconsistent with our ideas of his attributes. To him who is now writing, this seems no more contrary to the first principles of reason, and no more difficult to be resolved into sovereign will, than the saying, that God decreed the state, although to be accomplished through the medium of guilt, not to be avoided. The latter, however, was accepted; while the other would have been refused. And hence there arose the necessity of devising the expedient of the imputation of Adam's sin, as the only mean by which the final result could have been brought about. From the same source flowed the doctrine of a grace irresistibly saving to some, and not possible to be improved by others; which was nothing else than the exertion of omnipotence, in the only way in which the decree could have been carried into effect. These doctrines were not introduced into the church at the same time. Those of predestination and irresistible grace, appeared in the beginning of the fifth century, and were afterwards much cultivated in curious reasonings and distinctions; especially by the schoolmen and the monks; still, in connexion with an opinion very ill suited to the

system; that of the possibility of falling from grace given. It was reserved for Calvinism, to discover the inconsistency; and by establishing the final perseverance of the saints, to exhibit a connected chain of doctrine. But, although the introducing of this comparatively modern doctrine is here ascribed to Calvinism; and although it is one of the five points which have been long considered as characteristick of the followers of Calvin; yet it does not appear to have been taught by the reformer himself. On the contrary, as was shown in the first part, but as it may be proper to repeat here in substance, after having spoken of some elected and of others passed by, he says*—
 ‘It is owing to this, that some persevere while others fall; perseverance itself being the gift of God; which he bestows, not on all, but as seems good to him.’”

Although there is here a delineation of one new opinion giving birth to another, and this to a third; and onward, until a theory became complete; yet it is far from being thought, that there was a deliberate design to corrupt the word of God, by matters of human invention and tradition. Far from it, the principal framers of the theory were holy men; who had in view the clearing of the church of a heresy, by which her peace had been disturbed. But it is an infirmity of the human mind, to be driven by zeal against some particular error, into whatever is the farthest removed from it; which may be error also. And when this happens, the latter will beget its like; until there shall be a family of errors, with the same features and complexion; one or another of which will be met with, in every department of religious disquisition. With this good opi-

* Book ii. chapter v. section 3.

nion of the original devisers of the system, there is one equally favourable, of many who have supported it in every succeeding age. It is not here forgotten, that there have been religious men, who, conceiving themselves called to speculations concerning seemingly inconsistent attributes of God, have preferred the view of them which seemed the least in danger of encouraging selfrighteousness and selfsufficiency. It is further here acknowledged, that if these are the genuine growth of the opinions on the subjects which are to be given in the present work, in opposition to Calvinism; they show error—deadly error, on their very faces. But if every thing of this sort can be avoided, without resorting to doctrines so shocking as those of Calvinism are here conceived to be to the reason of mankind, the author supposes himself at liberty to treat those doctrines as the imaginations of men, without giving just cause of offence to worthy persons who hold them. Among these, he knows some of whose sincerity he has the highest opinion, and for whose talents also he entertains great respect. If they should be mistaken, as is here supposed, there can be little doubt, that the single error of Calvinistick predestination is the source of their errors on the other points; and if so, they must all be affected by the property of metaphysical speculation, in which the first step was taken.

But the author has a third position, which he wishes to establish in this part of his work. It is, that a theory arising, as was affirmed, not in revelation, but in metaphysics, has become, long since its origin and in modern times, more metaphysical and less dependent on

revelation than before; by an alliance with the more recently invented (or rather revived) doctrine of philosophical necessity. In regard to the two preceding remarks, recourse must be had for evidence, to the body of this department of the work. But as nothing will be there found relative to the matter now affirmed, the author is under the necessity of declaring his sense of it here, in the introduction.

It is not his design to discuss in this place, the merits of the doctrine the last alluded to. Whether it be true or false, is nothing to the present purpose; which is merely to show, that Calvinism has heightened her metaphysical complexion, by having recourse to this doctrine for its assistance. Or, if it be not saying too much in this stage of proposal without proof, she has reclined on the prop thus presented, in failure of support formerly supposed to be sufficiently abounding in the scriptures.

What is undertaken under this branch of the subject, will have been sufficiently performed, if it should be shown concerning the doctrine of philosophical necessity, that it originated with, and in its progress has been improved principally, by men who were either indifferent or unfriendly to revelation—that, in some important particulars, it is contradictory of the tenets of Calvinism, as held in the beginning—and yet, that modern Calvinism has placed reliance on it for her support.

In regard to the origin of the doctrine, current opinion mentions Thomas Hobbes as having given the first hints of it: A name, of which it was not supposed, in the age in which he lived, that it would in after times become allied to any thing favourable to piety or to morals.*

* Dr. Priestley, in his correspondence with Dr. Price on the

Some time afterwards, the doctrine found an able adversary here treated of, has given the opinion, that Hobbes, far from being an atheist, as is commonly supposed, was a believer in Christianity and a conscientious good man: and he refers, in support of the opinion, to the life of Hobbes, in the *Biographica Britannica*.

It is so unwelcome a task to support the contrary opinion concerning any man, that the author does not undertake it: neither is it necessary to his argument. He supposes that few, if any, will deny, that Hobbes has published to the world principles, which strike at the foundations of all religion and morality. How far a man may do this from eccentricity of character, and consistently with a better faith, the author declines considering; as also, on the other hand, whether a man, contemning religion in every shape, may not attend on its instituted ordinances, without violating any principle on which he may be supposed to act; and merely to plead his doing so, as is said of Hobbes, in order to have something to oppose to the charge of atheism, from which he seems to have apprehended danger to his person. It is enough for the present purpose, that such a reasoner as this singular man should be looked up to as a distinguished champion; and, according to Dr. Priestley, the father of the doctrine in question. This position, however, is not here admitted to be strictly correct: and it is rather believed, that the modern Necessarian scheme is a revival of the ancient doctrine of Fate; with the very material difference, indeed, that this binds God as well as men, under its decree; while the other hesitates as to the carrying of its speculations to such an extent, concerning the divine nature. In this point, it is the most reverent; but not, as is here thought, the most consistent. The author might bring forward many names, which, being connected alike with infidelity and with necessity, are evidence of an alliance between the two. But he will rather mention this remarkable fact. It is well known, that not long before the French revolution, Monsieur Neckar wrote a book "*Of the Importance of Religious Opinions*," the design of which was to combat the fashionable atheism of his country. In that book, the ingenious author, sustaining the truth of the existence of an intel-

cate in Anthony Collins, 'a known unbeliever in Christianity and zealous to disparage it*'. It is of no consequence to the author, to recite the names of all who have laboured in this thorny field of speculation; but he supposes he cannot be mistaken in saying, that none have figured in it more than Leibnitz and his successour Wolfius. Of these men it is certain, that they made no publick profession of Christianity. To all appearance they were deists, with discretion generally suited to the stations which they filled. In later times, there has been probably no man whose work on the subject has acquired so much celebrity as that of Lord Kaims: And the infidelity of this eminent scholar is commonly mentioned as a matter not to be disputed.† There would be mislignant Being, steadily considers as opposed to his system, and held by those on the other side; necessity operating on matter existing from eternity.

* To this Anthony Collins, Dr. Priestley, in his *Treatise on Philosophical Necessity*, ascribes his conversion to the belief of it, after having been a writer in favour of the opposite system.

† Since writing the above, the author has seen a life of this celebrated man, by Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq. He describes the subject of his work, as deeply impressed with sentiments of religion, and taking great delight in exercises of devotion: And many evidences of this are given; especially a prayer in the conclusion. Every Christian, who shall read what the biographer has said to this effect, will rejoice for the correct sentiments entertained by Lord Kaims, concerning the divine Being. At the same time it will be lamented, that a man of such an enlarged capacity and extensive knowledge of the moral history of mankind, should not have perceived, that his sentiments would never have been instilled into his mind, but through the medium of the divine revelation, the authenticity of which we may reasonably suppose to have been rejected by him. That this was

conception in supposing it intended to be here affirmed, that the doctrine has been confined to unbelievers in the scriptures. It is only contended, that its principal projectors and improvers have been of that description: and this, as an introduction to the second particular—the points in which it differs from Calvinism as held formerly; of which the test shall be the sentiments of Calvin himself, in his celebrated work called “The Institutions of the Christian Religion.”

This test shall be applied, as it affects man in his innocency, in his fall, and in his renewal.

In his innocency, there must have been, according to the doctrine, a propellent motive; which produced his fall necessarily, by means of the dependence of every effect on its proper cause. But Calvin thought otherwise; for he says: “We grant that such was the primitive condition of man during his state of integrity; that it was in his power to incline to one side or the other”* (meaning good or evil). And “In this integrity man was endued with freewill, by which, if he had chosen, the case, appears not only from some matters in his own works, utterly inconsistent with Christianity; but from the silence of himself and of his biographer, wherever the idea, if it had existed, may be expected to have been expressed. This note is inserted, because the author, having through a long course of time, heard Lord Kaimes mentioned as one of the most distinguished deists of the age, has within these few years heard the fact doubted of, in consequence of respect shown by his lordship to divine worship, in various ways. There has been manifested by many men a favourable disposition to the religion of their country, without any faith in its divine authority; but from contemplating it as a mean of the moral improvement and the political government of mankind.

* Book ii. chapter iii. section 10.

he might have obtained eternal life:"—and again—"All the powers of his soul were formed to rectitude; and there subsisted a soundness of mind and a will free to the choice of good.*" It would be in vain to allege in this place, that Calvin contemplated freedom as opposed to force: Because, as will appear presently, he thought the distinction, as applied to the present subject, both trivial and dangerous. Besides, his considering of freewill as distinguishing the innocency of man from the circumstances induced by the apostasy, shows beyond all doubt, that he designed to hold up the high endowment in question, as involving the independence of the morality of his conduct on any necessarily predisposing cause. Calvin's idea of the liberty of Adam, as opposed, not to force, but to necessity, is clearly unfolded in the eighth section of the sixteenth chapter of his first book; of which a small part is quoted above.

The very circumstance of the change which has taken place among the Calvinists, in regard to the use of the word freewill, shows the accommodation of their ideas concerning man's state in his apostasy, to the Necessarian scheme. By the loss of freewill, the early Calvinists meant no more, than the subjection of the will to corrupt passion and inordinate desire: And accordingly, there is not in all Calvin's book, a more decided censure than the following, passed by him on the name of freewill: "Man will be said to possess freewill in this sense, not that he has an equally free election of good and evil, but because he does evil voluntarily, and not by constraint. That indeed is very true; but what end could it answer, to deck a

* Book i. chapter xv. section 8.

thing so diminutive, with a title so superb? Egregious liberty indeed! if man be not compelled to serve sin, but yet is such a willing slave, that his will is held in bondage by the fetters of sin. I really abominate contentions about words, which disturb the church, without producing any good effect: but I think, that we ought religiously to avoid words, which signify any absurdity, particularly when they lead to a pernicious error. How few are there, pray, who, when they hear free-will attributed to man, do not immediately conceive, that he has the sovereignty over his own mind and will; and is able, by his innate power, to incline himself to whatever he pleases? But it will be said, all danger from these expressions will be removed, if the people are carefully apprized of their signification. But, on the contrary, the human mind is naturally so prone to falsehood, that it will sooner imbibe error from one single expression, than truth from a prolix oration: of which, we have a more certain experiment than could be wished, in this very word. For, neglecting that explanation of the Fathers, almost all their successors have been drawn into a most fatal selfconfidence, by adhering to the original and proper signification of the word.”*

Now, there can be no occasion to prove, that the word, as descriptive of an attribute of the human mind, has become familiar in Calvinistick systems, since the time of Calvin: and this is so much the case, as to occasion the boast frequently found in them, that there can be no true and rational liberty, detached from their favourite necessity. It is true, that they make a dis-

* Book ii chap. ii. sect. 7.

inction between necessity and force. It is carefully defined, that liberty is ascribed to the will, in contradistinction to the latter only: And this may give the appearance of there being merely a change in the signification appropriated to the word. But this is not the case. For when the old Calvinists spoke of the slavery of the will, they intended this of the subjection in which it was held by sinful passion: And accordingly, their doctrine did not apply, as a thing of course, to matters indifferent to moral good and evil. Not so the iron chain of philosophical necessity; which binds every motion of the will, in the track of a continued series of causes and effects, beginning in the will of God. Accordingly, here is a change in the system, which, if it have no other consequence, has that of leading still further from the straight and high road of scripture, into the crooked and obscure byways of metaphysical subtilty and refinement.

Lastly, in regard to the renewal of human nature, Calvinism held out as accompanying it, and in proportion as it is accomplished, the regaining of the freedom which had been lost; than which nothing can be more contrary to the sentiments of the Necessarians. That the former part of what is here affirmed is true, may be likewise proved from Calvin; who assigns as a reason for denying all power to man in his apostasy, that "being surrounded, on every side, with the most miserable necessity, he should nevertheless be instructed to aspire to the good of which he is destitute, and to the liberty of which he is deprived."* Indeed, this is a necessary consequence of what had been conceded, of freedom in

* Book ii. chap. ii. sect. 1.

a state of innocency; since, as they were both lost, so it is natural to be supposed, that they will both be regained together.

It will be pertinent to set down in this place, in addition to the authority of Calvin, the determinations of the Synod of Dort, on the particulars which have been stated: From which it will appear, that at the time when the comparative merits of Calvinism and Arminianism were put to issue in that celebrated assembly, the former had not as yet formed the alliance in which it now stands, with a doctrine born and fostered out of the pale of the Christian church. In the Confession of Faith, received and established by the Synod, it is said*—“We believe, that God created man out of the dust of the earth; and made and formed him after his own image and likeness; good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God.”† So much for the first of the particulars mentioned: And as to the second, it is said in the same article, after notice of the change undergone in the apostasy—“We reject all what is repugnant to this, concerning the freewill of man; since man is but a slave to sin, and has nothing of himself, unless it is given him from heaven.” In regard to the third particular, it is said in the twelfth canon, under the third and fourth heads, after a declaration of the change of the sinner wrought by grace—“The will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but, in consequence of this

* The extracts to be here made from the system of the Synod of Dort, are taken from the translation in use in the churches in the United States, professing that faith.

† Article 14.

influence, becomes itself active." Thus different from the present Necessarian Calvinism, was the system established by the very Synod, which was summoned for the purpose of extirpating opposing opinions; and for the guarding against any which might otherwise arise in future.

However inimical both Calvin and the Synod of Dort to the name of freewill, it seems to have been adopted by their followers generally, within half a century after the Synod. For Professor Turretine, of Geneva, a standard writer of the Calvinistick opinion, not only uses the word and defends it in his system of divinity,* but considers the affirmation of its being rejected by those of his persuasion, as a calumny. What he says on the subject is as follows, and must be perceived to be in direct contrariety to what had been said on it by Calvin—"Although this name may seem too proud, and although some may, on that account, have wished it removed from the church; yet, as it has been so long in use with her, we judge that it may be usefully retained; provided the right sense of it be taught and abuse avoided. Wherefore, it cannot without calumny be urged against us, that we cannot bear either the name of freewill, or the thing itself."

There remains to give evidence of the application of the Necessarian scheme, to what is doubtless thought an improvement of Calvinism, by professed advocates of this system.

It has been said by Dr. Priestley,† that the first that introduced the supposed improvement was a divine of this

* Locus ix. chap. xli. † Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, section 12.

country—Mr. Jonathan Edwards, formerly President of Princeton College. Whether this be exactly the fact, the knowledge of Calvinistick writers may not be sufficiently author's extensive to determine: But that necessity, in the sense of the philosophers, is the distinguishing feature of President Edwards's celebrated Treatise on Freewill, and that the subject is there handled with great ability, will doubtless be acknowledged by all who have perused the book. It is well known, and might be made appear, that the principles thus maintained by President Edwards, have had their effect on the Calvinistick writings of this country. He has clearly described the application of his system, to the current objections against the Calvinistick system; and his zeal and ingenuity in this line have not failed of their effect.*

In the church of England, there have been perhaps no divines of late years, who have written so much and so zealously in favour of Calvinism, as Mr. Toplady and Dr. Haweis; both of whom have considered the Calvinistick scheme as supported by the Necessarian. Mr. Toplady, in various places, treats it as the height of impiety and of folly to deny them: And as to Dr. Haweis, it is obvious how decided a Necessarian he must have been in the circumstance, that, however great St. Austin in

* However considerable the influence of President Edwards's system, it is here supposed that Dr. Witherspoon, one of his successours, was what may be called, in this respect, a Calvinist of the old school. There seems reason to infer this, from some objections brought in his thirteenth lecture on divinity, against the scheme of Leibnitz; which is in evident harmony with that of Edwards. And in the sixteenth lecture, he declares expressly against the metaphysical doctrine of necessity, "of which," says he, "infidels avail themselves, in opposition to all religion."

the estimation of Calvin, and however great in that of all those reformers and of others since them who have trodden in Calvin's steps, the author here spoken of, in what he calls his impartial history of the Christian Church, does not scruple to say,* that "there is more deep reasoning, solid argument, precision of language, and scriptural evidence, in one page of Edwards on Freewill, than in all the voluminous works of Augustine put together."†

Since those gentlemen, there is a writer, who has been thought to have given an able delineation of Calvinism. The writer, here alluded to, is the Rev. J. Pye Smith, D. D. a dissenting minister of South Britain; from whose letter to Mr. Belsham on the subject, there has been lately published in that country, and republished in the United States, an account of the Calvinistick doctrine. If the writer of this be correctly informed, it has been favourably received by Calvinistick divines; which is a circumstance, tending to show the increasing reputation of Calvinism in its more modern dress. Dr. Smith says, that "all created existence is a concatenation of subordinate causes and consequences, originating in the will and power of God; constantly supported by him and terminating in the most glorious display of his excellences."‡ This is precisely philosophical necessity; but there is nothing like it in ancient Calvinism. Dr. Smith seems sensible

* Vol. i. page 337.

† Dr. Haweis, it seems, like most of the modern Calvinists, was reconciled to the name of freewill, so much reprobated by Calvin. Not so Mr. Toplady, who manifests his dislike to it wherever it comes in his way; and pours out his indignation on the freewillers, as he calls all who are inimical to his favourite theory.

‡ Page 28.

of this; for he adds soon after in a note: "It is acknowledged, that this view of the subject is different from that which most Calvinistick writers have given. Yet several eminent writers have laid down the fundamental principles at least of this sentiment, and have opened the way to it; particularly Augustine, Theophilus Gale, and a class of German theologians of the school of Leibnitz." As to Austin, it would be difficult to show, in what respects he differs materially from Calvin, who evidently considered himself as treading in his steps. It is remarkable, that Calvin is not mentioned by Dr. Smith, among the few who are noticed as giving their sanction to his own view of Calvinism: And as to looking back to Austin for the ground work of the Necessarian scheme, there is here doubted the propriety of it. There seems no other coincidence in the two opinions, than what may be found in two roads, which, beginning in different quarters, come in contact at certain points. With the writings of Theophilus Gale, the writer of this is unacquainted. He was certainly a Calvinistick divine, of eminent reputation: And if his works contain the principles of philosophical necessity, Dr. Priestley has been mistaken in mentioning President Edwards, as the first Calvinist who had owned them. Dr. Smith's claim to the countenance of the Leibnitzian school is not to be denied; and his introducing of its authority is to the purpose for which his own is introduced, in the present work. He does not go into argument on the subject of the controversy; but only professes to give a correct statement of the Calvinistick opinions; in order to guard against what he thinks a mistaken representation of them by Mr. Belsham. It seems inconsistent, that the former, writing with this design,

should make the acknowledgment, that most Calvinistick writers had given a view of the subject different from his. Mr. Belsham does not fail to avail himself of this concession; and thinks it extraordinary, that he should be publickly attacked for misrepresenting the tenets of Calvinism, by a gentleman, who, in the very act of making the attack, declares his own view of the subject to be different from that of the majority of its advocates. Among these, he might have included Calvin himself, all who thought with him in his day, and afterwards, the whole body of the Synod of Dort. If the standard must be looked for in the junction stated by Dr. Smith, to be made with the Leibnitzian scheme; that standard, and the confessions of the Calvinistick churches should be considered henceforth as wide of one another.

At the same time, it is worthy of remark, how coldly Calvinism, in this her new form, is received by her solicited ally—Philosophical necessity. Dr. Priestley, in his work on the latter subject, is careful to point out the differences between the two. And now, his friend Mr. Belsham—a Necessarian also—refuses to know Calvinism, except as contained in publick confessions. Not so, indeed, Lord Kaims; as set forth already. But the reason of the difference is discernable. His *Essay on Liberty and Necessity* had subjected him to the charge of irreligion. Accordingly, he availed himself of the aid of President Edwards's book on the will, which came out soon afterwards; and on the ground of the principles therein contained, claimed to be considered as a supporter of the doctrines of the established Church of Scotland.

When Dr. Priestley said, that President Edwards was the first Calvinist who applied the doctrine of phi-

philosophical necessity to his system, he probably meant —to any considerable extent. For there could not have been unknown to him Professor Witsius's work on the covenants; in which, the necessity spoken of is conspicuous. According to this learned and respectable writer,* there were two species of influence operating on Adam; a natural influence, through the medium of second causes, by which the divine Being impelled him to will and act; and a moral influence, inducing its being done in a holy manner. The latter influence being withdrawn and the former remaining, Adam fell. On this, the present writer would remark, that he must have been like a body acted on by two forces, one impelling and the other guiding: On the withdrawing of the guiding force, disorder followed. It is evident, that the sentiments of Professor Witsius vary from those of Calvin and the Synod of Dort: And the change seems to have been introduced, by the intervention of the philosophical hypothesis in question.

It is useless to mention more names to the present point, when satisfaction may so easily be obtained from many sources, accessible in common life. But there is a note to a passage in Dr. Mosheim's History, so much to the purpose, that it ought not to be overlooked. Mosheim had spoken of the Arminians* declining as a sect; but of Arminianism, as increasing in the established church of the Netherlands. But his learned annotator, Dr. Maclean, who had the best opportunities of personal information, thinks it proper to remark, that the progress of Arminianism has been there great-

* Chapter viii. sec. 13 and following. Amer. ed. † Century 17, sec. ii. part ii.

ly checked, and even that its cause daily declines in Germany and several parts of Switzerland; in consequence of the ascendancy which the Leibnitzian and Wolfian philosophy has gained in those countries, and particularly among the clergy and men of learning. It is foreign to the present purpose to inquire, with what correctness the reasonings deduced from the said philosophy have been applied. It is sufficient, that the armour, thus wielded in defence of what is thought a Christian fortress, was wrought on a foreign anvil: And this is only brought in aid of the considerations intended to prove, that the works defended are of human and not of divine structure.

This leads to another object of the ensuing investigation; a and mere inference from what has been premised: The effect of which will be, if the view to be here taken of the subject should be correct, that there ought to be an exclusion of it from the sphere of Christian theology; and that, if thought of, it should be merely as matter of philosophical research; this too, with the caution which is dictated by reverence to the great Being, concerning whose perfections we thus presume to speculate. We are instructed on the highest authority, that "the secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us." Yet there is an infirmity of the mind of man, always tempting him to transgress the bounds prescribed to his understanding; and to dogmatize on subjects, concerning which there are no data to be reasoned from with certainty, and authorizing to conclude with safety. There are evidences of this busy and presumptuous spirit, operating within the bounds of the Christian

church, in the days of the Apostles. St. Paul, in particular, alludes to it in several places; and speaks of it most expressly, when, in his first epistle to Timothy,* he notices “oppositions of science falsely so called;” and when, in his epistle to the Colossians,† he warns them—“Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit.” Far be it from him who is now writing, to insinuate reproach on the use which may be made of any branch of human literature, in defending, or in explaining, or in illustrating any book of Scripture, or any matter comprehended in it. Instead of this, the opinion is entertained, that, in the councils of divine wisdom, there was designed to be an aid from literature, for the accomplishing of purposes, which would otherwise have required a perpetuity of miracle. But when the busy wits of men, by processes of philosophical reasoning, or of what is deemed such, land in dogmas not found in the word of truth; this is what is here conceived to come under the weight of the censures cited from St. Paul. What though the effect of such reasoning present a supposed rationale, for matters confessedly delivered; the most that this can justify, is the modestly tendering of it, in contrariety to the pretence of absurdity, or of inconsistency in the sacred oracles. But from the circumstance there can be no plea resulting, to demand submission to human theory.

The last matter to be stated, as the expected result of the ensuing investigation, is, that the anti-Calvinistic opinion, on some points especially interesting to the feelings of mankind in general, are to be declared to them without reserve. Particularly, if individual and

* Chap. vi. v. 20. † Chap. ii. v. 8.

discriminative predestination should be proved a fabrication of the human imagination, the contrary truth of salvation, wrought for all men and offered alike to all, is to be indiscriminately offered; without the latent sting of a distinction between a revealed and a secret will; the former holding out the offer of a good, which the latter keeps back under the strong hold of an irresistible decree. In like manner, if there should appear no ground for the distinction between ordinary and efficacious grace, mankind are to be encouraged to improve every gracious motion; under an assurance, that it cannot betray them into a fruitless labour and the pursuit of an unattainable good. On the same ground, the best of Christians may be cautioned—and much more may they who think themselves such, in consequence of an inward personal assurance supposed to have been vouchsafed to them—against the danger still existing, of being at last destroyed by the remaining infirmities of their nature; whatever measure of joy may have been the fruit of their compliance with the offers of the Gospel; and notwithstanding which, there is no information of a resistless power, which will at last snatch them from perdition, whatever sinfulness they may fall into before the close of life.

To him who expresses these sentiments, it is not unknown, that the most enlightened and liberal preachers of the Calvinistick persuasion, do not think themselves obliged to declare the discouraging side of the system, in their publick ministrations; and that on the contrary, they consider this as a matter to be avoided. But it is worth their while to inquire, whether this very circumstance be not additional evidence of the increa-

sing preponderance of their philosophical authority, over their scriptural. Certainly, they think in this matter very differently from Calvin, who says of predestination—"It is by all means to be preached, that he who hath ears to hear may hear:"* And he only condemns the pronouncing concerning any, that they are reprobates, because of their unbelief; by which, he says, we should make ourselves prophets. Agreeable to this is the decision of the Council of Dort; who decreed, under the point of predestination,† that "it is still to be published in due time and place in the church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed; provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of piety and discretion, to the glory of God's most holy name, and the enlivening and comforting his people; without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High." Who can deny that all this is correct; if predestination, in the sense of Calvin and of the Synod, be indeed taught in the many passages of Scripture, in which they thought they found it? But if, on the contrary, the basis be in necessity alone, ministers of the Gospel may reasonably think with Lord Kaims; who finds a security against the evils which it threatens, in the conviction, that it will be never known but to those who are conversant with philosophy. The same ministers, under the present view of the subject, may address to their hearers the admonitions, the exhortations, the reproofs, the promises, and the threatenings of scripture; free from the discouragement, with which, on the contrary system, they must be delivered and received. It is sufficiently

* Book iii. chap. xxiii. sect. 13. . † Article xi.

painful to a benevolent man to know, that the offers which he makes of grace will increase the guilt of those who reject them, without the existence of any disqualification or disability. But to be persuaded, that the very end of preaching, in regard to some, is to make their damnation sure; would seem sufficient to swallow up whatever consolation can arise from any other source of the ministerial calling. And then, in regard to the hearers, the doctrine seems naturally fruitful of presumption in some, and of despair in others. For, although these consequences are contended to be incorrectly drawn, and to be abuses of gospel truth; yet the misfortune is, that the consequences are such as present themselves to ordinary understandings; and can be guarded against no otherwise, than by refined reasonings and minute distinctions. But be these things as they may, if the doctrine should not shine as a luminous truth of scripture, the promises of God may be announced and received with all certainty in their favour; and its threatenings without the discouragement, that there may be a predetermination of their being fruitless. And in this case, ministers may preach, and the people may hear, under the impression, that there are set before men, in every instance, life and death; an eternal blessing, and an eternal curse; making salvation, indeed, if they should attain to it, the free gift of God; but their perdition, if this should be the sad reverse, the consequence of their sinful state, inexcusably and without an over-ruling destiny persevered in.

These remarks, however, are made merely for the giving of a view of the design, in this department of

the work. At present it shall only be added, that if they be incorrect, commendation should be given to those consistent Calvinists, who consider an indiscriminate offer of grace, as prohibited by the doctrine in question. The late Mr. R. Robinson, in his notes to "Claude on the Composition of a Sermon,"* takes notice of the error, as he thought it, of those who censured such an offer; being himself what is called a moderate Calvinist; and remarks, that the like objection would lie against reasoning on the subject. But there is a great difference. An officer of government might address a rebel audience on their guilt, and demonstrate to them the duty of submission; although he might not absolutely know, that all of them were within the sphere of a contemplated pardon. But to make the offer of mercy indiscriminately to all, when he could not know, but that his hearers might be of the number who are beyond its reach, would be an exceeding of his commission. And therefore, on the ground taken, there seems no impropriety in what Mr. Robinson cites with disapprobation from a Mr. Hussey, who complained of the practice of murdering a text, by shooting at it from the stalkinghorse of use and application. The said Mr. Hussey, it seems, judged application altogether unwarrantable, when it related to the offer of gospel grace to sinners; because it could not be known, for whom of them the divine decree designed it. To the writer of this, the inference seems fair. But supposing it otherwise; the very abuse renders the question of the utmost importance, how far the system of Calvinism rests on the scriptures; and

* Vol. ii. p. 237.

how far, on philosophical necessity. If the latter be the only ground, the system should be abandoned by every clergyman as a theologian, whatever he may think of it as a metaphysician.*

* Since the former publication of these sheets, there has been edited a volume of sermons, of the late Bishop Horsley; in which, page 74, there is the following remark, sustaining the sentiments here expressed—"There is yet another error on this subject" (Grace) "which, I think, took its rise among professed infidels; and to them, till of late, it hath been entirely confined. But some have appeared among its modern advocates, actuated, I am persuaded (for their writings on this subject witness it) by the same humble spirit of resigned devotion, which gave birth to the plan of arbitrary predestination. Deeply versed in physicks, which the Calvinists neglected, these men wish to reconcile the notion of God's arbitrary dominion, which they in common with the Calvinists maintain, with what the others entirely overlooked, the regular operation of second causes. And in this circumstance lies the chief, if not the whole difference, between the philosophical necessity of our subtile moderns, and the predestination of their more simple ancestors."

1. OF PREDESTINATION.

Of the Term "Decree"—Predestination only incidentally found in other Books—Predestination and Election mean the same in all—Phrases, though similar in Sense—The Situation of St. Paul—Sundry Passages of Scripture—A constructive Sense—Useless Questions—Rules—The Subject, being foreign to Scripture, must be judged of on Principles of Reason—A Point, on which the Parties are agreed—A Deduction from what should be considered as the Point of Difference—The Result, in Relation to the Divine Attributes.

ON the very threshold of this gloomy building, the attention of the author is drawn to what he considers as no slight evidence of its having been raised, not by scripture, but by metaphysicks. It is the necessity which has occurred of calling in the word, "decree," to answer some purpose, to which the word, "predestination" does not extend. For there may be propriety in apprizing the reader, that the latter word, which is scriptural, has not been found sufficient to support the systems devised by human ingenuity, on the present subject. Hence, the introduction of the other word, which is confessedly not applied to the subject in the scriptures. Predestination supposes the persons to be contemplated, of whom it is affirmed: But, as it is wished to carry back the investigation so far, as to disclose the motive in the mind of God; which proposes the illustrating of his glory, independently on the object on which the dispensation operates; there was occasion, that another word should be had recourse to. The word "chosen" does not answer to any thing in scripture, though applicable to the present subject. Accordingly, the word "decree" is taken, although it

is not used any where in scripture, in the sense thus imposed on it, to make it serve the intended purpose. In the Old Testament, the word translated “decree,”* signifies “commandment” or “statute,” as in Isaiah viii. 1. And in the New Testament, the word so translated is found in Acts xvi. 4, and xvii. 7.† This introduction of the word “decree” has an unfavourable aspect on those views of the subject—and they are many—to which there could have been no extension of the word “predestination.” The distinction here taken must now, however, be lost sight of; because the ensuing investigation is to be of the sense of scripture only; which knows nothing of the determination of the divine mind, considered independently on the persons whom they respect.

Under the present point, it is a considerable relief in examining the alleged authorities of Scripture, that there will be no necessity of devoting any further attention to the epistle to the Romans. In saying this, the author is not sensible of any difficulty, of giving a satisfactory explanation of the passages in that epistle, any more than of those in other books of scripture. But the sentiment is grounded on the circumstance, that it is the only book, in which the subject is supposed to have been treated of professedly; or given in any place in such a shape, as shows it to have been principally on the mind of the writer. It is here believed, that any considerate person, either Calvinist or Arminian, would not hesitate to acknowledge, in regard to any text which he thinks favourable to his doctrine in the other books, that it introduced incidentally; if indeed it be otherwise seen than by implication; and to be presumed, in order to render the sense consistent and

* קח. † δόγμα.

complete. It is not so with the epistle to the Romans. In this, if the doctrine be found at all, it was what principally occupied the mind of the writer, during the latter part of the eighth and the whole of the ninth chapter. If therefore it should have appeared, that those passages relate to quite another subject; respecting nothing else than national designation to the visible church; there may reasonably be suspected a mistake, in the supposed discovery of it in any other place. For the point of view in which the doctrine is upheld, is, as clothed with preeminent importance; and indeed, entering more or less into all the Christian doctrines; being that which constitutes them doctrines of grace: A name not seldom denied to every system, which does not manifest in all its parts, the pervading influence of the doctrine here in question. It is not in the indirect way here noticed, that there is given to us in scripture any thing which can be supposed to constitute its high and leading sense. For instance, the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and his propitiatory sacrifice for sin. However convinced the writer of this, of their being truths of scripture; yet, if they were found there in a form like that of the doctrine of predestination, as it respects opposite states in another life; supposing this to be found in the texts alleged for it; he would certainly consider the preceding doctrines as unimportant to the essence of divine truth; and opposite opinion as a matter, by which Christian communion were not at all to be affected. In what extent the remark applies to the passages which are to come under review, may be worthy of some consideration, as they shall present themselves.

But it is here conceived, that another advantage may be fairly claimed, in consequence of what has been alrea-

dy written on the epistle to the Romans. If the principles there advocated should be thought correct, especially in regard to the term predestination, this and its kindred word election may reasonably be supposed to have the same meaning, in the other epistles of the same Apostle. Thus, when he tells the Ephesians, speaking of the Father's "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself;"* and when he says to the Thessalonians:† "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God;" and to the same people in his other epistle to them—"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation;"‡ he can mean no more, than to support a truth which he has often occasion to refer to, in opposition to the favourers of legality, that the Gentiles were called, in an emancipation from the institutions of the law. And nothing could so effectually sustain this sentiment, as the resting of it on the divine purpose, entertained before the giving of the law, and even before the foundation of the world.

The passage from the 2d epistle to the Thessalonians, is thought to give weight to the Calvinistick interpretation, by the words, "from the beginning." It seems however agreed on all hands, that the same words being applied in scripture to different subjects, they ought to be interpreted in each instance, according to the subject. That in some instances they are intended of the commencement of the evangelical dispensation, is allowed; and of this there is an instance in St. Luke i. 2. Hence, some have endeavoured to bring the passage in question under the same interpretation. But to this there seems a fair objection in its appearing, that the Thessalo-

* Chapter i. v. 5. † Ch. i. v. 1—4. ‡ Ch. ii. v. 13.

nians were not among the earliest believers. Still, if we abide by the rule laid down, the divine dispensations relative to the Gospel ought to bound the interpretation.

It seems indeed impossible to prove from scripture, that the expression, "from the beginning," ever denotes eternity in the strict and proper sense. In the 1st chapter of Genesis, the words, "in the beginning," look no further back than to the creation; and that confined probably to the system of which our globe is part. The first words in the gospel of St. John—"In the beginning was the word"—are often quoted to prove the eternity of the divine nature of the Messiah. There seems however something more to the purpose, in what follows in the same verse and in similar places of scripture; ascribing to the Son divine attributes, derived to him from the Father. The mere expression, "in the beginning," is here conceived to be too indeterminate to found the doctrine on.

If we depart from the construction which has been given of "chosen" and "predestinate," it may be worth while to be aware of the objections, lying against the manner of writing which we must in that case attribute to St. Paul. However highly we may think of his extraordinary gifts, have we reason to suppose, that it extended to the knowledge of the hearts of men? This would be very unreasonable; and yet we must conceive of him, as discerning the inward state and condition of every member of every Church which he addressed in such language as that recited; to justify his affirming of them without exception, that they were "chosen" or "predestinated" to everlasting life. It would have ill accorded with what is said

in the epistle from which the first recited text was taken, when the writer admonishes those whom he was addressing: "Take to yourselves the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil;" going on in an expressive allegorical description of the dangers of the spiritual warfare. And then, why there should be such dangers from the formidable foe alluded to, it seems impossible to account for on the principle here supposed. Did St. Paul so explicitly announce to the Ephesian church, the election to eternal life of all and every one of them? And was the prince of darkness less able than they and we, to comprehend it? Or knowing it, was he so unwise, as to waste his efforts for their destruction? He had sagacity enough to let Job alone, in his person and in his substance, because God had hedged him about and all that he had, within the protection of his providence: And could the archdeceiver have been less aware of the irresistible effects of the eternal decree of saving grace? These seem difficulties in the way; but there is another—that of the language of severe reproof of the Apostle to some members of the churches, which yet he honours with the appellation of "elect." This is consistent, if the term were intended of the body, and that in reference to the subject of church communion. But if it were applied to them individually, and with a view to their destination in another world; it is not to be supposed, that there should be charged, on some of these elect, faults which are incompatible with the Christian state. For this is done by the Apostle, relatively to some members of the Thessalonian church; when he describes them* thus: "We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies." Are these they,

* 2, iii. 11.

whom he had assured in the preceding chapter*—that they had, “from the beginning, been chosen unto salvation?” Yet this is what the Calvinistick sense requires. But no, the Thessalonians, collectively considered, were chosen to be a church of God, living in visible profession of his name; and this no doubt with a view to the salvation, of which such a profession was the mean: while, as to every individual and his attaining to the same salvation, it was another subject and rested on other grounds.

But even if the construction of the words here given were to be abandoned; and they were to be interpreted of every individual and his condition in another life; it would not appear, with what propriety the subject is connected with the operation of the eternal mind of God. The remotest dates referred to by the New Testament, as connected with any predestination, or election of which it speaks, is what may be thought contained in the expression used in several places—“Before the foundation of the world.” If this be considered the same as from eternity, it is because we know of the adorable Being concerning whom it is spoken, that he is without beginning. It is then by mere inference, that a foundation is laid, on which to erect a structure of dogmas, attached to so incomprehensible a subject, as that of an antecedent eternity. As to the Greek expression † translated in 2. Timothy, i. 9. and in Titus i. 2, “before the world began,” it will not be rash to say, that it does not necessarily mean more, than before the different dispensations of the divine economy in the present world; and that this must be the meaning, especially in the place last referred to; which speaks of a pro-

* ii. 13. † *πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων.*

mise made before the ages in contemplation. The words are—“In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised, before the world began.” The passage cannot be supposed to look further back, than to the promise made in paradise of the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent’s head. The like may be said of another expression, that of Ephesians, iii. 11* translated: “According to the eternal purpose,” but of which the literal meaning is—“According to the afore-disposing of the ages.” Of these, the last was the evangelical; which shows, that the others could reach no further back, than those preparatory to it. In systematick discussions of the doctrine of predestination, it is common to find this text brought forward as the prominent authority, for the affirming of the decrees of God, that they are eternal. Professor Witsius acknowledges† that the expressions: “From the foundation of the world,” and “before the foundation of the world,” do not necessarily signify eternity. And he further acknowledges the same concerning the expression: “Before the world began.”‡ And yet the same author quotes Ephesians iii. 11, as directly declaring the eternity of God’s decree; whereas it would seem the furthest from it of all the passages he has quoted, if the original be taken into view. But it is remarkable, in a person of so much candour, that although he refers to the originals of his other quotations, he has not done so in the present instance. As to those others, they are not even alleged by this author to be declarative of eternity, any further than as this may be drawn from them by way of inference.

* Κατα πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων † Book .iii. chap. iv. sec. 15.

‡ sec. 20.

It will still be said, that every consideration extending to “before the ages” and “before the foundation of the world,” will also carry them back without end. Far be the author of the present work, from denying this: Still, it is only an inference from what we are satisfied of, concerning the unbeginning existence of the divine mind. What difference then, it may be said, do the two opinions make, in regard to the sense of the words in question? The difference is very material: the opinion here contradicted, making the subject of the Apostle quite wide of that occupying his mind; which was a series of dispensations, ending as well as beginning in time. Why then may not the opinion stand, as the reasonable decision of the human understanding, instead of being quoted as the language of holy writ? It is here conceived, that there can be but one reason; and this is the difficulty of subjecting our imaginations to restraints, which tie them down from the fabricating of metaphysical systems.

It is thought that there can be no occasion, to enter on a discussion of the weight of the criticisms made on the word translated “eternal.”* As applied to the present subject, it cannot mean a strict and proper eternity: It cannot in the passage quoted from the epistle to Titus; because the ages there spoken of, are connected with a promise confessedly made in time: And it cannot, even in that quoted from the epistle to Timothy; because all time must have had a beginning, as well as an end. The Greek words in question may be not improperly translated—“The times of the ages;” although it is employing an adjective substantively, there being no adjective answering to it in English.

* αἰώνιος.

But there is a passage, considered as so peculiarly in favour of the Calvinistick scheme, by its stating of divine election to be precedent to a regard to the holiness of the parties chosen, as to require notice.* It is—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy" &c. But for the construction thus given, the cause is indebted to the severing of the 4th verse from the 3rd, which makes a part of the same sentence. It is—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ." The sense of the place is, there being conferred on the Ephesians spiritual blessings, to the end that they should be holy. The predestinating of them to be a church gathered from among the heathens, is a circumstance noticed of the case. So far as concerns the order of the acts of the divine mind, there is much more pertinent in a passage in the 1st epistle of St. Peter, i. 2. "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Here, the election is evidently predicated to be founded on the foreknowledge, &c.

But let it be remembered, that these strictures on eternity, as connected with the decrees of God, are not necessary to the purpose here entertained; which supposes, that, whether there be intended a strict and proper eternity, or only an indefinite term of time, in the passages in question; they have no immediate relation to a future life, or to the conditions of individuals in it; the subject to which they relate being the church on earth.

It was natural, that of all the inspired writers, St. Paul should the most abound in references to antece-

* Eph. i. 4.

dent determinations of the sovereign will of God, concerning his kingdom on earth recently founded by his omnipotence. The mission of this Apostle was especially to the Gentiles. All his epistles to churches, are principally to those of the Gentile sort, except the epistle to the Hebrews, which, conformably with the view here taken of the subject, has nothing concerning predestination, or election, or purpose. Further, he found himself continually thwarted in his ministry, by a mixture of Judaism and Christianity; which had its foundation in the error, that there was but one chosen people; in the mass of whom, of course, all the receivers of the new doctrine should be merged. That St. Paul is continually taking occasion to contradict this error; and that he has largely refuted it in his epistle to the Romans and in that to the Galatians, will not be denied by any. It is equally evident, that, in so doing, he has shown at some length, how far his sense of a Gentile church was from being a novelty, and that, on the contrary, it might be clearly seen in promises made before the giving of the law. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, that the Apostle, even in his salutations of particular churches, addresses them as the objects of divine choice and predestination; that is, in their collective capacity. For that he should have intended it of them in their individual characters, assuring them that they were all marked out for eternal glory by an unchangeable destination; and this in epistles, in which admonition and reproof were to bear a part; and which were designed to incite the full force of endeavour under surrounding difficulties and discouragements, described with all their formidable dangers; is an inconsistency not to be supposed under the gift of inspiration; or

even under the influence of a tolerable measure of Christian prudence. What would be thought, at this day, of any minister of the Gospel; who, having cleared his congregation of every member chargeable with just cause of ecclesiastical censure, should address the remainder as the predestinated of God, in the modern sense which the term customarily bears; declaring to one and all of them, that their heavenly inheritance was made sure beyond the possibility of change? Yet why may he not do this, on the Calvinistick interpretation of the passages which have been referred to? It is not conceived to be a part of Apostolick prerogative, to know the hearts of men. Of those addressed in any Epistle of St. Paul, some may have been hypocrites, for any thing known to the contrary by him. And even of those who thought themselves sincere, some, according to the theory here opposed, may have been under that kind of grace, distinguished from the saving grace affirmed to be invariably followed by perseverance. Accordingly, it is not reasonable to give to the expressions of this Apostle such a construction, as wings them with delusion to some; and with the danger of relaxation of endeavour, in regard to all. It may be here proper to apply to the texts which have been examined, the remark already made—that even taking them in the Calvinistick sense, it can be drawn from them no otherwise, than as taught incidentally; or else by way of inference. For it will not be contended, that when different churches are addressed as the elect or chosen of God, their election is the prominent sentiment in the writer's mind. His principal purpose, in each place, is to deliver a different matter of instruction; and the other is at most a circumstance attached to it. But it may be said—the election spoken

of is presumed; and built on as an acknowledged doctrine of the Gospel. There may be reason in this, if the remark made were applicable to some places only; and if the doctrine in question were taught often and explicitly elsewhere: Which is the matter principally intended to be here denied.

The hope then is entertained of its having been made to appear, that, exclusively of the epistle to the Romans, there are no circumstances attached to the other epistles of St. Paul, which rescue them from what is contended for, as the proper sense of scriptural predestination; but on the contrary, that there are considerations which make all the epistles harmonize. We may therefore go on to the other parts of Scripture.

Here it will be natural to take, in the first place, the passages the most nearly allied to those which have been commented on; and resting on the same general principle. Such are our Saviour's speaking of the elect or chosen.* Nearly of the same character, are the places in the 10th, the 15th, and the 17th chapters of St. John's Gospel; in which our Lord speaks frequently of his chosen; sometimes expressly, and sometimes also figuratively, as the sheep of him, the shepherd, and as branches dependent for nourishment on him, the vine. St. Peter also speaks of the elect in his 1 Epistle i. 2; and of election in his 2 Epistle i. 10. And St. John addresses an eminent Christian woman, as "the elect lady."

In explanation of these places, let it be remarked, in the first place, that nothing could have been more natural, than for our blessed Saviour and his Apostles to designate his followers, at first few in number, but contemplated as a

* Matt. xxiv. 22 and 31; Mark xiii. 20; and Luke xviii. 7.

great multitude in future, as the chosen of God. For what was Christian communion, but a perpetuating of the church of God, begun many ages before; to be in future under another form? Now, we find Moses addressing the children of Israel, in Deuteronomy, vii. 6, thus: "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself:" and again the same words in chap. xiv. 2. Did the legislator of Israel intend to ascribe sanctity of mind to every individual of the body, whom he was addressing? It is too absurd a sentiment to be entertained by any. Did he even intend the words to be descriptive of the major part? Neither can this be; for he tells them in the very address that has been referred to—"From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord."* What then was the ground of the epithet in question? It could have been grounded on nothing else, than God's choice of the Israelites, to be a people in covenant with him; to be favoured with a revelation of his will; and to maintain on earth the profession of the belief of one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, until the appointed time of gathering a church from among all nations. The same title of "the elect" or "the chosen," is applied indiscriminately to the people of Israel, in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, and in the Psalms. It was therefore a maintaining of the style of holy writ, to speak of those who had been brought within the pale of the Christian church, under the name of "the chosen" or of a word the same in the original—"the elect." As to the sense of the word in its applica-

* Deuteronomy ix. 7.

tion to the immediate followers of Christ; it ought to have been rescued from the Calvinistick interpretation, by the circumstance, that Judas is called one of the chosen in John vi. 70; and must have been recognised as such where it is said*—“Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.” There seems very little appearance of reason, in the Calvinistick interpretation of the latter text. The word “but”† is supposed to be used to express, not exception, but opposition, which makes the sentiment of the text—“none,” meaning of those given, “lost, but the son of perdition is lost.” If our Saviour extended his view beyond the sphere to which his discourse had been before confined, were there none lost but Judas? Yet it follows that there were none but he, if we suppose any spoken of besides “the chosen” or “the given;” of which, accordingly, Judas was one. Dr. Doddridge remarks, that the Greek word‡ is not always strictly an exceptive particle; and has quoted some passages in support of his remark. Still, as it is generally and properly exceptive, it would seem reasonable to understand it as so used, at least whenever this the best agrees with the tendency of the discourse: Which is the case in the present instance; there being otherwise a disagreeable redundancy.

But Calvin thinks,§ that the text may be explained by John xiii. 18; where it is said—“I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled: He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” The aid supposed to be derived

* John xvii. 12. † εἰ μὴ. ‡ εἰ μὴ. § book iii. chapter xxiv. section 8.

from this, is in its being construed to distinguish Judas from the chosen. Now setting aside that this would be contrary to that other place, in which he is pronounced to be of the number; to sever him from them even in the passage brought for the purpose, it must receive an interpretation resting on the supposition of there being something understood; which, however, is not required to make out the sense. This, with the something to be understood, seems neither more nor less than as if it had been said—
 “In regard to the blessedness just now spoken of, consisting of the doing of what I have enjoined, I do not consider it as a subject in which all of you have an interest. You are, indeed, every one of you, of the chosen company of my disciples: Yet there is one of you, who will abandon the privilege conferred on him, by becoming my betrayer.”

For the full understanding of the passage, recourse should be had to two other passages; one evidently referred to in the Psalms, which must be that in Psalm cix. 8, ‘Let his days be few, and let another take his office;’ and a passage in the succeeding chapter,* where we read, after our Lord’s benevolent intercession for his disciples—“If ye seek me, let these go their way,” that this was done, for the fulfilling of the other saying—“Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”† The amount of these places, taken together, seems to be, that the immediate disciples of our Lord were given to him, for the laying of the foundation of his church; that for the accomplishing of this, they must both have remained faithful to his person, and have escaped the malice by which the master himself should fall; that when he spoke in chapter xvii.

* John xviii. 8. † John xviii. 9.

his purpose in their behalf, except as to one of them, had prevailed; and that what he said in chapter xviii. was in pursuance of the same design; which is so expressly declared, in the last mentioned place, to have been directed to the safety of their persons, that it seems impossible to bend it to any other subject. Thus, from the comparing of the quotation as it stands in the New Testament, with its station in the Old, there arises a confirmation of the sense which is here thought to be obvious on the very face of the passage—that our Lord acknowledged Judas to be one of the chosen, but declared, that although chosen, he would be a traitor.

The contrary interpretation to that here sustained, has been thought countenanced by what is said in Matthew xxiv. 24 of false Christs, and false prophets, who shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. But who knows not, that the words, “if it were possible,” are often used to express a matter of considerable difficulty; as we may suppose to have been that of seducing believers, who had become such under a visible display of supernatural power. St. Paul hastened; “if it were possible,”—“to be at Jerusalem the feast of Penticost:”* And the same Apostle commands—“if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”† If the former had been strictly an impossibility, it would not have been attempted: And if the latter had been such, it would not have been advised. The clause evidently intimates no more, than that the accomplishment of the purpose was problematical. Such lax phraseology is frequent in every language; and may be mentioned as an additional proof of the impropriety of founding doctrine

* Acts xx. 16. † Rom. xii. 18.

on particular expressions; in which the object of the speaker is something distinct from the doctrine, whether true or false.

There is also a class of texts brought up, consisting of declarations of the immutability of the counsels of God; and of his foreknowledge of all the events, which were to be brought about in the order of his providence: such as that in Isaiah xlvi. 10—"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:" that in Daniel, iv. 35—"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth;" and that in Prov. xix. 21—"The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." In the New Testament also it is said—"He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;"* and "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world."† Many other passages might be mentioned, to the same effect; but they avail nothing, in contrariety to those who acknowledge the sovereignty and the foreknowledge of God, in their extent. What they demand, is scriptural authority to show, that his foreknowledge is exercised or his sovereignty illustrated, in the predetermination contemplated by the subject. Is it not evident in the producing of such passages, that the doctrine is first presumed; and then proof given, of the unchangeableness of the event to which it refers?

There is another class of texts, which speak of wicked men, and of God's making of their wickedness the medium of their destruction: The Calvinistick interpretation of which is predicated on the supposition, that God makes them wicked, with a view to that unhappy end; although

* Eph. i. 11. † Acts xv. 18.

no intimation to such an effect is given in the texts themselves. Thus where it is said in Joshua xi. 20, concerning the Canaanitish nations—"It was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly;" it amounts to no more, than that those nations being very wicked, and, on that account, their excision being determined on by the Lord of life and death; his providence so disposed the series of events, as to incite them to hazard battle with a power, before which they had not strength to stand.—Their wickedness had been frequently spoken of in the foregoing history; and made the ground of a destruction, of which the Israelites were declared to be the executioners. They were found wicked, when their hearts were hardened to a desperate warfare: so that their case is quite foreign to the point, to which it has been applied—their being brought into existence, under an inevitable necessity of being wicked. Analogous to this, is the case of Pharaoh; the hardening of whose heart is ascribed to God in Exodus vii. 3—xiv. 4 and 17. It is not meant that God made him wicked: But being so, the miracles which would have softened and subdued a heart less desperate, had the effect of hardening his still more; and of urging him on to ruin.

Under the same denomination there comes a text, than which there has perhaps been none oftener cited, in support of the system here opposed. It is Prov. xvi. 4; "The Lord hath made allthings for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The word translated "made" is not expressive of creating* or making; † but signifies to go through a work, or bring it to effect. ‡ As applied in this

* ברא. † עשה. ‡ פעל.

place, it means, that God so disposes matters, as to cause the wickedness of men to bring them to the day of evil: if indeed evil to them be the matter intended in this place; and not rather their being the instruments of accomplishing the divine purposes, in evil to be brought on others; as in the case of the king of Assyria,* who was, in the hands of God, the rod of his anger and the staff of his indignation against the surrounding nations. The words will bear either interpretation; and therefore, if there were nothing else to hinder, ought not to be applied to any sense repugnant to correct ideas of the Godhead. The latter interpretation is much countenanced by the Hebrew word† which is expressive of one thing answering to another.

What great stress Calvin laid on this text, may be seen book iii. chapter xxiii. section 6. He notices an objection made by some to his scheme of predestination, that it takes from the sinner the blame which would attach. In answer to this, Calvin speaks to the following effect. He says he will not answer with ecclesiastical writers, that prescience does not prevent guilt: It is sufficient for him, that he can oppose to such objections the decision of scripture, in Proverbs xvi. 4.

Belonging to the same class, there is a text in Isaiah vi. 10; which ought to be the more noticed, as it is quoted and applied by our Saviour himself; whose meaning may, of course, derive light from the use of the passage by the prophet. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Here are three things, worthy to be inquired

* Isaiah x. 5. † למענהו Parkhurst.

into—the end of the denunciation—the cause of it—and the mean by which it was to be accomplished. The end is laid down in the words following those already quoted. For, on the prophet's asking: "How long"—meaning the continuance of the judgment threatened—the answer is—"Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate: and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." Nothing else than the impending captivity in Babylon, can be the matter intended in these words; which are also followed by the promise of a remnant who should return. So much for the end of the denunciation: and for the cause of it, we must look to the preceding parts of the prophecy, which is principally filled with lamentations of abounding wickedness; and this was, of course, what produced the denunciation. The nation being excessively corrupt, and this corruption being about to be punished by a seventy years banishment from their country; the preaching of the prophet was, in itself indeed, a dispensation full of grace; but is here contemplated as a mean, which would be abused to a greater degree of obduracy; and thus add to the punishment to be inflicted. This is no more than what we have continually before our eyes, of men's being hardened in their iniquity, by that which should be the occasion of their recovery from it.

It may be now proper to follow the passage to where it is quoted by our Saviour, as recorded in Matthew xiii. 14—in Mark iv. 12, and in John xii. 40—in Luke viii. 10, and by St. Paul in Acts xxviii. 26.

A repetition of the words would be useless, because Isaiah is quoted by name; and there is no other passage in his book, which could have been intended. Is it not then evident, that our Lord's ministry found the Jewish nation in just such a crisis, as that formerly contemplated by Isaiah? Was there not impending a captivity, as before by the king of Babylon, so now by the Romans? And was there ever a passage more pertinently transferred from an event past, to another future? But after all, the passage, as applied by our Saviour, refers to a particular species of his discourses; not as hardening the heart, but as wrapping up his meaning in parables, to prevent their being the mean of the hardening of it the more. Not far before, there stands recorded his admirable sermon on the mount; delivered to the people generally, who were "astonished at his doctrine." That sermon, relative to the ordinary discipline of the mind and government of the life, is expressed in language void of figure and concealment of every kind. But when he delivered what was peculiarly intended of his kingdom, that is of his church, it was designed peculiarly for his Apostles; to whom it was "given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God." It is not said, that those mysteries were withheld from the people, lest they should convert and be healed:" to give this construction, would be to connect two subjects, without regard to what occurs intermediately. No, it is "because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand:"* that is, they would not, speaking of them nationally, admit the intelligence which might be communicated to them, of

* Matthew xiii. 13.

the ensuing spritual kingdom. Then follows the quotation from the prophecy of Isaiah, which is merely said to be fulfilled: that is, as in Isaiah's time, so now, the nation was waxing ripe for destruction; and could not be reclaimed, but might be made worse, by an indiscriminate disclosure of truths, concerning the future establishment and prodigious increase of the church. There have been noticed the several passages of the New Testament, in which the passage from Isaiah is quoted. In no one of these places, except in St. John, is the act of hardening apparently affirmed of the divine Being. And even in St. John, the words will be divested of a signification so harsh, if we construe the original word, on the supposition of its being used impersonally; which is frequent in the Greek language. Under such a translation, the passage would be relieved from a sentiment not found either in that of which it is confessedly a quotation, or in the quotations by the three other Evangelists.

Similar to the class of texts the last mentioned, is another class of them, which speak of God's imparting or withholding the benefits of the Gospel; according to the perparation or the disqualification of mind, of the persons in contemplation. But there may be propriety in premising in this place, concerning what is to be said of a preparation of the mind, that it would be unfairly interpreted, as if presumed to be the result of human ability. On the contrary, it is here believed, that divine grace goes before, in such a previous discipline, and assists in it. But, that the receiving of the truth depends in some degree on the predisposing habits of the mind, is evident in various passages of scripture. Why

else is the seed of the word, agreeably to what is affirmed in Luke xiii. 15, the more likely to be productive, from the circumstance of its having been sown, “in an honest and good heart?” And why is the doing of good or of evil spoken of in St. John iii. 20, 21, as being preparatory to the coming to the light, or the contrary? Also in Mark x. 21, we read of a young man of whom it is said—“Jesus beholding him, loved him.” And in Acts xvii. 11, the Jews of Berea are commended above those of Thessalonica, in that the former “received the word with all readiness of mind.” These passages are cited merely to prove, that when our blessed Saviour opened his commission of the Gospel to the Jews, their reception or rejection of the gracious present, depended partly on the states of mind which had been cherished by them under a lower measure of the communication of divine truth.*

* Professor Witsius, speaking of the passage here cited, of the young man in the Gospel, says—“It has been found, that they who in appearance, were in the best manner disposed for regeneration, were yet at the greatest distance from it, as the instance of that young man very plainly shows.” In what direct contrariety are the statement of the Evangelist, and the comment of the professor! The former says—“Jesus loved him:” which implies some gracious tendency to good. But the latter thinks, that however apparently disposed, he was at the greatest distance from it. Doubtless, the professor would have said the same of a kindred case, related soon after (xii. 34) in the same Gospel, in which Jesus said to a certain Scribe—“Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” It is true, as the professor remarks of the young man—he parted with our Lord sorrowful. That he parted finally, is more than we can affirm: And if he did, it only proves, that his riches and the prospect of persecution had greater effect on one hand, than his favourable disposition on the other. In regard to the kingdom of

But to proceed with the class of texts in contemplation: St. Matthew says—"At that time Jesus answered and said: I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."* That the words, "wise and prudent," are here used in a sense implying censure, and the word "babes" in a sense of approbation, is not denied by any. Under the one therefore, there must be conveyed the sense of a mental preparation for the receiving of the truths of the Gospel; and under the other, disability and hindrance in a similar point of view. What has this to do, with the subjection of some to an unavoidable necessity of sinning, and of others to an irresistible call of grace? It

heaven, as in regard to any place or state on earth, a man may be near and yet never enter; while this does not prove, that propinquity is not in itself a favourable circumstance. But the professor cites what is said in Matthew xxi. 31, 32, that "the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God," before certain others. But who were these others? They were "the chief priests and elders of the people;" whose characters are drawn in very dark colours; and who had sinned against clearer light, than they with whom they are so ignominiously compared. Doubtless, the former were not the persons, of whom it is said—"He that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."

It is worthy of remark, that Witsius, when professedly attacking the sentiment here sustained, rests his cause on the passage the last commented on; and on Isaiah lxv. 1; which will be commented on in the next note.

* xi. 25.

would seem, that no two subjects can be less connected. And yet it has been common with Calvinistick writers, in every particular in which their system exacts of them the acknowledgment of what seems in opposition to the clearest dictates of our rational nature, to bow in submission, and to say—"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Many indeed are the instances, in which the ways of God are unsearchable; because we cannot look forward to their ends. And great reason have we, on such occasions, to acquiesce and to adore; under the conviction, concerning what is good in the sight of God, that it would be good in ours also, could we see it in the whole extent of its relations. But when the very end of a dispensation is so stated, as to contradict our best founded apprehensions of the moral attributes of God; the doctrine cannot come within the meaning of the holy ejaculation quoted.

Under the present denomination, we may bring that in Acts xiii. 48; in which it is said—"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." It would have been more to the purpose for which this text has been so often quoted, if the original word, instead of being from the word answering to it in the Greek Testament;* had been from one or the other of two words,† both of which are translated "ordained" in other places. But that the first mentioned word has a greater latitude of signification, appears from the use made of it in 1. Cor. xvi. 15, where we read—"They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."‡ In like manner, when it is said Acts xx. 13—"for so had he appoint-

* ταρω. † τιθημι, or προοριζω. ‡ εταξαν εαυτους.

ed”* more strictly—“so was he disposed”—if, as in the passage under consideration, we were to translate it, “so was he ordained;” it would represent the Apostle as guided by the will of others; in measures in which the passage evidently intended to represent him as governed by the dictates of his own mind. If the same sense be applied to the place in question, the sentiment will imply a preparation of heart, disposing certain persons to believe: Which we ought the rather to suppose to be the matter intended, as the expression describes a contrariety of character to that found in the verse but one before, in which the Apostle had said to those Jews who rejected the Gospel—“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” Here were a class of people indisposed to eternal life, who thrust it from them: On the contrary, “as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed.”

A similar passage is brought from 1. Peter ii. 8—“Whereunto also” [that is destruction] “they were appointed.” And there would have been no impropriety in translating it “ordained:” For a word is used† acknowledged above to bear that meaning. But the question is—Who were the persons spoken of, and to what are they ordained? The context describes them as “disobedient,” and being disobedient, it was ordained, that the preaching of a crucified Saviour should be “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence” to them. The character of the party is laid down, before the mention of the appointed destruction, which was the effect of it.‡

* γὰρ ἢ διατεταγμενος. † ετεθησαν.

‡ Although this text has been stated as not applying to the

Similar to the last mentioned passage, is another in matter at issue; yet it is conceived, that the words admit of a material emendation, from the Syriack version which is “οἱ προσκοπτῶσι τῷ λόγῳ ἀπειθεῖς, εἰς ὃ καὶ ἐτεθῆσαν.” Of this, the present writer presumes to propose the following translation—“At which [stone] they stumble, who are disobedient to the word; to which [word] they also were set [or placed or appointed.]” If an objection should be founded on the neuter gender of the pronoun,* the answer is, that such precision is not always observed; and particularly that there is a similar change of gender, in 1. Thess. iii. 3.

Whether the translation above given be or be not altogether correct; the proposer of it entertains entire confidence in it, so far as relates to the connecting of “appointment” with the “word,” and not with “disobedience;” and in this he is sustained by the following authorities.

Erasmus paraphrases the place thus—“And they stumble, who-soever be offended at the worde of the Gospel, and believe it not; seeing Moses’ lawe made them readie before-hande, to the ende that they should believe the Gospel, as soon as the thing was truly performed in dede, that the lawe signified in shadowe.” Archbishop Cranmer’s bible, published in 1541, translates—“Whereat they be offended, which stumble at the worde, and believe not that, whereon they were set.” Dr. Luther, according to a rendering from the German, delivered to the writer of this by a respectable Lutheran clergyman, translates—“Who stumble at the word, and believe not thereon, on which they were placed.” Archbishop Newcome, translates—“Even to those who stumble at the word, disbelieving that to which they were appointed.” And Mr. Charles Thomson, in the version with which he has lately favoured the publick, translates—“They, disbelieving the word, stumble at the thing for which they were laid.”

In Griesbach’s text of the New Testament, the sentiment here given is sustained, by his connecting of “τῷ λόγῳ” not with “προσκοπτῶσι” but with “ἀπειθεῖς.”

In the sentiment here considered as offensive, the reading kept in view is the vulgate; of which, however, it is a hard construction. The vulgate is—“Iis qui offendunt verbo, nec credunt in

* ὃ

the epistle of St. Jude v. 4—"Who were before of old quod et positi sunt." The being appointed to the word seems a more natural sense, than the being appointed to unbelief.

Perhaps one of the greatest liberties to be found in biblical translation, is that taken with this text, by the learned professor Theodore Beza. In his note on the place, he professes to adopt the Syriack, as the better [sincerio^rem] version; and accordingly in his translation, he properly uses the expression—"non parendo sermoni." This would have thrown forward "the word," to a connexion with appointment. But to prevent such a connexion, he thrusts in the word "immoregeri." There can be no room either for "non parendo," or for "immoregeri," except as the rendering of "ἀπειθεῖντες." How then can there be room for both of those Latin terms? Here is redundancy, and for what purpose, is evident. But his is not all. He changes the perfect tense of the vulgate, "positi sunt," into the pluperfect—"constituti fuerunt." This is not warranted in the Greek; but the use is obvious. The perfect tense might still have admitted the idea, that the unbelieving Jews, as well as the believing, were set to the word; agreeably to the prophecy quoted in the verse before the text: whereas the other tense favours the idea, of a retrospect to an eternal determination of the divine mind. Doubtless the exchange of "positi" for the stronger word "constituti" was with the same view.

What makes the preceding statement the more worthy of notice, is a probability, that Beza may have introduced the change, which seems to have taken place in his time, in the translation of the verse in question. The present writer has consulted an edition of Geneva edited in 1554. which translates—"Qui offendunt verbo, in quo et positi sunt;" also a Swiss edition of 1544, which translates—"Qui impingunt in sermonem, neque credunt in id, ad quod, et instituti fuerunt." Archbishop Newcome quotes Strype, saying, that the English version of Geneva was formed too faithfully on the model of of Beza: And this is probably the channel, through which the substitution came of the present translation, for that of Cranmer's bible; an hypothesis, which agrees with the position, of there having been a great change in the sentiments of the English clergy, at a period intervening between the dates of these two translations.

ordained to this condemnation.” But the ground of the ordaining—if this be thought the matter spoken of—is declared in their being “ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” It can-

Even Calvin, so little earlier than Beza, does not seem to have considered this text as to his purpose. For he is silent on it, in his *Institutions*; although, understood Calvinistically, it goes to the extent of his doctrine of reprobation.

After committing to the press the preceding part of this note, there came accidentally under the notice of the writer of it, a work which confirmed him in the suspicion before entertained, that Theodore Beza was the person, with whom the drawing of reprobation from this text originated. The work here alluded to, is a *System of Theology* by Dr. John Gerhard, a Lutheran divine, who was a professor in the University of Jena, in the 16th century, and is honourably spoken of by Dr. Mosheim. Dr. Gerhard [tom. ii. p. 36. edit. 1657] notices the innovation here remarked on; ascribes it to Beza; and adds, that the perversion [perversio] being very agreeable to some, they were not afraid [non veriti fuerint] to insert it in the very text of Latin Bibles, published in Francfort, in the year 1591. Gerhard's work appears, from his dedication of it to the Elector of Saxony, to have been first edited in 1610: At which time, it seemed to him an extraordinary instance of effrontery, to have introduced into Latin Bibles, what restricted the words to a sense which is now pleaded for by Calvinists, as the true construction of the common English version.

Further, the same author quotes some work of Calvin, in which, commenting on Acts xiii. 36, he illustrates the sentiment of it by the passage now in question; which he considers as expressing that the Jews were placed in circumstances favourable to their reception of the Gospel. This is stronger than what is stated above, concerning his not including of the place among the texts by which his system is supported in the *Institutions*.

The prominence of the place in the reprobatory scheme, and concern for the integrity of the sacred text, must be the apology for the length of this note.

not however be reasonably contended, that there is here meant ordaining, in any usual meaning of the word. It is,* “before written;” and in its connexion may properly be translated, “of whom it was before written.” It must mean, either that the end of such ungodly men might be seen, foretold in prophecy; or that their destruction might be traced, either by themselves or by others, in the ends of former ungodly men on record. Nothing can be further from the sense of the passage, than that their being ungodly was part of the ordainment. The last of the two interpretations, is that given by Dr. Doddridge, whose note on the place, considering his general system, is an evidence of his candour. It is as follows: “Which interpretation I prefer to any other, as it tends to clear God of that heavy imputation which it must bring upon his moral attributes, to suppose that he appoints men to sin against him, and then condemns them for doing what they could not but do, and what they were, independent on their own freedom of choice, fated to: A doctrine so pregnant with gloomy, and, as I should fear with fatal consequences, that I think it a part of the duty I owe to the word of God, to rescue it from the imputation of containing such a tenet.”†

* προγεγραμμενοι.

† Cranmer’s Bible translates—“Of which it was written aforetime, unto such judgement.” Luther’s Bible, rendered into English, translates—“Of whom, in former times, has been written to such punishments.” Archbishop Newcombe has it—“Who were before, of old, set forth for this condemnation.” And Mr. Charles Thomson has it—“Who have been of old written of, and for this very crime.”

Of this text it may be remarked, as of 1. Peter ii. 8. that Cal-

In Philippians iv. 3. and in sundry places of the Revelation of St. John, we read of “the book of life,” in which the names of the saints are “written.” Much stress has been laid on this expression. But besides the hazard run, when we rely on mere metaphor in proof of doctrine; the abuse of that in question is sufficiently guarded against, in that place of the Revelations where it is threatened—*“If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.” Therefore, this was no book of eternal and immutable decree.

In addition to the classes of texts hitherto noticed, it may be proper to bring into view a few, which come not strictly under them.

Considerable use has been made of a passage in the Acts of the Apostles: “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”† The stress is evidently here laid on the words “should be;” as if the event followed from some previous discriminating determination. But this is not exacted by the sense of the original,‡ which might be well translated “were saved;” or who had accepted of the salvation offered to them. The meaning is, that of those there were daily additions to the visible communion of Christians.

Exodus xxxiii. 19. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy,” has been continually brought up on the present subject: not that, to all appearance, it would vin did not apply it to his doctrine of reprobation: the way for this was perhaps not prepared by mistranslation.

* Chap. xxii. v. 19. † Chap. ii. v. 47. ‡ σωζομενους.

have been thought to express more than temporal promise, if it had not been quoted by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, and there thought to have a reference to everlasting happiness. The passage has been already noticed in the first department of the present work. But as this was merely because of its relation to the argument of St. Paul, there may be propriety in noticing it here also. The word translated: "I will be gracious,"* means strictly: "I will seize or take possession;" and although thought to be applicable to benignity, according to the general idea of that attribute, may be held fully satisfied in this place, by the circumstance that Israel was "the Lord's inheritance." The word translated, "I will have mercy,"† bears the sense of having compassion; between which and the other there is some diversity. The substantive is used in Genesis xliii. 14—"God Almighty give you mercy before the man;" and in other places, in which it cannot be supposed to express the pardon of sin: Although this is the sense to which modern use has very much applied the word; and hence the facility with which, as it stands in Exodus and in the epistle to the Romans, there is drawn from it a meaning apparently not in contemplation in either place.

Much also has been built on Deuteronomy xxix. 4. "The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, until this day." Now nothing could have been more foreign to the design of Moses, in a discourse which is a mixture of exhortation and reproof, than to have told the Israelites, that their past blindness or disobedience had been owing to

* ארחן † ארחן

a withholding of the grace of God. The more natural sense, therefore, is, that the root of the deficiency was in themselves. But in truth the text, without the least violence, may be made to bear a sense the very reverse of that translation. The sense alluded to arises from making the words an interrogation, as in 2. Kings v. 26 —“Went not mine heart with thee?” &c Other places might be mentioned, for which there can be given no other reason, than that applicable here also—and indeed a reason quite sufficient—its being the most agreeable to the sense.

Perhaps there never was a passage in itself beautiful and affecting, but divested of these properties by misapplication, more conspicuously than is that in Isaiah lxxv. 1, when taken from its proper subject, the call of the Gentiles into the church; and applied to a predestination to life of individual persons. The prophet, carried by vision to the time of the event involved in the former subject, and contemplating the event as present to him, says, in the name of the great Being under whose inspiration he was speaking—“I am sought of them that asked not for me: I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.” And then, mournfully contrasting the splendid event with the foreseen apostasy of the Israelites, he adds—“I have spread out my hands all the day, unto a rebellious people:” going on to describe their own prevalent idolatry and other wickedness. St Paul, in the 20th verse of the 10th chapter to the Romans, closely applies the prophecy as here interpreted, to the people of whom it is designed: But Calvinists apply the ante-

cedent part of it to the predestinating decree of God; which accomplishes its end, without any seeking of the persons on whom it lights. The words are the vehicle of the same sentiment, and relate to the same event, as where it is said in another place*—“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.”†

The theory here opposed, continually applying personally what was meant collectively, does not disdain to lay stress on what is said in Matthew xv. 13—“Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” The Greek word‡ signifies not so properly a single plant, as a collection of plants; that is, a garden or plantation. The accusation had been made by our Saviour just before, concerning the Pharisees, that they “taught for doctrines the commandments of men.” Then, on being told that they were offended at his saying, he uttered the denunciation now in question. It means, that the assumed authority of this hypocritical sect, would fall under the divinely instituted authority of the spiritual kingdom of the speaker.

The text last noticed, is urged by Professor Witsius; who also supposes something to his purpose in Luke

* Matthew iv. 16.

† Isaiah lxv. 1. is one of the two passages, mentioned in a preceding note, as the most relied on by Professor Witsius, in opposition to the opinion of there being certain states of mind, which are a better preparation than others, for the receiving of Gospel grace.

‡ *φυτεία*.

x: 20—"In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." But, if it be affirmed of the seventy disciples, to whom the language is addressed after the fulfilment of their mission, that there were evidence of their names being written in heaven; it does not appear how any inference can be adduced, in favour of the theory to which it is applied. No doubt, as Witsius remarks, there is reference to a register: But why it should be understood, as having an allusion to the genealogical register noticed in Ezra, does not so distinctly appear, as this learned man presumes. A register, however, is in contemplation; such as a general may keep of his army, or a pastor of his flock. In neither of these, does the subject either discard all dependence on the will of the person whose name is entered, or preclude all possibility of its being erased, in consequence of his default. There is always hazard run, in building doctrine on metaphor: But when this is attempted, there should be consistency.

So many texts of scripture have been commented on, that there seems a call to say something further, in evidence of a sentiment expressed in the beginning—there being, even on the ground of the Calvinistick explication, no more than a constructive or implied sense. A few instances of this shall be given, in texts of different descriptions. Even if our Saviour, when he spoke of "gathering his elect from the four winds," meant the term "elect" in the sense put on it in the Calvinistick scheme; still it will be acknowledged, that the object of the blessed speaker was not to establish the point, that there is such a description of persons; but

to announce a future judgment. So, when he thanked his heavenly Father, for hiding the things of the Gospel from people of a certain character, and revealing them to those of another; if it were allowed, contrary to apparent propriety, that the opposite characters became what they were, by the operation of an eternal decree; this would not hinder, but that the matters spoken of were the different dispensations towards them. In like manner, when St. Paul, writing to the Philippians, salutes certain persons "whose names are in the book of life;" his purpose must have been, to declare his opinion of their christian character. But that this was connected with a predestination, in any sense that can be annexed to the word—supposing this to have been the case—was a circumstance attached to the commendation given. Be it here acknowledged, that there may often be clearly gathered truths, attached to other subjects, and growing, as it were, out of them. The matter contended for, is merely that there are no leading truths of scripture, which are not taught more expressly, and as being principally within the contemplation of the writers.

If these things are so; on how slight a foundation, or rather how without any foundation, has there been erected a superstructure of systematick doctrine! To take notice, in the first place, of the controversy which gave occasion to the present discussion: There has been presumed to have been taught in scripture, a doctrine of predestination, relative to the future condition of individuals. The matter contested between the opposite parties has been, whether the decree were founded on prescience of good and ill. And what were

the consequences in the confiscation of property, and in the banishment of persons, besides all the wrath and the malice excited, with their deplorable effects in a variety of ways, are too well known to those who have looked into the history of the dispute. But before this, there had been another, which agitated the country wherein the subjects were the most discussed: And to all appearance, it was only the rise of the second controversy, which united the two parties of the other against a common enemy. The first controversy here alluded to, had been between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians; the former of whom thought, that God determined to create mankind, for the express purpose of illustrating his mercy in the salvation of some, and his justice in the damnation of others. But the latter represent the same great Being, contemplating the creation and the fall together; and founding his decrees on his designs in respect to both those descriptions of persons, although without respect to good and evil to be done by them respectively. These are not yet the only airy castles of predestinarian controversy. For it has been thought of moment to inquire, and to take opposite sides on the question, whether God, in the framing of the decree, contemplated man created and fallen, or only to be created and made liable to fall. As if this were not enough, it has been debated, whether our blessed Saviour were to be considered as the object of the decree, or the mean of carrying it into effect: some conceiving that they do him more honour, by supposing that he is the final object of such an operation of the divine mind; than if man were the object, and the divine nature united with the human on his

account. It would be endless to mention the subordinate controversies, which have arisen on the various branches of the more general controversy. But let it be asked—Does it not follow from such speculations, running so far ahead of any guidance found in scripture, that they are evidence of a frailty of the human heart, which calls for subjection to Christian humility and a just knowledge of ourselves? If it were only “weaving the spider’s web,” it would at the best be pastime: But it is to “hatch the cockatrice eggs,” from which there springs the viper of persecution. Instead therefore of giving loose to the imagination, in inquiries such as those alluded to; it must surely be better to lift up the heart in prayer, to be kept contented under that property of the condition of mankind, which will not suffer them to “know” but “in part.”

It may be asked, however, on the supposition of the abandoning of all scripture ground relatively to the subject—Is this to be a field of inquiry forbidden to the human intellect; qualified, as we find it, to explore the wonders of earth and heaven?

To this let it be answered, in the first place, that in inquiries relative either to spirit or to matter, we cannot reasonably proceed to determination, without first having data, on which to ground it. It was allowable in Des Cartes to contemplate the system of the universe, in order to discover the laws which guide its motions: But he did not act philosophically, when he delivered the unproved doctrine of his vortices. In like manner, the metaphysician may look back to and adore the eternal wisdom and goodness, which brought this fair creation into being: But let him beware of fabri-

cating a system, intended to have an operation on faith and practice; unless, indeed, some metaphysical Newton should arise, who, by discovering and demonstrating principles unthought of hitherto, shall carry irresistible conviction. This, however, is here apprehended to be forbidden by the nature of the subject.

It is another reasonable rule resulting, that if a man will speculate and form a system without demonstrable principles to support it, although perhaps with principles which may appear demonstrable to himself, he should at least take care, that his system be not such as leads to conclusions, directly contrary to the clearest dictates of the understandings of mankind; and especially, in what relates to the adorable perfections of the Godhead. There are some truths, which, fairly presented to the mind, are perceived by the most simple of its operations. There are other truths, or what seem such, each of which, to be attained to, requires a chain of thought. In proportion to the number of links in the chain, we ought to be aware, that error may have happened. But if the result be the contradicting of important truths of the description before stated, it ought in reason, as is here conceived, to be rejected. The application of these remarks to the present subject is obvious. We are told in scripture, that “the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.”* And although only “his eternal power and godhead” are instanced, yet the sentiment may be extended to his attributes generally. But when we speak of the goodness of God and of his justice, we

* Rom. i. 20.

cannot but conceive of these properties as the same in kind, however infinitely higher the sense in which they are applied, with what we find in men. And we certainly cannot err, in conceiving of them as thus the same in kind; when the great Lord of heaven and earth has not disdained, in the revelation which he has given us of his will, to invite us to judge of his dealings towards us, by the same rules of equity which apply to our dealings with one another.

But further—and this is another matter to be exacted—if men will speculate and systematize, either disregarding the consequences seen to follow, or persuading themselves that they are not fairly drawn; let them at all events beware of obtruding their opinions as revealed truth, obligatory on others. The writer of this is far from being of the opinion, that the church of God has no right to oppose the salutary truths of scripture, to any pernicious errors which contradict them; as if she were destined to be, like Noah's Ark, the receptacle of the unclean beasts and birds of heresies, in all their variety of shapes. The right, here presumed to belong to the church, may be abused; and has been so, in a very great degree. But to deny it, is to devest her of an attribute, which is essential to every social body, whether civil or religious. Let those, however, who are called to the management of her concerns, take care how they press their own opinions, to be admitted as the decisions of holy writ. It is an awful threat—“If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.”* It is not here affirmed, that the words apply strictly to the

* Rev. xxii. 18.

subject: For the obtruding of dogmas extraneous to the written word, is not of the same grade of assumed power, as would be the incorporating of them with the word itself. We have reason, indeed, of devout acknowledgment in the circumstance, that the end designed in the interdicting of the adding to or the detracting from the Bible, in the passage to which there has been here a reference, has been accomplished by the good providence of God; in his having maintained it in such integrity, that all parties agree in appealing to it as the standard, however they may differ in the interpretation of it. But if to demand to human opinions the same authority as to holy writ, be not actually a corruption of it, does it not partake of the same spirit, and does not the criminality of the one extend in a measure to the other? This would seem to be the case; and the consequent responsibility ought to put us on our guard.

As to the effect which the subject should have on people generally; it is, that the scriptures being in their hands, with an authenticity acknowledged by all litigant parties to be incontrovertible, they should reject all dogmas not there found; and also be assured, that none will be found, which are contrary to the perfections of God, as stamped on the whole face of nature. Doubtless, in the applying of the latter principle, there is need of caution. In attending to the economy of grace, there may be observed some particulars, the reasons of which are not immediately apparent. It is the same in the economy of nature: the wisdom of which is not in every instance obvious, on a transient attention. Both in nature and in grace, we may mis-

judge, from not having the divine dispensations before us, in all their relations. Here is room for the suspension of opinion; and for the submission of human reason, to the dictates of the divine. But when there are promulgated doctrines, which strike directly at the divine attributes: and that in a universality of sense, leaving no room for their being placed in a different point of view, by circumstances now unknown, we cannot be unsafe, in imitating the saying of St. Paul—“Let God be true and every man a liar:” that is, as applicable to the present point—let all the attributes of the divine nature be sustained; whatever may be the consequences, to the theories of fallible and frail men.

In the beginning of this discussion, there was held out the expectation of such an explanation of the texts usually applied, as is thought to overthrow the Calvinistick interpretation, without establishing the Arminian. With a reference to that intimation, it may be proper again to remark the two senses, in which predestination has been understood. One sense and it is that here maintained—is, as constituting future believers the members of a certain body—a peculium—a church, which was to be established in the world by the Omnipotence, and sustained in it by the Providence of God. Even in regard to this favoured communion, it has been shown, as is here hoped, that predestination, as affirmed in scripture, looks no farther back than to the beginning of the dispensations connected with the event. And even for this retrospect, there has been shown a powerful reason in the necessity of contradicting a prejudice; which treated the coming in of the Gentiles, otherwise than under the wing

of Judaism, as a novel device, for which there was no ground in antecedent promise.

The other sense of predestination is, as marking out from eternity some to everlasting happiness, and others to everlasting misery. But it has been endeavoured to be shown, that of this, either as founded on rescience or as independent on it, the scriptures are silent.

If so, the subject rests on reason, and our natural sense of propriety: And on this ground, what can be more offensive, than the sustaining of the sovereignty of God in such a manner, as is contrary to every idea which we should otherwise entertain of his benevolence and his justice? Here then it may be expected of the author, to indulge himself in highly wrought invectives, against the Calvinistick scheme; accusing it of describing God as the tyrant of the universe; with many other things to the same effect. But the author forbears; well knowing, that none are more shocked than many religious Calvinists, at the apparent consequences of their doctrine: which consequences they accordingly deny; at the same time that they are sensible of the difficulty attending their system, in this respect; but from which they think they cannot disengage it, without giving room for other consequences, held by them to be still more injurious to the Godhead. There is here so much respect for sensibility of this sort, that there shall be avoided all reasoning a priori, from the benevolence and the justice of God; any further than the advocates of the opposite theory will consent to go along. And there is even hope entertained, of showing in what is now to be remarked, that the opposite parties of Calvinists and Arminians are not so remote from one another, on the present point of an appeal to reason, as to a transient observer might appear.

There has been already referred to the decision of the Calvinists, that God cannot condemn an innocent creature to everlasting torments. And we find, in Professor Turretine's system of Divinity, under his 9th head, chapter 18, that thesis maintained against certain schoolmen, who held the contrary. Conformably with this, Professor Witsius affirms,* that "it is unbecoming the goodness, nay," says he, "I would almost dare to add, the justice of God, to adjudge an innocent creature to hell torments." But then, it was held by both these divines, that all mankind are guilty and deserving of punishment, by the imputation of Adam's sin, and by their inheriting from him of a depraved nature. And before Turretine and Witsius, it had been said by Calvin,† that, for the reasons stated, "infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another." There seems, then, a consent between the Calvinists and the Arminians, in the position, that reason may so far raise her voice, as to interdict an evident interference of doctrine with what we know of the attributes of God. Accordingly, the difference between the parties is reduced to the question, whether the subjecting of a creature to the necessity of sinning, by the very circumstances under which he was brought into existence, come within the sphere of the position in which they are thus agreed? If then the Arminian should pronounce of the case the last supposed, that it is no less essentially unjust, than that other on which the Calvinists decide positively that it is so and therefore cannot be, let the point of difference be duly marked; and let there not be charged as cri-

* Book i. chapter iv. section 14. † Book ii. chapter i. sec. 8.

minal, the comparing of what is proclaimed to be divine truth, with what we gather concerning the nature of God, from reflecting on the operations of our own minds and from his works.

But as the point now contemplated is a fruitful source of what logicians call the argument to modesty,* brought forward for the silencing of debate; there may be propriety, in attending to what the above two learned men have said, in proof of the position already quoted, as maintained by them.

Professor Turretine argues, in the first place, that, in an innocent creature, there cannot be the consciousness of crime and of the just judgment of God; which, says he, constitutes the punishment. It would seem, that this judicious remark must apply much further than intended; that is, to a creature not conscious of any act, but such as it has been impelled to by overruling destiny. What ground can there be here for the condemnation of conscience, or for the looking back on the lost opportunities of life, as what might have been applied for the working out of salvation? That some men, believing the Calvinistick doctrine, live and die in sin, is what no one will deny. In all probability, a proportion of these have experienced the sensibilities excited by accusing consciences. If so, it must surely be owing to lurking doubts of the correctness of their theory. But if the truth of it should be confirmed to them in that future state of being, in which we are warranted to expect to have an enlarged view of the divine dispensations; condemnation, whatever may be the nature of the punishment consequent on it in other respects, cannot, it would seem, produce the reproaches of a convicted conscience. A contrary opinion,

* *Argumentum ad modestiam.*

would suppose that venerable monitor determined to possess properties hereafter, quite different from any found attached to it in the present life.

But there has not yet been given the extent of Turretine's reasoning from the divine attributes, against that extravagant opinion of certain schoolmen. He affirms,* that "from such a dispensation no glory can arise, but rather the ignominy of a tyrannical dominion." The anticalvinist says precisely the same, against the idea of God's calling into existence, for the illustrating of his glory in damnation. The question then between them is, not of the lawfulness of applying the maxims of reason to the ways of heaven, but of the propriety of the respective application.

The Professor also arms himself with that passage in the 25th Psalm, ver. 10—"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." On the contrary side it will be said, that the abstract part of the proposition must have a general operation; although in this place specially applied. Another text of scripture is brought up, that in Hebrews xi. 6—"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." It will be answered, that this truth presumes the possibility of the use, and of the abuse of moral freedom. There is yet another text—Psalm xviii. 26—"With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure:" And this the writer presumes essential to the justice of God. If so, it must be on a principle, which extends further than would have been allowed.

The reasoning of Professor Witsius is also worthy of notice. He is answering 'T'wiss; whom he calls a great

* *System of Divinity*, 9th head, Chap. 18.

divine; and who, he says, had many followers. In order to show the unreasonableness of the opinion entertained by this divine, Witsius argues thus—"Is it becoming the most holy and thrice excellent God, to say to his holy creature—Look upon me as thy chief good; but know I neither am, nor shall be such to thee. Long after me; but on condition thou never obtain thy desire. Hunger and thirst after me; but only to be for ever disappointed and never satisfied. Seek me above all things; but seek me in vain, never to be found. He does not know God, who imagines that such things are worthy of him." The anticalvinist may step in here; and by no material change of sentiment and language, may represent the impropriety of supposing the Creator thus addressing the unhappy victim of his discriminating decree—"I command thee to seek me above all things, but have predetermined to withhold from thee that grace, without which thou canst not seek and find: And I have commanded thee to repent, to believe, and to obey; but all in contrariety to a necessity, impelling thee to the opposite of the things required." When the two cases and the corresponding addresses are considered, there seems no such difference between them, as should prevent our saying, in words like those of Witsius—"He does not possess, in this particular point, a just knowledge of God, who imagines that such things are worthy of him."

Let it then be remembered, how freely such writers can pronounce, concerning what the moral attributes of God require, when the argument does not invade their theory. For in such a case, there is no likening of it to the "thing formed saying to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus?" And there is allowed no weight to

the demand that might be made on them by their opponents—"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?" And yet it is difficult to perceive, how they could evade such an argument, otherwise than by the interpretation given of the passage in the former part of this work, as affecting the condition of man, not in eternity, but in time. Much indeed may justly be said, of the caution and the reverence with which we should reason concerning the ways of God to man; and of the danger of error from our imperfect views of them. Yet even on this awful subject, there are some things which we may affirm, and other things which we may deny, without presumption.

It is indeed surprising, that any should forbid all appeal to our rational faculties, relatively to the connexion of the moral government of God, with his adorable attributes; when he has himself so often appealed to the same subject, in his word. For instance, when in allusion to the equity of his commands, he expostulated--"O my people, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me:"* And when he allowed Abraham to reason with him in regard to Sodom--"That be far from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"† And when he addresses the house of Israel thus—"Are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?"‡ Under these and the like high authorities, although there will always be occasion, where we cannot discern the ends of the moral government of God, to remember, that "clouds and darkness are round about him;" yet we may answer to all theories, contra-

* Micah vi. 3. † Genesis xviii. 25. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 29.

dicting the primary truths gathered by sober reason from the contemplation of his works, that "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat."

2 OF REDEMPTION.

Import of the Term--Arminian side adopted--Texts expressive of Universality--Of the same, without mentioning Sacrifice for Sin--Texts of Invitation--Of exhortation--Of Promise and Threatening--Making especial Mention of the World--Which excite to the Imitation of God--Expressive of being within the Covenant--Of temporal Mercies--Of Spiritual--The whole applied.

FROM a subject, which the word of God has not cleared of the clouds and darkness thrown on it by the circumstances of our condition, the attention is now invited to another; that of a truth, as luminous as the region from which it has descended to bless mankind.

The very name of the history of Redemption--the Gospel, that is, Good News--carries with it a confutation of all theories, erected on the foundation of the doctrine of a discriminating decree. From constantly hearing the word technically applied, as the title of a book, or as denoting the contents of the books of the New Testament collectively, it makes an impression far below that, with which the sound of it was winged to every ear, on the first establishment of the Christian dispensation. Let a man suppose himself an inhabitant of some city of the Roman Empire, at the beginning of the Christian era. Unexpectedly there appear persons, professing to be the messengers of Heaven: The prominent circumstance of what they announce, is its being glad tidings or good news: And the offer is to one and all of those who listen to them, either from curiosity or for edification. What would be the sentiments of the man, supposing himself the witness of such an occasion; and what would be his

feelings; when it should be disclosed to him, that under the declared general will, there were another secret; providing that some, probably the far greater number, perhaps all of the hearers, were incapacitated for the acceptance of it; and that the call, although made on every individual, in such a manner as implies him to be personally contemplated, was nevertheless, with there being a circumstance understood, the existence or the want of which would render the call effectual or the contrary? These are the very matters affirmed to have been taught by the Apostles, to persons in the circumstances here supposed; who, however, do not appear to have discovered, or to have had their minds offended by the inconsistency.

It is intended, in the discussion of the present point, to adopt precisely the Arminian side of the question; or rather that which is here supposed to have been uniformly taught in the Christian church, until early in the fifth century. If there be weight in the authorities to be adduced in support of it, they ought to be considered as applying in direct contrariety to the Calvinistick construction of the passages on the other side. It follows from the competition in which they will stand, not that the scripture is inconsistent in itself, but that the parts of it, somewhat obscure, should be explained by those which are more explicit. For it will appear, in regard to a considerable proportion of the texts to be brought forward, in evidence of the universality of redemption, that it is the very truth intended to be taught in them; and that without it, the words have no meaning. So far are they from conveying the sentiment merely by implication, or from giving occasion to its being deduced from them, by way of inference.

The first class of texts which shall be mentioned, are they which consist in little more than in a further elucidation of the sentiment comprehended in the name. Thus, when the angels announced to the shepherds,* that the message brought by them was “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people;” when the disciples were commanded to “go into all the world, and preach the Gospel [that is the good news] to every creature;” and when the Gospel [the same good news] is said† to have been “preached to every creature which is under heaven,” and other passages to the same purpose might be mentioned—there is not specious room for the comfortless criticism applied to other places; that by all people is meant all sorts of people: For the stress is laid on the preaching to all; which would be unworthy of the commission, unless all to whom it was to be preached were interested in it. Besides, it is well known to many, that “preaching” is but a faint expression of the original word, which might more properly be translated “publishing” or “proclaiming.”‡ There may, however, be propriety in remarking, that it is no violence to language to admit, what the truth of the case requires, that, by proclaiming to all the world, is not meant that all mankind had heard the sound of the Gospel. It is sufficient, that, to all who were within the reach of the sound, the Gospel was proclaimed; and for their benefit. Why should it be published or proclaimed to all? On the contrary side, there can be but one pertinent answer; and this is, that it concerns all; some, as the means of their salvation; and others as sealing their condemnation. But this does not account for its being published as good news—as tidings of salvation to all. It

* Luke ii. 10. † Col. i. 23. ‡ *Kneussav.*

is a common rule in interpreting the written instruments of men, that when any particular part is construed in opposition to the principal and the most conspicuous design, error is to be presumed in the construction of the subordinate part; and the more general character of the composition is to be sustained. The rule seems reasonable; and, if applied to the present subject, must quash all controversy; because there cannot be any property of any writing more explicitly declared, than that of grace to mankind generally, as a property of the Gospel.

The next class of texts to be mentioned, are those which apply to the universality of the extent of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross: and they will be urged with the more confidence of their being the proper means of bringing the controversy to an issue, because of the unequivocal terms in which the Calvinistick doctrine declares, that the sacrifice was not for all. No; the elect only are affirmed to be within the reach of the divine mind, when it conceived the design of man's redemption.

Surely, the contrary sentiment to this must have been in the mind of our blessed Saviour, when he declared—"The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."* The same must have been intended by St. Paul, when he said, speaking of the Saviour—"Who gave himself a ransom for all."† Agreeable to this is what St. John says—"He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world;"‡ and what St. Peter says, where he describes certain heretical teachers, as "denying the Lord that bought them,"§

* John vi. 51. † 1. Tim. ii. 6. ‡ 1. John ii. 2. § 2. Pet. ii. 1.

and yet, "bringing on themselves swift destruction." These teachers had been characterized as "false," and as "bringing in damnable heresies;" and "destruction" is the fruit of their doings." Of this text, as in several other instances, Dr. Doddridge gives an interpretation, amounting to that of those who dissent from him in his system.

It is but fair, to record the usual interpretation of Calvinistick writers, of the texts which have been cited. According to them, by "all the world" and "all men," is meant a select number from all the people of the world, of different times, places and circumstances of condition. And they who are said to have been bought by the Lord, and yet to have perished, have the former affirmed of them, because they bore the appearance to others of being of the number of the faithful. The former of these interpretations is applied to other texts, intended to be cited.

There is a very explicit passage in Titus ii. 11, to which the grammatical construction gives a much stronger sense, than that found in the text of the common translation, although the margin has done justice to the original. The exact order of Greek words dictates the following order to the English—"There has appeared the grace of God, bringing salvation unto all men." The advocates of the opposite system, so far as is known to him who writes, have no way of rendering the text conformable to their plan, but by still keeping out of view the marginal reading, and under the cover of the textual, making the old distinction of all sorts of men.*

* Beza, however, the learned and celebrated successor of Calvin.
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Not unlike the preceding text, is that in 2. Cor. v. 19; which says—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." It would be difficult to devise words, whereby universal redemption could have been expressed more clearly, supposing it to have been the matter intended; and therefore, the obvious interpretation should prevail; unless indeed it can be thought, that a redemption wrought for all the world is beyond the reach of the power of God, or beyond what can be believed of his benevolence.

Under the present head, there may be brought in the pointed parallel drawn by St. Paul, between the death of all men in Adam, and the revivification of all in Christ. When it is said "In Adam all die;" if spiritual death be the thing intended, it would seem that no ingenuity can rescue the other clause—"So in Christ shall all be made alive," from the same universality of sense, relatively to everlasting happiness. But if we understand death to be the loss of immortality, to which we are restored by Christ, in such a sense, as that we are again in a state of probation for everlasting happiness; the passage admits of an application easy in

vin in the professorship of divinity in Geneva, has done justice to this text as a Latin translator, making his version conformable to the Greek and to the Vulgate. But in his notes he guards against the consequences, by the customary distinction.

To countervail the more obvious sense of this text, it is usually remarked, that the Apostle had been delivering instructions to servants just before: which is thought to favour the construction of all sorts of men. But to give ground for this interpretation, it would seem necessary, that the putting of servants on an equal footing with others, in the concerns of salvation, were a peculiarity of the Christian dispensation.

itself, and agreeable to the general tenour of holy writ. But to justify this, it is necessary to admit of the universality of the benefit bestowed.

2. Corinthians v. 14. "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." Here is, first a position laid down as a safe ground of reasoning—"One died for all." The inference is—"Then were all dead." If this be true, more evidently so must be the premises. The meaning is still more firmly established by what follows—"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves; but unto him that died for them, and rose again." If what went before do not apply to all who hear the gospel, neither does the improvement: while yet, the Calvinist affirms it to be obligatory; without the distinction of the elect and others.

1. Corinthians viii. 11. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died." If none can perish for whom Christ died, what can these words mean? Dr. Doddridge—Calvinist as he is—gives them a paraphrase, amounting to what any anticalvinist would contend for. His words are—"And so shall the weak brother, for whom the Lord Jesus Christ himself died, be liable to perish by thy knowledge, in this instance mischievous, rather than useful, so that when thou makest a vain ostentation of it, thou dost in effect pride thyself in thy brother's ruin."

The class of texts which shall occupy the next place, as seeming the most nearly allied to that which has gone before, are those in which salvation by Christ appears in the same form of universality, but without espe-

cial mention of his sacrifice for sin. Thus it is said: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* And again it is said, in the next verse—"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." To the same purpose, 1. Timothy ii. 4—"God our Saviour who will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth."† And it seems reasonable to put in the same range 1. Timothy iv. 10. "Who is the Saviour of all

* John iii. 16.

†The old comment here recurs—that of "all men," for all sorts of men; and is thought to derive weight from the special mention of civil rulers. But the apostle had just before exhorted, "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men:" and then it is specified "for kings, and for all that are in authority." Therefore the "all" whom God would have to be saved, and the "all" on account of whom the reason was given, are "the all" for whom we are to pray. And it will be allowed, that we are to pray for all men—rulers and subjects—saints and sinners.

Dr. Doddridge rejects the usual Calvinistical interpretation of this text. "I must confess," says he, "I have never been satisfied with that interpretation, which explains all men here, some of all sorts and ranks of men; since I fear it might also be said, on the principles of those who are fondest of this gloss, that he also wills all men to be condemned." This divine's construction of the place is, "that God has made *sufficient* provision for the salvation of *all*, and that it is to be considered as the *general* declaration of his will, that *all* who know the truth themselves should publish it to all around them, so far as their influence can extend." This construction does not involve the absurdity before exposed: but seems equally remote from the obvious import of the text.

men, especially of those that believe." It is true, that the word translated "Saviour" may be applied either in a temporal or in a spiritual sense, or in both. They are probably both included, but that the latter is not excluded, would seem from the low sense in that case to be given to the species of mercy spoken of, which would be merely the preservation of the wicked by the providence of God, with a view to and for the greater aggravation of the approaching judgment, drawing nigh to them in consequence of his predestination.

The passage the last quoted, and that immediately before it, have been grossly misrepresented by Beza, in his translation of the New Testament. He renders "σωτηρ" not servator [Saviour] but conservator [preserver.] And he has taken a similar liberty with another passage, that of Hebrews x. 38, which is here mentioned, not as applying to the present subdivision of the subject, but as associated with the other texts by Dr. Campbell. In Hebrews x. 38, Beza translates.* "It is not agreeable to my mind." What makes the license of Beza the more striking, is the position in which his translation stands, with the Greek on the one hand and the Vulgate on the other, in collateral columns, testifying against the incorrectness of their companion.

Dr. Campbell, in his dissertations prefixed to his translation of the gospels†, although himself a Calvinist, severely censures Beza, on account of the above and other incorrect translations; calling him, what Jerom had called Aquila—"contentiosus interpres;" that is,

* "Οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχή μου ἐν αὐτῷ." my soul shall have no pleasure in him "non est gratum animo meo."

† Diss. x. p. 5.

a translator who accommodates his version to his system. There can hardly be a severer censure on any man, in the character of a translator, than that which one Calvinistick divine here passes on another. In regard to two of the passages spoken of, Dr. Campbell evidently considers Beza, as giving a different sense from that intended in the Bible. Of the other,* he says he will not affirm, that “conservator” does not express the sense; but he objects to the altering of expressions for the favouring of opinions: and he supposes, that the translator would have adhered to servator, if it had not been to get rid of the difficulty, in the clause,† “especially of those that believe.”

The reason given by Beza in his notes, for the freedoms which have been specified, are here conceived to be so evidently insufficient, as greatly to aggravate the impropriety of such conduct. His motive for altering “Saviour” to “Preserver,” is, that the former word being commonly applied to the subject of eternal life through Christ, he altered it to avoid an homonymy; thus presuming, that it meant another matter in this place; which is the very point in question. In the next passage, he compares the expression—“Would have all men to be saved,” to its being said, Matthew iv. 23, and elsewhere, that our Lord healed “all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, among the people.”‡ But there seems no ground for this comparison: because the varied forms of expression from St. Matthew, give the same sentiment; whereas, not so the expressions, “all men,” and “every sort of men.” The

* Timothy iv. 10. † μάλιστα πιστών.

‡ πᾶσαν νόσον, καὶ πᾶσαν μελαγχίαν.

substance of what is said for the varied expression in the remaining passage,* is, that it amounts to the same thing: but this is not correct; for as it stands in the Greek, and in the Vulgate, it makes directly against final perseverance; a sense entirely lost by the substituted sentiment. How very extensive must have been the consequences of such license! since, as Dr. Campbell remarks, Beza's translation has been the standard of most of the translations of the reformed churches (I do not, says he, include the Lutheran) into modern languages.

It is here recorded with satisfaction, that the common family bible, among the Calvinists, as well as among the Lutherans, in the United States, is that of Luther.†

* Hebrews x. 38.

† Dr. Campbell gives several other instances of Beza's departure from the integrity of a translator. One only shall be here stated; and that because of its being said, like those already quoted, to have been copied into modern translations of the bibles of Calvinistick churches. It is [Acts xiv. 23] *χειροτονησαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους*—in English, “when they had ordained them elders;” which, to favour popular election, he has translated: “Quumque ipsi per suffragia creassent presbyteros;” that is, “when they had made presbyters by holding up hands” [significative of choice.] Dr. Campbell says—“Though no man is more an enemy of ecclesiastical tyranny than I am, I would not employ against it weapons borrowed from falsehood and sophistry.” He then goes on to show, that the Greek verb in the passage, notwithstanding its etymology, means authoritative constitution; and can mean nothing else in that place. He next takes notice, that the error had been copied by the French Protestant, and by the English Geneva bible: by the latter thus—“And when they had ordained them elders by election.” In the English translation, as Dr Campbell further remarks, meaning that made in England and by authority, the

Under the denomination of passages here presented, there may properly be added sundry from the Old Testament; which, although they say nothing of a Redeemer not yet revealed, offer life and death; the former, no otherwise to be had, than through his subsequent redemption. Thus, when Moses admonished the children of Israel—"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day;"* it ought not to be supposed of the Divine Being—it ought not to be supposed of any human being, not depraved below the ordinary standard, that such an offer should be indiscriminately made; with the reserve, which, in the contrary system, is implied.

What shall we say of the declaration in Ezekiel xviii. 32—"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." And again, in chapter xxxiii. 11. as if to make the preceding assurance stronger under the solemnity of an oath—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Surely, such melting tenderness has not been lavished, under the inexorable determination that it shall be ineffectual.

words "by election" were discarded. "Our translators," says he, "did not concur in sentiment with the Genevese, at least in this article."

* Deuteronomy xi. 26.

The last two passages are interpreted by the Calvinists by the supposition, first, that temporal death is spoken of principally; and then, that God is introduced, speaking after the manner of men: And this is the opinion of Calvin. Nothing can be more certain, than that such a manner of speaking is frequent in the scriptures. But in the figure, there is always an analogy to support it. Thus, when God is spoken of as having eyes and hands, there are his omnipotence and his omnipresence, to support the license of language. But that it is ever used, as in the instance supposed, without a ground of propriety in the subject, is not, as is here believed, apparent from any thing in scripture.

Next to these classes of texts, there may be mentioned those which consist of invitation simply. Such are Isaiah lv. 1—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters:" Isaiah xlv. 22—"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:" Matthew xi. 28—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:" Matthew xxii. 4—"Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." What though of texts like these, some of them express particular cast of character: It is of such a sort, as must be allowed to exist in many of those, who never come in effect to Christ; and who will not be allowed of the number of the elect; to whom alone, therefore, the offer stands under the stamp of the sincerity of the offerer.

Very like to texts of invitation, are those which are expostulatory: Such as Micah vi. 3—"O my people,

what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me:" Isaiah i. 18—"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord:" John v. 40—"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life:" and Matthew xxiii. 37—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Why is such tender complaint thrown away? And would not the damnation of the party have been sufficiently provided for, by the mere offer; if the making and the unavoidable non-acceptance of this were to be followed by such an effect?

There might, in addition, be enumerated texts of admonition, texts of exhortation, and texts of censure: But they are so numerous, that the mere mentioning of these properties cannot but recall instances to every mind, in any considerable degree conversant in the scriptures. But let there be every chance of justice to the objection brought from the other side, against the present application of them. And the objection shall be, that of Calvin himself. He says—"When he" (that is God) "addresses the same word to the reprobates, though it produces not their correction, yet he makes it effectual for another purpose, that they may be confounded by the testimony of their consciences now, and be rendered more inexcusable at the day of judgment."*

Texts of promise and threatening might also be added to the account. But they so abound, that to specify a few of them might have the effect of detracting from their weight in mass. Here also the answer of

* Book 2, chap. v. sect. 5.

Calvin demands admittance, as found in the passage quoted from him. They are supposed to be for the punishment of offenders in the pains of conscience. The obvious reply is, that the effect of Calvin's system is to release from the pains of conscience; these not existing, without the conviction of the commission of crime which might have been avoided; or the omission of duty that might have been performed.

There has been mentioned a class of texts, which unequivocally affirm the universality of the mediatorial relation to mankind. But there may be made a distinct class, of such as affirm indeed the same universality, but make it more pointed, by an especial mention of the world: which must, in reason, be interpreted of the whole and not a part of it. Thus, we read of a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world:"* of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:"† of "the bread of God that giveth life to the world:"‡ and "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved:"§ with many passages to the same effect. This is language, not seeming to accord with that of dying for the elect only. They who hold the latter are cautious of committing themselves, and of raising what they think ill grounded expectations in their hearers, by holding out such ample declarations of divine love, extending to all mankind in the redemption. And were the blessed apostles of our Lord—much more, was his adorable self not sufficiently cautious of raising hopes, which could not be gratified, and of making declarations which, according to the

* 1. John ii. 2. † John i. 29. ‡ vi. 33. § John iii. 17.

common use of language, must be adjudged to be not strictly true?

There is, besides, that whole class of texts which have for their object an imitation of the excellences of God: as those which incite us to be like him in doing good to the unthankful and the evil;* to the being “partakers of his holiness;”† and to be “partakers of the divine nature.”‡ A moral resemblance of God is universally allowed by Christians to be the perfection of man: But with what reason on the Calvinistick scheme, unless justice and benevolence are properties of a quite different nature, as existing in the one and in the other?

There may also be alleged all those texts, which require faith in Christ, and censure the want of it as sinful. “Repent ye and believe the gospel,” was the first summons of our Saviour, as recorded by St. Mark: Agreeably to which, the same blessed speaker uniformly characterizes the want of faith, as the result of a faulty state of mind. There is no need to dwell on this, because Calvinists, like others, consider faith as among the exacted duties. On the system here sustained, any person, convinced of sin, may reasonably reflect in this manner—“Christ died to save sinners: I am of that description: he therefore died to save me: and how then shall I escape if I neglect so great salvation?” But on the contrary system, it would seem that he cannot be required to believe what may not be true. The thing, if true, is so only on the condition of his being of the number of the elect. Accordingly the requisition, as applied to him, cannot be more than of faith, with the

* Matthew v. 45. † Hebrews xii. 10. ‡ 2. Peter i. 4.

reservation of his being within the terms. And if he should be beyond them, it is difficult to conceive, how the not believing of what is not true, can be made to aggravate his condemnation.

It is very common, with those who deny the universality of redemption, to make their appeal to John x. 15—"I lay down my life for the sheep." But who were the identical sheep spoken of? Not all the elect; because the blessed speaker says immediately after—"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." Therefore these were not among the persons spoken of before. Our Lord had a definite object in his view, consisting of some of those present at his discourse; and it was to his purpose to describe the opposition of character between them, and others by whom he had been rejected. His saying, under this limited view of his subject, that he died for some, is not a denial that he died for all: otherwise, it might be proved from Galatians ii. 20, that he died for none besides St. Paul; who says—"I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." It is not here unknown, that even this passage has been brought in proof of the partiality of redemption. With little less reason, some bring the passages which predicate redemption of the church, as "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it."* But besides the irrelevancy already noticed, this and every similar text is in direct opposition to the system which they are brought to sustain. Calvinists, in their ideas of the "church," consent with their opponents in saying, that in it, "the evil are mingled with the good." Some indeed have

* Ephesians v. 25.

adopted the phantasy of an invisible church, consisting of holy and virtuous persons only: but this is not the social body, spoken of by the apostle. In regard to other texts brought together with the same view, who knows not, that a truth applying universally, may occasionally be recognised in its relation to some portion of the whole?

Independently on the sense of the enumerated texts, intimating that Christ died for all, that salvation is offered to all, that the scriptures invite all, and that faith is required of all; even the circumstance of being within the covenant of grace affords ground of presumption, in regard to all to whom the promises of it have been sealed by the divinely instituted introduction to it, that they are not admitted to the church militant on earth, without the privilege which may be improved, of being finally of the church triumphant in heaven. For how high a character is attributed in scripture, to the divinely instituted society of the faithful! They are called “the body” and “the spouse of Christ”—“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.” It would be easy to multiply such evidences of the honour, with which the church hath been adorned by her divine head; and that not only about the time of her establishment, but many ages before, by the mouths of the prophets, when in vision they contemplated her with a holy rapture. That she should be like a field, in which the wheat should be encumbered with the tares; and like a net, enclosing fishes good and bad; is indeed revealed in terms not to be mistaken. But that men should be invited into this holy association; not only invited, but

actually vested with all its privileges, as authoritatively as the truth of God can warrant; and yet be of the number of those, for whom there is not, and never was, any sacrifice for sin; and who no farther differ from the apostate angels, “reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day,” than in being a disfigurement of that church, of which it is nevertheless said, that “Christ gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;” seems one of the most manifest incongruities, with which the divine word can be impeached.

Not only ecclesiastical privileges, but temporal mercies are to the point pleaded for: that is, what are usually considered as temporal mercies, if they ought indeed to be esteemed such; if there is to be held a debt of gratitude due on their account; and if they are not a dole, dealt out to aggravate damnation. We are told, indeed, that the mercy of God is “over all his works;” that “he does good to the unthankful and the evil;” and that he gives to men “rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness;” to the end “that they might seek after him and find him.” And many are the delightful strains, both in the Old Testament and in the New, inviting to join in the chorus of gratitude, which all nature should be continually sending up to her almighty Lord. But if the damnation of a proportion of mankind be independent on themselves, and in no way to be avoided by them; and if, as all agree, the abuse of temporal mercies be a ground of future condemnation; it is difficult to perceive, how the persons alluded to, were they to be as-

certained, could be called to confess a debt of gratitude. So that when men are invited to this duty, as conspicuous as any charged on them when properly applied, there should still, according to the theory here objected to, be a discrimination of persons, whether to be traced or not, even by themselves. For surely it should be held a duty, only in regard to those, of whom it should at last appear, that the mercies spoken of are indeed such; and not judgments in disguise.

If temporal mercies imply the truth here sustained, more evidently may the same be said, of such as are purely spiritual; and which are not denied by the opposite system to the reprobate. St. Peter speaks of the giving of "all things that pertain unto life and godliness:"* And this is in his address to persons of whose apostasy he was afraid, as appears in chapter iii. 17. There has been already mentioned the privilege of being brought within the visible fold of Christ's flock. But besides this, there are the strivings of God's Holy Spirit in the heart; there are gracious desires excited; there are virtuous resolutions entered into; and there is sometimes a persuasion—induced, it will be said in error, yet after prayer and seeking—that the divine favour has been assured to the soul by correspondent sensibilities. All these will be acknowledged to have been found in persons, who have afterwards cast off every appearance of devotion, and who have lived and died in sin. Not only so; the recited particulars, except perhaps the last of them, will be owned by Calvinists as a divine operation on the mind.† But is it worthy

* 2. Peter i. 3.

† Calvin in a passage which may be more particularly noted

of God to suppose, that he would thus put forth his holy energy, without intending to complete its work, unless resisted by the person to be benefitted? It is said, that all mankind incurred damnation, by the sin of Adam: May not then the object of the divine decree be supposed to have been accomplished, by a breach of the alleged covenant of works, without the intervention of a personal rejection of a covenant of grace? If, in that affirmed covenant with Adam, his posterity were federally included, and therefore bound; it is, nevertheless, acknowledged by early if not by modern Calvinism, that the representative had it in his power to have obeyed. But here is a species of offence, not provided for under the old covenant; and for which no new one is conceived of. Is not this, even on Calvinistick principles, superfluity of rigour? And does it not amount to an impeachment of the divine attributes, to guard against which, that very scheme of a covenant in paradise has been introduced? Doubtless every alarm of conscience, every pang of penitence, and every longing of the soul after lost perfection—sensibilities which are confessed to come from God, and to have existed in men, who yet have not been at last the subjects of gospel grace—may have been evidences to such persons at the time, that they have the ministry of reconciliation offered to them: offered in a saving sense, and under the possibility of acceptance.

It ought not to be said of inquiries, such as those above recorded, that, to make them, is to arraign the hereafter, affirms, that God manifests himself in a measure to some minds, for the purpose of rendering them inexcusable. According to this, there is no exception from the general observation.

wisdom of the moral government of God; which we can never sufficiently revere, or speak of with too much caution. The object is to show, that the matter contended for, on the other side, cannot be any part of the dispensation. It is no more than is done by the Calvinists themselves, when falling in with the design of their argument; as was shown in the passages quoted from Turretine and Witsius under the former point. There they were found saying, that God cannot condemn an innocent creature to eternal torments. It was then remarked, that their doctrine was true; and that it extended further than to the subject to which it was applied by them. But the liberty is here taken of going further; and of saying, that the gracious Being spoken of, had he given over sinners to hopeless misery, would not waste on them those inward suasions, the apparent tendency of which is to make them renounce sin in future, and avoid the punishment due to the past. And if this position be correct, every drawing of divine grace may be an evidence to the soul which feels it, that there still remains the opportunity of choosing between life and death. Indeed, on any other supposition, it is improperly that preachers of all descriptions tell their hearers of a day of grace: There is no such day, to those who are under the decree of reprobation.

When there are in the scriptures so many passages, of which the most obvious sense is universality of redemption, not otherwise to be rendered partial, than under limitations which are the fruit of refined reasonings and minute distinctions; it is a material objection against these, that they represent the divine word as expressed very incautiously on a point, in respect to

which men have the dictates of their rational nature to counteract, for the reception of what is supposed to be divine truth in opposition. It will hardly be denied, that young persons, as they advance towards maturity, commonly suppose, from the reading and hearing of the scriptures, and from the general system as it is gradually opened to their understandings, that salvation is absolutely in their offer; until the sentiment receives a check from the expounding of catechisms and other means of instruction, directed purposely to the point. Even such instruction, coming from venerated pastors and parents, has much opposing sentiment to subdue; and that in persons piously disposed, before entire acquiescence in the truth of what is taught. Perhaps it will be said, that this is the resistance of corrupt nature, against the sovereignty of divine grace. Or perhaps, it will be called the presumptuous prying of human understanding, where reason should submit and faith govern. The latter is the very argument of the Romanists, against the intrusion of reason into the merits of their doctrine of transubstantiation. And there are surely some truths, as clearly perceived by the understanding, as others are by the senses. But admitting either or both of the objections stated; is it possible, that the language of holy writ should be so little accommodated to its awful contents, as to designate "some" under the denomination of "all" and a "few" under that of "the whole world?" and that it should hold out a revealed will, in contrariety to a secret one; of which it is supposed, that the existence is revealed also, although the contents of it are unknown?

Such is the sense, here thought proper to be given

to the comparatively few texts quoted, and the host of them alluded to: and it is surely that, which best suits the idea of man's being a subject of punishment and of reward. Calvin, indeed, in the chapter lately quoted, has an answer to this also, in the remark, that the reward is not to human merit, but to the divine gifts. Far be it from the Christian, to set up the claim of merit, in any shape; or to imagine himself possessed of gifts, other than such as flow from God's free, though not discriminating grace. But can it be thought, that Calvin's view of the subject is correct, in distinguishing between the persons and the gifts? Our blessed Saviour says—"Your Father shall reward you openly;"* and, "He shall reward every man according to his works."† St. Paul says of Moses—"He had respect unto the recompense of the reward."‡ And St. John says—"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."§ Is it not enough, that the reward is acknowledged to be of mere grace; that there must also be lost sight of the agency to which it is attached? And further, does it not destroy the very idea of the grace of God, to contend, that it always attaches, not to the creature, but to God himself in the creature? There is indeed a complacency, which we all believe him to take in his own adorable perfection; but it is not benevolence—it is not grace.

This leads to the concluding of the present department of the work, with the remark, that, on the subject of a dispensation which professes to be stamped with the impression of "grace, mercy, and peace from

* Matt. vi. 4. † xvi. 27. ‡ Heb. xi. 26. § 2. St. John epis. 8.

God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ," it becomes a religious duty to conceive of him in such a manner, as may not hide from us the splendour of those perfections. When we listen to him saying—"Give me thine heart;" let not there be wanting a ground of the exacted tribute of affection. When he says—"If I be a father, where is mine honour;" let there be found in us such a conviction of paternal right, as shall make the motive operative. And when we read, that he will finally "judge the world in righteousness;" let us conceive of this attribute, as also governing in the preparatory dispensation of the gospel. Yes, great Creator and Preserver! Thou hast told us, that thou art good to all! May we never, then, lose sight of thee, in this thine endearing character! But may we always be kept by thy grace, under such a sense of it, as to join, here on earth, in that song of Moses and the Lamb, which shall be sung eternally in heaven—"Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

3 OF FREEWILL*

Doctrine of Imputation and a Covenant—Radical Corruption of Nature—Texts—Oneness of the Church in all ages—What Christ said of Infants—View of the Apostasy—Consequences of opposite Theory—Objections guarded against.

There should be here remembered the particular in which the parties are agreed; and the two particulars in which they differ. The former is, the utter inability of man as to recovery from the apostasy; and the absolute need of the interposition of Divine Grace for the accomplishing of the effect. The latter are the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity; and the entire and radical corruption of human nature. It must be notorious, that these subjects have entered into the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians; although, in the synod of Dort, as the latter had clearly affirmed man's natural impotency, and as this was among the tenets of the former also, no decree was made by the one against the other.†

* There may be propriety in again mentioning what was said under this point, in the first department of the work, on the term freewill. It has been considered as inaccurate; because the will, in respect to external force, cannot but be free. Accordingly, the word is here considered as expressive of what the Greeks called *αυτεξαρτιον*, or a power inherent to the mind.

† It may seem an omission, to have taken no notice of what has been considered as another branch of the apostasy—the loss of original righteousness. The reason is, that it has not entered into the controversy. There is no difficulty in conceiving of devout and holy affections, excited agreeable to a law of man's nature; and then of the ceasing of these; so that he is left a mere natural man,

The doctrine of the imputation of the sin of Adam, seems to rest on these grounds: that he was appointed the representative of his future posterity; that there was established a covenant of works, by which he bound himself and all mankind to obedience; and that the great Creator condescended to covenant, on the condition of that obedience, everlasting life to him and them. The premises being presumed, the consequence of imputation follows.

But are these things so? And is there any evidence of them in the Bible? First in regard to the representative character: It frequently occurs in human institutions; as where a nobleman represents all his posterity, in respect to the estate and the honours of the name. These are positive privileges; not such as could not have been rightfully denied; but flowing from the especial favour of the social body, or of those who exercise its powers. To inflict positive punishment on the children, for the parent's crime; and that out of all proportion to any benefit derived from the civil relations in which they stand, is a species of penal law, which cannot indeed be said never to have been put in force; but has been in none other, than the most barbarous of former times; and is looked back on with universal detestation, under the influence of the more improved maxims of the present day.

In the divine proceedings also, the idea of covenant intervenes. For instance, there is that made with Abraham in St. Paul's sense of the expression; or with properties only accommodated to the wants of his temporary being. And it will follow, that whatever of the aforesaid affections are subsequently excited in him, must be under the agency of the Holy Spirit. This, the author supposes to be a part of the belief of the Christian church generally.

ham, as recorded in the 17th chapter of Genesis; and that with the whole congregation of the children of Israel, as it stands in the 24th chapter of Exodus, when Moses sprinkled the blood and said—"Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." That these covenants were not only for Abraham and the Israelites respectively, but for their posterities also, is certain; and it is especially declared in the former instance by the rite of circumcision, which was the sign of the covenant in the flesh; not only in the person of Abraham, but in his seed after him. This covenant, however, respected peculiar privileges; and the consequence of disobedience, merely as in contrariety to the covenant, was the loss of these; to which the Israelites had no more natural right than others: For as to any penalty in another life, it was such a fruit of disobedience, as would attach to it without consent on the part of the offender. There can be no reasoning from transactions of the kind here spoken of, to the covenant in question; in which there is supposed a forfeiture of everlasting life, and an entailment of everlasting misery, by representation; while yet, the persons so deeply concerned had no voice in the appointment of their proxy.

Adam being described as the representative of mankind; and there being further supposed, that God entered into covenant with him, it is called the covenant of works, to distinguish it from the subsequent one of grace. But what ground is there of the distinction? And had Adam retained his innocency, what would have been all the felicity which might have been allotted to him, but the effect of pure grace—of the same grace, which had brought himself, and all the fair creation surrounding him, into being?

Where is the record—where is the hint given of this covenant? The writer of this could never find a single text alleged to the effect; unless by applying to it what is said of the covenant in the law of Moses. This indeed has been introduced, with a view to the subject; and allusion has been made to what is said of the two covenants, mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians;* although it is there defined, that the first of them was that “from Sinai, which gendereth unto bondage;” and therefore cannot be a covenant made in paradise.

It is worth the while of an inquirer, to search for scriptural evidence on this point, in professor Witsius’s celebrated treatise on the covenants: But the use here expected to result, is an entire conviction, that there is nothing to be said. Had there been any authorities in scripture, they certainly would not have been entirely overlooked by this acute divine. But although we have, in his work, a chapter on the parties to this covenant; another on its condition; another on its promises; another on its penal sanction; another on its sacraments; another on the violation; and another on the abrogation of it; yet, to show that such a covenant was ever made, there is absolutely nothing: unless, as was said, the inquirer will accept of allegations, concerning the covenant made on Sinai, or with a text which will be noticed by and by. It is true, that the said learned person, speaking of the Mo-saick law as a covenant, denominates it not only “legal,” but “of nature:” And by this it seems insinuated, that, as a natural covenant, it was laid on Adam by the condition of his creation. But this, is to confound subjects of a very different nature. Independently on any precise

* Chapter iv.

stipulation on the part of God, we are under obligations to obey him. If in the Abrahamick covenant, and in the Mosaick, he stipulated especial benefits, in reward of that obedience which was his due; this has nothing to do with the relations, in which man stood in paradise; and in which he now stands, except under such a peculiarity of circumstances as that alluded to. The text of scripture said to apply directly to a covenant made in Eden, is Hosea vi. 7. For, speaking of the first sin, Witsius adds—"Thus Adam transgressed the covenant:" and this with a reference to the aforesaid passage. It must be a hard strain, that should give the words an apparent bearing on the subject. The passage stands in the translation thus—"They, like men, have transgressed the covenant." That the translation, "men," is justified by common use of the original word, will not be denied: And therefore, to translate it "Adam," in the present instance, merely to suit the supposed fact, would be a circular sort of reasoning, that only shows the difficulty of obtaining scripture for the purpose. But, even supposing Adam to be spoken of by Hosea, there would be no propriety in the application of the passage. For although the word "covenant" is used to denote a transaction, in which the Creator is a stipulating party on one side, and the creature on the other; yet it has additional senses, enumerated by Witsius himself, in the third section of his first chapter. He there notices three senses, one of which is that of a precept: And so the result would be, as intended by Hosea, that as Adam had transgressed the divine precept given in paradise, so the Israelites had broken the preceptive economy of Sinai. Professor Turretine has

made a similar use of the aforesaid text; and indeed it seems to have been a favourite one with Calvinistick divines, on an occasion so very pressing.

Let there be taken the definition of the covenant, said to have been made with Adam, as it is given by Witsius himself; and let it be compared with what scripture has revealed, concerning Adam in his first estate. The definition is—"An agreement made between God and Adam, formed after the image of God, as the head and chief of all mankind, by which God promised eternal life and happiness to him, if he yielded the most perfect obedience to all his commands; subjoining a threatening of death, if he transgressed in the least point: And Adam accepted the condition."* Now let it be asked: What evidence have we of such a covenant, between the great Creator and his newly formed creature? That the former designed a continuation and even an increase of benefit, may be believed from the consideration of his adorable perfections; and from the ends which may reasonably be supposed to have been in view, in his calling into existence of a new order of intelligent beings, created in his image and after his likeness. And that, on the part of man, there was the most unlimited obligation of obedience, is what it would be presumption to deny or question. But when the beneficence on one side, and the submission on the other, are digested by human interpretation into the form of a covenant, it is natural to demand the authority for such a procedure. And when it is with the view to raise from it a theory, that is to have an influence on every branch of theological inqui-

* Book i. chap. 2, sect. 1.

ry; it becomes a matter of immense moment, to set off satisfactorily from the beginning point.

But with the supposed character of Adam and the covenant, there is another principle connected; of which no evidence, so far as the writer of this knows, is even attempted. It is, that if Adam had persevered in innocency, it would have availed, not for himself only, but also for his posterity. This does not follow from the nature of a covenant. In that with Abraham and his seed, any individual of them might lose the benefit, as it respected himself. If, as the doctrine of Calvin confesses, it was left to Adam's self either to fall or to persevere, analogy points to the inference, that, even in the event of his perseverance, the same liberty would have attached to every individual of his descendants. Is there any thing contrary to this in scripture? Not a word: and yet, the whole theory of Calvinism presumes the probation of Adam to have been for his posterity, as well as for himself. Otherwise, there would have been no benefit to them, as the result of his obedience; to be a counterpoise to the misery which was the consequence of his fall.

But Professor Witsius thinks, that he removes the difficulty by arguing, that "if Adam had, in his own and our name, stood to the conditions of the covenant; if, having finished the course of his probation, he had been confirmed in happiness, and we and his posterity in him; if, fully satisfied with the delight of animal life, we had, together with him, been translated to the joys of heaven; nobody would have complained, that he was included in the head of mankind: Every one would have commended both the wisdom and goodness of

God.”* Here the professor seems to confound two matters, in themselves distinct—the not complaining, and the commending. If a father should bind himself and his children in a covenant, by which, according to the performance or the failure of some act on his part, dependent wholly on his will, there were secured to all of them the enjoyment of great dignities and riches; or else to be brought on them a hopeless state of shame and penury; in the event of the performance of the condition, the children might not complain, but it is not probable that they would approve. The professor intends an addition to his argument, by going on to remark, that no descendant of Adam can assuredly know, whether, in the same circumstances, he would not have done the same. “Dost thou,” says this author, “most iniquitous censurer of the ways of the Lord, boast thou wouldest have better used thy freewill? Nay, on the contrary, all thy actions cry aloud, that thou approvest, that thou art highly pleased with, and always takest example from that deed of thy first parent, about which thou unjustly complainest.”† But how irrelevant is this argument! which, from the circumstances of a creature confessedly labouring under a diseased nature, and according to the theory of the reasoner, subjected to an inevitable necessity of sinning in every action, infers what the same creature would do, under that liberty which Calvinism does not deny to man in paradise. It is true, that no man can know, whether, in his person, the same liberty might not have had the same unhappy issue. But there is as little right to presume of him the affirmative proposition; much less, on

* Book i. chap. 2, sect. 17. † Sect. 18.

the presumption of it, to declare him in reason subjected to endless misery. On any other principle than that here maintained, man must be supposed to have been created sinful: which rests the matter on quite other grounds.

Of the invention of federal headship and a covenant of works, it would seem, that they must have been designed as a mere rationale for the doctrine of the imputation of the sin of Adam, supposed to be taught in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.* Although it is hoped, that this passage has been explained in the former part of the work; yet, as it is the only place in scripture usually alleged for the establishment of the doctrine, there may be a use in so far recurring to the subject, as to obtain a comprehensive view of the arguments which prove, that the Calvinistick opinion cannot be the matter intended.

1st. It is not credible, that, of a doctrine of such importance, there should be no direct intimation, except in a single passage of scripture, and that confessedly a digression from the principal purpose of the writer. For the doctrine, if true, has an intimate connexion with doctrines of like importance with itself; and not only so, ought to give a tincture to the devotions, which are composed or uttered under the belief of it. It must be incumbent on men, to pray to be relieved from so great a burthen; and if they believe it to have been removed from them, to be for ever grateful for the benefit. Above all, the great duty of repentance should have respect to it: For although it seems difficult to conceive of one man's repenting for the sin of another, yet, if that of Adam have been made ours by

* Verse 12 and following.

the act of God, it must needs come within the design of all those precepts, by which we are commanded to repent.

2dly. It represents St. Paul as an insufficient reasoner. He was answering prejudices of Jewish origin, and entertained by Jewish Christians. One medium of proof with him, is an effect of Adam's sin; which it would have been foreign to his design to have stated in any other point of view, than as known and admitted by those, whom it was his object to refute. But, what evidence is there in scripture, or in the Talmudick writers, or in the valuable remains transmitted by Josephus, which gives the least hint of all mankind's incurring damnation by Adam's sin? There is not a particle of record to this effect. Let the matter be supposed designed of the universality of mortality through Adam; and then the Apostle presumes nothing; but what would be admitted by every Jew; and the reasoning founded on such conceded fact, is pertinent and conclusive.

3dly. The interpretation intended to support the opinion, leads to consequences not admitted by its advocates; and therefore avails them nothing. The extent of the benefit by Christ, is evidently affirmed to equal, and even to surpass, as is thought generally, that of the loss through Adam. But this can be true, only on the supposition of mortality as the loss, and of the contrary as the benefit. The words alluded to are in the 18th and 19th verses.

4thly. The same opinion educes from the passage a sense too far wide as well of reason as of fact, to be owned by either side. For when it is said—"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned af-

ter the similitude of Adam's transgression;" if by "death" be meant, as is stiffly contended relatively to the 12th verse, that which is eternal; it follows, that damnation had been the lot of all who had lived before the giving of the law. For it will be in vain to say, that the passage has respect merely to the becoming liable to damnation in paradise. It is here spoken of, if indeed that be the sense of the word, as actually inflicted on the whole race of mankind, during a long term, in the periods in which they respectively lived: and a very strong expression is used, that of reigning over them. There is no getting over this difficulty, but by supposing the word death to undergo an entire change of meaning, between the 12th verse and the 14th. And here let it be noted by the way, that, in the intermediate verse, the only passage brought from scripture to prove the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity, the word imputation is used as expressive of the charging of the guilt of the sins of men upon themselves; while there is no application of the same word, although so favourable an opportunity offered, in the extraordinary connexion which the Calvinistick theory supposes.

5thly. It is no small difficulty, that we read in the passage, of some "who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." If, as is alleged, all men sinned in him, they surely did so after the similitude of his transgression. Indeed, on this ground, every subsequent sin of Adam is as much ours, as is that in paradise. And so is every man's sin that of all his posterity to the end of time.*

* The author of this, having always understood Dr. Wither-
spoon to have been a Calvinist to the extent of the system, was

6thly. The comparative novelty of the interpretation, is a presumptive argument against it. It does not date its origin, at least among Protestants, quite so high as the memory of Calvin: For it is not justice to that celebrated man, to suppose him the advocate of a doctrine, which now makes so conspicuous a figure in the system called by his name. Neither do we find in him the hypothesis of a covenant of works and federal representation; which seem to have been put in since, in order to prop up the doctrine of imputation. Still, when the controversy arose between the Calvinists and the Arminians, these matters were zealously maintained by the former; and have been accordingly considered in this place.

In the passage already quoted from Calvin, in which he says—"Infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by surprised to find him not saying, in his Lectures, a sentence expressive of imputation. He refers, indeed, to the passage in the 5th of the Romans; but merely considers it as evidence, that the corruption of mankind was derived from Adam. He also uses the terms "federal head" and "covenant of works;" but in explaining his sense of the last term, he says—"The giving a special command, with a threatening annexed, does evidently imply in it such a covenant:" Whereas, the common use of the term seems to require stipulation on the other side also. Even in speaking of transmitted sin, he expresses himself in language far short of that of his communion. For he says of Adam and his posterity—"They lost a great part of the image of God, in which they were created:" which is not the same with the being "made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." This professor's well known learning and intelligence, forbid the supposition, that he delivered himself without due consideration on such points, and in educating for the ministry.

the sinfulness of another;" he adds a sentiment, be the weight of it what it may, applying to inherent depravity; which is a matter distinct from imputation.

The parts of the passage which are thought the most to favour the doctrine of imputation, are where it is said, in verse 12 (according to the marginal reading, here acknowledged to be correct) "In whom all have sinned;" and in verse 19, "many were made sinners." To counteract the application of these clauses, an instance was given of the same manner of expression in 1. Kings i. 21. But professor Witsius finds fault with Grotius, for quoting that passage to the same effect; and says* that Bathsheba did not there mean the undergoing of punishment without fault, but the being found guilty of a treasonable aiming at the kingdom. There is nothing in the passage, to justify this construction. David had designated his son Solomon, to the inheritance of the crown. In the yet unsettled state of the monarchy, it does not appear that there was any constitutional principle opposed to this; and on the contrary, the design of the king had the divine sanction. Had Adonijah reigned, Bathsheba and Solomon would not have been rebels; but she had good reason to believe, that the fate of rebels would have been theirs.

Had Witsius succeeded in warding off the force of this passage, there would still have been many other passages, to the purpose of the criticism, which it was to support. There shall be here a reference to two of them. In Psalms xxxvii. 33, the words rendered, "will not condemn," would be, under a more strict translation, "will not make him guilty." So in 2. Kings vii. 9, where it

* Book i. chap. viii. sect. 34.

is said “some mischief will come upon us,” the literal translation would be, “iniquity will meet us:” although the innocency of the persons is beyond a doubt.

Among all the writers of sacred scripture, there is not one who may so easily be supposed to have adopted this short way of writing, as St. Paul. We find him doing it on many subjects, not connected with the present. And in regard to the present subject itself, we find him not scrupling to say of the adorable Redeemer—“He was made sin for us:” which seems a strong figure, although Witsius thinks otherwise. He urges—and is supported by the Septuagint, that the Greek word* sometimes signifies “a sacrifice for sin.” Yet it is applied in a stronger way here; although by a figure, founded on that idea. In the passage, believers are called, not merely “righteous,” but “the righteousness of God in Christ.” Accordingly, to complete the contrast, Christ must be considered (figuratively) as not merely “a sinner,” but “sin.”

The same author supposes an insipid tautology in the interpretation; it being, as he states, in effect to say—“So death passed upon all, through whom all die.” But the two clauses are not the same; the latter clause expressing not simply death; but this, in alliance with the medium by which it came. He further objects, that there being an acknowledged punishment of the posterity of Adam for his sin, they must be adjudged to have sinned in him; since punishment, without sin, would be unjust. The reasoning would be good, if the new condition of the human race were less marked by benefit, than by infliction. The former may be abridged without injustice; and even to the highest praise of the divine benignity, if the end to be accomplished should bear

* *Αμαρτια.*

the impression of that attribute, as is here supposed to be the case.

Now, let it be considered to what point tend all the speculations concerning a covenant of works, and the imputation of Adam's sin. It is for the purpose of accommodating the whole system of theology, to the eternal damnation of all mankind, incurred by that single act. And professor Witsius thinks, that he finds the awful sentiment included in the threatening in Genesis ii. 17; the more literal translation of which would be—"Dying thou shalt die." The expression is certainly very strong; and as if it had been said—"Thou shalt utterly die." But is there no way of satisfying them to the extent, under the primary and obvious meaning of the word "death," as denoting the whole extinction of being? This is the sense which would occur to every mind, on reading the transactions recorded in the beginning of Genesis. It would require very unequivocal authority from the New Testament, to support the other opinion: But of such authority there is alleged no more, than what is supposed to be in the much mistaken passage of the 5th chapter to the Romans.

But to make amends for the deficiency of scripture, reason is appealed to for the interpretation; as an evident consequence of the circumstance, that when Adam sinned, his whole posterity were in his loins. But is not the operation of this argument too extensive, for the maintainers of it? We were all, say they, in the loins of Adam when he sinned. And were we not equally so, when he repented; if this happened, as is supposed? Or, if it did not happen, does it not apply to the offspring of those, from whom the imputed guilt has been removed? If then, on the

professed principle, men must needs be partakers of a father's sin; surely it is an effect of the same, to give an interest in his obedience. But this, it will be said, if to be brought about in any way by another, must be the effect of a new act of grace, which God may extend or limit at his pleasure. Be it so: but at the same time let there be dropped the argument of fitness, from our being in the loins of our progenitor; which would extend as much to the one case, as to the other. Independently on this, no man possesses any benefit which is more the effect of grace, than was the condition of Adam, under the promise made to him in paradise.

It is time to proceed to the examination of the other branch of Calvinistick doctrine—that of the entire and radical corruption of human nature.

It is trusted, that there is no want of reverence of the holy scriptures in the remark, that, in the interpreting of them, we should not altogether lose sight of human nature, and of human life; such as they lie before us, and are the subjects of every day's experience. Protestants very properly have recourse to evidence as clear and not more so than this; when they appeal to human sense, in contradiction of the Roman Catholick interpretation of our Lord's words, in the institution of the Eucharist. The words, literally taken, are decisive for the opinion which Protestants reject. But they say, that this is over-ruled by the evidence of sense; and that therefore, the command should be interpreted on other grounds, contended to be reasonable in themselves, and in analogy with other passages of scripture. Let it be here remarked, what extravagance would result, were there admitted the principle, that whatever

in scripture is descriptive of man should be interpreted strictly, without reference to general fact on one hand, and to the particular purpose of the writer on the other. Thus, when Abraham describes man as being "but dust and ashes;"* such a saying might prove him destitute of an immortal spirit. The same doctrine, might be deduced from what is said by the divine Being in Genesis vi. 3—"My spirit shall not always strive with man; for that he also is flesh." And in like manner, in regard to human life, what is said in Job v. 7—"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward," strictly applied, would prove that his condition admits of trouble only; and that he is a stranger to every species of satisfaction.

Equally far from all reasonable rule of interpretation, and of facts existing before our eyes, it is here conceived that they wander, who explain what is said of man's sinful nature and condition, as though it involved a hatred of all good and an inclination to all evil. But let the prominent passages be examined.

Great stress is laid on Genesis vi. 5—"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually:" and in viii. 21—"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The former of these passages evidently applies to a general depravity of manners, the result of evil communication and bad example; after the sons of God had contracted alliances with the daughters of men: meaning the posterity of righteous Seth, with that of wicked Cain, as is generally supposed. And yet, however universal the affirmation, it was not

* Genesis xviii. 27.

intended strictly; because Noah and his family appear, from other places, to have been exceptions from the general profligacy. The latter of the two passages affirms, what is not here denied, but on the contrary held up as an important truth, that there is a corruption of human nature; although not in the extent which Calvinism contends for.

Perhaps there is no text, that has been oftener enlisted in the service, than Job xiv. 4—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." The full effect of this might be acknowledged; were it not an act of justice due to holy writ, to rescue the passage from all application to the subject. Whoever will read with attention that chapter of the book of Job, must perceive it to be a plaintive lamentation of the sorrows of humanity; and especially of the shortness of life. What have these to do with cleanness and uncleanness, in the ordinary senses of the words? Nothing: and accordingly the word translated clean,* besides the being used for "true" and "clean" in a levitical and moral sense, signifies "brightness" as ascribed to the heavens, in Exodus xxiv. 10, and Job xxxvii. 21. And what comes nearer to the present point, it is applied to the glory of the human character and condition, in Psalm lxxxix 44: For we there read—"Thou hast made his glory to cease and cast his throne down to the ground." For "glory" we have "brightness" in the margin; and it might have been "cleanness," with as much propriety as there is put "a clean thing" in the place in question. The word translated "unclean" has its root in the other word; and is the contrary to it.

There is urged, to the present point, another quotation

* טהר.

from the same book—"How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?"* Moral purity, as pertaining to man, is not advocated in this treatise. But that, in the text in question, human nature is not held up as a mass of unmixed wickedness, is evident from the next verse; which shows the comparative point of view in which the words are to be taken—"Behold, even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight."

Still more pointed language is thought to be found in chapter xv. verses 14, 15, 16—"What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight: How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" Here is another comparison. It is that of man, with a higher order of created beings. But if the "drinking of iniquity like water" be held expressive of a tendency to all manner of wickedness, as a radical and universal property of human nature; let it be remembered, that the speaker (Bildad) is not always correct in the opinions which he delivers. In the speeches of the three friends of Job, there is certainly much brilliant and instructive sentiment: They are however reproved for having uttered some rash opinions, before the conclusion of the book.

What shall be said of Psalm li. 5—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The answer is—Let it be acknowledged, and not without deep sensibility of the danger of our condition on this account, that our earliest recollection may show us,

* xxv. 4.

how continually evil has assailed us under the specious appearance of good; and how easily, any further than resisted by the help of divine grace, it presses into its service all our powers, physical, animal, and intellectual; all which, however, bear abundant evidence, that they were created for and accommodated to other objects and pursuits. If there must be imposed a most rigorous interpretation on the psalmist's words, indited at a time when his mind was humbled under the sense of crimes actually committed by him; and when he was pouring out his heart in supplications for forgiveness, almost indicative of despair; such an interpretation would lead to a sense, which both the Calvinist and Arminian would abhor; but from which, however, some commentators have thought it necessary to vindicate the passage. The truth is, the psalmist cannot reasonably be supposed intending any datum, for the determining on the constituent principles of human nature. As found in himself, it was under a continual liability to evil. Every man who contrasts human sinfulness and imperfection with the purity and the perfection of the divine law, will be ready to say the same of his own heart: And there is no contradiction of this, in the argument of the present work. To construe the abovementioned words of the psalmist, without regard to the considerations here advanced, would be as unreasonable as to make the same use of what he says in another place—"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."* In this Psalm, David is supposed to be describing the wickedness of Saul's counsellors, who

* Psalm lviii. 3.

were instigating their master against the complainant. Knowing their characters, he represents them as having been wicked from very early life; which he expresses under the terms—“As soon as they be born” and “From their mother’s womb:” strong language, indeed; but involving absurdity, if taken according to the letter. For how can a man have “gone astray and spoken lies,” from the early period referred to? There is another instance to the purpose, where it is said—“Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.”* Such a passage comes under the name of a Hebraism.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:” says the prophet Jeremiah, adding—“Who can know it?”† And this has been thought pertinent to the present subject. There can be no doubt of the wickedness, to which the heart of every man is liable: And if we were to doubt that guilty passion may wear deceitful appearances to the man who cherishes it in his bosom, we might be put to shame by the importance with which even the heathen sages have clothed the precept—“Know thyself.” But that this passage has in view the hearts of all men, may well be questioned. Not long before, there are denounced, by the mouth of the prophet, the divine judgments against “the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” Next, there is contrasted a blessing on “the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.” And then come in the words in question; which are a reason why we ought not to trust in man, whose heart we can-

* Psalm xxii. 9. † ch. xvii. 9.

not know, and why we ought to trust in God, who says of himself—"I the Lord search the hearts, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

The following text has been thought to involve the sentiment in question: "Foolishness" (confessedly another name for wickedness) "is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."* It might have been supposed, that the passage has nothing to do with the season of life, too early for the rod of correction to be applied to it. But in truth, the original word,† though applicable to childhood, is not restricted to it. We find it applied in many places to a progress towards maturity, much beyond infancy. One instance shall suffice. The young men, spoken of by Abraham in Genesis xxv. and who had attended him in his war against the five kings, are denoted by this term. The text means, that wickedness may be incorporated with the inward character, in very early life. More than this would not be consistent with the intimated remedy; because some children are restrained from vice and educated to religion and virtue, without the rod of correction; and very many without so much use of it, as makes it the chief instrument of discipline. If these sentiments be incorrect, it must have been a false boast of good Obadiah, when he said—"I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth:"‡ the very word being here used, which is translated "child" in the text in question. If therefore it should be affirmed, that the Hebrew word, although admitting of the translation "young men" and even

* Prov. xxii. 15. † נער ‡ 1. Kings xix. 12.

“young women,” embraces the sense of the very earliest period of life; the same is as applicable to the passage in Kings, as to that in Proverbs. The Greek word* which describes an infant strictly speaking, is used by St. Paul where he tells Timothy—“From a child† thou hast known the holy scriptures.”‡ Did the Apostle mean, that Timothy had been instructed in the scriptures, while at the breast? By no means. But he left to the sense of propriety, to determine the precise application of the expressions; which must have imported, that the sacred oracles became known, in proportion to that advance in years, which was suited to the intended use of making “wise unto salvation.”

When we come down to the New Testament, there are no passages more prominent than those which describe certain persons, as “enemies of God,” as “the children of wrath,” as “sinners,” and the like. On the principle of comparing spiritual things with spiritual, the first of these terms should be thought explained by Colossians i. 21. where it is added—“By wicked works:” which shows, that something distinct from the condition of birth is the matter intended. But those names, as they occur in the epistles of St. Paul, cannot be understood, without regard had to the difference of the state of the Gentiles, from that of the Jews; and the Apostle’s identifying of himself with the former, as their Apostle. Perhaps, the most remarkable instance of the two principles in connexion, is in the epistle to the Ephesians; the passages of which, relative to the present point, shall be here explained, agreeably to the sentiment entertained, for the purpose of illustrating the property affirmed to belong to the writings of St. Paul.

* Βρεφος † 2. Tim. iii. 15. ‡ απο βρεφους.

Having spoken of “the dispensation of the fulness of times,”* in which God was to “gather together in one all things in Christ,” the Apostle adds—“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance;” meaning we Christians of the church of Rome, from whence the epistle was written. He goes on, soon afterwards—“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth;”† that is, ye Christians of the church of Ephesus. The Apostle, after displaying through the whole chapter the excellency of the Gospel and the dignity of the person of Christ, says, in the first verse of the next chapter—“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Then, he again brings in the Gentile Christians of the church of Rome, still making himself of their number—“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”‡ After again celebrating the saving grace of the Gospel, he tells his Ephesian converts:§ “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Then the Apostle goes on to state the uniting of the Jews and the Gentiles in the same dispensation of the Gospel; which is the sentiment set out with—the ma-

* Chap. i. 10. † Verse 13. ‡ Chap. ii. 3. § Verses 11, 12.

king of both one, by him who is our peace; “having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”*

The sacred penman winds up what is pertinent to the present purpose, with the following inference—“Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”†

It would seem, that there is here drawn a marked distinction of character between the Gentiles and the Jews, before their respective reception of the Gospel. The former were “the children of wrath even as others:” not as all others, but as the Roman Gentiles, from among whom the epistle was written. These converts had been, collectively speaking, in the condition described above. On the contrary, the converts from among the Jews had been of “the commonwealth of Israel;” they had possessed “the covenants of promise;” they had been provided with a ground “of hope;” and, considered as a people owned by God, they had been “with him in the world:” their legal economy having directed their attention to a better, by which it was now to be superseded, after having answered all the purposes of a covenant state, so long as its obligation lasted.

Besides such passages as the above, clearly marking the distinction between the state of the Gentiles and that of the Jews; there are other passages in the writings of St. Paul, which cannot be understood, without a refer-

* Chap. ii. 14—17. † Verse 19.

ence to the same distinction. The places here meant, are such as speak of extreme dissoluteness of manners in professors of Christianity, before their conversion. One place will be sufficient for a specimen; and it shall be Titus iii. 3. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Now to show how far this is from being intended as a description of human nature, it will be sufficient to remark, that St. Paul never applies such language to the natural condition of the Jews. Else, what shall we make of that in which he says—"We who are Jews by nature" (meaning natural condition) "and not sinners of the Gentiles."* Or of that in which he says—"Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, unto this day."† It is true, that in the epistle to Titus, he speaks in the first person plural: but this is only another instance, in which he takes occasion to identify himself with the Gentile Christians, and to speak as if he were one of them. The truth is, the words in question were intended of a collective body; and, independently on being inapplicable to natural condition strictly speaking, cannot be supposed to have applied to every individual in practice. The sense of them is sufficiently supported by the fact, that idolatry, with all its attendant licentiousness, had very much abounded among the converts from heathenism to Christianity. The same Apostle, indeed, in his epistle to the Romans, charges the Jewish community with the like corruption in practice, as that of the heathen. Still, when we descend from the collective capacity to the individual, the Jew was distinguished from the heathen

* Gal. ii. 15. † Acts xxiii. 1.

in this, that the former was owned of the visible church, and in covenant with the God of Israel.

Without remarking the distinction here stated, there are many sayings in scripture, which can never be made to agree with the general spirit and design of it. But let it be supposed, in respect to the Jews, that they were, as a people, in covenant with God; every individual to be responsible for what he was, and for what he did, under the conditions of it; and then of the Gentiles, that they enjoyed no such benefit; and that, collectively, they were in the practice of the aforementioned enormities in worship and in morals; and then the terms—"aliens"—"children of wrath," and the like, may be seen intended to designate Gentiles, without danger of administering to the arrogance of the Jews; who, as a nation, had little reason to boast of a dispensation, under which they were nationally guilty before God; and besides, the chief value of which consisted in its being, as it were, a schoolmaster, to bring them at last to Christ; under whom the Gentiles were to be joined with them; both constituting one body; in the new creation of which, the former disparity should be abolished.

In going on to the passages not connected with the stated peculiarities in the writings of St. Paul, the most prominent meeting our attention, is that of the same Apostle, in Romans.* There having been much said on that passage in the first part of the present work; nothing further shall be said here, except to lament, that so many men, not only of intellectual abilities and accomplishments, but as much as persons of any description to the perfection of evangelical morality, should conceive of the passages as describing the inward cast of

* Ch. vii. 7, and the following.

character, and the life, and conversation of a Christian. For an illustration of this remark, it may be worth while to refer any reader to what some eminent Calvinistick writer has said, when professedly portraying the Christian state. For instance, let there be taken professor Witsius: a man, who, so far as may be ascertained from his writings, seems to have possessed the Christian spirit in a very eminent degree. Let there then be read what this religious and virtuous man has written, under the heads of sanctification, of conservation, and of glorification. And then let there be asked—Is all this in the character of that child of God, who may nevertheless be the person described in the 7th chapter to the Romans, as doing what he hates; as leaving undone, what he approves; as brought under captivity to the law of sin; and as crying out, under a sense of the misery of his condition—“Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It is not here, surely, that we can recognise “the peace of God which passeth all understanding;” the “keeping of the body under and bringing it into subjection;” and “the crucifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts;” elsewhere held up as descriptive of the Christian state. No doubt, it was highly important to Calvinism, to press the passage in question into its service; although the consequences of this would seem to be, that in respect to “redeeming from all iniquity and purifying to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,” Christ has died in vain.

Analogous to the passage which has been under consideration, and by a like mistake with that applied to the unregenerate, is what we find in Gal. v. 17—“The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the

flesh; and these are contrary one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Sometimes, a very slight alteration of language gives the opportunity of a very material alteration of sense: And this is observable here. The translating of the Greek phrase* by—"So that ye cannot do," gives the appearance of an inference drawn applicable to Christians, from what had gone before. Nothing can be further from the thing intended; which must be obvious on the more exact translation—"That ye may not do." The contrariety just before affirmed is considered as tending to this effect; instead of the Apostle's being represented as establishing it by inference. But besides, the idea of the applicability of the passage to the Christian state is guarded against, both in the verse going before and in that following. "This I say then" (so begins the Apostle) "walk in the spirit; and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Then comes in the contrariety of principles, in the passage under consideration. After which there follows—"If ye be led by the spirit ye are not under the law," that is, under its condemning power. And then follows a black catalogue of the lusts of the flesh; of which and the like "I tell you before," says the Apostle, "as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." This whole passage may be considered as an illustration of that in the Romans; and the united force of both, is the giving of a view of contending principles in man, as he is by nature; and the ascendancy of the one or the other of which, constitutes his character.

* *ἵνα μὴ αὐθελήτε, ταῦτα ποιήτε.*

Another passage is in 1. Corinthians ii. 14—“The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God.” Certainly not: but it is evident that “the natural man”* is a sensual person, or one under the dominion of his sensitive nature. This man has no sensibility to the things of God: but what is such a sentiment, to the purpose for which it is adduced?

To the above passage and those like it, there has been thought a considerable resemblance in others, which suppose an intimate connexion between sin and human nature, under the denomination of “flesh.” The being “born of the flesh,” is put in opposition to the being “born of the spirit;” and the being “carnal,” is mentioned as the same with being “sold under sin.” It cannot be denied, that the use of the words is often such as has been stated, and that sinful practice is then the same as the being “sold under sin.” But is it not also occasionally used, in a sense less odious and even innocent? When our Saviour says—“Except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved,”† he adopts the word as descriptive of men in general. St. Paul, who, more than any other of the sacred writers, makes the word descriptive of moral evil, yet says in 2. Corinthians vii. 5.—“When we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side.” And in his first epistle to the same people, he calls them “carnal,” because of prevailing attachments of different persons to their respective favourite ministers. Now, although this merited apostolick censure and correction; yet, being addressed to them who were “sanctified in Christ Jesus,” it must have been compatible with a measure.

* ψυχικος ανθρωπος. † Matt. xxiv. 22.

of grace determining the Christian character, although under manifest imperfection. Otherwise, the Apostle addresses them in terms not applicable to them. Besides which, lamentable must be the condition of innumerable persons in every age, who have manifested the same weakness; not without similar evidence of sincerity, although doubtless in alliance with great defalcation from what the spirit of their holy religion calls for. The expression of "God's being manifest in the flesh," with other like sayings concerning our Lord, might have exempted the word from the charge of its denoting an assemblage of properties essentially corrupt. And indeed, if, under the great variety of meaning, making it necessary to attend to circumstances in each place, it often stands for sinful propensity, without attachment or alloy; this is a use naturally resulting from the evident fact, that our flesh or mortal nature is the part of us in which sin principally manifests its dominion: which very matter rather opposes than confirms the sentiment, that our whole nature is radically sinful.

Of the theory here objected to, there has been supposed an indirect proof, in all the passages in which we are requested to be regenerated or renewed. But will there be no end of straining metaphorical language, beyond its intended application? If the analogy with creation and natural birth must be supported to the extent, there is here required nothing short of a reproduction of human powers. But none suppose this. In Christian renovation, the powers of man are confessed to be what they were before; with this difference in the application, that they are drawn off from evil and di-

rected to good. A metaphor, like that applied to the renewing of the mind, is applied to new prospects relatively as well to body as to mind, where it is said in 1. Peter i. 3.—“Which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Here, our whole nature is represented as anticipating a new birth, by restoration to a new life in heaven. Is this intended of a new production of bodily and of mental powers? Such an extravagant supposition is not made by any. Similar to this new birth in heaven, is that of Christianity on earth; in which the affections and the appetites remain substantially the same; although the former are directed to higher objects; and the latter are regulated, not by sensual gratification, but by Christian ends. In short man, as born of Adam, has a mere animal life: but as born again in Christ, he has, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, a life of righteousness in the world, and looks forward to a life of glory in the heavens: which is a representation of Christian renovation, not exacting the Calvinistick doctrine, concerning the natural state of men. In the epistle of St. Paul to Philemon* there is a passage which may strikingly show how improper it is to construe strictly such figurative terms as have been referred to—“Whom,” says the Apostle, meaning it of Onesimus—“I have begotten in my bonds.” Surely, it was not intended to arrogate an agency which can belong only to the Spirit of God.

There is a large class of texts, which it is common to bring against such sentiments as those contained in the present treatise; even all which represent salvation as not attainable, but through Christ and the merits of

* Verse 10.

his death—For “there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved”*—“Who gave himself a ransom for all”† and—“he is the propitiation for our sins.”‡ God forbid that a word should be here said, to limit the extent of the salutary truth, held out in these passages and in many more. The subject is to be considered, as it regards—1st, Adults, and then, infants. In relation to the former, it is here agreed and contended, that there is no man who has not “fallen short of the glory of God,” and therefore no man who has not need of pardoning mercy, to be extended through a Redeemer. In relation to the latter, the subject concerns them, as through Adam immortality has been lost to them, and they have inherited from him a diseased nature. Immortality can be regained by them only by Christ, who “hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.” Their nature is sanctified by the possession of grace bestowed in baptism: a grace which if improved, is sufficient for the exigences of future life; and therefore sufficient to prepare them for early death. Let it be remembered, that only the infants of Christian parents are spoken of, because of their case only, the evangelical economy leads to the contemplation; leaving us to judge of others, by the analogy of God’s moral government of the world; and under assurances clearly and often made, that of future condemnation there is no other ground, than that of “deeds done in the body.”

The author is aware, that, on the present subject, there have been brought some considerations and some

* Acts iv. 12. † 1. Tim. ii. 6. ‡ 1. John vi. 10.

passages of scripture, which are left by him unnoticed. The reason is, that they are such as contemplate a theory, diverse from the present. The Socinian doctrine is here alluded to; which supposes that Adam would have died, had he not sinned; that his death has no effect on the condition of his posterity; that there was no original righteousness in paradise; and that there is no moral pollution inherent to man at present. These, and the like opinions, are not the sense of the author of this work; and therefore he finds himself under no obligation of noticing objections, which have no bearing on the one, although applicable to the other. He cannot however leave this part of the subject, without noticing a distinguishing characteristick of the scriptures; and some express passages in them, which seem to him in hostility with a view of human nature, exhibited by Calvinism.

It is generally believed by Christians, that the church now on earth is the continuation of a body essentially the same, from the promise of a Redeemer in paradise, to the consummation of his work in the end of time. The sacrifices of Cain and Abel were seals of the covenant of grace begun: and if so, these sons of the first man must be considered as inheriting, by the right of birth, an interest in what the sacrifices prefigured, and a right to all its attendant privileges. When, in consequence of the general prevalence of idolatry, it pleased God to set apart a family, that, among one people at least, there might be sustained the belief of the unity of God, and the expectation of a Redeemer; and when, for the accomplishing of this, God condescended to enter into a covenant with that people in the person of

their progenitor; it was declared to be with him, and his seed after him. And to show, that the benefits of the covenant were theirs from their birth; within a few days after it, they were to have the sign of the covenant in the flesh. In the subsequent covenant between God and his people by the ministry of Moses, none doubt, that there was an inheritance from infancy of the spiritual, as well as of the temporal promises attached to it. When this was superseded by a covenant founded on better promises, the ordinance initiatory to it, in the "circumcision made without hands," became the right, as Christians in general in every age have held, not of believers only, but of their infant offspring; agreeably to that saying in Acts ii. 39—"The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Now, that in this series of dispensations, originating in the beginning and to reach to the end of time, the favour of God should be declared and visible signs of it bestowed, at the early period when the subjects of them were in the state supposed by Calvinism of extreme pollution; and with dispositions which, when they come to operate, must fix on what is unholy, mischievous and impure; and admit no natural restraint, except from principles resolving themselves into craft and selfishness; is a species of economy, so utterly unworthy of the attributes of God, as that there would seem an impossibility of there being any evidence competent to the establishment of it. In regard to texts of scripture, especially directed to the point, that humanity, as coming into life, is not answerable to the picture drawn, it is not natural to expect any to the effect. It

has been seen under another head, that Calvinistick divines have had occasion to vindicate the divine Being from the supposition, that he could condemn an innocent creature to eternal torments. They have however demonstrated their point, by reason and by inferences from general declarations; without being able to produce a single passage, in which the affirmation is directly and in precise or equivalent words contained. And yet, to the point in question, there are two express declarations of our Saviour, which apply to it directly, although made with other views; and not to contradict an opinion, of which there is no evidence of its being at that time entertained by any. One of these authorities is in Matthew xviii. 3—“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Now what was this conversion? Certainly it was from a corrupt state of mind, produced by an intercourse with the world; and issuing in an inordinate desire of its seducing objects. If it had been true of “the little child” which our Saviour took, that his infant heart was at that moment the seat of passions essentially unholy and corrupt, there would seem a most manifest unsuitableness between the intended lesson, and the vehicle by which it came. And here, lest it should seem, from what our Saviour says in the sixth verse concerning offending one of the little ones who believed in him, that the child before spoken of was of years sufficiently advanced for the exercise of faith; it may be proper to remark, that our Lord must be considered as identifying the said little child with believers of lowly condition in society; and that with this agrees the original

word,* which may denote persons of this description. The scope of the passage requires this construction: for our Lord, to reprove the aspiring thoughts of his disciples, had taken an infant strictly speaking, as the original word† denotes: and yet with this it was a natural coincidence, to deliver a lesson against the contempt of inferiours, and of persons of ordinary estimation. The blessed speaker, however, still keeps the stage of infancy within his view: for when he goes on to the declaration—“I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;” it is of little consequence, whether we interpret it of infants only, or of the little ones‡ in general; since all so called are characterized from certain attributes of infancy. Some construe the text the last quoted, of the guardianship of angels; and others, of the glorified spirits of those in question. In either sense, the record is an honour done to infancy, which would hardly have been bestowed on it, if the idea of infancy, recognised by Calvinism, were correct. To little purpose it is sometimes remarked, that mere negative virtue is the matter, for which infancy is held up by way of example, in the passage. If, as Calvin has been quoted, saying—“They bring their condemnation into the world with them;” and if, as Calvinism uniformly declares, they are averse to all good and inclined to all evil; they were not an emblem for the purpose. An infant hyena possesses as much negative harmlessness, as the human infant; and yet it would hardly have been thought in point, to have made the former the medium of the instruction.

* μικρων. † παιδιον. ‡ μικρων.

The other passage is in the 19th chapter, verse 14,—“Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” In St. Mark x. 15, it is added—“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” The Christian church in general, considers the precept as a warrant for infant baptism. Why then should any part of that church sever the precept from the reason given for it—that the kingdom of heaven is of such? meaning not surely in ignorance, but in innocency. And why should there be overlooked the remark in which the whole ends, that the kingdom of God must be received by others, in like manner as by them? meaning, doubtless, with their sincerity and want of guile. How low a representation of this transaction does it suppose, to say, that the infants spoken of are full of disposition to all mischief; and that the thing commended in them, is merely that they are not yet at a time of life, in which it breaks forth in action?

In addition to these express declarations of our Saviour, there is a remarkable passage in 1. Corinthians xiv. 20—“In malice be ye children.” The Greek word,* translated “malice,” has a sense much more extensive than the English word, as in modern use. It means evil disposition in the abstract. In regard to that, we are instructed to resemble children: them in whom, according to the Calvinistick theory, it the most essentially inheres.

The very passage, so much a favourite with Calvinism, which speaks of the hiding of the gospel from the

* κακια.

wise and prudent, and the revealing of it to babes, supposes something opposed to mental depravity in infancy. And of other passages amounting to implication, many might be produced.

Further, on any other supposition, there would seem no pertinency in what our Saviour says—“ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”* These words, as they stand in the Psalm, if not to be construed strictly, imply, that even infants may acceptably express the praises of the Creator. As the same words are applied by Christ to children celebrating his entry into the temple, the argument is probably from a less to a greater; and signifies, that if infants, in a very strict meaning of the word, may take on their tongues songs of praise, more evidently so may the young persons spoken of in the passage. And yet even these would appear from the passage too young, for considerations necessary to produce the mystical conversion here in question.

In addition, there is the very express text in 1. Corinthians vii. 14—“ Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” The Greek word † is commonly translated “ saints:” which shows, that the children of Christian parents have an hereditary right to the benefits of the Christian covenant; the seal of which is baptism.

In order to serve the double purpose of guarding against the confounding of the sentiments here advanced with the Pelagian and Socinian errors; and of pointing out, more distinctly than has yet been done, the circumstances of man’s condition, under which the

* Matthew xxi. 16. † αἱ ἁγία.

texts referred to have been arranged; there shall be stated the sentiments of the author, concerning the effects of the apostasy in paradise.

Whatever he has heard or read of this description, falls under one or another of the following heads—temporal death and its attendant ills—loss of original righteousness—imputation of the sin of Adam—and hereditary corruption.

The first is death with its attendant ills; meaning of bodily pain and susceptibility of injury from the elements; which would end, if there were no other dispensation of God to man, in the extinction of his being. It is the grace of God, through Christ, that puts him on a new probation. And there seems no other way of accounting for there having been in the Jewish economy implication merely—of which indeed there is much—but no distinct revelation of a life to come; than by supposing, that, the original sentence being seen continually fulfilling, there was no way of looking beyond it, but through the medium of types and figures; which represented something not yet revealed, yet giving occasion of intermediate faith and consolation. The very phrase of “bringing life and immortality to light,” presumes there being no divine testimony to a future state of being; except imperfectly, through the dispensations preparatory to the gospel; and fully, by means of its own bright discoveries. If so, every individual, when he resigns his breath, finds a termination of his whole interest and concern in the events of paradise.

The next particular, is the loss of original righteousness; which consisted in willing agreeably to the will of God and in doing according to his commands.

It supposes subjection of sense to reason; and a readiness of mind to the contemplation of divine things. In short, whatever, under present circumstances, ought to belong to man, as a religious and moral being, is ascribed to him by the subject; without the intermixture of an interfering propensity to sin. There has been alleged by the Socinians, that this could not have been the condition of Adam; because such rectitude of disposition by nature, must exclude a choice between the rival solicitations of good and evil. But this is an untenable objection. It supposes imperfection in the angels; if they be, as we suppose, without temptation to sin. It even supposes imperfection in God, who “cannot be tempted to evil;” and whose will is essentially good and holy. The theory here maintained is most agreeable to our ideas of an original creation; it harmonizes with the change in the earth and in the elements; and it is the express declaration of the passage of scripture which says—“God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”*

The third, is the imputation of Adam’s sin, of which the author, having rejected the doctrine altogether, would say no more, were he not desirous of guarding against some misstatement of the doctrine, as if it were merely guilt charged because of hereditary depravity. Accordingly, that there may be a distinct idea of the matter spoken of, it is thus defined, and the mistatement alluded to is guarded against by professor Turretine—“If it be only so, that the sin of Adam is said to be imputed to us mediately, because we are constituted guilty by God and are made obnoxious to pun-

* Ecclesiastes vii. 29.

ishment, because of the hereditary corruption which we draw from Adam; there will not be properly any imputation of the sin of Adam, but only of an inherent stain ****. We teach, that the actual sin of Adam is so in itself imputed to all descending from him in the ordinary way, that, because of it, all are reckoned guilty, and all may be punished, or at least may be accounted worthy of punishment.”*

Of the remaining particular—derived corruption—the author will deliver his sentiments; such, as he conceives to have been gathered by him from scripture.

Man, in his innocency, was so far from being under a covenant of works, that it was a covenant of grace to him altogether. By grace, he was called into existence. By grace, he held whatever helped to contribute to the blissful state bestowed on him. And by grace alone he could have continued to enjoy it. That by apostasy he might lessen these benefits to his posterity; and that these might even thereby lose them, in an extinction of their being, is certain. And in this, there is no contrariety to any attribute of the divine nature; since the bestowing of a temporary benefit is no evidence, that it ought to have been made perpetual.

Adam fell; and by this event he incurred responsibility to the threatening—“Dying thou shalt die;” that is, “have thy being extinguished by a return to the earth, out of which it was created.” The same was incurred for his posterity, if any were to proceed from him: for it cannot be gathered from the narrative, whether death might not have been made to do its work more agreeably to the letter of the threatening, had not the new dispensation of a Restorer intervened.

* *Locus 9. sect. xxxv.*

If this view of the subject be correct; the mercy of God through Christ, which was coeval with the fall, restores every man to a personal responsibility for his own conduct; for which he must be accountable to that God, who shall judge all men according to their works. And this is declared so clearly, as ought to overbear all opposing speculation, arising out of passages less clear; and more connected with circumstances on which they are dependent for explanation. The very being put into the state described, supposes a responsibility of men, proportioned to the lights which God has bestowed on them, and the means which they have enjoyed. That all this may be, through Christ, in favour of many who never heard of him, is not only supported by passages of scripture, but is shown in the case of infants; of whom it is believed by both of the litigant parties here in view, that at least some are saved. And this makes it the easier to be conceived, that the principle may be extended. Even those Calvinists who, conforming to their publick creeds and to the opinion of Calvin himself, pronounce of elect infants only that they are saved, cannot deny that their salvation is accomplished, under their ignorance of the procuring cause: and if so, why may not the same be believed of virtuous adults, labouring under ignorance alike involuntary and invincible? Let there be remarked the circumstances, under which men would have come into being in paradise, and under which they at present come; according to the opinion which has been stated. Under the former circumstance, they would have been peccable, as Adam himself was. Under the latter, they are far more exposed to sin, but favoured with a more beneficent dispensation, which supplies the mean of their recovery.

Man, in his present condition, is indeed very liable to sin, although not without a better principle, condemning it: and this is the struggle described by St. Paul, under the representation of “a law in the members, warring against the law in the mind;” and, except so far as it is resisted and subdued by the aid of divine grace, “bringing it under captivity to the law of sin.”

But if one of the reasons for setting aside the doctrine of condemnation to everlasting misery, as the effect of Adam’s sin, was its not being found in the account of the apostasy in Genesis; may there not, in the same manner, be alleged against this other doctrine of natural corruption, that the same book is silent on the subject? By no means; and it may be distinctly traced, concise as is the narrative. Mortality involved in itself liability to every disease, to every species of violence, and to every privation, by which the effect might be accomplished. That the elements also underwent a change, appears in the superinduced necessity of clothing; which, although in the first instance supplied by an extraordinary interposition of the great Creator, was to be afterwards the product of human industry. Added to these, there was the curse of sterility on the earth, whose reluctant yielding of her treasures could not but be fruitful of the misery of want. Now is it not evident, what must be hereby brought about, by the natural connexion between a cause and its effect? Such a change in the human constitution could not but be productive of imbecility of reason and strength of passion. And such a change in outward nature, while it produced, as was intended, more powerful incentives to innocent desire, as accommodated to the supply of man’s necessities; so it of course produced a greater danger of

his carrying of that desire to an extreme, under the afore-said impairing of his higher faculty of intellect.*

Let there be remarked the manner, in which these causes are seen to operate; with the view of ascertaining, whether they will not account for the abounding wickedness of the world. And for this purpose, let the matter be brought to the test of religious and moral duty.

* Since the drawing up of these papers, the author has met with something so like them in a modern publication in England, that he now takes occasion to subjoin the passage referred to. It is in a letter, making one of a series of letters to the publisher, the reverend Mr. Stedman, from the reverend Sir James Stonehouse, a clergyman of the established church, and the reverend Job Orton, a dissenting minister of great merit, and author of the *Life of Dr. Doddridge*, prefixed to his works. The passage is from one of Mr. Orton's letters. Speaking of original sin, he says—"What I understand is (and which I take to be a fact) that as we are born with less perfect constitutions, so the passions are stronger and less governable; and thereby, we are more easily led into sin. I have known so many instances, in which persons have excused their sins and bad tempers, by pleading original sin, that I would be extremely cautious, how I gave the most distant encouragement to such absurd and dangerous pleas."

On these principles, it is easy to answer an objection brought against hereditary corruption, in the allegation, that as it is said to be communicated by descent from sinful Adam, by parity of reasoning, there should be transmission of holiness from regenerate parents to their offspring. Calvin [Lib. 2. chap. 1. sec. 7.] notices the objection, and endeavours to answer it by the remark, that the former is in the course of nature, and the latter by superinduced grace. There seems no argument in this, on the ground taken to prove transmission of a sinful nature—that every being, holy or unholy, must produce its like. The maxim rests on a presumption, entirely distinct from a question which may be raised, as to the channel by which the possessed properties were received.

Human duty, agreeably to the catechism, in which the division is here thought more correct than in the common systems of ethicks, is divided into our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour: comprehending, under either or both, whatever relates to the proper government of ourselves.

In regard to God, he who writes never knew an instance, in which, there being proposed to the mind of a young person, the idea of such a being, with the perfections usually ascribed to him, the result was hatred; or even any thing short of admiration and esteem. There have been so many instances within his observation, of its proving a theme dwelt on with delight, that he is warranted in believing it a general trait of the youthful character; although the contrary may sometimes happen; to be accounted for by an extraordinary association of ideas; the effect either of mistake in education, or the neglect of it. That the young mind may afterwards become indisposed to the contemplation of the same adorable Being; and may even become so far depraved, as never to think of him but with disgust; and for ought here known with hatred, although not met with in any instance, is conceded. But this may be traced to the prevalence of inordinate desire, in some shape or in another; which prompts the consciousness, that the great Creator and Preserver cannot be thought of, without self-reproach.

We also owe to God, the proper government of ourselves. Now, it will not be denied, that all passions to the contrary are desires, innocent and useful as implanted in the constitution, yet running wide of their objects, or else carried to an extreme. Beastly as gluttony is, no man ever pronounced hunger an entailment on the fall and in

itself sinful; since Adam, in his innocency, was to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: And the same may be said of every other natural appetite, as implanted by the Author of our Being. Now, however wide and dreadful the range of appetite, let loose for the disturbance of human happiness, this is evidently the result of that increase of desire and that decrease of the restraints of reason, which were the unavoidable accompaniments of what we find recorded concerning a change in Adam and in all around him.

A similar series of sentiment may be applied, as affecting the performance of a man's duty to his neighbour. Every one, who has attended to the operations of a young mind, must have remarked in it unequivocal evidences of gratitude, and of a disposition to offices of kindness. It does not so soon prove its submission to the law of justice, and will accordingly grasp at what is not its own. But this is owing to there being required some knowledge of the distinction between "meum" and "tuum," as a ground on which the law may operate. The same may be said of the law of truth. An infant may violate it by signs, before he has the power of utterance; finding in it some gratification of appetite, and not having the least idea of the effect of the subject on society. But in regard to both these laws of honesty and of truth, there seem to be no instances, in which young persons, properly instructed, more directly assent to their obligations, and manifest a disposition to the practice of them; however they may lose sight of them in succeeding life, through the influence of temptation. But when there is annexed the condition of proper instruction, there is implied consistent example of the instructor. Even if some instances,

to the contrary of what is stated, may come within the experience of others; yet, if the general fact be agreeable to the former, it is sufficient to the argument. As there are monsters in the natural world, there may, perhaps, be something analogous in the moral; although it is here doubted.

But if there be correctness in what has been laid down as a property of very early years; how happens it, that young persons are so often and so easily drawn aside, to selfishness and injustice? It is from a growing acquaintance with their present, and with what may be their future wants, together with the difficulties attending the acquisition of what is to supply them; and of various ways in which they may come in competition with their neighbours, for that which is their common object of desire. Hence arise anger—jealousy—envy—malice; with all the injurious treatment, which is the result of them. Some of the passions, indeed, have been distinguished from the other passions, by the epithet of unnatural. But they all are equally unnatural in this respect, that they arise from cupidity, carried to an extreme; and equally natural in this, that they may be traced to principles, which are necessary and useful in the human constitution.

The passion which has a connexion the least obvious with the causes stated, is that of pride, in its modifications of contumacy to superiours, of arrogancy to inferiours, and of jealousy towards equals, and in various other operations. Still, these things are resolvable into the same causes; it being because of an apprehended interference with the acquiring or the retaining of what is made desirable, by real or imaginary wants, that men cherish feelings so inimical to others and so tormenting

to themselves. And uniting with such a series of un-social passions, there is the misdirection of that noble ardour of the mind, which was given to excite it to laudable and useful enterprise. For although one end of this endowment is esteem; yet, combining with ignoble principles of conduct, it defeats its own end, by deeds which deserve universal detestation. Under the perversion which has been described, it would be as unreasonable to say, that the hands which steal were not made to work; and that the tongue which blasphemes was not made to speak the praises of the Creator; as that the affection of the mind, which issues in any abominable crime, was not implanted for some purpose, worthy of the great Being who bestowed it.

Now, let there be the inquiry, whether the fall of Adam, as here stated, agrees with what we are taught in scripture, concerning redemption.

So far as the doctrine relates to the being restored to immortality, with new responsibility attached to it, there must be a suitableness with the promise, of the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head; the gain being thus accommodated to the more visible property of the loss. But the more important part of the subject respects the taint of nature; and prompts the inquiry as to the way, in which the remedy is suited to the disease. Here, all mankind out of the Christian church may be left to the effect of the principles already stated, as to their condition. Concerning infants brought to Christ by baptism, it is a scriptural truth, not contradicted within the first fifteen hundred years of the Christian era, that they are made his by bap-
tis-

mal regeneration: under which term there is here included, not a moral change; but partly the being begotten again to immortality, spoken of in 1. Peter i. 3; and partly the new character assured to them in a federal institution, in which the aids of the Holy Spirit are stipulated to them on the part of God. The same applies to adults; except, that as the difference of the case suggests, obedience is promised in person; and further, that there must be repentance, which is inapplicable to infants. In the event of subsequent sin, there is no difference between the two descriptions of persons. Repentance is not denied: but, awful is the prospect, unless the end of all be accomplished—that victory which the Apostle, after describing the conflict in the sinner's breast, mentions as the achievement of Christian faith; and which consists in being delivered “from the body of this death.” Without this, there would not apply what he says of glorying in the fruit of such a victory—“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”

When there is contemplated the theory here proposed, of the consequences of Adam's sin; there is mourned over, the contrariety in which it stands to the system of many faithful ministers of that Gospel, which we in common consider as the foundation of our faith. But there arises a confirmation of what is here held, from looking into the writings of sensible and learned men on the other side; and from remarking the caution with which, in general, they avoid the tracing of opinions to their consequences: which would present a picture of the world, different from the original, as it

stands before their eyes. For if what they say be correct, of a depravity universal and entire; it would surely follow of all men and women, not under the regenerating power of Christianity, that they stand ready for any kind of wickedness, further than as they may be restrained from it by some counteracting selfishness. If this be so, we may cast our eyes around us, and say of persons who fill the most respectable stands in society—That man would fain murder such another, who is a competitor with him in the road to publick honour—That other man must needs be desirous of making his own, the property of a certain orphan committed to his care—And that other, were he to follow as his inclination leads, would be abandoned to lewdness of every kind. Such are the men, and such is the wickedness of their hearts; and such would be their outrages, were they not kept within bounds, by considerations which represent the temporal loss, as what might probably be greater to them than the gain. And further, it must be true of domestick life, on the principles of such a theory, that, in regard to the greater proportion of the world, it is the result of the most grovelling motives, if the son do not take the life of the father, the husband that of the wife, and the wife that of the husband; whenever, in the respective cases, there may be the prospect of an alteration for the better, in the condition of the inimical parties. Calvin thus avows the sentiment, in its extent—“If every soul be subject to all these monstrous vices, as the Apostle fearlessly pronounces, we clearly see what would be the consequence, if the Lord should suffer the human passions to go all the lengths to which they are inclined.

There is no furious beast, that would be agitated with such ungovernable rage; there is no river, though ever so rapid and violent, that would overflow its boundaries with such impetuosity. In his elect, the Lord heals these maladies, by a method which we shall hereafter describe. In others, he restrains them, only to prevent their ebullitions so far as he sees to be necessary for the preservation of the universe. Hence, some by shame, and some by fear of the laws, are prevented from running into many kinds of pollutions, though they cannot in any great degree dissemble their impurity: others, because they think that a virtuous course of life is advantageous, entertain some languid desires after it: others go farther, and display more than common excellence, that by their majesty they may confine the vulgar to their duty. Thus God, by his providence, restrains the perverseness of our nature from breaking out into external acts, but does not purify it within.*

It would be easy to cite sentiments from Calvinistick divines, to the same effect. One more however shall suffice. The learned and pious divine here in view—Bishop Beveridge—in his Exposition of the 9th Article of the Church of England, contrasting the present state of man with that in which he was created, says—“So that he that before did not only not hate God but love him, doth now not only not love him, but hate him; his nature being now averse from good, and inclined to evil; as it was before averse from evil and inclined to good:” And again—“A wolf begets wolves, not lambs; so he” (man) “begets sinners, not saints: and

* Book ii. chap. iii. sect. 3.

hence, a child is a sinner as soon as born; yea, as soon as conceived, before any sin can be committed by it, it hath sin conceived in it."

It is not always, that we find Calvinistick writers delineating their doctrine in its extent, like Calvin and Bishop Beveridge. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to find among the less informed advocates of the theory, persons who are aware, that, in the extent described, it is opposed to fact; and who endeavour to guard against this, by "restraining," or what they sometimes call "preventing grace." In doing this, they change the meaning of the latter term, which is of well known signification in theology, expressive of a sound truth; that of the grace of God going before us in all good, and disposing to it. The expression, "restraining grace," may also be correctly used, although not in the sense here alluded to. That the holy spirit of God, by suggesting salutary sentiment to the mind, may keep a man back from an action which he wickedly wills to do, may be conceived of. This however is not the thing, which the persons referred to mean. It is that divine grace keeps the evil will from willing evil. Under an utter incapacity of apprehending the distinction, no more shall be said concerning it. Neither Calvin nor Bishop Beveridge could have said any thing so unintelligible; and therefore the former, as no doubt the latter would have done, places the restraint in motives foreign to religion: thus speaking language which may be understood, although describing mankind otherwise than as we know them.

If infants were really, as they come into the world, so much like imps of hell, as they are described by the

theory alluded to; instead of watching as we do their early efforts and emotions, it would be more consistent conduct in a Christian, to conceive of them as of serpents or of rats, from which we turn away with disgust, even when we have no apprehension of their doing us harm. But, when we see the state of matrimony engaged in by a conscientious advocate of the theory, there is a consolation in believing, that he has not an entire confidence in the foundation of it; or, that he would not voluntarily be the mean of increasing a progeny, declared to be hated by God and deserving to be hated by men also; however he may be impelled by an appetite, which he might hope to keep down by strict abstinence and by continual prayer.

It is no small evil, resulting from such mistaken representations of human nature, that many a man, far from the temper and state essential to the lowest grade of Christian standing, yet not a stranger to temporary devotion and good desires, and further not conscious of hatred to God, or of malice against men, yet taught that the latter is always attendant on the unregenerate, considers with satisfaction, that he therefore cannot be of the number; while yet his delinquencies are such, that it may confidently be said of them — “These spots are not the spots of God’s children.”

But by what process of argument can the theory be made to agree with the evident principle of common sense, that an essential ingredient in sin is the exercise of intellect? Or how shall we reconcile it to the equally reasonable maxim of scripture, that “where there is no law, there is no transgression?” We observe, in certain animals, sensibilities like those which we brand as sinful passion in

mankind. Yet of sin we do not accuse them; and the idea, that the justice of God cannot pass it by without an atonement, never enters our minds. On the same principles, we acquit idiots and madmen of crimes; although the latter may be outrageous in the extreme. How then can there be more sin in a human being, possessing less that looks like intellect, than what may be found in a madman, or in an idiot, or in a brute? The writer of this has been in the habit of supposing, that the weak point in the system here noticed, gave occasion to the introducing of the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin; although the necessity of it had not occurred to Calvin. Mankind were to be considered as coming into the world, deserving of the eternal wrath of God. But he cannot, it is said, condemn an innocent creature to everlasting misery. Sin, therefore, must attach to the infant, in one way or another; and accordingly, Calvin supposed sin and the attendant condemnation to belong to it from the mother's womb. But was this possible; unless, with a measure of intelligence suited to the case, the infant had done, or at least willed, something, which might be construed into a consent to the sin in paradise? Hence, to all appearance, arose the necessity of introducing the novelty of an imputation, by the just judgment of God, of a sin committed by representation. It is only thus that an infant can, with any appearance of consistency, be affirmed to be guilty as soon as it is born; or, to use the more consistent words of bishop Beveridge, as soon as it is conceived; because, consent to a former sin by imitation requires the exercise of the intellectual faculty.

It is with the most profound reverence, that there is submitted the following intimation concerning the person

of the adorable Redeemer, as connected with the present subject. It has frequently pressed on the mind of the author; and he thinks, that the withholding of it would not be consistent with the justice due to the sacred cause of truth. That in the person of Jesus, the divine nature was united with the human—not body only, but soul also, is the faith of Christians generally; and the excluding of the human soul, is stigmatized as the heresy of the Apollinarians. But is it consistent with this doctrine, to conceive of the soul of fallen man, essentially such as the Calvinistick theory describes it? This objection had seemed important to the author, before he found in his reading any thing in any author, which had a bearing on the point. Nor did he meet with any notice of it, until his reading of Witsius; whose answer, he must say, has much confirmed him in the conviction of the insuperable nature of the difficulty proposed. This author, considering the matter in relation to imputation only, has some minute distinctions, not necessary to be repeated; and all turning on the point, that the second Adam was not born according to the ordinary course of nature; but in virtue of the promise of the seed of the woman. Notwithstanding this, however, there are the declarations in scripture, that he “took on him the seed of Abraham;” that “in all things he was made like unto his brethren;” and that as “the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same;” with other things to the like effect; which seem to intimate what is directly contrary to the design of the argument of Witsius. But even allowing him its full effect, as imputation is concerned; it does not touch the point of derivation. For, if “the word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” it matters not as to

this point, how far the humanity was derived from Adam. There must have been a union of the word with the humanity, under all its essential properties.

There is another impression on the author's mind on the present subject, like the consideration introduced above, affecting the divine character. He alludes to the asseverations in scripture, that man, not only as to his original state, but as to his present also, is in the image of God. Thus, the reason given against the taking of human life, is—"In the image of God made he man."* And it is said by St. James concerning a licentious tongue—"Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God."† Are these things consistent with the idea, that we have lost all traces of the divine image; and, as some divines do not scruple to affirm, are by nature in the likeness of the devil?‡ It is here presumed, that they are not. If it be answered, that the prohibition in Genesis, and the reproof in St. James are because of the image originally possessed; they are no more pertinent to their purpose, than what might be affirmed of a fine picture, would be pertinent, after the obliteration of all its lineaments; their place on the canvass being supplied by a hideous visage, as unlike as possible to the other. If it should be further answered, that reference is had to the regaining of the image, it is irrelevant to the drifts of the

* Genesis ix. 6. † Ch. iii. 9.

‡ Even the last opinion is not always thought to reach the tone of orthodoxy. For the writer of this, at a very early period of his life, heard of a very popular Calvinistick clergyman's declaring from the pulpit, that whereas some had characterized man as half beast and half devil, he ought rather to be described as all beast and all devil.

passages, in their respective places; there might still be reasons against murder, and against licentiousness of tongue; but there could be no reason against them, either in the circumstance that man once was, or in that of the possibility of his being destined to be in future, in the image of his Creator. The mere possibility is adverted to; because, according to the theory, the argument against the murder of any man would be, that for ought known to the murderer, the other may be one of those, who are to bear the image of God on their souls.

There have been mentioned some difficulties, the solutions of which are not commonly attempted by Calvinistick writers. But there is one difficulty, which they often labour to remove. It is, that of their system's apparently making of God the author of sin. A specimen of the manner in which the consequence is evaded, may be seen in Witsius.* The drift of his argument is, that God indeed excites and predetermines the will of man to vicious actions, so far as they are actions; and so, that it is not possible, but that thus acted on, it shall act: but that, God not superadding the moral quality of goodness, the action derives its malignity from the creature's will; which cannot be good, without a divine influx. And the position is laid down concerning human nature, as well before the fall as after it. Such is the way, in which Witsius provides against the making of God the author of sin; for this is pronounced by him to be blasphemy. Can there be the least pretence from scripture, for a distinction on which so much is built? To do the professor justice,

* Book i. ch. 8. sec. 23 and seq.

he does not present any scriptural authority in proof of it. Ought it not, then, to be evidence of the extremities to which the theory leads? It would seem, indeed, that the learned author, aware how inadequate some minds would be to the discovery of the consistency of his positions, provides for such occasions by remarking—"Though it be difficult, nay impossible for us, to reconcile these truths with each other; yet we ought not to deny what is manifest, on account of that which is hard to be understood." Certainly not: but the principle does not apply, where—as is conceived in the present instance—the matter, far from being manifest, has nothing in its favour, except its being needed to support a system; and where, instead of its being merely hard to be understood, it amounts to a contradiction.

Such are the opinions here entertained of the consequences of Adam's fall; and they seem to be far from having a tendency to lessen the motives to any virtue; but on the contrary, to be necessary to all responsibility of conscience. Could we look back on our earlier thoughts and dispositions, as having pointed to every thing hateful in the sight of God and man, we could not feel the pain of self-condemnation, for any excesses into which we may have fallen; or for any imperfections, in the performance of religious and moral duties. We might perhaps bewail the misery of such a nature, but could never be brought to any sensibility of the sin of it.

The author, however, is not without the apprehension, that his sentiments will be misunderstood and misapplied. One objection will be—and a formidable

one indeed, if it be to the purpose—that they cherish the pride of human nature; because they are opposed to a system, which preeminently boasts of its enmity to that evil principle in the heart of man. In theory, there would not seem to be this result; so long as it is confessed, that we are under a pressure of sin and in a state of impotency, from which nothing but the divine mercy can relieve us. Besides, we are not so ignorant of Satan's devices as not to be aware, that the pride of human nature may be displayed in endeavours to debase it. In practice, it is a delicate task to make an estimate of the opposite influence of the theories; because of the invidious property of comparison. It is trusted, however, that there can be no indecorum in remarking, as the fruit of individual experience—which perhaps has not been sufficiently extensive for a criterion—that if the belief of the dark descriptions which have been given of human nature, have generally the effect of making men, more eminently than others, meek, modest, and unassuming, under the sensibility of so great a misery; it is what is here not known, or can be conceded.

Further, it would be exceedingly unfair to infer from what has been written, that the sinner is considered, on the account of his sins being the result of the misdirection of good properties of his being, as having the less occasion for the renovating work of grace. It will hold for ever true, that “the carnal mind is enmity against God;” and that “to be carnally minded is death.” Not only so, the being in such a state poisons every performance, which might in itself be the subject of divine approbation. The sense entertained on this

point, shall be illustrated by reference to a passage in Dr. Witherspoon's fourteenth lecture; in regard to which, the liberty is here taken of thinking the Doctor correct in part, but not entirely. He represents his theory as "by no means asserting, that every act" (of the unregenerate man) "in every part of it is evil: Such as to speak truth, to do justice, to show mercy; which certainly an unholy man may do. Nay;" says he, "I suppose even the greatest sinner that ever was, speaks twenty true words, where he speaks one that is false. But what is meant to be asserted is, that every action of an unregenerate man is essentially defective as a moral duty; because flowing from a wrong principle and tending to a wrong end." Now, the Doctor is here supposed so far right, as that the sinful state of man in question forbids the acceptance of an act, not partaking of the vicious properties of that state. But to say of the same man, that he cannot do any action in itself right, except from a wrong principle and with a view to a wrong end, seems a carrying of the matter beyond what observation warrants. The Doctor goes on to show, what he means by a wrong end and motive; instancing one man's being sober from a concern for his health; and another's being frugal, to fill his purse. But if even persons who "live without God in the world," as to any uniform sense of his authority and his presence, may do what is here stated, from higher considerations than those in the supposition; much more, if such persons may have temporary sensibilities, partaking of the spirit by which they should be habitually governed; there must be an error in laying down so general a position, as that which has been quoted from

a respectable and learned author. Of such an alliance, we have continually instances before our eyes: and there does not seem any possible danger in the distinction here laid down; because the character will still be determined by the ruling principle. A son, under the just displeasure of his father, may, during his estrangement, perform some actions which the father would be far from considering as defective, either in principle or in form: and yet these actions may have no effect on the relative position of the parties; while there are wanting the dutiful sorrow and submission, necessary to the giving of acceptance to any performance of the offender.

It is often asked—and with reason—If human nature be so pure, as some have taken a pleasure in describing it; how does it happen, that of a race so virtuous naturally, every individual, arrived at the use of reason, incurs at least a measure of guilt; while every community of them exhibit a mass of wickedness, which it is horrible to contemplate? Such a question has no bearing on the theory here laid down. According to it, mankind have a disease of nature; being sensible of sources of want, and surrounded by correspondent temptations, which change weakness into sin. Here is a cause, which will account for all prevalence of iniquity; any further than as it may be checked by opposite testimony from the works and from the word of God, in neither of which hath he left himself without a witness; by the consenting testimony of conscience to them both, and by their being all directed to their proper end, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is true, that in estimating the comparative quantities of the

good and the evil, some overlook much of the former, which is the more private; and make the most of the latter, which is always the more prominent to observation. Still, there is so much of this as to show, that there are no duties more important, than those of watchfulness and prayer. Every representation of human nature, which lessens the necessity of these, must be built on error. It is trusted, that no such consequence results from the opinions which have been unfolded; but on the contrary, that they are more favourable to those exercises, than a theory, which, representing human nature as essentially in enmity to every holy thought and every good desire, may prompt the idea that there is propriety in sitting still in such a state; until dragged from it by the resistless grace, which is to be treated of in the ensuing subdivision of the work.

4 OF GRACE.

The Arminian side taken—Texts declaring the general Tenour of the Christian Mission—Texts which make the Offer general—Texts which suppose the Possibility of Resistance—Texts on the other Side—Would prove the Influence of Satan irresistible—Unnecessary Consequence drawn by Calvinists—Consequences of the other Side—The question of Faith and Works—Distinction between absolute and covenanted Merit.

In discussing the point, it is again necessary to distinguish between what is held by the litigants in common, and the matter on which they divide. That there is an agency of the Holy Spirit on the human mind, is believed, as well by the Arminian as by the Calvinist. But the latter, while he acknowledges a grace given to all and not competent to salvation, contends for an effectual grace, applied to the predestinate alone; and accomplishing its object, with an energy that is sovereign and irresistible. The Arminian knows of no saving grace, besides that given to all; which he considers as persuasive and to be resisted.

On the present point, the Arminian does not fail to remark, and he is in no danger of contradiction—that the more obvious sense of scripture is with him: its contents being generally spoken of, as interesting alike to all. And he argues from this, that if, in contrariety to offers explicitly made, and which every man may read or hear, there be a reserve, the effect of which, relatively to himself, he cannot know; there ought at least to be very luminous evidence of an invisible hand, thus subducting what a visible and open hand has the appearance of be-

stowing: If indeed any evidence can be competent to the conviction of the contrariety supposed; for the impossibility of this he is not backward to affirm.

The opinion of the Arminians, is that which will be here maintained. But to state all the passages of scripture which they think applicable to their purpose, would be to transcribe a great part of the sacred volume. For they contend, that there is not an admonition, or an expostulation, or a reproof, or a precept, or a promise, or a threatening, but what is predicated on the truth of their opinion; and, independently on it, would be either deception or mockery: Deception, if the party interested were informed of the apparent benefit, but kept in ignorance of the drawback; and mockery, if, as is supposed in the instance at issue, both the offer and the restraint are made known to him in the same heavenly message.

In addition, however, to this general consideration, there are express texts of Scripture: And the first class of them to be here mentioned are those which, in the very defining of the evangelical mission, recognise the general interest existing in it. It has been remarked under another head, that the very word "Gospel," is the same with "good news." To whom? it may be asked. Certainly to all those to whom it has been authoritatively declared. And who are they? It is defined in all such passages as that in St. Luke xxiv. 47; where our Saviour, after his death, instructed his disciples, that "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;" and that in St. Mark xiii. 10; where, before his death, he told them—"The Gospel must first be published among all nations." It is unnecessary, to guard here against the criticism alleged on another point, in-

tended to limit the description of all nations, to some of every nation; not only because it would destroy the whole spirit of the mission, but because the said criticism is not even applied, in the present instance: the acknowledgment being made, that the Gospel is indeed to be preached to all; while it is contended, that the end of this, to all except the elect, is to render their damnation just.

The next class of authorities are express calls given in Scripture, but given, it is alleged on the other side, ineffectually. Thus, when to the call in the 14th chapter of St. Luke, there were excuses made; of one, that he had “bought a farm and must needs go and see it;” of another, that he had “bought five yokes of oxen and must go to prove them;” and of another, that he had “married a wife, and therefore could not come;” they are all of them considered as bidden by the Master: as bidden, not, for any thing appearing, under a determination that the offer shall be of no avail. Why does our Lord complain—“Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life?”* And why does he mourn over Jerusalem, saying—“How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not;”† if the event were to be brought about by the resistless power of God—and so declared to those complained of?

Even the invitations which imply a corresponding disposition on the part of those invited, as—“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden,”‡ have an unfavourable aspect on the opinion, of there being invited those who cannot come. For since they of the said opinion allow, that a man may have much sorrow for sin and a

* John v. 40. † Matt. xxiii. 37. ‡ Matt. xi. 28.

considerable tenderness of mind, directing his view to the consolations of the Gospel, and yet not be under an effectual call; as may appear by his living and dying without reform; it follows, that even present desire can be no evidence to the person conscious of it, that he is of the number of those who have an interest in the promises made to the penitent in scripture.

But what shall we say to those passages, in which resistance is directly affirmed, as likely to happen on the part of man? An instance is in Ephesians iv. 30—“Grieve not the holy spirit of God.” Be it, as is affirmed, that this is said after the manner of men: Yet surely it is a conceiving of the divine nature, in a similar manner to that in which we conceive of the human. If so, there must be a resistance, in a measure at least, of the governance of the divine spirit: And if he may be resisted in a degree and for a time, why not in full and finally? No—it will be said; this is guarded against in the words which follow—“Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” These words are amply explained in the first chapter of this epistle, verse 13—“In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise.” Here we may perceive, what the sealing was not, and what it was. It was not the sealing of an individual for salvation, as a merchant seals a package of goods, for the use to which it is destined—the comparison made on the other side. This could not be, since the sealing is a matter distinct from the believing and subsequent to it. It amounts to the same thing, whether we content ourselves with the common translation; or render the words, as we may—“ye, believing, were sealed, &c.” What the sealing was, appears in the

expression—"The holy Spirit of promise;" which must be the same called in Luke xxiv. 49, and in Acts i. 4,—
"The promise of the Father:" that is the Holy Ghost, demonstrating his presence by miraculous gifts; first, on the church of Jerusalem on the day of pentecost; and afterwards on various churches, of which that at Ephesus must have been one. The members of this church, as a body, must have had the seal set on them, designating their vocation to be a branch of the church; and to enjoy a participation of the inestimable privileges involved in it. In this sense, the foregoing comparison of the sealing of goods will apply as strictly, as if the matter intended had been the sealing of the individuals.

Similar to the expression here commented on, but indeed still stronger, is that in 1. Thessalonians v. 19—
"Quench not the Spirit." It matters not, whether his ordinary or his extraordinary influence be the subject of the precept. If there may be a defeat of his influence in this, more evidently may it be in that. Again, there is a strong passage in Revelations iii. 20—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." It is well remarked by Calvinists and by others on this passage, that it puts off all pretence of any thing being done by the will of man, without the grace of God preventing; that is, going before. But surely it teaches with equal clearness, that compliance or resistance rests with man. That the omnipotence of God can accomplish what he wills, no one is hardy or foolish enough to deny. But whether it will or will not be exerted, according to the condition of the movement of the human will; and whether it may not have been his high

pleasure, to establish the system of human affairs, on the principle of the affirmative; is another subject. Such a system is consistent with the proposition laid down before, and is evidently the leading sentiment, of the passage under notice.

It will hardly be denied, that the sense of scripture, here supposed, is the more obvious of the two senses in question; however it may be contended, that the other is the more sure, though recondite. Accordingly, it will now be proper to attend to some leading authorities, which are adduced to this effect.

First, let it be remarked, that there are held up all the passages, in which, whatever we may possess of grace is ascribed to God; as that in James i. 17—"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights;" that in 1. Corinthians iv. 7—"Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" And to go from grace generally, to the most prominent fruit of it—"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."* In regard to all such passages, the answer is, that no question is raised, as to who is the author of all good. The difference is, as to the manner in which it is bestowed by him. It would be improper, however, to dismiss the last of the passages mentioned, without noticing the violence offered to grammar, in order to bring it to bear on the question; so as to prove the point of the irresistible grace of God. That faith may be said to be his gift, as well because of its objects, as because of his grace inclining to it, is not denied. And yet, even this is not the sentiment of the

* Ephesians ii. 8.

passage. The word "it,"* in the original, cannot be made to agree in gender with "faith."† Its antecedent, therefore, is the whole preceding part of the sentence—the being "saved by grace through faith." It is this which is the gift of God. Neither will there be any inconsistency with the interpretation, in what follows—"not of works," &c.—"for we are his workmanship." Grace was the principle in the divine mind, and workmanship was the grace carried into effect. But there is thus brought into view an expression, thought to be pointedly characteristick of the irresistible grace of God; since what can look more like the effect of mechanical process, than the being a workmanship? And yet, to call so, a collective body of Christians, was no more than had been said relative to the community of the Jews, in many places, as in Isaiah xliii. 1.—"Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel." The polity of each was a divine work; and nothing further is contained in the expression; although it ought to be confessed equally the work of God; whenever the hearts of his people are such as he is always endeavouring to make them, by the influences of his holy Spirit.

Perhaps there has been no passage oftener quoted, than that in Acts xvi. 14.—"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." What is there like irresistible grace, in the conversion of the character here introduced? It is said of her, that she "worshipped God;" being probably a prose-

* ΤΗΤΟ. † ΠΙΣΤΙΣ.

lyte of the gate. Surely the suasive motion of grace, under which she had already lived, is a cause sufficient to account for the effect of a ready ear given to the Christian doctrine, and to the evidences of the divine commission of those who preached it. In short, this exemplary woman was under the influence of the spirit of God, before her hearing of the preaching of St. Paul: and therefore, nothing here said is to the purpose of the irresistible grace of God, in the conversion of the sinner. It is not uncommon, to find the place urged to that effect. There can be but one reason: and it is the hostility to system in the circumstance, of a predisposition in the soil for the receiving of the seed of the word sown: however unequivocally this may be ascribed to what is called the preventing grace of God.

But it is remarked, that there are a whole class of texts, in which Christians are said to be begotten or to be born again; or are compared to a new creation, or the like. Of the passages referred to, some are designated by the sense in one, and some by the sense in another, of the two following points of view: 1st, as expressing the sanctity of the Christian calling, affecting the community of Christians; and in this respect, no stronger language is used than there had been concerning the former chosen people; to whom are applied expressions, which in the original denote creating and forming; as in the passage from Isaiah above quoted, and evidently designed, not individually but collectively. The other point of view, is as exacting renovation of the heart. But there must be repeated a remark before made, on the impropriety of giving to scriptural metaphor an interpretation, that implies a production of new powers; while it is notorious, that

the best of saints carry with them out of the world no other faculty, and no other capacity of any kind, than such as had been in it; the difference between a state of sin, and that of grace, being in the objects to which the powers are directed.

The texts alluded to, are thought to derive great weight from those of another description, in which we are said to be “dead in trespasses and sins;”* in analogy with which we are called on—“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”† Does not this very passage show the danger of building doctrine on a strict adherence to the letter of metaphorical discourse? The same persons are asleep in one part of the verse, and dead in the other: And in other places, sinners are called on to awake out of sleep; as in Romans xiii. 11. and in 1. Corinthians xv. 34. If, by a state of death, there be merely intended that in which we should have remained under the fall, in an utter want of preparation for immortality, it is heartily conceded. This is enough for the point, that salvation is of grace; and yet will never show, that the grace is irresistible.

But there remain other texts, which speak expressly of the divine agency on the mind; and that, in a manner thought descriptive of omnipotence, exerting itself in the irresistible way in question. This is one of the points, on which the Calvinist is thought to find especial difficulty, in bringing passages which will apply. For this reason, he is induced to heap together texts, which speak of the grace of God in contradistinction from human power, and which his opponent claims as common to both systems; constantly alleging, that the question is not of

* Eph. ii. 1. † v. 14.

the grace of God, but of its overbearing influence. Accordingly, it is not here thought necessary, to advert to texts of that description. There are however two texts of another nature, and thought to go directly to the point; one in the Old, and the other in the New Testament. The former is in Jeremiah xx. 7—"O Lord, thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed." But let the connexion be ascertained. The prophet had faithfully discharged his commission, but had seen no beneficial effects; and on the contrary much evil to himself, resulting from it; and this had thrown him into despondency. Hence his complaint, in the words in question; the sense of which is, that God had prevailed on him, against his will, to go on his hitherto fruitless errand. The words were surely reprehensible; and still more so were the words immediately preceding them—"Thou hast deceived me and I was deceived." The case was this. When the command had been given to go "a prophet unto the nations,"* the designated messenger had answered—"Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child."† The Lord had replied—"Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak;"‡ and then it is added—"Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord."§ Now Jeremiah, on receiving the ill usage recorded just before the words in question, apprehends a failure of this promise; and discontentedly reminds his heavenly Master, of his first unwillingness to go on the errand; which, in his own estimation, had been unfruitful. His words, taken with the light thrown on them by the occasion, far from speaking the language of irresisti-

* Chap. i. 5. † Verse 6. ‡ Verse 7. § Verse 8.

ble grace, are in opposition to it. For that doctrine affirms an over-ruling of the will: Whereas here is an over-ruling of the actions, in opposition to the will.

The text from the New Testament is in the 2d ch. v. 12 and 13 of the Epistle to the Philippians—“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.” In interpreting this text, the Arminian fixes on the first of the verses and remarks, that the improvement of the grace spoken of must depend on human choice and agency, because of the excitement to the “working out of our own salvation.” On the contrary, says the Calvinist, we are over-ruled to it, by the resistless grace of God; “who worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure;” that is sovereign will. On the ground of either construction; if the apparent inconsistency between the two verses should be reconciled, there will remain the circumstance, that the one is represented as containing a reason for the precept in the other: And the pertinency of this does not conspicuously appear, even admitting the truth of the two positions, according to either system. But all the difficulty will be removed, by substituting “among,” for in,* and “good will,” or “benevolence,” for good pleasure,† which will be quite consistent with the meanings of those words. Then the sense will be as follows: The apostle had commended his Philippian converts for obeying, “not only in his presence, but now much more in his absence:” a circumstance, from which he had probably apprehended a relax-

* εν. † ευδοκία.

ation of their zeal. He then exhorts them to continue in the same good way; still “working out their own salvation with fear and trembling;” because, notwithstanding the want of his bodily presence, the divine Being was among them as much as ever, in the ministry of the word and in the influences of his spirit; moving them, of his benevolence, both to will and to do.

It is altogether unreasonable, when there are adduced, as applicable to the present point, the passages which speak of mighty operations of the Holy Spirit; clearly appearing, from the connexion, to be intended of a miraculous agency, discernible by sense. Thus when it is said—“According to the working of his mighty power;”* the same power is immediately afterwards described, as illustrating itself in the resurrection of Christ: So when we read—“He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles;”† the mighty working must have been what appeared in “the demonstration of power,” on which the apostolick preeminence was established. And no doubt, the like is the sense in Colossians i. 29—“His working, which worketh in me mightily.”

In regard to passages speaking of the operations of divine grace; there are none which wear the appearance of representing it to be irresistible, any more than will equally give occasion to apply other passages which relate to the operations of Satan, to prove that resistless also. For instance, some are spoken of, as being “taken captive by him at his will.”‡ So, we read of “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”§ It is true, we are instructed—“Resist the devil and he will

* Eph. i. 9, † Gal. ii. 8. ‡ 2. Tim. ii. 26. § Eph. ii. 2.

flee from you.” But as a counterpart to this, we have—“Quench not the Spirit,” and “grieve not the spirit.” So that there is no ground in the language of scripture, to believe one irresistible, any more than the other. And yet it is to be supposed, that no intelligent Christian conceives of this, as applicable to the enemy of all goodness.

Although, therefore, it is a divine truth, and ever to be kept in view, both for caution and for consolation, that there is an influence of the Spirit of God on the hearts of men; yet it is to be considered of as suasive, and not over-ruling and irresistible. The contrary hypothesis supposes a man a mere machine; and prevents his being a subject either of punishment or of reward. Not only so, it seems eminently derogatory to Almighty God, by representing him as proffering benefits, which he is determined never to bestow; and which the party to whom the offer is made, is under an invincible necessity of rejecting. For, however we may be cautioned, against admitting the voice of reason in the things of God; yet, as was shown in another place, Calvinists and Arminians alike appeal to its testimony, when it suits their respective purposes; the former declaring, that such and such a matter cannot be ascribed to God, because contrary to our natural apprehensions of his attributes; and the latter only differing from them, in ranking among such matters an apparent offer, accompanied by an actual, though concealed, refusal.*

* From what has fallen under the notice of the author of these remarks, he has been led to suppose it frequent in persons educated in the belief of Calvinism, when they begin to make serious inquiry into religion, to be sensible of a painful pressure on their

The Calvinist is sensible of the pressure of the difficulty above referred to; but adheres to his system, because of a double difficulty of another nature; that of limiting the sovereign grace of God, and of administering fuel to the flame of human arrogance and pride.

But how do those consequences follow? The minds, from the weight of its peculiar tenets. Many instances of this sort have displayed themselves openly to the world. But it is here thought, and in part known, that the retired instances of it are much more frequent. The opinion is strengthened by a passage in the 12th of Dr. Whitherspoon's Lectures; in which he tells his students in divinity—"It will be perhaps hard or impossible for you to enter into this at once, as I confess it was to me in early life." On this account the present writer asks the question; whether, if it be impossible to find an instance in the gospel age, or even for the first 400 years afterwards, of an individual's declaring perplexity or distress of mind, on the subject now in view—and this is here confidently believed to be the fact—the frequent existence of such a state of mind be not in itself a proof, that the ground of the difficulty has been introduced into theology, since the days which have been referred to?

No doubt, the distress thus occasioned has its weight with many Calvinistick divines, in the determination formed by them of not making the doctrines of their theory, the subjects of indiscriminate instruction. In this, however, their judgment is very different from that of the learned president above mentioned; who, in his farewell sermon at Paisley, speaking of the duty of declaring all the truths of God without exception, and after faulting various descriptions of preachers who were deficient in this particular, goes on as follows—"But of all others, the most wonderful set of men are those, who are for concealing some of the truths of God, lest they should be abused. The sovereignty of God, his eternal purpose, and the freeness of his grace, are often passed by, and on this ridiculous pretence. I would despise the wisdom of such persons: It is arrogance: It is impiety." Under the idea of the freeness of grace, the preacher certainly understood that property of it, which is called irresistible.

question is not concerning what sovereign grace can do, but relates to what it does under an instituted economy. Perhaps, the obedience to be produced by such an economy, is the only preparation for the enjoyment of himself. Perhaps, on that account, he has endowed the will with this selfmoving principle; which must be as much his gift, as any other bestowed by him; and seems comprehended in the idea of that image of himself, in which we are said to have been created. The necessarian scheme, indeed, strikes as much at such a property of man in innocency, as in man fallen. But not so the scheme properly Calvinistick; for this supposes it to have been possessed by him, between the creation and the fall. How does one of those, more than the other, limit the sovereign grace of God? It may be answered, that fallen man, impelled by his appetites and his passions, would spread confusion through the world. Not at all; while there is the prescience and the superintending providence of God; the former anticipating all the designs of the human heart, and the latter over-ruling them to an accomplishment of the purposes of his own unerring mind.

As for pride, there would seem, in the subject, still less ground for this. What! shall man be proud, because, although affectionately invited to obedience by his Creator, he has it in his power to perpetuate his rebellion; the alternative being appointed for wise purposes, and among others, that of rendering inexcusable an obstinate rejection of the offered mercy? It may be said, that, on the system here advocated, it rests with man to make use of the grace of God, or not: And Calvin has pronounced—
“He cannot arrogate any thing to himself, be it ever so

little, without God being robbed of his honour, and himself being endangered by presumptuous temerity.”* Now were it so, that man in his present state, as in paradise, according to the acknowledgment of Calvin, were possessed of full power to keep all the laws of God; it would be in him no cause of pride, because he might still be asked—“What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” But the fact is not so; and he should know this; in order that he may have recourse to the grace, without which he can do nothing. But if, while he looks to that grace and to that only, he should suppose that his Creator has put in his power either to reject or to improve it; the alternative does not seem to intrench either on the honour due to God, or on the humility which becomes man.

But let the other side be looked to; in order to the inquiry, whether there be not a way, in which pride may avail herself of the notion of a saving grace, given only to a select few. Were the heavenly bodies intelligent beings, there could be no crime in their recollecting, that “there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars;” and that “one star differeth from another star in glory.” There is none, in an angel’s contemplating of himself as superiour to a man; or in him, in knowing himself superiour to a brute. But how important a discrimination between man and man, is made by the doctrine of an especial grace! That some know themselves to have been laid hold on by this powerful energy, is supposed by the system. It would seem, then, that these have a right to contemplate themselves as a distinct order of beings:

* Book ii. ch. 2. sect. 1.

And if so, considering the passions of the human heart, what great temptation are they under, to an abuse of the prerogative in their social intercourse! But it will be said, that the call, designating the elect, establishes them of the number of the holy also. As if we did not know, however this may be said in speculation, what great deficiencies, in fact, are commonly admitted as consistent with the Christian character! They who have had experience of life, must have seen much of this: And they who have not, may learn it from some commentaries on the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Let it not be said, that the person who is the subject of special grace, knows not who of those whom he sees may become finally subjects of it, like himself. He may not absolutely know this; but he knows of many, that from their situations in life, and their habits of thinking, there is little likelihood of it: And in proportion to this, they must seem to him like another species; and that, under the eternal judgments of God. How the sentiment operates in regard to the heathen, has been manifest under some trying circumstances. It is within the memory of many, how much perfidy, and how much murder were the issue of it, on the frontiers of some parts of the present United States; in which the settlers, in other respects sober and orderly people, and making great profession of religion, considered unchristianized people as not entitled either to justice or to mercy.* And this was not the effect of passion, but

* The fact here affirmed, was especially notorious in the year 1764; when people of the description here mentioned perpetrated the horrible massacre of Indian men, women, and children, in the borough of Lancaster; and when, with an addition of force, they

constituted a part of the religion of the people here referred to. It will not be rash to affirm, that something like this in principle, is to be discerned within the bounds of civil communities denominated Christian. This is remarked under full knowledge, that it is not always an accompaniment of the theory here opposed; but merely to incite the serious mind to the inquiry, whether, wherever the contrary is found, it be not from an association of Christian benevolence with a gloomy principle; which has in itself a tendency to the contrary, however counteracted in the case supposed. When there are calculated the consequences of opinions, by reasoning a priori; it cannot but be fair to state one account, in contrariety to the other.*

came as far as Germantown, in the way to Philadelphia, with the avowed design of making a larger slaughter of Indian men, women, and children, then in the barracks near the city, under the protection of the proprietary government. The provocation urged was, that the adult men of those two companies of Indians had been concerned in murders on the frontiers; of the contrary of which, the government was satisfied. But this out of the question, the lawfulness of killing Indians, as such, was known to be a very prevalent sentiment with those sanguinary professors of religion: and the writer of this, then a youth, was often in the way of hearing the same sentiment advocated by some inhabitants of the city, who favoured their cause.

* On the subject of the comparative effect of the theories in softening the odious passion of pride, it may be worth while to remark, that in our Saviour's day, among the people with whom he conversed, there were none so remarkable for it as the Pharisees; who followed the Stoicks in their doctrine of fate, which has at least a near resemblance of the Calvinistick theory. The testimony of Josephus to this effect, is in book xvii. chap. ii. sect. 4, of his Jewish Antiquities. This is not here recorded, for the purpose of drawing comparisons among Christian professors; but to do away a supposed ground of them.

It is worthy of remark, to what difficulties and apparent inconsistencies, Calvinistick divines are driven in their publick ministrations, by the distinction of general and especial grace. They are aware, how barren of all practical use of preaching it would be, were they continually bringing before their hearers the dependence of the human will, on causes over which it has no control: For on this ground, there would seem no room for persuasion; and absolutely a snare to error, in an undistinguishing offer of gospel grace. But they think it their duty to persuade, and to make an offer without reserve. In this respect, they seem to take a distinction, similar to that of the philosophers of old; who had their exoterick and their esoterick doctrines; the one for lettered disciples, and the other for the world. But herein the philosophers seem to have been more consistent than the divines, that the two doctrines of the former were for two different descriptions of people; whereas those of the latter are for the same people, who learn them in their catechisms, and other publick documents of their churches; and who ought, at proper times, to forget as much as possible one of the doctrines, in order to profit by the other. The resemblance between the subject and the exoterick and the esoterick doctrines of the ancients, is much stronger in the sentiments of some Calvinistick divines, than in those of others. Of this a remarkable instance may be noticed, in the conduct of the English divines at the Synod of Dort; who recommended to the States and to the deputies of that country, that the matter of predestination (and the same would follow

of whatever is necessarily connected with it) should not be indiscriminately inculcated. This seems the distinction of the heathen philosophers precisely. The divines spoken of were worthy men; and it was probably owing principally to them, that the Synod did not go to the lengths aimed at by Gomarus and others, and take the high ground of supralapsarian predestination. Nevertheless, as scripture had been made the rule of the decisions of the body, it is difficult to perceive any reason of the recommended reserve, which did not also extend to the locking up from the people, in an unknown tongue, of at least considerable portions of the scriptures. Calvin was more consistent than those English divines. As quoted in another part of this work, he thought the doctrine "should be published, that he who hath ears to hear may hear."*

Another prominent objection to the doctrine of irresistible and special grace, is the representation which grows out of and is generally inculcated in connexion with it, of a conversion to God from a state of sin, incumbent on all persons, after they have attained to the exercise of reason. In the whole New Testament, the word "conversion" is used but once; and it is where† report of the conversion of the Gentiles is made to the church of Jerusalem. The word "convert," as a substantive in either number, and the same word, as a verb, in any of its moods and tenses, appears in four passages

* See Brandt's History. The same English divines endeavoured, but without success, to procure a censure on the propositions, that "God moves the tongues of men to blaspheme him;" and that "men can do no more good, than what they actually do."

† Acts xv. 3.

only.* It must be acknowledged, that the original word is sometimes translated “turn” or “turned;” which appears from the concordance to be in seven instances; as applicable to a change from evil to good. But of all the places referred to, there is not one of them, wherein either word is used, in which it does not designate a change from a state exterior to the Christian covenant; or else, from a state of sin, into which there has been an apostasy under it. Of the latter, there are two instances only; one in Luke xxii. 32—where our Lord enjoins St. Peter—“When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;” and the other in St. James, v. 19. which says—“If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him.” Neither of the words is ever used in such a connexion as to show, that a person born and religiously educated within the Christian church, and not fallen into a course of sin, is to be considered as a child of wrath, until he have the sensibility of a conversion to a state of grace. Parents are instructed† to bring up their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;” but are not admonished of the necessity of labouring their conversion. St. John congratulates “the elect lady,”‡ that he had “found of her children walking in the truth,” but not that they had become converted to it. And St.

* This is to be understood exclusively of the quoting of Isaiah vi. 10. The quotation appears in four different places; and, if the application made in the New Testament should constitute another instance of a use of the word, it can be one more instance only; because, on all the four occasions it is to the same point; and on three of them, it is in the record of the same transaction by so many different Evangelists.

† Ephesians vi. 4. ‡ 2 Epistle 4.

Paul, writing to Timothy, calls to remembrance “the faith which dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice;” adding—“And I am persuaded that in thee also :”* But of the conversion of Timothy, we have no hint, here or elsewhere. On the contrary, where it is said in the same Epistle†—“From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,” it is strongly intimated, that from childhood he had experienced their salutary tendency of making “wise unto salvation.”

It will be an insufficient answer to these things, to allege the infancy of Christianity, as having more connexion with converts from without, than with subjects born and growing up within. It had so: yet there are several epistles of so late a date, that very many must have grown up from the earliest infancy to years of maturity, within the bounds of the communion, before the writing of those epistles. But without apostasy intervening, where is the record of any labours for their conversion?

It is here indeed recollected, that some Calvinistick divines treat this subject in a way different from what might be expected from their systems; acknowledging, that there are many holy persons, who have become such by less sensible operations of grace; so that they cannot recollect the times, when they felt themselves the objects of the wrath of God. Others still insist on a more distinct sensibility, leaving impressions of the circumstances of—when—where—and how. It would seem, that the sentiments of these are the more consistent with the general doctrine; because of the young persons referred to, it is impossible they should be conscious of there having been

* 2. Tim. i. 5. † iii. 15.

a time, when they were unendowed with a single virtuous inclination; but on the contrary, the desires of their hearts tended to every species of wickedness, of which their experience had given them an idea.

In regard to infants, and very young persons generally, it is difficult to reconcile the contemplated doctrine of conversion, with the sentiments which Calvinistick divines entertain. some that a few, and others that all such are saved. Calvin affirms it of all deceased infants; whom he supposes to have undergone a conversion in some mysterious way. But in this, he is not followed by the publick confessions of those Calvinistick churches, which restrict the benefit to elect infants. It is probable, that Calvin held the damnation of all unbaptized infants; because it is the professed opinion of Austin, whom Calvin follows in almost all things included in the general controversy. It is very certain, however, that many Calvinistick divines unequivocally declare their belief of the salvation of all infants. But whether they be some or all, it is difficult to perceive how they could have undergone the necessary conversion. These divines uniformly reject the charge sometimes brought against them, of making a mere machine of man, as the subject of the operation of divine grace; because, say they, this acts through the medium of the will. But surely, the choice of the will supposes an exercise of the intellect, on the objects between which the choice is made. At any rate, if there be a possibility of choice, without intelligence in the mind that chooses; it will hardly be pretended, that any such matter is spoken of in the Scriptures. And therefore, on the ground of the opinion here

contradicted, we have no scriptural warrant for even the hope of the salvation of a single infant. On the contrary, the analogy of faith would lead to the belief of the damnation of all the infants which have been born, or even conceived, from the beginning of the life of Adam. Although we might probably bring ourselves to believe with Austin, who holds the above opinion with the exception of baptized infants, and others in covenant with God before the Christian era, that the misery of the great mass of all the rest is very small; yet it must be the fruit of our own charity, and not founded on any authority from the word of God. It would be great injustice in him who writes these things, were he to hold out the idea, that such disgusting sentiments are maintained by Calvinistick divines—at least of the present day. Of those within the spheres of his acquaintance, he knows the contrary; and he believes it of the rest. What he argues is, that the sentiments arise out of their system; and appear to have been perceived by the eminent person from whom it takes its name. He endeavours, indeed, to guard against the consequence, by supposed conversion. But this idea is indefensible; not only because it has no authority in scripture, but because it contemplates a change, of which the being, supposed to undergo it, is utterly unsusceptible.

These remarks are far from being designed to intimate, that mere decorous deportment, in rising youth, is the whole which their Christian profession calls for. It exacts inward piety, and dispositions suited to its holy genius. But it is contended, that this piety and these dispositions may be excited and cultivated by

religious education, and by good impressions, the result of it; although not without the genial influences of divine grace; which, under the circumstances stated, is never wanting, yet not acting irresistibly. But if it be inferred, that such young persons may think themselves safe in the exercise of a mechanical devotion, the effect of mere habit; or that they may go on through life, without a serious concern for the ensuring of their salvation; not this, but the contrary is the doctrine here maintained.

Neither is the present representation intended to lessen the importance of the high duty of repentance, which is incumbent on all; and yet not on all, in the sense in which it is called, "repentance, from dead works." It is here held, that without sensibility to the evil of sin, there can be no Christian virtue; and no resolutions pointing to it, which at all promise to be effectual. Too often do many, who are within the Christian covenant, fall into sin in act; and further, many fall, if not into this, yet into that state of forgetfulness of God, which is in itself essentially sinful. Great reason is there to call on both these descriptions of persons, to repent and turn to God; and to "do works meet for repentance." But this is a different matter from the species of conversion, here objected to; which is known and declared to be what first brings into a state of acceptance with God, those who were before federally his, and yet actually the children of the wicked one. Such a conversion, supposed to be brought about by the irresistible agency of the Holy Spirit, is an operation, to be for ever after an evidence of the being of the number of the elect. The sentiment is here conceived to be no part of the system

of divine truth, but a human invention; and not only so, to have a very dangerous tendency; since it constitutes a supposed evidence of a state of grace, distinct from that which consists in the constant and progressive work, of putting “off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;” and of putting “on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

In the former part of this work, there was noticed, as engrafted on the present branch of the controversy, another concerning the comparative value of faith and works. It was there shown, that the pretended merit which St. Paul attacks in the epistle to the Romans, was not absolute; as though the persons argued against, imagined that any such could exist, from themselves to their Creator; but what may be here called covenant merit, supposed to be grounded on promises made to an observance of Mosaick law. Whereas the apostle shows, that even under the old economy, faith in a future dispensation was the mean of justification with God; the other serving to manifest the deficiencies, which made that better way of mercy necessary.

Although it seems proper to recur to the subject, yet much need not be said on it; the principal writer being St. Paul, whose meaning elsewhere may be opened by the same key, which unlocks it in the epistle to the Romans. He continually opposes to the observance of the law—including not only the ceremonial part, but also the moral, so far as it depended on positive institution—a faith, the ground of which had been established before the giving of the other; and which its institutions were intended to sustain. But at the

same time, faith was so far from being contrasted with moral virtue, that this was supposed to exist in the other, as its principle.

Of the other apostolick writers of epistles, St. James, St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude, not one of them refers to an existing controversy on the subject, except in one place St. James, apparently for the purpose of guarding against an abuse which had been made of the doctrine of St. Paul. To counteract this, St. James affirms justification by works, and not by faith only; evidently using the words in senses quite wide of those in the writings of his co-apostle. With this exception of checking error, it seems that the apostles generally had left the dispute so interesting to the converted Gentiles, to their peculiar apostle; and to those who laboured under his direction. As for the four evangelists, there is no reference in their Gospels, to such a controversy in any shape. It was doubtless the prominent object of their respective histories, to induce faith in the Redeemer; but this, with a view to obedience: and there does not appear to have been contemplated a competition between the two.

Still, there being much said among Christian people concerning faith and works, as though they were in competition, there may be propriety in endeavouring to establish a correct sentiment on the subject.

First then, were our works whatever self-flattery might describe, we should be unprofitable servants: so reason may tell us; and so our blessed Saviour has pronounced, in a manner not to be misunderstood. But besides, we are sinners; and owing, as we do, our whole service to God, we have nothing in our own power,

that can be a commutation for the punishment due to sin. It was Christ, who “bore our sins in his own body on the tree:” he made “reconciliation by the blood of the cross;” and by “a sacrifice for sin”—for so Romans viii. 3, may be translated—he “condemned sin in the flesh.” He was indeed the true sacrifice, typically represented by the sacrifices under the law; the virtue of which was to make atonement,* or reconciliation; as must therefore their antitype, which is expressly said to be a fulfilling of them.

The way in which the merits of Christ avail us, is not by imputation; which would included a transfer of merit, and therefore detract from the freedom of the grace; but it is the procuring cause. Thus, in the case of subjects under the displeasure of their prince, if he should pardon them in consideration and at the request of a son, raised high in his affection by an achievement eminently meritorious; it would be a different matter from the imparting to them of the son’s merit; and from the rewarding of them on that account. In the case supposed, there must be an acceptance of the act of grace; to be a pledge of dutiful submission in future. So, in the case of a Christian; there must be a like acceptance by faith, considered not as opposed to obedience, but as involving a beginning of it and the principle from which it springs. The truth is, that as faith, repentance, and obedience, are the means by which the grace operates to our final salvation in heaven, each of them is occasionally spoken of as the whole; and with good reason, because it implies the others. Merit, none of them can have; but conditions, they all are.

* Καταλλαγήν.

But such disclaiming of merit on the part of man, is not sufficient in the eye of Calvinism, without the imputation of extraneous merit on the part of God. Far are the advocates of it in general, from meaning by this, to dispense with holiness and good works. And yet it would seem, as though the double performance were superfluous. To guard however against this objection, there is remarked the impossibility of the enjoyment of heavenly happiness, by persons inclined to sin, even if they were admitted into heaven. So then, it is only by circuitous reasoning, that the necessity of inherent righteousness is to be made out. And besides, why might not there be a preparation for the exigency in regard to such persons, in like manner as in the provision for elect infants; who are described as unholy also? Certain it is, that Antinomianism is a plant, which has had its growth, principally, and perhaps entirely, in the soil of Calvinism. And it is here believed, that no circumstance has more contributed to it, than the use of a word confessedly found in the New Testament; but applied by the Calvinistick theory, in a sense foreign to any in which it is even alleged to be there found. The word "impute,"* in its different modifications, is found six times in the New Testament, applied to the setting down of faith or of righteousness, to the account of the persons in whom they are found; but in no place as setting down the righteousness of Christ, to the account of any. † It is a considerable license, to

* λογίζω.

† From the same original word with "impute" is the word "reckoned," in Romans iv. 9 and 10; and evidently applied in the same signification with the others.

introduce into a branch of theology a term not known in scripture, yet designed to be expressive of Christian doctrine: but it is surely a much greater, to apply a term, there known indeed in reference to the subject in question; yet in a sense quite different from and irreconcilable with the doctrine to be thus sustained.*

Although the idea of imputation is here rejected; yet it is trusted, that, according to the view which has been taken, the doctrine of justification by faith alone is to be supported; without any derogation from good works, which exist in it as their source. And this will always be a leveller of human pride, if it should lift up its head with the claim of merit.

So extravagant a claim, indeed, is not commonly set up in controversy. It may, however, be the language of the heart, when not heard in words. It is true,

* Some Calvinists have applied, in evidence of the imputed righteousness of Christ, what is found (Revelations xix 8) "And to her" (the Church) "was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." But what says the candid Calvinist, Dr. Doddridge, to this? After paraphrasing the last expression—"The righteous acts of saints," he says in his notes—"So δικαιοματα evidently signifies; and, therefore, though I make no doubt, but it is with regard to the obedience and righteousness of the Son of God, that all our righteous acts are accepted before God, and have accordingly referred to this doctrine in the paraphrase" (and which the writer of this remarks, may be believed without the doctrine here in question) "yet I cannot suppose, that these words have that reference which some have imagined, to the imputation of his righteousness to us. And I hope Christian divines will have the courage to speak with the scripture, even though it should be at the expense of their reputation for orthodoxy with some, who profess, nevertheless, to make scripture their standard."

the Pharisee of old is described in the parable, intruding into the presence of his Maker, with the boast—"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men." Many a modern Pharisee may have cherished the same faulty state of heart, without its issuing in the same address. And this is a reason for the taking of care to be clear of such a stain, in the view of the Sovereign of heaven; even when there is no part of our creed which leans on such an error for its support.

Suppose, for instance, that a man, on the ground of that comparative freedom from crime in conduct, which is often joined with an entire want of sensibility to divine truth, were to claim an interest in the gospel promises; he should be instructed, that his negative and pretended merit is nothing in the sight of a holy God: and that although he will not be condemned for crimes not committed, yet he is in a sinful state; and is as much a fit object of mere mercy, as the confessed and notorious sinner.

Or, take an instance of one who lives in a strict attention to the observance of religion, and perhaps with conduct unstained by outward sin; yet conceiving of those things as the consideration, on which the approbation of God in this life, and his rewards in another, are to be bestowed. Such a person, if his error should ever be corrected, must be brought down from the pinnacle of human merit, and laid low before the footstool of divine mercy.

Let it be remarked, that no case is here stated, of a man leading a life of true obedience, or, as scripture says—"Living godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world;" and yet arrogating the favour of hea-

ven, as his due. It is supposed, that such fruit cannot grow on the barren stock of pride; and therefore cannot come in competition with evangelick faith, which is their nourishment.

On the whole, it is here inferred, that the belief of the necessity of the consenting will of man, to give effect to the holy influences of divine grace, has nothing to do with the wild fancy, of there being merit in human works; which is contrary, not only to many express declarations in the gospel, but also to its whole spirit and design; and must sink under the weight of any evangelical prayer, that can be put up to the throne of grace.

But, to return to the distinction between absolute merit and that supposed to be founded on covenant. The disregard of this distinction has led many into a material error, respecting the Jewish economy—that of conceiving of the whole body of the Israelites, as necessarily subjected to the curse of God, by the very conditions of their law, which required unerring obedience, not to be performed by any human creature: so that, according to this notion, it did not appear, until the manifestation of Christ, how any Israelite could be saved. But is it to be supposed, that any people would take on their consciences a stipulated obedience to such a law—an obedience, like that pledged by the people of Israel to the law promulgated on Sinai? Surely not: and, however they must have submitted to so inexorable a dispensation laid on them, they would not have sealed their own condemnation, by coming under engagements evidently impossible to be performed. Neither is it conceiving worthily of the all-wise and all-

gracious God, to suppose that he would exact any thing of this sort. The holy end, in there being required stipulation on the part of man, to meet promise on the part of God, is, that by the union of these two matters in the form of a covenant, the resulting obligation may be the more impressive; and not for the extorting of a previous consent, to gain the appearance of justice in a penalty that is unavoidable. If, from these general considerations, we proceed to an inspection of the legal economy; we find it abounding with sacrifices, intended to make atonement for different species of transgression. As these sacrifices prefigured the great sacrifice to come, here was faith associated with obedience, even under the preparatory dispensation. But when the object of that faith had appeared in person, the seeking of salvation by the law, was an abiding by the condemning property of it; and the putting of the more merciful out of view. Accordingly, it was pertinent in St. Paul, to caution the Jewish Christians against so great an error; by intimating, that they thereby subjected themselves to the consequences of the threatening—"Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." Not that this curse, as it stood in the law, was not allied with a gracious provision, for the relieving of the conscience from the weight of sin; but because this was henceforth to be continued under a new economy, by which the former was to be superseded. Although "the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did;" yet, even while the law lasted, intimations of the better hope to come were conspicuous appendages of the institution.

5 OF PERSEVERANCE.

Dissent from the Calvinistick Doctrine—The contrary s conformable to the human Character—Passages from the Old Testament—From the New—Exhortations and Dissuasives—Passages alleged by Calvinists—Dangerous Tendency of the Doctrine.

IT seems an extraordinary instance of the effect of established opinion, under circumstances which represent inquiry as sinful, that when the Arminians began to examine the foundation of the prevalent theology of the Low Countries, and to appeal to the world for the result; they should at first exhibit the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, as merely a questionable point: a doctrine, of which it will not be rash to affirm, although the proof will not be here brought, that it was absolutely unknown in the church, until after the beginning of the Reformation. In the preceding part of this work, the epistle to the Romans was thought silent as to any thing in favour of the doctrine, or contrary to it. In what is to follow, the latter will be upheld as gospel truth.

Let it be remarked, that this is one of the last subjects, on which, what is here conceived to be truth, might be expected to be laid down in form, in scripture. On the contrary, it is so consistent with what we know of the changeableness of the human character, with the temptations of life, and with the remains of evil, confessed to be an entailment on the regenerate; that there would seem little occasion of revealing to us, our being still peccable, habitually and finally:

especially, as this attended our first estate in paradise, blessed, as it was, with a more vigorous intellect, and a subjection to it of the affections. Under these circumstances, no more can be looked for than the finding of the truth insinuated or presumed, when some other subject is in the contemplation of the writer; and of evidence of this sort, there is abundance.

Not to omit the Old Testament altogether; there are several passages in the third and the eighteenth chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel, the substance of which is thus given in the twenty sixth verse of the eighteenth chapter—"When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die." That is, say some, if such an apostasy could happen, the effect would follow. The supposition, it seems, is merely made: but let it be asked—For what purpose made, in the case in question? There is also introduced the old and arbitrary distinction between a secret will and the revealed. The passage is rendered still more explicit by the frequent repetition of it, without such qualification as might prevent mistake.

There is also that passage in Psalm lxix. 28.—"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not written with the righteous." It is not denied by Calvinists generally, that the passage relates to another life; there being a connexion with a prophetick description of the sufferings of our Saviour. But there have been various ways thought of, to evade an authority, apparently so express. It is supposed to be a catachresis, standing for the not being written in the

book; or to have been spoken after the manner of men; or to have in view the excision of the Jewish nation, for their rejecting of the Messiah; or to be resolvable into the indeterminateness of metaphor or to the being written in the book, not efficaciously, but with a view to profession only; or to recognise two species of predestination, one of them incipient and the other perfect. Let all these hypotheses have their due weight; but it is here conceived, that the like may be devised without end.

But the possibility of a fall from grace is interwoven in the legal economy; being discernible in the very ground work of it—the covenant made with Abraham. Of this the sign was circumcision; to which was annexed the promise—“I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee.” From this covenant, there might confessedly be on the part of man a final fall. But if any doubt, whether the promise were intended in a spiritual sense and in its extent, they are referred to Calvin;* who treats the subject as here stated; among other things speaking of circumcision as regeneration, involving the favour of God, remission of sins, and eternal life. But it must be kept in view, that Calvinism, in the days of Calvin, did not explicitly, or without some intermixture of inconsistency, embrace the doctrine of final perseverance.

In Luke viii. 13, there are spoken of those, “who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.” Yes—it is replied to this—because “they have no root” in themselves. The term “root” is a mere figure, expressing permanency. This, it is true, they had not; and

* Book iv. ch. xvi. sect. 3, 4 and 6.

it is the very matter opposed to the doctrine; because they believed and yet fell away. But it is rejoined, that the faith was historical and not saving. Any authorities may be got rid of, by thus creating distinctions, concerning which there is not a word in scripture.

In St. Luke xii. 42, and following, our Lord describes a faithful servant, whom he should think worthy of making a ruler over his household; that is, of promoting to eminence in his church. The lowest sense which can be given to this, characterizes every Christian minister, with all the accomplishments requisite in such a person. But is he above the possibility of final apostasy? Far from it: for he is threatened, that in the event of an abuse of the authorities of his station—"The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." The margin, instead of "cut him in sunder," has, "cut him off;" that is, separate him from the body of the faithful: which is equally agreeable to the original, and exhibits a better sense. Here is Christian character on one hand; and fall—final fall, on the other.

St. John xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Here is first pronounced a union of the believer with Christ, as a branch with its proper vine. The branch was before described, both as drawing nourishment and as bearing fruit: which is a contradiction of the usual evasion, that the severed branch represents a person who is merely of the visible church, without being of the invisible

communion of the faithful. No; he comes under one of the strongest descriptions in scripture, of a spiritual membership of Christ: yet, as the text shows, he may be at last like a branch withered, gathered, cast into the fire, and burnt.

Romans xiv. 15. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." The matter here guarded against, is the undue use of Christian liberty: but why should it be restrained, if the apprehended consequence were such as could not happen? The place is contradictory to the point of limited redemption; but it is equally so, of this of final perseverance: for the person in contemplation is a brother, supposed to be in Christian standing; from which he is in danger of being cast down and destroyed.

1. Corinthians viii. 11. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died." This passage is precisely the same in sense, with that immediately preceding. It enjoins the same temperate use of Christian liberty, and they are alike demonstrative of general redemption, and of the possibility of a fall from grace.

1. Cor. ix. 27. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast-away." So says the great apostle of the Gentiles, with all his attainments, and after all his labours. It is the winding up of an allegory; in which the Christian life had been described, by an allusion to a race in the Grecian games. A candidate for the prize had little chance of gaining it, without the previous discipline of exercise and abstinence: and this was submitted to, with a view to an ornamental crown, which, at the end of the course,

was to reward the victor. St. Paul had undergone Christian discipline, with a view to a heavenly crown. He was however still aware, that the consequence of his relaxing might be his being at last a cast-away;* that is, unapproved or rejected by the judge. It will be in vain to attempt an explanation, founded on the consistency of practice with precept in the present life. Its race, like the race in the games, must be run, before the decision can be given.

When the apostle tells the Corinthians, I. x. 12.—“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall,” he cannot but mean a fall that shall be final; because he is cautioning against what had happened to the disobedient Israelites, who had been “overthrown in the wilderness.” As the apostasy of these was without recovery, so must have been that, of which the Corinthians were instructed to be aware.

1. Cor. xv. 1, 2. “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” Here had been a gospel preached and received. Not only so, the people addressed had possessed a standing in it: for the Greek word † is not “ye stand,” but “ye have stood.” And such was their establishment therein, that salvation would be the sure effect of their perseverance. But here comes in the exception—“Unless ye have believed in vain.” If there be any ground for the subtilty of an historical faith, it cannot be alleged here; because not consistent with the state, from which there

* ἀδοκιμος. † ἵστηκατε.

is supposed a possibility of departing. Dr. Doddridge has so far a leaning to his system, as that, instead of bringing back the term, “ye stand,” to a conformity with the original, he goes still farther from it, by the paraphrase—“Ye may be said to stand:” and he supposes of the latter part of the words of the passage, that the Greek favours their being construed into the same sense with the seventeenth verse of the chapter—“And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain.” But this is quite wide of the sense of the apostle, in the place in question; which implies a contingency, as to the matter spoken of. But no such circumstance attached to the resurrection of Christ.

The same apostle, in Galatians v. 4, announces, as what must be the consequence of the intermixture of Judaism with Christianity, by the Gentile Christians—“Ye are fallen from grace.” Perhaps this was said, under the supposed condition of their not returning to the integrity of the faith, as it had been planted among them by the apostle. Still, there is presumed the possibility of the event threatened. For there would be no terror in the threat, were it imagined, that the fall would take place with the circumstance understood of subsequent recovery. In the same epistle, it is said—“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain?”* And yet these are people of whom he says in chapter iv. verse 6—“Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, † informs them thus—“When I could no longer forbear, I

* Chap. iii. verse 4. † Chap. iii. verse 5.

sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain." Now, let there be considered the character of the people, to whom the apostle writes thus. In the beginning of the epistle, he remembers their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ." Not only so, he adds—"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." On which may be incidentally noted, how far that must be from meaning an election to life, founded or not founded on foreknowledge. But he goes on—"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." These words are here conceived to relate to miraculous demonstration of the truth of the gospel: but if they apply, as Calvinists commonly suppose, in part to the work of the Holy Ghost on the mind, their application will be the stronger on that account. In either case, there is much to the purpose in what follows—"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe, in Macedonia and Achaia." Such were the saints, of whom St. Paul acknowledges apprehensions—which however had become removed—lest his labour among them had been in vain—Would an inspired Apostle have intimated such a danger, if it had been impossible? Or would any Calvinist divine of the present day intimate, that such a danger remained to those who were possessed of the tokens of election, here ascribed to the Thessalonian Christians?

Constructed on a similar principle with that in the passage the last referred to, but disclosing the sentiment more largely, is a passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, in the third and fourth chapters, beginning at the eighth verse of the former. Here, the disobedient Israelites are said to have hardened their hearts in the wilderness; and on this ground is founded the lesson to the Hebrew Christians—"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."* And as, relatively to those Israelites, there had been made and kept the divine oath—"They shall not enter into my rest;" so the danger is held forth to those to whom the epistle is addressed—"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem" [that is, be seen, or adjudged, or proved; for the original may mean any of these] "to come short of it."†

Throughout the whole epistle to the Hebrews, the writer of it seems to labour under the apprehension of an utter apostasy, of persons who had formerly both professed the faith and suffered for it. And the most alarming considerations which he brings before them, are found in two passages, which speak decisively to the present purpose; although it must be confessed, that there is in each of them a difficulty, on which the question is not dependent. The first of the passages, is in chap. vi. 4, 5, 6—"It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of

* Chap. iii. verse 12. † Chap. iv. verse 1.

the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." The other passage is as follows—"If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."*

To distinguish the case of the Hebrews from any ordinary measure of delinquency, it has been justly remarked, that absolute and entire apostasy must have been the matter in contemplation; because they had been treated by the Apostle, all along, as very faulty; and yet not hopeless, as appears from the caution given.

And then, to distinguish their case from any that can ordinarily happen, it is further justly remarked, that there are expressions strongly descriptive of the having been favoured with the highest evidence which could have been bestowed, in the display of a miraculous power before their eyes. Superadded to this, there is evidently implied a very considerable measure of the experience of the consolations of Christian hope. And then, in regard to the expression in the tenth chapter—"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin;" it is well remarked, that the words simply express there being no other sacrifice, than that which has been rejected: but whether it may or may not be possible, to revert by repentance to that rejected sacrifice, is a point on which nothing is either affirmed or denied.

* Chap. x. verse 26.

On the ground of these remarks, it is not difficult to reconcile the passages with the general sense of scripture; which does not deny the grace of repentance to those, who, after baptism, have fallen into sin. But how the passages can be reconciled to the doctrine, that final apostasy is not a thing both possible and to be feared, is more than can be here imagined.

Were this problematical, it might be determined by a place, not far after the last of the recited passages. For the apostle, having departed from the considerations referred to, and entered on others collateral with them, reverts to the former in the place now noticed; and cautions the Hebrews thus—“Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”* And he tells those Hebrews—“Ye have need of patience; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”† From these things it appears, that there were among the Hebrew converts some at least, who were so confirmed as not to be the subjects of the holy jealousy, which the apostle had all along expressed. And this is further proved, by what is said in chapter vi. 9—“Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” But that there were others who drew back unto perdition, after they had received the knowledge of the truth and partaken of the efficacy of the true sacrifice for sin, is a trait of the passage which cannot be effaced from it. It is one of the passages recited under the second point, on account

* Ch. x. 38, 39. † Ch. x. 36.

of which Dr. Campbell so severely censured Beza, for his mistranslations of them in his version of the New Testament. For the words—"My soul shall have no pleasure in him," there is put a Latin substitute which signifies—"It is not agreeable to my mind." So difficult did this translator find it, to reconcile the passage with his system.*

* To the passage in Hebrews vi. 4, 5, 6, the construction has been given, that the strong expression of having "tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come," may be considered, like "the partaking of the Holy Ghost," to have been intended of miraculous power, indulged to bad men. But this drags the passage from the purpose of the Apostle; because it limits the sense to hypocrites: whereas the whole epistle, and this part of it in particular, was written to dissuade professing Christians generally from apostasy. It would have had but a very imperfect influence of this sort, to have affirmed the impossibility of renewing to repentance those who had worked miracles, while they were sinners. If this were set aside, the falling away, according to the plan here remarked on, must have been from working miracles. The renewing, indeed, is defined to be to repentance; but this supposes the fall to be from grace. Besides, it does not appear in any part of the New Testament, that a bad man was ever armed with miraculous powers, for the propagation of Christianity. Simon Magus solicited, but did not obtain it. And therefore, what our Lord says in St. Matthew vii. 22, may be thought to apply to intruders in the work, as in the case of the exorcists, mentioned in Acts xix. 13, 14; which divine providence permitted, not as a direct mean of propagating the faith, but to be overruled to its advantage.

Others think, that the words now under consideration intimate merely faint impressions—such as may be permitted to an unregenerate man, on Calvin's plan, in order to render his damnation just: and this sense is thought to be favoured by the words "them that have tasted" [*γευσαμεντες.*] But under the Greek word, literally

Not unlike some of the passages quoted from St. Paul, is that of 2. Peter ii. 20—"If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." It would seem as though the apostle could hardly have chosen words more descriptive of the Christian state: yet, the latter end of the persons spoken of was worse than the beginning. And as if "the latter end"

used, there is included a thorough sensibility on the palate, of the substance subjected to it: as in Luke xiv. 24—"None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Even in Matthew xxvii. 34—"When he had tasted thereof, he would not drink"—The taste was a sufficient experiment made of the quality of the draught. When the term is used metaphorically, as in the place in question, it means a sufficient acquaintance with the thing spoken of; as where it is said in this epistle ii. 21, that he should "taste death for every man;" which means entire subjection to its power. It is also a material objection to the present comment, in regard to all who have worn away any faint impressions which they had received, that they are represented as for ever after incapable of the grace, which is irresistible and saving.

To the extenuating expedients here noticed, and to any others of the kind, the objection still occurs, of that species of falling which alone can be brought into consistency with the affirmed impossibility or extreme difficulty of renewing "again to repentance" But what would seem to place the matter beyond all doubt, is the light which the passage receives from the concurring sense of the other passage beginning at the twenty sixth verse of the tenth chapter. The two passages evidently relate to the same description of persons; who are (verse 29) said to have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing. What words could have expressed more strongly their having been within the covenant of grace?

were thought in danger of being softened to a loose signification, it is subjoined—"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." If the matter intended had been a turning, from which there might still have been another turn; it would not be better never to have known the way of righteousness. But no; the apostle could have had in view nothing short of hopeless ruin. It has, however, been said by some concerning the persons spoken of, although with extraordinary violence to the passage, that they must have been hypocrites and pretenders.

The same apostle had, in the foregoing chapter, thus exhorted those to whom he wrote 2. Peter i, 10—"Wherefore the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall." Here is still recognised a fall, as being possible to the elect. It is to be guarded against, by their making of their calling and election sure; that is stable or firm; which is the sense of the original word.* Their election is acknowledged; but there is required, that it should be rendered permanent. And how was this to be done? It is declared in the very passage; and was, by adding† "to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." These are the very matters referred to by the illative particle, in the verse under consideration. In the Alexandrine and other

* ἑθεταίαν. † Verses 5, 6, 7.

manuscripts, the true meaning is further identified, by its being added to the injunction—“Make your calling and election sure”—“by good works.”* The Apostle had addressed his epistle “to them that have obtained like precious faith” with himself. If a fall from grace be impossible, how could that faith have been made more sure, by good works?

St. John says, in his second epistle, verse 8—“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought” [or gained, says the margin] “but that we receive a full reward.” Here it is supposed, that what had been gained might be at last lost, by an admission of the heresy—for this the context contemplates, ver. 7, that Jesus Christ was not come in the flesh.

Revelations iii. 11. “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”—It had been said just before, ver. 2—“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.” Expressions of this sort, coming from the mouth of him “which searcheth the reins and hearts,” must be predicated on the uncertainty of human perseverance, and the danger of final apostasy, from God.

In addition to positive texts of scripture to the present point, it is usual to argue from the many exhortations to virtue and dissuasives from sin; which must needs, as is justly remarked, be materially weakened by the admission of the sentiment, that the worst against which they are intended to guard is a temporary dereliction. To give but a single instance: St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, after having saluted them as “saints,” as “faithful” and as “chosen before the founda-

* *διὰ των καλων εργαων.*

tion of the world," exhorts them to "put on the whole armour of God;"* and goes on, in a beautiful allegory, founded on the then military art, to array the Christian in the girdle of "truth; the breast plate of righteousness; the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit." Was all this to guard against a temporary inactivity in the field of battle? or an entire prostration under the adversary's arm? The latter idea is certainly the most agreeable to the whole tenour of the passage.

And this is the more evident, when it is considered who the adversary, principally contemplated in the passage, is. He is clearly there referred to; and again by St. Peter† thus—"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Is this personage to be supposed uninformed on a point, judged to be unequivocally declared in scripture? Or if informed, is he so lavish of unavailing efforts, as to waste any on those, in whom he discerns evidence of being within the good shepherd's pale; and whom, if he should entice them from it for a while, he must restore? This is not consistent with his subtilty, as described to us.

The plan of this work requires, that attention be now paid to the scriptural authorities, by which the doctrine of final perseverance is supported. And the substance of them shall be taken from professor Turretine, in the order in which they have been arranged by him.

1. There are all the texts, which establish the doctrine of election; meaning in the Calvinistick sense of the word. Those quoted are Hebrews vi. 17, Romans

* vi. 11, and following. † 1. †. 8.

ix. 11. 2. Timothy ii. 19, Romans viii. 29, 30. On the system here sustained, there can be expected no other answer, than a denial of the premises which lead to the conclusion.

2. There are passages, which relate to the immutability of the covenant of grace, as Jeremiah xxxi. 32, 33, and xxxii. 40. Their purport may be perceived, by a recital of the 32d and 33d verses of the 31st chapter—"Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake; although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord.) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Answer: It will not be denied, that the passages in question relate primarily to the captivity of Babylon. But even taking the secondary sense, supported by some places in the New Testament; it may be conceded, that the covenant is unchangeable; and yet contended further, that it is accompanied by conditions; which must always be supposed to be performed by one of the parties, in order to make the promises of the other party binding. Besides, such texts relate to the Jews as a nation, and cannot be applied individually, unless in the way of analogy.

3. The conditional nature of promises furnishes a sufficient answer to the next description of texts, advanced by Turretine, and reciting promises, as in Deuteronomy xxxi. 8, and Hebrews xiii. 5. The latter of which says—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The

passages parallel to these are Hosea ii. 19, John x. 27, 28, and Matthew xvi. 18. The last is supposed by Protestants generally, to contain a promise not to individuals, but to the Church as a social body.

4. An argument is drawn from the merits and efficacy of the death of Christ, as applied to the subject in John vi. 37 and 39; and in xvii. 22. The first of these says—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." There can be no doubt of the abundant merit of the death of Christ, in reference to the end for which it was ordained. It was a property of this, that men must endure to the end, in order to be saved by it. But whether this be a necessary consequence of being once in grace, is a question left by the other subject, exactly as it was found. It is an honouring of Christ after a mistaken manner, to apply his merits to points, on the mere ground of our conceiving of them as suitably connected with it. On some such ground as this, Cardinal Cajetan argued with Luther, for a fund of supererogatory works: and some have thought it injurious to the same merits, that even the sins of the elect, lived and died in, should interpose to hinder their salvation, purchased for them by so great a price.

5. From the union of the faithful with Christ, expressed Romans viii. 38 and 1. Corinthians vi. 17. The former was considered in the first department of this work; and the latter says—"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." But from present union, the impossibility of future separation cannot be inferred. Else, how was Adam deprived of his early glory? And how happened it, that "the angels kept not their first estate?"

6. From the efficacy of the intercession of the Redeemer, expressed John xi. 42. and Luke xxii. 32. The former says—"I knew that thou hearest me always;" and the latter—"I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The sense of these texts is satisfied, by their being supposed to relate to the ordinary, although not irresistible aids of grace. However sure these, to all who seek them; yet prayer to that effect is made a duty, with the view to the cultivating of a sense of dependence on God. The duty rests on us, not as respects ourselves only, but as it involves the debt of intercession for others. And it became our Lord, who was to be a pattern to us in all things, thus to intercede for his immediate friends and followers.

7. From the guardianship and sealing of the Holy Spirit, declared in John xiv. 17, Galatians iv. 6, Ephesians i. 13. and iv. 30. As to the guardianship spoken of, the sentiment—"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter"—and the like—is sufficiently sustained, if our everlasting interests are protected against all enemies besides ourselves. The idea of a seal is evidently metaphorical: and they who think it conclusive to argue from metaphor, should remember in regard to this, that the impression of a seal may be discontinued, because of some change taking place in the substance, on which it was made. However, it is apprehended, that the sealing spoken of is of the Church, by the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit.

8. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."* It is answered here, as in the former part of the work, that if these gifts are lost, it is from human

* Rom. xi. 29.

changeableness; and not from repentance or change in the divine mind.

9. From the nature of the spiritual life, which is described to be perpetual or eternal, in John v. 24—vi. 40, and 1. John v. 13. The first says—“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” These passages are expressive of the certainty of the love of God; but by no means prove, that it may not be disappointed of its object, by the inconstancy of man. A beneficent father might make very ample declarations, to assure his children of his unalterable affection, and of its following of them to every period of their respective lives; and yet would be utterly misunderstood, if supposed to mean, that they were under a necessity of being benefitted by his goodness.

10. The Professor finds what he thinks an illustrious authority, where it is said*—“Whosoever is born of God cannot commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” If this passage should be construed literally, as affirming that the regenerate cannot sin, it would be not only an error, but destructive of the scheme which it is intended to support. To guard against this, it has been judged necessary to understand it of final sin: which, however, is not intimated in the passage. There is, indeed, stress laid on the seed’s remaining. But to what is this applied? It is, not the future state of the person in question, but his not sinning. He cannot live in sin, while

* 1. John iii. 9.

that seed is in him; and this is the most the words express. But St. Peter speaks the still stronger language of an "incorruptible seed."* Yes, the seed is incorruptible, but the soil may prove barren. But to return to the passage: it ought to be interpreted by the purpose of the writer; which was simply, as the connexion shows, to affirm the indissoluble alliance subsisting between the Christian character and a holy life and conversation. If we must still listen to metaphor, brought in support of doctrine, it should be remembered, that he who is born, although he lives and acts, may die. The meaning can amount to no more, than that while a man lives under the influence of the high and holy principle, implanted in him by the regenerating influence of Christianity, he cannot deliberately or habitually sin.

The 11th consists of metaphor altogether; urging the comparisons which have been made of the spiritual life; first, to "incorruptible seed," as in the passage noticed above; then to a "living fountain;" as in John iv. 14; and then, to "trees planted by streams of water;" as in Psalm i. 5; and then, to a house built upon a rock; as in Matthew vii. 24. All which contain simply the encouraging assurance, of the never failing supports of divine grace. But how far men will avail themselves of this, the passages say not.

12. St John says of apostates, they "went out from us, but they were not of us."† Answer: he says this of some, who had obtruded themselves on the faithful, under the cover of false appearances. But there are apostates of another description; who, as is said in another

* 1. Epis. i. 23. † 1. Epis. ii. 19.

place, "for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." The place in question, is as if in some orthodox church of modern times, the more vexatious and visionary members were to separate and form a new profession; and it were then said of them, what the Apostle said of those of old like them: meaning, that however within the communion, they had never entered into the spirit of its institutions.

It would be improper to leave the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, without remarking the dangerous aspect which it wears, in relation to sinful security and even licentious living. That it has had this effect in many instances, is so well attested, that the fact will hardly be denied; although it will be remarked, that the persons in question were never, as they supposed themselves, in grace. Yet, to all appearance, they had been under the same convictions of conscience; and had been favoured with the assurances thought to be possessed by those, who have been faithful to the end.

Independently on what is usually brought under the name of immorality, there have been those, who have indulged themselves in habits utterly inconsistent with the purity of Christian morals; and again, others, not conscious of habitual devotion, and of keeping God always before them, who yet occasionally have looked back on what they called their first love, and have been confident, that, however smothered the flame of it for a while, it could never be extinguished. These different descriptions of people, if the theory here advocated be true, had no interest "in the kingdom of Christ and of God," during the seasons of their respective

delinquency. Their former convictions and sensibilities may or may not have returned; but their only intermediate effect, was the aggravation of sin.

It is here acknowledged, that gracious truths ought not to be suppressed, merely because the wicked abuse them to their destruction. But it ought to be acknowledged on the other hand, that an opinion, so easily abused as the one in question, should be well weighed and clearly proved, before it be affirmed for truth; and especially of such a grade, as that without it, neither the sovereignty nor the truth of God can be sustained.

CONCLUSION.

The Subject should be excluded from Theology—Transactions in the Synod of Dort—Dean Hall's Sermon—Dr. Priestley's Acknowledgment—Late Introduction of Calvinism.

THE author hopes he has made it appear, that the subordinate parts of the Calvinistick system, instead of being founded on scripture, are the result of the opinion on the first and leading point; all the rest being accommodated to preconceived ideas of the divine sovereignty; and originating in a wish to exhibit it, in a consistency with what is considered as a defensible scheme of moral government. He therefore desires to revert to that original ground; and, contemplating the whole subject of predestination in any other point of view than as relative to the visible church, to infer the wisdom of excluding it from Christian theology; and of leaving it to be acted on, if at all, by philosophical speculation.

He further wishes to illustrate this sentiment, by adverting to the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, in the Synod of Dort. For he thinks he perceives in the transactions of that body, as related by the historian, Brandt, a manifest injury to the cause of the Arminians, in their meeting of their adversaries so far, as with them to apply certain passages of scripture to predestination, in the sense in which the word is usually understood; but affirming it to be grounded on the Deity's prescience of the characters and the conduct of men respectively. If the sentiment here sustained be

correct, the Arminians, instead of endeavouring to prove their sense of the doctrine by the scriptures, as the Calvinists endeavoured to prove theirs, should have denied, that there was any express decision of so high an authority on the case; and should have contended, concerning those of the points which are wrapped up in metaphysical difficulty, that they ought not to be embodied with evangelical instruction, or make a part of it in any way; and that if they should be thought fit subjects of disputation in the schools, yet even in this line, what seems true in theory cannot be true in any apparent consequence, contradicting our clearest conceptions of the moral attributes of God; and that if, under this view, there should appear to be truth against truth, the most reasonable and safe determination is, to resolve the apparent contrariety into the imperfection of the human intellect: at all events, not daring either to lessen the sovereignty of God, on the one hand, or to impeach his goodness and his justice on the other; since, in regard to the former, there should be remembered what is intimated in scripture—“He giveth not account of any of his matters;” and, in regard to the latter, it cannot be unbecoming, in a professor of the Christian faith, to say with the Father of the faithful—“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Every reader of the transactions of the Synod of Dort must have noticed the pertinacity, with which the president, Bogerman, insisted with the remonstrants, from time to time, that they should confine themselves to the proof of their own opinions, and not digress into a crimination of the opinions of their opponents; which, it was said, were not before the Synod; and the equal

pertinacity, with which Episcopius and his brethren disregarded the admonition. Now, if the positions maintained by these, relatively to all the five points, had rested on so many and such unequivocal authorities in scripture, as the single point of a redemption designed for all men, it may be believed, that no material inconvenience would have resulted from the limits so prescribed. But after they had affirmed for many years, in reasonings of great length and intricacy, that there was a conditional election of individuals, founded on their foreseen obedience; when this distinction had extended its influence, over all affirmed by them on the subject of grace; when they had appealed, in evidence of their position, to the very passages of scripture, which their adversaries had appealed to for the contrary; and when these had been accused by them, for many years preceding, of contradicting scripture in their discourses; and of filling them with matter, not merely foreign to it and unedifying, but having a tendency to puzzle and to disturb; it is not to be wondered at, that they were continually stepping aside from the path marked out to them. The Synod have been much blamed on this account, by some; but, as is here conceived, not with demonstrable propriety; because the Arminians, in the preceding stages of the controversy, had made the affirmative of the points the most prominent. Of this they stood accused; being before the Synod, under a citation to support what they had affirmed. The case would have been different, had they treated predestination in the usual sense, as mere philosophy; but affirmed, without reserve, the universality of divine grace: which was not only demonstrable by clear texts of scripture, but professed by the

church, whose divines, of all the foreigners, held the first rank; and whose opinions had great weight in the assembly.

The disadvantage of the Arminians, here stated, was especially conspicuous in the matter of reprobation. They were continually reminded, and with appearance of reason, that there being such a doctrine made no part of the system which they were cited to support; and in addition, that it became such saints as them [this was sarcasm] to look at the comforts of election, and not on the gloomy side of reprobation. It was indeed the case, that while some of the Calvinists considered the decree as having respect, alike directly, to the salvation of the elect, and to the damnation of the reprobate; there were others, who affected to consider the latter as passed over merely. As these things seem the same in reason, so they are the same in scripture. For, if the choice of Isaac and of Jacob respected them personally, and not their posterities, as existing in them, and if the election of them were with a view to their condition in another life, the like applies to the rejection of Ishmael and of Esau, whose damnation must be equally considered, as coming within the limits of the decree. The same must be preeminently true of the case of Pharaoh; whose damnation there is the less pretence for representing to be merely the result of the election of another. The whole tenour of the epistle to the Romans, on the Calvinistick plan of interpretation, represents the fitting of the vessels of wrath for destruction, to be as much a direct object of the act of predestination, as the preparing of the vessels of mercy for glory. Nevertheless, there existed in the Synod the difference which has been stated: and therefore,

on how much more tenable ground would the Arminians have stood, if, instead of resting their cause on passages explained by them in one way, and by their adversaries in another, but by both as relative to another life, it had been contended, that the passages had no relation to the subject; and that accordingly, Christianity was unnecessarily encumbered with the doctrine taught? Here, they would have proved, from the writings of one description of their adversaries, what would not have been justified by the other of them, that there had been taught reprobation, as the direct act of God, although not found in scripture. In regard to those who had not taught the doctrine in this explicit form, it might have been charged as the consequence of what they had taught of another sort. And it must even have been owned by those who denied the correctness of the inference, that the Arminians who made it were entitled to the opportunity of supporting their charge, before they should be condemned as false accusers of their brethren.

It is difficult to perceive how, on this ground, they could have failed to be supported by the English divines, consistently with the decisions of their church. Brandt ascribes to them, that the second article underwent a considerable alteration, from what it had been when drafted. For it had been said, that unbelievers will be damned for original, as well as for actual sin: which was struck out at the instance of those divines; lest it should militate against the doctrine of their church, that original sin is done away in baptism. On the article as carried, two of them were in the affirmative, and two in the negative. Among the latter was the Bishop of

Landaff; who explained, as intended of all sorts of men, what is said in the 31st article of his church, which defines—"The offering of Christ once made," to be "that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." This article appears, indeed, to have occasioned some embarrassment to the English divines; and to have produced a correspondence with their superiours at home. It was probably from a similar inducement, that they exhorted the body to great moderation on the fifth point; which is, indeed, in direct contrariety to the doctrine of the church of England, of baptismal regeneration. And even in regard to the first point, they advised, that the doctrine of predestination should not be indiscriminately handled.

Although the author has vindicated the Synod and their president in a single matter; yet he would not be understood, as extending the vindication generally. The intemperate ebullitions of his passions were such, as it would be difficult to find any persons of the present day to advocate. And as to the Synod itself, it is probable, that at this distance of time, its proceedings must be generally looked back on, not only as having been much governed by the then existing state of politicks in the Netherlands, and even in England; but as exhibiting effects of the passions of the members generally, not to be reconciled with the requisitions of Christian charity. The correctness of these positions is rested not only on the narrative of Brandt, but also on the accounts of the proceedings sent to the English Ambassador by the Rev. Mr. Hales, his chaplain, who attended the deliberations of the Synod; and by the Rev. Walter

Balquancal who was a member of it, representing the church of Scotland. Nevertheless, the Synod seems to have been unduly censured, as to the particulars which it has been thought proper to notice in this place: and they are stated only to show, that the Arminians would have stood on stronger ground, had they rested their cause on the affirmative of the second question. The negative on the first, on the fourth, and on the fifth, would have been obvious inferences; with which they might have been satisfied, without affirming any doctrine of their own on the first point; but showing, that the predestination spoken of in scripture related to another subject.

There having been introduced an allusion to the Arminian cause in the Synod of Dort, it was impossible to overlook what was found so much to the purpose of the preceding distinction between Christian faith and philosophical speculation, in dean (afterwards bishop) Hall's sermon at the opening of that assembly. The author had entertained the design of extracting the part of the dean's discourse, which applies: but as the same sentiments are more compressed in a tract of the same excellent person called "*Via media*," it is judged, that the extract may with equal propriety be made from that.*

* The historian, Brandt, who, however, being of the remonstrant party, may have been biassed, says of this holy man, that he was supposed to have left the Synod, because he foresaw the intemperance of their proceedings. The cause assigned was ill health; in consequence of which, he was excused by his sovereign from further attendance. Besides, in his speech to the states at his departure, he expressed great regret at leaving the Synod; the society of which he described as next to that in heaven: which however,

In the said tract, Dr. Hall, considering both sides as agreed on fundamentals, urges the King (James I.) to silence controversy on the rest.* And then he goes on thus: "If any man herein complain of usurpation on the conscience and unjust servitude, let him be taught the difference between matters of faith and scholastick disquisitions. Those have God for their author; these, the brains of men. Those are contained in the scriptures, either in express terms or by irrefragable consequences; these are only deduced thence by such crooked inferences, as cannot command assent. Those are for the pulpit; these for the schools. In those, the heart is tied to believe; the tongue must be free to speak. In these, the heart may be free, the tongue may be bound." What makes the preceding passage pertinent to the present purpose, is, its cautioning against the handling of certain doctrines, as had been done by others, on principles which have been compared in this work to the exoterick and isoterick doctrines of the ancients: the truth of the doctrines being dependent on reasonings, which originate

may be thought accountable for by the circumstance, that whatever spirit may be supposed to have actuated the body, Dr Hall found among its members many excellent persons, with whose society he could not but have been delighted. Be these things as they may; his sermon, at the opening of the assembly, involves a strong crimination of the spirit of some of their subsequent proceedings.

* It is a strong instance of the deep-rooted prejudice of the time, that so good and so wise a man as bishop Hall thought it justifiable in him, as a Christian minister, to advise the civil magistrate to the execution of his authority for the suppression of error in religion.

in philosophy; and are therefore foreign to the Christian revelation.

Of that new philosophy by which the Calvinistick doctrines are now currently defended, it is said by one of its ablest and most zealous advocates (Dr. Priestley) in his tract on philosophical necessity—"I do not think the sacred writers were, strictly speaking, necessarians; for they were not philosophers."* And yet he quotes sundry passages conformable, as he thinks, to the necessarian scheme; attributing them to the devotion of the sacred penmen.†

Independently on the scheme here referred to, the hope is indulged of there having been shown, that there is no ground in scripture for the doctrine of predestination, in the sense in which the word is commonly used; nor for the tenets which are its usual accompaniments. If so, they rest on human conjecture and human reasonings: and the belief of this will be the more confirmed, if it should be proved, as may be done, that they began to be introduced about 400 years after the promulgation of Christianity; from the supposition of aid, in contrariety to a doctrine unsound in its foundation and pernicious in its consequences; but to be disproved, without resort to so desperate an expedient. That the fact, relative to the early church, is as here stated, was amply confessed

* Sect. xi.

† The author believes, with Dr. Priestley, that it was no object of the inspired writers, to connect their doctrine with philosophical speculation in any way; but at the same time supposes, that had St. Paul been a decided necessarian, he would never have used an expression so evidently favouring the *αυτεξουσια* of the Greek philosophers, as that of *ἐξουσιαν περι τῶ ἰδίου θεληματος* [power over his own will] in 1. Cor. viii. 37.

by Calvin; and if he be correct, the church, previous to the fifth century, had not found verified what St. Paul affirms of scripture, that it is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

* 2. Tim. iii. 16, 17.

APPENDIX.

NO. 1 OF PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY.

Consciousness opposed to Necessity—Dr. Clarke's Distinction between the Mind and a Balance—Consequences of supposing the Mind acted on as a Lever—Objection of Confusion—Necessity overthrows Praise and Blame—Lord Kaims—Bishop Berkeley—David Hume—Restrictions on Speculation—Danger of extending necessity to God—Mr. Leibnitz—Dr. Priestley—President Edwards.

THE author of this work, in the department of it immediately preceding, has had occasion to refer to important changes made in the Calvinistick theory, by its availing of itself of the aid of what is said to be the more modern doctrine of philosophical necessity. It has been matter of surprise to him, that no Calvinist of the old school, so far as is here known, stepped forward in the beginning, to forbid the banns of this unnatural marriage. This has not since been done, to any considerable extent, within the knowledge of him who writes. It is however hoped, that there has been no impropriety, in the interference of one who is not of the family, to pronounce the alliance unlawful.

In doing this, it was explicitly declared, that the question of the truth of philosophical necessity was foreign to the views of the present treatise; which were directed to matters of revelation only. It has, however, been suggested by subsequent reflection, that there may be use in a brief examination of the merits of this upstart and intrusive doctrine; still under the declaration,

that what shall be advanced, ought not to be considered as involving in it the merits of any other argument which has been handled.

If any man attend to what passes in his own mind, it must be evident to him, that at least, he seems to have been endowed by the Creator with a power, by which he fixes his attention on one subject, and refuses it to another; or passes from that to this, by a self determined direction of his will. If there should be exceptions to this—for instance when the mind is occupied by some extraordinary event, either of joy or of sorrow—it will be no objection to the remark, as applying generally. And even in regard to any such subject, carrying with it an extraordinary pressure; we are conscious of an inward energy, which, if exerted, makes it give way to thoughts of another nature, prompted either by duty or by discretion. It is probable there is no man, who, having never heard or read any metaphysical discussion of the subject, would not pronounce without hesitation, that he is conscious of such a power, the evidence of it being obtained by reflecting on the movements of his own mind.

Mr. Leibnitz seems sensible, that it would be unsafe to his theory, to rest it on consciousness disengaged from supposed metaphysical fitness. For in his controversy with Dr. Clarke; he writes thus: “We cannot, strictly speaking, be sensible of our not depending on other causes; for we cannot always perceive the causes (they being often imperceptible) on which our resolutions depend. It is as if a needle, touched with a loadstone, was sensible of and pleased with its turning towards the north. For it would believe, that it turned itself independently on any other cause, not perceiving the insensible

motions of the magnetick matter. A number of great and small motions, internal and external, concur with us, which generally we are not sensible of." This extract shows, that the prevailing tendency of the advocates of necessity is to appeal, not to consciousness, but to something on which it does not operate.

It is here supposed, that in the controversy on the present subject, much obscurity has arisen from the ambiguous use of the word "motive." It is that which determines the choice. But there is no necessity, that the determiner should be something exterior to the mind; and it may be, that the movements of this are determined by a principle inherent to itself. This sentiment may be illustrated by the following passage from Dr. Clarke, in his controversy with Mr. Leibnitz: "There is no similitude between a balance being moved by weights or impulse; and a mind moving itself, or acting upon a view of certain motives. The former is entirely passive; which is absolute necessity: The other not only is acted upon, but acts; which is the essence of liberty. The motive is something extrinsick to the mind. The impression is the perceptive quality: The doing is the power of self-motion. The confounding of the motive with the principle of action, is the ground of the whole error; and leads men to think, that the mind is no more active, than a balance would be with the power of perception."

Besides the matter of consciousness already stated, it would seem, that when there is an aim to a certain end, there being two means equally agreeable, we adopt one mean, without any consciousness of a motive to it in preference to the other: which seems a decisive instance

of choosing without motive, considered as something distinct from the mind itself. President Edwards, in his celebrated treatise on freewill,* found himself under the necessity of acknowledging that there are some cases, in which a man, not finding in himself a preference to one of two ways, gives himself up to accident. President Edwards indeed remarks, and justly, that what men call accident is subject to fixed laws. Still, so far as the will is concerned, it takes a course that finally fixes it on one side of the alternative, in preference to the other; although there was no such preference in the mind itself. For, as to the giving up to accident; it is here presumed, that no man will declare himself generally, much less always conscious of any act of the mind to that effect.

From what source then, and by what process, are there deduced reasonings in contrariety to what has been here stated? To the writer of this, it seems the result of men's speculating concerning the perfections of God, and the order of the universe, with a view to the determining of what is fit to be believed of both. Under the influence of considerations resulting from speculations of this description, Leibnitz pronounces, that a man cannot pass from the state of rest to that of motion, without having a reason, although it may be so minute as to escape his observation, for putting his right or his left foot foremost, as the case may have happened. But how did Mr. Leibnitz know this? Notwithstanding his great name, does it not look like what the logicians call a "petitio principii," made for no other reason, than its being exacted by his system? It would rather seem, that the man wills the

* Part ii. sect. 6.

putting forward of one of his feet, not for any reason making the motion of this preferable to the motion of the other; but because the motion of one of them, no matter which, being necessary to the end in view, it is by an inherent power, that he determines between the two.

Even when we deliberately compare objects which offer themselves to our choice; it would seem, that we are equal to the giving of preference, independently on any reasons which can be assigned by way of motives; and sometimes, even in contrariety to them. Here, however, an advocate of necessity would give the caution, not to estimate the effect of motive by its intrinsic weight, but by the force accompanying it to the mind on which it falls. Is it indeed so? And must there be something in minds themselves, which will occasion a motive to have different degrees of force on different minds; and even on the same mind, at different times? How very unlike to the physical connexion between a cause and its effect; to which however, there is said to be an exact analogy, between the motive and the act of willing!

But the opposite theory represents, that man is acted on by reasons, just as a weight is acted on by a lever or by a pulley; without any difference between the man and the weight, except that the former is conscious and the latter not so, of the course in which he is propelled. But let us inquire, whether this be consistent with what we know of the effect of motive on act. A man is standing at a certain place, without inducement to move from it, until tempted by some gratification at a given distance, on the right; and by another, in all

respects equal, on the left. According to the theory, he would remain unmoveable; although ever so much pressed by inclination, to the enjoyment of one or the other. To vary the hypothesis, let the offers be supposed made from stations not exactly to the right and the left, but from angles at an equal degree from right and left respectively. In this case, the man would move in an intermediate line, always keeping himself at an equal distance from the equal objects of his choice; and never possessing himself of either.

It has been remarked, that the arguments for the theory are deduced from topicks extraneous to the mind of man. And it is not to be denied, that the subject is attended with difficulty, when seen in the point of view, that connects it with the eternal administration of the moral government of God. But the difficulty is removed, by considering the subject of an antecedent eternity, not only in itself but in all its relations, as beyond the conception, and interdicted to the curiosity, of men. And that this is true in scripture, as well as in reason, it has been one purpose of the preceding disquisitions to demonstrate.

But there has been brought an argument of another kind; grounded on the absurdity of the hypothesis, that the beauty, the order, and the harmony of this fair creation, has been subjected to what is called the freewill of millions of intelligent creatures, under the influence of so much depraved passion, as we know to be in mankind: which, it is said, would defeat whatever wisdom was intended to be manifested in the design. The answer is, that doubtless this would be the effect, if these wayward wills were let loose, without the superintendence

of a divine will, over-ruling them to its purposes, by means of the connexion between cause and effect impressed on matter: it being doubtless within the contemplation of the providence of God, what effect the self-determining mind of man would have on nature, in every event which would occur. This may be illustrated, by the improvement usually made of that passage in the Psalms—"He maketh the wrath of man to praise him." Men may will, what is in opposition to the will of God. Known to him beforehand, however, are the designs to which their wickedness will incite them; and he is competent to the accomplishing of his own designs, by adjusting to them all natural objects, in number, weight, and measure. This is the view taken of the subject—and that philosophically as is here conceived—by a celebrated poet, when he says:

" And binding Nature fast in fate,
" Left free the human will."

But are there no difficulties attendant on the necessarian scheme? There are many and great; of which the most prominent shall be stated.

It overthrows the foundation of moral praise and blame. If a man should have done you some substantial service, and an opportunity of a return should offer; however you may comply with the dictates of your understanding, pointing out to you a general fitness and utility in the encouragement of beneficence; yet you surely would not think such a person entitled to the gratitude of your heart. Or if a man have injured you feel, if you please, the wrong sustained; but do not aggravate the conduct of the offender, by the supposition of his having wickedly violated the laws of God and

man. To take the matter in another point of view; let it be supposed, that you sit as a judge, in the condemnation of a criminal. Doubtless, you are bound by oath and by the publick good, to pronounce the sentence which the law inflicts: But what ought to be your feelings, when you consider, that the punishment to be pronounced by you, is but one link in an indissoluble chain, having its beginning in the throne of God; and running through this and every future event, in the destination of the offender? On the contrary, the uniform tenour of a well spent life, and even the most splendid services to individuals and to the publick, are no more a call for esteem or for affection, under the operation of the principles contemplated, than are those objects of outward nature, which are unconsciously made to contribute to our preservation or to our comfort. The sentiment may be applied to domestick life. In the relations between husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant; the theory must be put out of view, before there can be a distinction made between misfortune and crime; or between a benefit meritoriously conferred, and that which it did not rest with the party either to withhold or to bestow.

We are told indeed—and this is a conspicuous feature in the celebrated essay of lord Kaimes—of the discovery made in late ages, of the non-existence of colour; and of the little effect of the discovery, on any transactions in which the colour of body is concerned. But the subjects rest on such different grounds and apply so differently, that there can be no reasoning from one of them to the other. If a dressy gentleman should conceive of his figure in society, as dependent on a certain colour of his

coat; or if a lady should conceive the like, of a certain colour of her gown; in these cases, the motive of choice is not at all dependent on the circumstance, that the colour is merely the effect of the configuration of the particles of which the material is composed. The beau and the belle, though taught to apprehend this, would yet perceive, that their persons are not affected by it, in the eye of the beholder. It is not so, in the other department; in which the system may be consistent with pleasure on one hand, or with disgust on the other; but not with the sense either of virtue or of vice.

There is a still more important difficulty, in the connexion of the subject with responsibility. Under the operation of the theory, a man may be sensible of misery, but surely cannot be conscious of guilt. At least, if he accuse himself of the latter, it must be, by putting of the former for a time out of his mind. This, it is confessed, may be accomplished by that self-determining power, which is here supposed to enter into the more probable side of the question. And there is encouragement to the exercise of the power, when the sinner recollects, that, until death shall have set its seal to his condition, there is room for hope, that he may be of the number of the elect; which however, without repentance, cannot be. But when he shall have reached the world of spirits; how he can condemn himself for the rejecting of offers never made, and the defeating of grace never given; having been placed in circumstances under which it was impossible they should have effect; or how conscience can aggravate any other species of misery, which divine Omnipotence may be supposed to inflict, is very difficult to be conceived of.

And yet, that very circumstance is generally spoken of by Christians of every denomination, as the principal source of unhappiness to sinners, in another state of being.

To him who writes this it is well known, that many an ingenuous Calvinist would confess the pressure of the difficulties mentioned; but would say, that in the Arminian scheme, he finds difficulties still more pressing. Ought he not then to give a willing ear to considerations intended to evince, that both the schemes are unsupported by the gospel; so far as they speculate on the eternity of God, or connect his sovereignty and human agency together? That "there are secret things belonging to the Lord our God," is clearly taught in scripture: And what can more properly be considered as of the number of them, than the subject now in contemplation?

But it may be said, even on the supposition of the silence of scripture—Shall the active mind of man be excluded altogether from this field of philosophical investigation? The only answer pertinent to the present design is, that it should at least be under the restriction, of presuming latent error in reasonings, which strike at any of the divine perfections; or represent human nature, differently from what observation and experience prove of it.

If we take up the subject, as it respects the perfections of God; it is surely a suitable submission of human reason to say, that there must be somewhere a defect in any chain of reasoning, however unable we may find ourselves for the discovery of the weak link, when it terminates in the representing

of him as wielding the sceptre of his resistless sovereignty, in order to demonstrate the extent of his power; in a way which, according to the maxims governing good men—the only way of our forming of any apprehension as to what is to be believed concerning God—is not consistent either with benevolence or with justice.

In the other respect also, as the subject relates to the properties of human nature, under our observation and our experience; there cannot be truth in a theory, however plausible, that contradicts them. The sentiment may be illustrated, as it applies on another subject. Bishop Berkeley, to whom Mr. Pope ascribes “every virtue under heaven,” perceiving no necessary relation between an idea, and matter of which it is the image, fell into a track of argument, ending in the disbelief of a material universe. Whoever has perused the disquisitions of that very ingenious and very amiable bishop, must perceive, that it is not easy to detect the error of his reasonings. But is a man, conscious of his inability to refute them, to acquiesce in the conclusion? Not at all. Mankind, not excepting the author of the theory and his followers, have always acted in contrariety to it in common life. It contradicts the judgments, formed on all the occasions coming before us; and on which, as there is a call for very little process of the reasoning faculty, there is the less danger of its being led astray.

Bishop Berkeley was led into an hypothesis so extraordinary, by the combination of a pious disposition, with the belief of a theory of the human mind, that had become prevalent in his day; and some parts of which had not yet been contemplated in all their consequences. But

after him came David Hume; who, from the opposite principle of irreligion, but proceeding on the same theory, struck at the root of all certainty, on religious and moral subjects; representing man as a mere bundle of ideas, brought together in accidental association. Dr. Beattie, in speaking of Mr. Hume's representation of human nature, has noticed the compliment paid to Shakspeare—that another order of intelligent beings, without converse with man, might form a conception of him from the writings of the poet: and then the doctor asks, whether the same or any thing like it can be affirmed, of Mr. Hume's professed delineation of the nature of the same being; which is indeed wide of any knowledge to be acquired of it, from conversation with one another. Such theories may be ingenious; but without considering whether we are able to confute them, it is rational to pronounce, that they cannot be true.

If philosophical necessity be judged by this standard, there seems nothing which can prevent its sinking under the weight of opposite experience and observation. And what makes the writer of this the more lament, that Calvinism should take shelter under the wings of such a useless kind of metaphysics, is his remarking, not only that it is welcome to the minds of many thinking Deists; but that it is apt to be so, in proportion as they find in materialism the same charms to captivate them. As we form our ideas of the perfections of God, by ascribing to him, in the highest sense, what we find excellent in the creature; it is natural to transfer the idea of necessity—that being supposed the most perfect of all schemes—from the universe to the Creator.

Something of the sort seems confessed by Leibnitz, in his pronouncing, that God cannot make two particles

of matter, in all respects alike; because each particle must occupy a certain portion of space; and were the two particles in all respects alike, there could be no reason in the divine mind, for placing either particle in the space occupied by it, rather than in that occupied by the other. It might be made a question, whether this Leibnitzian concession, which is indeed an unavoidable result, do not interfere essentially with the distinguishing circumstance of Calvinistick predestination, that it is independent on any thing foreseen in the elect or in the reprobate. For it would seem, according to the scheme of Leibnitz, that there must be as much difficulty in choosing between two such beings, as between two similar particles of matter. But, putting this question of consistency aside, there would seem in the aforesaid position of Leibnitz, something indicating a near kindred between materialism and philosophical necessity.

It is here supposed to be the opinion of Christians generally, that when God created man, he might have withheld the act of his omnipotence. But how this is consistent with what necessity would lead us to think of him, is not apparent. We know, that, among the heathen, the fatalists considered the gods themselves as subject to the decrees of fate. This is mythology; but the principles wrapt up in it, were the result of deep thought. The system was consistent: and it is to be feared, that some religious necessarians have adopted it, without perceiving the consequences in which it ends.

The late Dr. Priestley, in his tract on philosophical necessity, seems to have avoided looking on the subject, in the point of view in which it may be thought to

intrench on the freedom of the divine mind. He has, indeed, treated of this, in relation to his opinion of materialism; with which he certainly combined the kindred opinion of necessity. But how far the subject affects the freedom of the divine operation, he has not there inquired. If the writer of this were to reason, according to his own ideas of propriety, from the premises of others; he would be led to the position, that the necessarian scheme must extend to the Deity himself. Dr. Priestley, indeed, distinguishes his own necessity from that of the ancients, in the point, that to the latter, even the gods were subject. But under this, may not the very sentiment of what is now called philosophical necessity have been concealed, in the remote ages in which the mythology was framed? It is well known, that this fictitious person, intended to be emblematical of abstract opinion, was born and cradled in Egypt, and not in Greece; in which much of the original symbols was lost or overlooked. But, whatever may have been the opinions of the ancient philosophers, we have too many evidences among the modern, that the mixture of necessity and materialism, advocated by Dr. Priestley, has a tendency to the more sublimated philosophy of that kind, denominated from Spinoza.

President Edwards seems to have been less shy than Dr. Priestley, of the bearing of his principles on the present subject. He has spoken of it in this point of view, in the seventh and eighth sections of the fourth part of his Inquiry. In the seventh, he argues that the operations of the divine mind are not the less free, because they are and must be always directed to ends of the most consummate wisdom: and he quotes Dr. Clarke

to the same effect. In the eighth section, he treats of that which is the main point, the choice of the divine mind, in an alternative, in which either side would be consistent with supreme wisdom. Here he throws on those who differ from him, the burthen of the proof, that any such alternative can exist: whereas, he ought rather to have taken on himself the proof, that it is impossible. So far as we can judge, it was not essential to the wisdom of the divine workmanship, that in the system which we inhabit, there should be the precise number of planets, which make their circuits round the sun; so that there being one more or one less, would have made the system less wise. Supposing it to be as president Edwards states, that, according to Sir Isaac Newton's laws, an atom more or less would have deranged the whole system of the universe; yet it will hardly be affirmed, that the relative positions of the bodies of which the universe is composed, might not have been such, as to have conformed to the addition or the subtraction of the atom. So in the scale of animal life, another species more or another less, would not seem to detract from the general design exhibited: and this instance is the more remarkable, if, as is supposed, some species formerly appearing, have been lost. The subject might be placed in various other points of view: and the application to it of the system of necessity seems to exact a demonstration, that all nature could have been no other, than as we see it. President Edwards, particularly, takes up the position of Leibnitz, of the impossibility of there being two particles of matter alike. In discussing this point, he goes into many very minute distinctions; which it is less to the present

purpose to examine, than to remark, that they imply the application of necessity in this extent; and that therefore, there results the importance of every man's seriously considering, before he adopts the sentiment and other sentiments akin to it, how exactly it coincides with the ancient doctrine of fate, exercising sovereignty over the gods; and even how little distant it is from the modern doctrine of Spinoza, who had no other idea of God, than as an energy arising out of the organization and the operations of matter. The mutual relation of these things, was certainly not perceived by president Edwards; or he would have rejected metaphysical necessity, as one of his successours, Dr. Witherspoon, has done; which appears in a quotation already made from him. He doubtless saw the danger: and his hesitation may be an example to the like in others; before they consider Calvinism and necessity, as tied together in an indissoluble connexion.

Not only is such care necessary, as the subject affects the divine Being; but it is also incumbent, in reference to moral virtue. When lord Kaims wrote his *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, he seemed aware, that the general prevalence of his principles, notwithstanding his comparison of the nonentity of colour, might have an unhappy influence on morals. But he thought he perceived sufficient security against this; in the circumstance, that the system would be confined to the philosophick few. Little was it imagined by this accomplished scholar, that only a few years were requisite, to give an opportunity to philosophick zealots, of applying the wildest theories of philosophy to what they thought the reforming of the affairs of men: and as little did it

occur to him, that there would be, at this time, so great a proportion of civilized society, who would know enough of philosophy, to be misled by the fallacies which it gives birth to; without that sufficient knowledge of it, which might correct them. But independently on this, what a strange opinion of the divine wisdom must be possessed by the man who supposes, that God has subjected the species to the influence of certain principles; and made them conducive to publick and private happiness, by a salutary deception; but has not screened the falsehood from the discerning eyes of the philosophick few! We approve and disapprove of actions of ourselves and others, on grounds of a moral nature; and not at all connected with, or rather in contrariety to any notions, which the theory of necessity suggests. That we should do so, is confessed by lord Kaims to be necessary to the virtue of, at least, the mass of the human kind. But it seems presumed of the great contriver of the drama of human life, that he had not the sagacity to reserve, to the close of it, a secret which is interwoven with the whole plot, and necessary for the conducting of it to a prosperous issue.

When the Essay of lord Kaims was first published in Scotland, many religious persons of the established church of that country were much offended at the threatened injury to morals, in the resting of them on deception. And when the Essay came to the knowledge of president Edwards, who, about the same time, had interwoven the two systems of Calvinism and Necessity, in the treatise which has been referred to, he made some strictures on the other performance, designed to show wherein it differed from his scheme, especially in the

point here contemplated. Like a religious man, he shows himself averse to the idea of salutary deception, and of virtue founded on it: and to make it appear, how distant himself and lord Kaims were in that particular, he refers to his "Inquiry."* The diversity is manifest; but on which side there is the most strict deduction from the premises held in common, may be made a question.

In the said section, president Edwards undertakes to disprove the position, that "it is agreeable to common sense, and the natural notions of mankind, to suppose moral necessity to be inconsistent with praise and blame, reward and punishment." And he brings two arguments to the purpose.

The first is, in substance, that the mass of mankind, under the government of common sense, and not perplexing themselves with the metaphysical distinctions of philosophy, look for no further liberty, than that which is opposed to constraint. So that if a man act from his own will, and not from the compulsion of another, they praise or censure, without concerning themselves with the inquiry, how far the will itself is free from influence.

But when we speak of the dictate of the common sense of mankind; we should suppose to be fairly before that faculty the subject, on which it is said to speak. Otherwise, what we call common sense, may be no more than common ignorance. Young people, until better informed, take the sun and moon to have flat surfaces: and the world itself was taken by all its inhabitants for many ages, and is now taken by many.

* Part iv. sect. 4.

nations, to be an extended plane, with the sun and the moon revolving round it. Yet, these apprehensions will hardly be called the dictates of common sense. It is certainly the case, as president Edwards states, that children and common people look no further for the ground of merit or of demerit in action, than that it should be from the will or intention of the agent. But the question should occur—Is not this from the supposition of spontaneity; although they may not have heard of that or of any kindred name, invented by philosophy? And were they told, and to give credit to metaphysicians for a sentiment, that the will itself is acted on by causes over which the agent has no control; would they not then think him as little the subject of praise or blame, as a weight moved by a pulley or by a lever? It is here supposed, that such would be the result.

The second argument is, that if the common sense of mankind were to withhold praise and blame from actions, because of moral necessity or impossibility; the nearer any action should approach to this, the less cause of praise or blame would there be attached to it: whereas the contrary appears, in men's being always disposed to commend a virtuous action the more highly, and to condemn a vicious action the more severely, because of their respectively issuing from the natural, the habitual, and the confirmed dispositions of the doers of them.

But there should be a distinction taken, between esteem and disesteem on one hand, and praise and blame on the other. We certainly esteem or disesteem a man the more, for the ease with which his desires centre in what is virtuous, or for his uncontrollable propensity to

vice: but we are so far from thinking him the subject of praise or blame, proportionably to such a characteristic; that we praise him the more for a virtuous action achieved at the expense of the resistance of strong natural propensity; and we blame him the more, for his being ensnared into evil practices, in violation of amiable tendencies to their opposites. In the case which president Edwards supposes, of a man whose injurious conduct should proceed from a haughty and malicious disposition; although we should the more reprobate his character on that account; yet we should not think of it, as giving the more cause of blame and punishment. The reason why we should conceive of any blame to lie, or of any punishment to be deserved, is, that the party is possessed of counteracting principles; by which, but for his own delinquency, his evil propensities might have been checked. A wolf, a viper, or any other mischievous animal may be an object of our dislike, but cannot be of our blame; because we suppose him to act according to the law of his nature, and without a controlling principle. The like would be our estimate of the haughty and malicious man supposed by president Edwards; if we knew him to be, as much as the other animals referred to, under an impulse that is unavoidable and uncontrollable.

From the premises it is concluded, that lord Kaims, with a consistency from which president Edwards, however generally consistent, was caused by his piety to revolt, was right, according to the principles entertained by both, in the point of a delusive sense of liberty and of its being the foundation of moral praise and blame. It is true, that the learned judge, perceiving the offence

which his doctrine gave, and which was the greater because his station required a membership of the established church of Scotland, made it an object to allay the dissatisfaction in a subsequent edition of his essay: for he explicitly relinquished his alarming position; and, in favour of the principles of his performance thus purged, he quoted passages from the works of sundry Calvinistick divines; and among them, from the Inquiry of president Edwards, then recently published and become an object of attention. How far the peculiar situation of his lordship, and how far the love of virtue generally ascribed to him, and not contradicted by any viciousness of conduct, may have operated in the change, is not here made a matter of investigation. To him who writes, it appears, that the ground remains, on which the offensive principle was a superstructure. Nor is there any thing to guard against the consequent mischief; except the position, strongly insisted on, that however men may reason for necessity in their closets, they will carry nothing of it with them, into their conduct. Even in stating this, lord Kaimes goes on grounds directly contrary to any which could have been admitted by president Edwards, as a religious Necessarian or Calvinist. For the former has represented the Deity, as providing against the consequences of the belief of necessity, by instincts tending to the practice of what is right; and too powerful to be controlled by the feeble effort of speculative opinion. Thus, the very principle of the retractation leaves the original sentiment in full force, so far as the present subject is concerned. If Dr. Priestley be correct, in ascribing the combining of philosophical necessity with Calvinism to president Edwards;

it is a singular coincidence of circumstances, that while he was employed in this work, a gentleman, who, to all appearance was an unbeliever in Christianity, was aiming a blow at it under the cover of that necessity; and afterwards called in the treatise of president Edwards to his assistance. This is a consideration, which tends to confirm the sentiment here sustained, of the unsuitableness of the alliance.

These are the ideas of the author, on the subject of philosophical necessity. The use contemplated in the recording of them, is the inducing of a suspicion of the validity of Calvinism; on account of its thus having recourse to a weapon, which, if not forged on the foreign anvil of infidelity, has at least been polished by its hands. Were Calvin to make his appearance at the present day, he might reasonably demand to be informed, what relation there is in these remarks on philosophical necessity, to the system left behind him in his Institutes; gloomy and ill founded, as is here conceived; yet consistent in itself, ably supported, and expressed with admirable latinity. The acknowledgment would be made, that there is no necessary relation between the two. But to prove that there has been a change in the system, reference would be had to modern Calvinistick writers, the most noted for their talents and for their learning. And this is, in itself, a reason for the suspicion, that although the appeal is still made "to the law and to the testimony," there is not so much confidence in their aid, as when these were thought the only ground, which there was occasion to have recourse to.

APPENDIX No 2.

An Analysis of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of the last ten Verses, in the fifth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.—*

General remarks on Man's Ruin and Redemption—President Edwards's Remarks on the 13th and 14th Verses—His Answers to Objections—Faults found by him with two dissenting Ministers—Instance of his Consistency.

The interpretation here referred to, is in president Edwards's Treatise of Original Sin. The book had never been seen by the author of the present work, until after his finishing of the part to which this is an appendix. The treatise on original sin, like that of the same writer on freewill, is here thought to manifest strong marks of his metaphysical and acute mind. A very great proportion of the book being directed against the Socinian principles of Dr. Taylor, to whose book on the same subject it is an answer, has no bearing on the present work. And of what may be considered as applying, it is here supposed, that no occasion is given for a reconsideration of the subject; except, in what the ingenious author has said on the above named passage in the epistle to the Romans; in which there are some matters, not found in Calvinistick writers the most commonly met with.

The writer of this knows of no Calvinist, more entitled to the praise of consistency than president Edwards. There is a complaint frequently made by the advocates of the system maintained by him, that their opponents charge them with consequences not fairly drawn. But

* See vol. 6. of the 1st. Am. Ed. of his works, p. 352, et seq.

it is here believed, that some of the most forbidding of those consequences may be found distinctly drawn; not from oversight or want of circumspection in the author, which would be contrary to his known character; but, as was hinted, from that consistency of reasoning, which seems to have reconciled him to any consequences, on which he may have been landed by deductions, thought by him to have been safely begun and closely linked together.

On the subject of hereditary sinful disposition, this part of the character of president Edwards appears conspicuous. For instead of making the frequent distinction of actions formally good, yet not so in regard to the want of the true governing principle, he represents all the thoughts and the desires of man, as in themselves essentially unholy and mischievous. Thus* of Romans iii. 10—18, quoted from the fourteenth Psalm, which he considers as descriptive of human nature, instead of a corrupt state of society taken collectively, agreeably to what is here thought the evident drift both of the apostle and of the Psalmist; it is said among other things thus:—"The expressions also are evidently chosen to denote a most extreme and desperate wickedness of heart. An exceeding depravity is ascribed to every part: to the throat, the scent of an open sepulchre; to the tongue and lips, deceit and the poison of asps; to the mouth, cursing and bitterness: of their feet it is said, they are swift to shed blood: and with regard to the whole man it is said, destruction and misery are in their ways." Many other extracts might be made, to show, that these and the like things are what all men are supposed to be

* Page 335, vol. vi. 1st Amer. Edition of his works.

impelled to by natural inclination, until this is rectified by conversion. And instead of such representations as are made even by some Calvinists, from the passage in Matthew xviii. 35, concerning infants, president Edwards contends, that the commendation is merely negative. "For let their nature," says he,* "be ever so corrupt, yet surely it is no wonder that they be not guilty of positive wicked action, before they are capable of any moral action at all. A young viper has a malignant nature, though incapable of doing a malignant action, and at present appearing a harmless creature."

On the subject of imputation also, to which the ensuing analysis will be confined; president Edwards seems more unqualified and less regardful of offensive consequences, than the advocates of the system generally. These presume, as the pre-requisite of imputation, the consent of the descendant, by sin existing in itself, to the sin of the forefather. And although such consent may be no more than the thought or the inclination which exists in embryo; yet herein is believed a provision, against the objection of either creating in a state of guilt, or damning in a state of innocency. Not so president Edwards; who pleads for the reasonableness of a divine constitution; according to which, as an injury to the root of a tree affects its branches in every leaf; so God might reasonably cause, that the sinful will of a federal head should immediately produce sin in the wills of all the persons united with it under covenant. And even the consequence of this, as involving the damnation of infants, was evidently what his mind did

* Page 475.

not revolt from. But these are matters, which will be more fully opened in what follows. The disquisition of president Edwards is divided into two parts.

SECTION I.

Here are eight remarks of president Edwards on the interpretation to which he objects.

The first, turns on the meaning of the word "death." That the original and obvious meaning is a termination of life, is not denied by him. And that it receives a more extended sense, so as to include future misery, does not seem to have been denied by the writer whom he opposes. The question remains—Which is the sense, in the place? President Edwards argues for the latter, from a similar use in the last verse of the next chapter, and in the last verse of the present. In regard to the former, he is certainly correct; there being in that chapter a transition to matters of Christian practice. But it is conceived, that he is not correct in regard to the other place; and that his mistake turns on the equivocal sense of the words "eternal life." That they may express celestial happiness, placed in contrast to eternal misery, is conceded. In themselves, however, they mean no more than a never ending existence; which is contrasted by the apostle, pertinently to his argument, with an extinction of being. But why did president Edwards go below the passage, in quest of the meaning of the word "death;" when it is used in the verse but one before the passage; where we are said to be "reconciled to God" by the death of Christ? And the words "die" and "died" are used just before. If these words, in the places cited, relate to temporal

death—as will doubtless be acknowledged—they are more decisive of the sense in the twelfth verse, than any thing below it, even had that been as president Edwards states; which is conceived to be not the fact. He is indeed aware of the advantage, which the connexion gives to his opponent: and to do it away, he produces passages, in which the two senses of life and death are promiscuously used; as John xi. 25, 26; and Matthew x. 39. And he shows, from modes of speech in common life, how, in different sentences, one sentence may have respect to one part, and another sentence to a different part, of the same subject. Nothing of this is denied. But it is contended, that the sense of the word “death” here advocated, arises out of the very design of the apostle’s discourse; which was the running of a parallel between the loss of immortality in Adam, and the regaining of it in Christ.

President Edwards’s second remark, has no influence on the system here sustained; however it may apply to that which he opposes. It was a point with the latter, to deny that the sin of Adam affected any besides himself. In refutation, president Edwards pertinently says, that on such a ground, it was nothing to the purpose in the apostle to state, that “by one man sin entered into the world;” because the object was to show, not how it began in a single instance, but how it got abroad and abounded.

Alike foreign to the present argument, is his third remark—that on the principles opposed to his, the force of the causal particles “through” and “by” is done away. It is so; unless in the sin of Adam there be

seen a causality, in reference to the mortality of his whole posterity.

It may also be said of the fourth, that it treats of something foreign to the present object. The remark is in opposition to a position of Dr. Taylor, that the entailment of mortality was not a dispensation of displeasure, but an exercise of grace and kindness. The author of this, not having access to Dr. Taylor's work, does not know his sense on the present point, further than as he gathers it from the work of the opponent. If Dr. Taylor meant no more, than that the punishment was inflicted, under the design of making it finally subservient to good; it is difficult to perceive the error. But it would rather appear, from the statement on the other side, that he contended for its being no punishment at all: which is contrary to the whole tenour of the history.

The weight of the fifth remark of president Edwards, is against what is here conceived to be the true construction of the thirteenth and fourteenth verses of the passage—"For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses. even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." In order to perceive the principle on which the advocated sense is grounded, it should be remembered, that the argument of the apostle is directed against persons, among whom it must have been a familiar idea, that death had been a specifick penalty, consequent on the breach of a positive institution. He makes this a postulatam; remarking, as a necessary appendage to it,

that since from Adam to Moses there was no law with this penalty; and since there was required such a law, with such a penalty, in order to the effect; all of the human race, intervening between Adam and Moses, had incurred the death inflicted for Adam's sin on all. These were points, which the aim of the apostle's argument made no call on him to prove; and he refers to them as acknowledged principles; in order to show, what he had especially in view, that the death of Christ was for all, both Jews and Gentiles. President Edwards treats the passage, as if the apostle were endeavouring to prove, what he is here supposed to have presumed: and therefore, the charge of inconsequential reasoning does not lie against the sense here contended for, however it may have lain against that of Dr. Taylor. For the same reason, there is nothing to the present purpose, however pertinent it may have been in answer to the same gentleman, in all president Edwards has said concerning the right of God to inflict death, as the punishment of breaches of the law of nature. There is no doubt of this; although Jews and Christians must believe, that it was actually inflicted for the breach of positive law. And this fact might reasonably be— not proved, but—appealed to by St. Paul, because of its subserviency to a matter beyond it in his contemplation. It is here conceived, that the interpretation given will derive an accession of strength, if, on the very respectable authority of the Alexandrian manuscript, we read “was not imputed”* instead of “is not imputed;”† this bearing the appearance of an

* ἢκ ἐλλογετο. † ἢκ ἐλλογείται.

abstract proposition; and the other agreeing better with a fact referred to. If the criticism be correct; the latter part of the verse should be rendered—"there being no law."*

The sixth remark may be considered as confined to the peculiarities of Dr. Taylor's scheme; and to argue well, that there could be no grace in redemption, which yet the passage is acknowledged to affirm, if there had been no penalty on the apostasy.

The seventh remark relates to the signification of the words "judgment," "condemnation," "justification" and "righteousness." President Edwards's charge of misusing the first two, no further applies to the present system, than as it may be said to involve judgment and condemnation passed on innocent persons: there being acknowledged, that the loss of immortality was through Adam to his posterity. To prepare for an answer to this, there should be noted—what will not be denied—that the words in question, as used in the New Testament, are not confined to what awaits mankind in eternity. As the subject then regards temporal death, that is, an abridgment of the divine bounty to the species; and as the words, in the place under consideration, have not a moral but a forensick meaning; they might very well be used to express a change of the divine dispensations, without being designed to charge crime by imputation, where there was none in fact. Under this judicial construction of the word, one of the evangelists does not scruple to imply, that his blessed Master was a malefactor, where it is said—"There were also two other malefactors led with him to be put

* *μη οντος νομου.*

to death.”* Some indeed, from what is here conceived to be misapplied delicacy, endeavour to avoid this, by putting a stop between “other,” which they change into “others,” and “malefactors.” This not only renders the words in combination an unusual expression; but is alien from the spirit of the remark made by St. Mark xv. 28, that in the circumstance stated, there was fulfilled the prediction—“He was numbered with the transgressors:” that is, he was one of them, in the judicial meaning of the word.† In regard to the words “righteousness” and “justification,” Dr. Taylor may have applied them, as president Edwards states, to the universal resurrection at the last day. Without entering into the question, how far this may appear from other places, to be an effect of the character sustained by the Redeemer, it is here considered as a sense foreign to the passage. As this was explained in the first part of the present work, “the all” on whom the justification and righteousness came, were the Jews and the Gentiles; considered collectively, or as bodies: and for a medium of proof of this, there is fitly introduced

* Luke xxiii. 32.

† It may seem, that the expression “*ετεροι κακουργοι*” should be interpreted like certain places, in which the word “*ανηρ*” or “*ανθρωπος*” is attached to another word; as “*αδελφοι*” in Acts ii. 37, and elsewhere—“*ποιμενες*” in Luke ii. 15. and “*βασιλει*” in Matthew xviii, 23. and so “*αδελφην γυναικα*” in 1. Corinthians ix. 5. But the phraseology, in these instances, is a peculiarity found in the best greek writers: and not, as is here conceived, extending further, to the disjoining of words placed in obvious concord of an adjective with a substantive, as in the instance here contemplated.

the fact, that death had come on all by the first transgression.*

* President Edwards, under this remark, is compelled by his system to make a very forced interpretation of the meaning of "righteousness," said to come "on all;" and of the effect of "obedience," meaning that of Christ, as having the same extent. For he interprets the expression, as meaning all who believe in Christ, in order to get rid of the construction which applies the "all" to the collective bodies of Jews and Gentiles. And Dr Taylor having forced on the attention of President Edwards the similar passage in 1. Corinthians xv. 22—"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" he evades the force of it by saying, that under the idea of the resurrection, there is seldom included, in the New Testament, that of the wicked, it being only to misery. Why does he speak of the New Testament only; when, in the very few places of the Old, declaratory of the resurrection, it is said in one of them [Daniel xii. 2.]—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt?" But as he confines himself to the New Testament, how express is that in John v. 28. 29—"The hour is coming, in the which, all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." And again, Acts xxiv. 15—"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." The resurrection of the wicked is therefore directly mentioned; if not often, yet sometimes and very explicitly. But besides, it is noticed, without direct mention, in all the places which speak of a general judgment; and especially those which specify the different issues of it to the righteous and to the wicked. What though the former are specially named, in one place, "the children of the resurrection?" This is when they are contrasted with "the children of this world;" regard being had to an opposition, not of character, but of condition. "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage:" But not so, the

The last remark of president Edwards, is what he supposes the unreasonableness of the interpretation put on the words—"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." The offensive interpretation and that here advocated is, that by the sin of Adam, all were in such sort constituted sinners, as that they sustained the consequences of sin. No doubt it is one of the instances, of which however there are many, of St. Paul's giving of energy to his discourse, by unusual modes of speech. And in a preceding subdivision of the present part of the work, an instance was given, thought to be even more remarkable than that in question, where our Saviour is said to have been "made sin for us."* In addition to this, some passages of the Old Testament have been referred to, where the word "sinners" is used, merely on the ground, that the persons to whom it was

children of the resurrection; whether they be the same or others. It would therefore seem, that "the all" who died in Adam, cannot be more in number, than "the all" who are made alive in Christ:" that is, put into a life of responsibility and of hope; in which they would never have been, but through Gospel grace.

* Of this text it is said, that it may strictly be construed to mean—"A sacrifice for sin;" the Greek word [*αμαρτια*] being sometimes so used. But it cannot have been so used in this place; in which there is evidently designed an opposition, between the terms "sin" and "righteousness." Christ was a sacrifice for sin. But his being so was not precisely the sentiment in the mind of the apostle. Although not precisely the same, it is necessary to the interpretation of the place. As in the next clause, persons made righteous by faith must be supposed, for the sustaining of the figure of righteousness in the abstract, so there must be a similar supposition of Christ being a sin-offering, agreeably to the use of the Greek word by the seventy, to sustain the equally strong figure of his being made sin.

applied were considered the objects of punishment, as if sinners. President Edwards would ward off this by the circumstance, that in all such cases, the persons were so denominated from the accusation of sin thrown on them, although unjustly. But it is evident, that St. Paul, in the place in question, is using judicial language, and speaking under judicial forms: And it was a sustaining of the character of a discourse of this description, to mention those as sinners, who had fallen under the effects of a judicial sentence. It is a very minute distinction made by president Edwards, in relation to passages in the Old Testament, in which the word "sinners" is applied to innocent persons; that it was because they were to be treated, as if they were the former. He urges, that they were or would be so, in the estimation of those who punished. But no good reason can be given, why the historians should speak agreeably to such false conception, if the term in question did not apply by custom, independently both on guilt and on the supposition of it.

SECTION II.

AS the first section had been devoted to the demolishing of the interpretation of an opponent; the present is occupied in laying down the author's own: beginning with the scope of the epistle, as declared in the chapters preceding the chapter, of which the verses in question are a part.

The first property of the epistle, supposed by president Edwards, is, its treating largely of the depravity and ruin of mankind, in their natural state. But it has been contended in the first department of this work, and is

here repeated, that the natural state of man, be this what it may, is not the subject treated of in those early chapters. There are enumerated in them some crimes, for which man has no natural appetite; and others, which mark indeed a depraved state of society, but were never in any community found descriptive of all the members of it. The other sense, however, although in opposition to the plainest language, must be persevered in by the Calvinist, in his interpretation of the early parts of that epistle, in order to lay a foundation for his exposition of all that follows.

Again, it is remarked, how full the beginning of the epistle is of displays of the grace of Christ in redemption; for which president Edwards thinks there could have been no foundation, but on the supposition of human guilt, independently on the acts of those on which it lay. Guilt or no guilt, the procuring of benefit not otherwise to be obtained, gives room for the acknowledgment of grace. But besides this, one part of the benefit was to obtain the pardon of sin, not laid by imputation, but committed in person.

There is another remark made—That St. Paul, after having spoken, in the preceding chapter, of the dependence of mankind on the righteousness of Christ, had, in the early parts of this very fifth chapter, spoken of the utter sinfulness and ruin of all men. But it has been before, and is now denied, that he speaks on any such subject, in the initiatory verses of this chapter. However true the position that there is sinfulness in all men, the point handled in the place in question, is the sinfulness of the Gentiles in particular; who, being out of covenant with God, and having gone into the greatest

excesses of idolatry, are described as enemies: a term never applied to the Jews; who, however personally wicked, were nationally possessed of the adoption and the covenants.*

From these general remarks, president Edwards proceeds to some more special; taking notice, that a leading object of the apostle was to contradict the extravagant

* President Edwards objects to the idea of the apostle's identifying of himself with the Gentile Christians; where he is supposed to have them especially in view, under the denomination of "enemies," and other expressions to the same effect. The reasons of this construction having been given elsewhere; no more shall be said of it here, except to guard against some peculiarities in president Edwards. He likens it to a father's identifying of himself with his children, or a physician with his patients, under the pronoun "we." But these are not parallel cases; because there would not, in either of them, be a character in common to the persons spoken of. Now, St. Paul was speaking, not of Gentiles living in heathen practices—which president Edwards seems, in his objection, to suppose—but of Gentile Christians, forming a body of which the apostle was a member. Another case, supposed by president Edwards, seems more to the purpose. It is that of a missionary to distant subjects fallen into infidelity, and brought back by him to the faith. If such a missionary, discoursing of the comparative pretensions of his especial flock, were to speak of himself as one of them, it is difficult to discern any violence, which, however, president Edwards thinks he sees, to customary language. But his interpretation of the passage in the Acts—"We who are Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles;" is here thought very extraordinary. He says, it is not as adopting the expression, but as disapproving of it. Surely, there is nothing like an intimation of this. It is true, that St. Paul blames St. Peter, for making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles, after that the partition wall had been broken down. He does not intimate, however, that there had been no such wall; but the contrary.

notion entertained by the Jews of their law. Such an object is thought to fall in with the idea of his leading up of their attention, to sin's entering into the world by Adam, the common father of Jew and Gentile: Which, with several coincident remarks, must have been intended in contradiction of the theory, making the sin of Adam merely personal in its consequences.

From this, president Edwards goes into remarks on the 13th and 14th verses, similar to those in his first section and already attended to; and which are here preparatory to his own interpretation of the 14th—"Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression." These words he interprets, with many others, of infants. Now, setting aside that the position of an infant's committing of sin is shocking to common sense—and it will not be pretended that there can be found another text in scripture for its support—it seems absolutely inconsistent with what is said in the verse immediately preceding—"Sin is not imputed where there is no law." To infants there could be no law: Which, to make it obligatory, exacts the use of intellect. Accordingly, that in the 13th verse, such a position should be laid down, and that in the next verse there should be a discourse of infants sinning, though not after the similitude of Adam's transgression, is one of the most extraordinary instances of interpretation to be met with; and renders such constructive sinning too much like those fictions of law, which the exigency of human affairs has made expedient, but for which there can be no occasion in the divine economy.

Next, president Edwards gives a paraphrase of those two verses, constructed on his own principles. And here he takes, as his leading idea, a design in the apostle to contradict the extravagant notion entertained by the Jews, of their law. But, such a design by no means draws after it the consequence of infants sinning; and of all men being accounted guilty for Adam's sin. That by this sin immortality was lost, both to Jew and Gentile, in their common parent, was sufficient to be a foundation for the analogy of their regaining of it also by a common head, who should stand in the same relation to them both. Therefore, as the words of these two verses do not express any thing to the purpose to which they have been applied, so neither does their general scope, even as laid open with that intent.

What follows, in this section, is principally recapitulation, dependent for correctness on the presumption of the truth of what had gone before; except that president Edwards, although he acknowledges some difficulty in the 13th verse and in the next which has been the last under consideration, insists, that the passage in general, is one of the plainest in scripture. It will be allowed by all, that the difficulty lies principally in those very verses, from which, the one or the other interpretation of sin and death will have an influence on all the rest. It would further seem, that on the one hypothesis or the other, there are modes of expression which can be accounted for no otherwise, than by the occasional and very peculiar brevity of St. Paul: of which, if there were no other evidence, there would be sufficient in the frequent introduction of words, in this passage, not found

in the original; but which the translators were under the necessity of introducing; taking care, agreeably to their usual fidelity, to express them in italicks. So that there seems no ground for the loud complaint which president Edwards makes, against those of the opposite system, of their straining of expressions and their racking of words and phrases. There can be no principles adopted for the explaining of the passage, on which it will not appear that extraordinary phraseology is a conspicuous property of it.

President Edwards, towards the end of his treatise, answers objections, which he supposes to be brought against his theory in general. The objections will be here considered, no further than as they relate to the point of imputation, grounded on the aforesaid passage.

One of the objections he represents as founded on the description of the last judgment; expressly said to be conducted, in reference to every individual, according to his works. The answer given is, that the end of the judgment is to ascertain the primary distinction of the difference of state, and the secondary distinction of the difference of degrees; and that the question of the imputation of Adam's sin enters not into either. The reply is, that the object is not to ascertain the one or the other; but to acquit or condemn, according to known and, humanly speaking, recorded works. Now, if eternal damnation should be understood under the term "death," as coming on all men originally for Adam's sin; they who are not released from that state by the mercy of God through Christ, absolutely sink under the weight of that sin. And the most remarkable application of the principle is to all infants, except the elect.

Another objection is, from there not being a single instance in scripture, of the use of the word "impute," in the sense supposed; although it is used in the sense of a reference to personal sin. The author opposed had said, that it is often so used; which occasions president Edwards to remark, that it is twice only. He does not, however, allege a single instance of the use of the word in the sense denied by the objection. Yet he is aware, that other words will be said to have been used, which plainly import the imputation of personal sin. But so likewise, says he, of the other subject. It may be demanded—where? His answer is, by adducing instances from the passage here in question; for no other does he instance. But this cannot be allowed in argument. And there remains the objection, that, in the only place cited to establish the imputation of the sin of Adam, the word "imputed" is indeed used, but applicable to the charging of men with the demerit of their own sins.

President Edwards further answers an objection, made against his whole theory, of mankind being affected by the sin of their forefathers; that so little is said of it in the scriptures. So far as this relates to other consequences than the matter in question, it is here conceived, that there is abundant proof in scripture. But not so of the interpretation; which, if found in the 5th chapter to the Romans, is acknowledged to be there only. Now, on a subject which the advocates of the interpretation hold to be so important, how can they account for the utter silence of all sacred writers, except St. Paul; and of his also, except in this single supposed instance? But, says president Edwards, the same was the case of the doctrine of the resurrection among the Jews; which our Saviour himself

no otherwise educed from the Old Testament, than in the way of inference and construction. True: because it was a part of the divine economy, that an express revelation of the resurrection was referred to another dispensation; since said, on that very account, to have "brought life and immortality to light." But he further says, that some of the perfections of God are scarcely mentioned in the scriptures; and instances infinity, omnipresence, and omniscience. The very idea of a divine Being necessarily involves whatever can contribute to perfection: whereas it will not be said, that our being affected by Adam's sin necessarily extends to every possible way, in which a sovereign Being can cause it to extend, for a display of his omnipotence. Besides, president Edwards seems not accurate, in so stating infinity, as if it were of itself an attribute, distinct from the other attributes of the divine nature. It seems more proper to say of them all, that they are infinite. Wherever, therefore, the power, or the wisdom, or the goodness of God is displayed, as being without bounds, infinity is ascribed to him. As to the two other attributes, they are found in many more places of scripture, than might be supposed from the statement of president Edwards: Omnipresence in many texts;* and omniscience in many others.† Indeed these attributes are implied in the very idea of a divine being; whereas it cannot be said of imputation, that it is involved in any other

* Jer. xxiii. 24. Acts xvi. 27, 28. Job xxiii. 8, 9, 10. and 1. Kings viii. 27. Psalm cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.

† In Psalm xciv. 9, 10. Prov. v. 21. Job. xxxiv. 21, 1. Chron. xxviii. 9. 1. Sam. xvi. 7. and 1. John iii. 20; besides, very many places, wherein one or another of these attributes is implied.

subject; unless it be the single one, of attaching justice to the damnation of those who had not merited it in person.

In reference to this reserve of scripture, president Edwards has given, from a Swiss writer, a string of authorities copied from Jewish writers, descriptive of the corrupt nature of mankind. It is remarkable, that among those authorities, there is not one which bears on the point of imputation. The authorities are here allowed to avail, to the purpose of contradicting an attempted disproof of hereditary stain: But they are at the same time a strong negative testimony, that the ancient Jews had no idea of such a doctrine as that supposed to be in the 5th chapter to the Romans. And if so, it seems little likely, that St. Paul, in controversy, should endeavour to prove the matter before him; by referring to another matter, of which the people, whose prejudices he was contradicting, could have had no conception.

But the most extraordinary of president Edwards's answers to objections, and here reserved to be the last noticed, is what he says in opposition to the affirmed injustice and unreasonableness of the doctrine of imputation. He undertakes to prove, that it is entirely just and reasonable; and he lays the main stress on all mankind's being considered as one with Adam; just as the head and all the parts of the body, and as the root of a tree and all its branches are respectively one. He takes up the latter comparison; and making the supposition of its having been the will of the Creator, that of this tree, comprehending all humanity, the root and the branches had been coexistent, he perceives no injustice and no unreasonableness in its being ordained, that the heart of the root becoming depraved, the hearts of all the branches

should be infected; and that the former being forsaken of God, so likewise should be the latter. Since, then we are constantly supported in being by the agency of God; and it is merely of his will and constitution, that identity is in succession; what would be just and reasonable in a coexistent identity, is the same in that which is successive. It is evident, that the whole question turns on the divine economy, in the supposed case of the coexistence of the root and the branches, and in what is affirmed concerning it, of which president Edwards thinks, that the equity is unquestionable. It is difficult to account for the difference of association, in which the same subject appears to different minds, in their search of truth. But however just and reasonable such an economy in the eye of president Edwards, it appears to him who writes this, to be more answerable to the representations given of the Typhon of the Egyptians, and the Arimanius of the Persians, than to what the scriptures teach of the ways of Him, "who hath righteousness and judgment for the habitation of his seat."

The following is a sketch of the reasoning of president Edwards, on the subject of identity. He lays down the position, which the author whom he opposes had maintained also, that we are upheld in existence by a continual divine agency. He remarks, that the existence of any created substance, at the present moment, cannot be the effect of its existence in the moment preceding. Therefore, the cause of its continuance in successive periods is the divine constitution simply; the operation of which he argues to be accordingly equivalent to a new production out of nothing, at each successive moment. This arguing is to show, that if God annexes

identity to these successive productions (or what amounts to them) out of nothing, he may with equal reason annex oneness, or identity to such a relative condition of all mankind, as resembles the root and all the branches of a tree: And if to such a collective body coexisting, to the same also in succession. Although the writer of this considers the fallacy of such metaphysicks as sufficiently exposed, by a comparing of them with the position in which they are designed to terminate; yet he judges it not improper, to notice what appears to him the defective link in the chain. It is the contemplating of the continuance of a being in successive existence, and the continued reproduction of it, as the same thing. Under the former circumstance, the being is a fit subject of the consciousness, which constitutes identity: but not so under the latter. What the omnipotence of God can effect, is not here in question. Doubtless, his power is equal to the making of A, suppose himself guilty of the crimes committed by B; and to possess all the feelings attached to a seeming consciousness of them. The contrariety of this to the wisdom and benevolence of God, is the thing maintained: but surely not with more reason, than in the kind of consciousness supposed by president Edwards, whether it be in coexistence or in succession.

Perhaps it may be thought, that the peculiarities of the learned president respecting identity and divine constitution were cherished by him with the view of mitigating the rigour of imputing the sin of Adam to his unborn posterity. But no such difficulty occurred: on the contrary, he affirms the imputation, over and over, contending for the justice of it. It is probable, that

when he projected the scheme of divine constitution, as stated in the illustration of the tree and its branches, it was in discharge of what was spoken of in the first part of this work, as a subject of his abhorrence—endeavours to trim off the knots of Calvinism. The notion of federal headship, had been an expedient for the reconciling of the doctrine of imputation, with the attributes of God. But the thought of a divine constitution, was more in alliance with the satisfaction felt by this author, in the contemplation of the exercise of the sovereignty of God, in hardening and damning whom he will.

Of this treatise of president Edwards it may seem remarkable, that, although entitled to rank with his treatise on Freewill in point of ingenuity, it has not the like celebrity with the latter work, among the advocates of Calvinism. The author of the present work thinks it may be accounted for, from the consistency maintained by president Edwards, in his pursuing of his opinions into all their consequences. From these, a very great proportion of the advocates of the system will always turn aside with horror; however consenting to the principles from which they are fairly drawn. An instance of this his consistency, shall be given from the section of his book the last under discussion. He finds fault with the writings of two dissenting divines, whose names are not mentioned; and who, although they acknowledged the imputation of Adam's sin, could not reconcile themselves to the hard case of the damnation of infants. To get rid of this, they supposed, that the first sin was not imputed to infants in the same degree, as to Adam himself. One of the divines was in hopes

of providing, in this way, a retreat for the little wretches, in annihilation. The other thought himself entitled to affirm, that their condition would not be worse than non-existence. All this is much to the dissatisfaction of president Edwards; who, arguing more logically from the data held in common, rejects such softening expedients, invented for the easing of the feelings of humanity. The expedients may be evidences of the benevolence of the ministers alluded to; but are not in harmony with the principle of the general doctrine; and cannot pretend to derive support from any passage in the scriptures.

This analysis shall be concluded with another instance of the consistency of the same eminent divine, relative, not indeed immediately to the question of imputation; but to another, which has been treated of in the preceding part of the work; and which is indeed connected with the whole subject. The fact to be recorded is taken from his life, prefixed to his *Treatise on Religious Affections*.

President Edwards began his ministry as colleague of his maternal grandfather, in Northampton, Massachusetts. The latter, during a long residence in that place, had encouraged the members of his congregation to present themselves at the communion, provided their lives were correct; and although they might not have undergone that sensible conversion, which their system called for. Not that he undervalued this; but because of a distinction which subsisted in his mind, between a federal and a real holiness. President Edwards, after the decease of his grandfather, and after himself had been a pastor of the congregation, and had lived in great

harmony with them for twenty three years, scrupled the propriety of that distinction; and was at last brought to the point, that he could not, in conscience, admit to the communion, without previous conversion. This excited a flame, which produced a separation of the pastor from his flock; of whom there were two hundred votes against twenty, for his immediate removal. This narrative is here given, to show the issue in which consistent reasoning, from what is supposed a mistaken datum, cannot fail to terminate. President Edwards, who possessed great sincerity, and at the same time strong powers of mind, reconciled himself to any consequences of his consistency; but never suspected the soundness of a principle, held sacred in his communion. The minister of a church which teaches, that, in baptism, infants are made “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven,” may afterwards consider them, when arrived at maturity of reason and discretion, as entitled to participate of the eucharist; provided there be nothing in their lives, unsuitable to such a privilege: Not, however, because inward piety is held unnecessary; but because it can be known no otherwise, than by visible profession and corresponding fruit. But under the other theory, it would seem as if the conversion were a pre-requisite; and that if the pastor be not satisfied of the fact, without knowing the circumstances of “when,” “how,” and “where,” he has a right to demand them. They who cannot reconcile themselves to this, and who think it an unfounded discipline, are concerned to correct the error, not in the stream, but at its source.

PART III.

A Comparison of the Controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, with the Opinions of the early Fathers.

INTRODUCTION.

The Kind of Evidence to be educed from the Fathers—The early Fathers, silent on the Points denominated Calvinism—This continued, until the Time of St. Austin—Calvin acknowledges the Fact.

THERE ought to be clearly understood the purpose, for which reference is made to an authority extraneous to holy scripture: especially as there are some, who criminate every appeal to the fathers; as if it were a removing of the cause from before the tribunal of the paramount authority of the law and the testimony. It is accordingly here declared, that no idea is entertained of going beyond the limits of the canon, for the establishing of any opinion, not found in the books of which it is composed. But it is conceived, that the sense of the times immediately following the apostles must, as a fact, be a strong testimony on the question of what was the faith, which the apostles handed to them; and, in that point of view, may give considerable aid in the interpreting of scripture. This is no more than what is attributed to them, by the admission of their testimony, in regard to what books are to be received as the writings of the apostles. The argument, as applying to any leading doctrine or institution of Christianity, in proof of its having been held at the time in question,

appears to the writer of this equally cogent, as when applied to the genuineness of the book, in which the doctrine or the institution is supposed to be found.

But the argument appears to him even to increase in weight, when applied in the negative form; or, when it is pleaded that a certain doctrine could not have been delivered by the apostles, because not found in the remains of early times; and especially, those of them written with the professed view of declaring their faith before the world.

When we come to apply the argument to the peculiarities of Calvinism; it ought to be remembered, that they are held up as constituent principles of Christian truth, being preeminently entitled by the advocates of them to the doctrines of grace; under the opinion that the opposite theory, by ascribing something to man, is subversive of the glory of the grace of God. And it is said, that the declarations of scripture, relative to the points at issue, are so many thunderbolts, designed to level the mountains of human pride. Were there not still, then, the same mountains, on the ground of human nature? Or was the distinguishing feature of the Gospel, that it was of grace, overlooked by those who drank of the stream the nearest to its source? The early writers do indeed declare, over and over, that salvation is of grace. But that the sentiment is, in a single instance, connected with any one peculiar tenet of the Calvinistick theory, is here conceived impossible to be found.

The argument is even stronger, than if there were professed to be given authorities, in express contradiction of the tenets referred to: that is, than if the passages to be adduced were not only inconsistent with them—for such

are found and will be brought forward—but than if they bore the appearance of designed contradiction. For that would suppose another theory, and another party advocating it; who might perhaps have said for themselves, what has not reached us: and it will be in vain to account for the dead silence prevailing, by a presumed unanimity in doctrine. The passion of Christ; the reconciliation of which it is the mean, his resurrection and his ascension, were acknowledged by all who were contemplated by the church as christian. Yet these things are often introduced, on account of the practical effects to which they lead: effects which, in the opinion of the Calvinist, there was equally a call for the publishing of the doctrines of the decrees of God, his irresistible grace, and the radical corruption of human nature.

It is to the credit of Calvin's candour, that he gives up all plea of his system's being countenanced by any of the fathers, before St. Austin: for he acknowledges this, in several places, in reference to freewill; which has an influence over his whole scheme. He says—"The early fathers appear to me to have thus extolled human power, from a fear, lest if they openly confessed its impotence, they might in the first place incur the derision of the philosophers, with whom they were then contending; and in the next place, might administer to the flesh, of itself naturally too torpid to all that is good, a fresh occasion of slothfulness.* However candid this acknowledgment on the part of Calvin; yet it may be supposed, that he was mistaken in the first of these motives, as influencing the early fathers. For it is unlikely, that the men who did

* Book 2. ch. 2. Sect. 4.

not shrink from the encountering of the ridicule of the philosophers in the more essential doctrines of the Christian Religion, should be shy of it on a point, on which their sentiments would have been much countenanced by one species of philosophy—that of the stoicks.

Again he says—“Perhaps I may be thought to have raised a great prejudice against myself, by confessing that all the ecclesiastical writers, except Augustine, have treated this subject,” free-will, “with such ambiguities or variations, that nothing certain can be learned from their writings. For some will interpret this, as though I intended to deprive them of the right of giving their suffrages, because their opinions are all adverse to mine. But I have had no other object in view, than simply and faithfully to consult the benefit of pious minds, who, if they wait to discover the sentiments of the fathers on this subject, will fluctuate in perpetual uncertainty.”

Again, speaking of the divine influence, he says—“And he moves the will, not in such a manner, that, according to the system maintained and believed for many ages, it would afterwards be at our option, either to obey the impulse, or to resist it; but by an efficacious influence.”*

With the same candour, he acknowledges, concerning predestination, that the opinion of grounding it on pre-science has had great advocates [auctores] in all ages.†

It might have been expected, after such explicit acknowledgments of Calvin himself, that Calvinistick writers would have given up as desperate, the expecta-

* Book 2. ch. 3. Sect. 10. † Book 3. ch. 22: Sect. 1.

tion of extracting any thing to their purpose, from the fathers. It has, indeed, been endeavoured by very few, and those not the most distinguished of the school. Nevertheless, as some have undertaken to make this barren field productive; not indeed by alleging any continued discourse to the effect, but by taking hold, here and there, of words and clauses, some notice of this excess of zeal will be incumbent.

1 OF PREDESTINATION.

Apostolick Fathers—Accounts of them by Mr. Toplady, Dr. Haweis, and Mr. Milner—Succeeding Fathers—The Time when Predestination, in the Philosophical Sense, was introduced—Fathers later than the above—Consequence—Change effected by St. Austin—Interposition of the Papal See—The Subject purely Metaphysical.

ON the subject of this department, the first recourse must be had to the Apostolick Fathers; so called from the circumstance, that their lives were partly coincident with those of the apostles. From the scanty, though golden remains of these holy men, controversial ingenuity has endeavoured to draw, for the confirmation of the Calvinistick system, not—as was intimated in the introduction—doctrine laid down in form; not supposed saving truths, dwelt on for the uses to which they are believed to apply; but detached parts of sentences; which, even if they were to the purpose of those who quote them, as indeed they are not, would at the same time be evidence, that the doctrines at issue were of no very prominent importance, in the estimation of the writers by whom they are so incidentally alluded to.

The passages shall be taken as found cited by Mr. Toplady, a clergyman of the church of England, noticed in a preceding part of this work; whose zeal, however, is supposed by the writer of this, to have carried him to a length of torture of the scraps taken from these fathers, which is not here recollected to have been found in any other author. An extraordinary degree of zeal for what he supposed to be the truth, is the only mean

through which charity can reconcile his talent, at finding out his opinions in some passages; on which, so far as is known, none before him professed to find them. Certain it is, that on the doctrine of predestination and its kindred points, the divine here spoken of has heaped up authorities, not found in the books of the most acknowledged merit in his way. He ascribes there being no opposition to the anti-calvinistick opinions, to the circumstance that, in the early ages, the adverse opinions were universally held. If this had been the fact, it would account for there being no opposition to the supposed errors; but surely, not for the withholding of what are affirmed to be such important truths.

The above is not the worst effect of the zeal of Mr. Toplady: for it is desirable to ascribe to the same cause the confidence with which he accuses, condemns, and bestows hard names on those who differ from him. Among the most remarkable instances of this, is the abuse, amounting to vulgarity, which he lavishes most plentifully on two persons against whom he writes.* Had these men been knowingly and confessedly blasphemers of the grace of God—as Mr. Toplady doubtless thought them virtually—a Christian divine ought not to have considered himself released by that circumstance, from subjection to the spirit, and obedience to the precepts of his holy religion.

But his wrath is not confined to those with whom he had become heated in controversy: for he bestows no small portions of it on deceased characters, held honourable in their generations; and not only his wrath, but his contempt; in defiance of publick opinion, as to mat-

* Mr. John Wesley, and Mr. Walter Sellon.

ters, concerning which no truth could be supposed at stake. Of the latter there is a signal instance, where he speaks of “that poor, dull, blind creature” (as he is pleased to call him) “Bishop Taylor.” Mr. Toplady must have conceived very highly indeed of his own talents, if he thought them of a higher grade than those of persons, who have esteemed bishop Taylor, not only a very pious and a very learned man, but also writer of brilliant genius and extraordinary eloquence.

The writer of this work hopes he has shown himself careful in the progress of it, to avoid personal censure, beyond what was involved in competition of opinion. In the present instance, he has deviated from his general line of conduct, for these two reasons—That Mr. Toplady’s departure from Christian charity is here thought so enormous, as to render it doubtful, how far his writings can with propriety be noticed, without a protest against the spirit which they breathe, in relation to those who differ from them—and because the writing so intemperately, without any apparent consciousness of the impropriety of it, is a melancholy, but edifying proof, how much the precepts of Christian meekness are apt to sink in importance, under an overweening zeal for speculative opinion.

In examining the epistle ascribed to St. Barnabas, Mr. Toplady* thinks it “more than probable” (for further is not professed) “that he was far from being startled at the doctrine of reprobation.” Stress is laid, on its being said that—“Christ chose his own apostles;” and that, “it was requisite that he (Christ) should suffer on the tree:” which last is construed in favour of necessity.

* Vol. i. page 118.

Other authorities of the like kind are produced; but according to the interpretation given of them, scores to the same purpose might be taken out of the writings of known and professed Arminians.

When Mr. Toplady comes to the interesting epistle of St. Clement, he finds a sentiment which would be indeed to the purpose, if the passage were disjoined from the context; and if the translator of it were indulged in choosing a pronoun, different from that which the context dictates. The apostolick and blessed writer of the epistle had been reciting, from the divine word, promises of pardon to the penitent, and threatenings against the impenitent and rebellious; and with those, he had intermixed sundry admonitions to obedience in various ways. Then, with an evident reference to these promises, he speaks what may be translated literally as follows.* “Therefore, being willing that all his beloved should be partakers of repentance, he has established” [here a pronoun is wanting: if supplied, it ought to relate to the premises] “by his own omnipotent will.” But Mr. Toplady† has translated the last clause—“He has established them firmly” [meaning his beloved] “by his own almighty purpose.” This makes it inapplicable to what went before; with which it is connected by the illative, “therefore,” omitted by Mr. Toplady; and further, destroys all pertinency to the admonition of the apostle. Calvinists hold, that they who are once in grace cannot finally fall. But no rational man among them ever made it an inference, from earnest admonitions and entreaties; and that this should have been done

* Clem. Ep. 1. ad. Cor. §. viii. Cot. ed. tom. 1. p. 152.

† Page 123.

by Saint Clement, whose very object in writing was to impeach of great faults, and to call wandering sinners to repentance, would have been a kind of address, one of the most incongruous that could have been devised.

There are other passages cited to the purpose; but so evidently foreign to it, that there can be no occasion to repeat them. Some of them apply to divine providence, and to the sovereignty of God in nature. These subjects were doubtless considered as inseparably connected with the question of predestination, in the mind of Mr. Toplady; but he must have known, that in the conceptions of others, they were distinct.

But does not St. Clement, like St. Paul, make use of the term “elect?” He does; and like St. Paul, in a sense different from that supported by Mr. Toplady; as appears in the second section, where he tells those whom he addresses, in reference to their former laudable conduct—“There was among you, by night and day, a solicitude for the whole brotherhood: that with mercy and conscience, the number of the elect might be saved;” strongly implying, that some of the elect, meaning of the visible church, might not finally be saved.

The manner in which Dr. Haweis, another Calvinistick clergyman of the church of England, mentions the epistle of St. Clement, in a work which he has called—“*An History of the Christian Church,*” is worthy of notice. Notwithstanding that writer’s talent at the discovery of what he thinks corrupt doctrine in the fathers, he found in this favoured epistle* “no deviation perceivable, in doctrine or practice, from the apostolick model.” Is this negative merit all? And had St. Clement

* Chap. ii. sect. ii. Cent. i.

nothing to say of the grace of the Gospel, in so long an epistle to the Corinthians? He certainly had; and yet, nothing that can be supposed illustrative of the particular view of the subject, familiar to Dr. Haweis.

As in the case of Mr. Toplady, so in this of Dr. Haweis, the author conceives himself called on by propriety, to record an expression of his disapprobation, extending to the character of the man. In this point of view, the opinion is here given—and an appeal is made for the correctness of it to the judgment of any candid person, who may have the patience to examine into the grounds of it—that the history in question is no more than a cursory expression of the author's sentiments of characters and events, with very little regard to the documents, on which the exhibition should have been founded. In some publications, in which the sense of this writer has been quoted, it is mentioned that he is a divine of the church of England; evidently with the expectation that it would give weight to his name, with readers of a certain description. For this reason, there is propriety in informing such readers, that Dr. Haweis, although an ordained and beneficed minister of said church, was in the habit of openly giving his patronage to societies, withdrawing from its communion and rejecting the obligation of its institutions. By what processes of reasoning he may have reconciled such conduct to consistency of character and fidelity to engagements, is here unknown. The only reason for recording the fact, is, that it may be a protest against any use of his authority, as that of a clergyman of the church of England.

From St. Clement, Mr. Toplady passes to St. Ignatius. And as the venerable father has been conceived by him to speak to some other points of the controversy, besides this of predestination; they shall be all presented in one view; it being not thought of sufficient moment to divide the attention, by an arrangement of them under their respective points. The same reasons will apply to the indiscriminate citation of passages from some other early writers, who will be introduced into this division of the work.

The first of the epistles of St. Ignatius remarked on by Mr. Toplady, is that to the Smyrneans; from which he thinks it worth his while to fasten on one passage, expressing the writer's confidence in their stability; another, affirming that Christ suffered on our account, that we might be saved; and another, expressing that repentance is difficult, but in the power of Christ; as if to him it could be difficult on any other account, than because requiring the cooperation of man. But the most material mistake, in respect to this epistle, is in the exordium of it; in which Mr. Toplady* introduces the favourite Calvinistick word "indefectible," as a translation of a word† which signifies no such thing, but "not behind," or "not deficient," or "stable," which last word materially differs from a word expressive of the impossibility of a fall.

In the introduction of the epistle to the Ephesians, Mr. Toplady could not fail to notice the word "predestinated," as applied to the church. Yes, to the church; every member of which, according to his interpretation, is pronounced by the saint to be predestinated to heaven;

* Page 129. † *αὐσεργητώ.*

as if he could assuredly know, that there were not among them an individual, who was a professor in hypocrisy, or in form. How long after the apostles, did there exist such a measure of information, if it were possessed by them; as indeed cannot reasonably be supposed? According to the same writer, perseverance is contained where it is said—“The church is as firmly united to Christ, as he to the Father.” And the Calvinistick sense of the corruption of human nature opens on the mind of the interpreter, in the assertion, that “carnal men are not able to perform spiritual things.”

In commenting on the introduction of the epistle to the Philadelphians, Mr. Toplady* considers what is said of God’s “establishing of the clergy” [meaning in their official capacity] “according to his own will;” as if it were intended of establishing them by his own will, in grace. And in this epistle, there occurs another of the same writer’s extraordinary translations. Ignatius speaks of some, who had endeavoured to draw him from his purpose, according to the flesh. But says he, “my spirit” [by which he seems, from the connexion, to mean the spirit of God in me] “is not seduced, being from God.” But this is rendered—“The spirit is not to be seduced;” and it is applied as if the meaning were—“There is no seduction of the spirits of believers.” The sense of the writer of the epistle is neither more nor less, than that he was not to be dissuaded from his purpose of meeting martyrdom.

In treating of the epistle to the Trallians,† Mr. Toplady bends a sentence to his theory, by keeping out of view the heresy of the Gnosticks; to which, according to

* Page 131. † Page 132, sect. 11.

the connexion, it has a manifest reference. In the twelfth section, he finds it hard to get rid of an intimation evidently against him; when the writer exhorts the church whom he was addressing, to pray for him, lest he should be found a cast-away.*

In referring to the epistle to the Romans,† there is a notorious change of the sense of a passage, in the 3d. section. The martyr says, that Christianity [as the Greek copy of Vossius has it] or a Christian, agreeably to the Latin copy of Usher, is “the work of greatness.” There is evidently wanting another substantive; which should be either greatness of speech, if the first copy be followed, or greatness of mind, according to the last, in order to accommodate to the respective standards. Mr. Toplady has evidently followed, or trod in the steps of some one who followed, the copy of Usher. But on what authority Mr. Toplady translated‡ “the mighty operation of the divine agency” cannot be here conjectured. There is nothing in the context, which justifies such a freedom.

It would seem, that the edition of Isaac Vossius, taken from the Medicean library, being in the language in which the epistles were written, must be of more authority generally than that of Archbishop Usher, given from a manuscript in Caius College, Cambridge. But this does not apply to the epistle to the Romans, which was not found in the Medicean manuscript. Le Clerc, the learned annotator on Cotelerius, thinks that the words in the Greek copy of this author, agree best with the connexion: But Archbishop Wake has followed the latin copy, in his translation of this epistle; noting in the margin, the differences of the other. The em-

* *αδοκιμος.* † Page 133. ‡ *μεγεθος.*

barrassed state of the passage renders it hardly worth the pains of any man to supply it with conjectural additions, for the support of any doctrine whatsoever.

It may be to the purpose not to leave Ignatius, without taking notice of a quotation from him in Gerard Vossius,* in which this writer thinks he finds an authority for the doctrine of the imputation of the sin of Adam. The quotation consists of two Greek words.† It seems strange, that a man of such sagacity should find so much within that small compass. But be it there or not, the words are only in the interpolated epistles of Ignatius, and therefore not his.

So much light has been thrown on the question of the authenticity of these compositions, since the time Gerard Vossius; especially by the edition obtained and edited by his son Isaac, and the latin translation of archbishop Usher, that the said Gerard is not to be blamed for his mistake here noticed. Less indulgence is due to a late work;‡ which says, under the article “Bishop,” speaking of Ignatius—“As several of the epistles ascribed to him are spurious, no great stress can be laid on his authority.” While yet the said work, under the article “Apollinarians,” quotes the same Ignatius as of their opinion; although it is not in the genuine epistles, but in those confessedly interpolated, that the sentiment alluded to is met with. It is not a little in favour of the genuine epistles, that in the two instances here alluded to, even the interpolated are thought deserving of attention, when apparently favourable to the purpose of writers, whose systems of ecclesiastical discipline naturally influenced to the rejection of both.

* Lib. 2. part 1. page 159. † *παλαιαν δυσσεβειαν.*

‡ Dr. Rees's Cyclopaedia.

After Ignatius, Mr. Toplady* takes notice of the epistle of the church of Smyrna, relating to the martyrdom of their bishop St. Polycarp. Among other things, the church relates, † that the pagans refused to them the remains of their deceased pastor, lest they should worship them; not knowing, say they, that Christians “could not leave him who died for their sins; and worship another.” Doubtless, they could not: for at the moment of worshipping another, they would cease to be Christians. But what has this to do with the impossibility of falling from grace—the purpose to which it has been applied?

Surely, the author here introduced had better have submitted to the authority of Calvin; who, as already quoted, acknowledged that the early ecclesiastical writers were against him. Mr. Toplady, indeed, with the exception of those very early ones referred to, is inclined to give up the fathers. For he says, that he once bestowed on them considerable time and attention, but found the employment barren and unimproving. He acknowledges, that there are some excellent things; but, says he, the golden grains are almost lost, amidst an infinity of rubbish. It must be evident to every intelligent reader of this writer’s works, that there could not be to his eye any golden grains, but such as he conceived to sparkle with the peculiarities of his favourite doctrines. And if he had but comprehended the apostolick fathers, under his sentence of condemnation, there would have been no need to remark on his extremely prejudiced exhibition of some passages in their writings. Dr. Haweis, however, does not hesitate to

* Page 134. † Sect. xvii.

rank the apostolick fathers “low on the scale of excellence; whether in precision of doctrine, clearness of argument, knowledge and comment of scripture, beauty of style, or forcibleness of application, compared with many of a more modern date.”* As to style and some other matters, they have nothing to do in the present inquiry. There are certainly many things in the writings of these men, which speak immediately to the heart. They are principally taken up with Christian morals; not however without a reference to their foundation in Christ’s redemption. But when Dr. Haweis speaks of their want of precision of doctrine, it may fairly be inferred from the general tenour of his work, that, under the term, he contemplated an entire absence of the doctrines, which were with him the substance of Christian verity. Dr. Haweis acknowledges of Ignatius in particular, that, “in doctrine, he does not seem to have degenerated from the truth as it is in Jesus:” A cold compliment; and of which no further proof is given, than that “the superscription of the epistle to the church of Ephesus, marks strongly the doctrines of grace.”† That is, it has the word predestinated; but whether in the sense of the writer who makes the remark, or in that contended for in this work, is the question.

The author cannot leave this subject of the apostolick fathers, without recommending it to the serious consideration of any sincere inquirer, into whose hands his remarks may come. Particularly, he wishes to suggest to such a person, how improbable it is, had what is now called Calvinism been a part of the profession of the

* Chap. ii. sect. ii. Cent. i. † Chap. iv. Cent. ii.

age, that no one of these writers should have spoken expressly to any of the five points, on which the controversy hangs. But, if there should be any doubt of this fact, the author would not wish to make it more sure, than to rest it on the issue of inquiry into the fidelity of those, who, running ahead of the most distinguished champion of their cause, endeavour to establish it by so desperate an adventure, as that of an appeal to the apostolick fathers.

In short, it is impossible to find in them the least countenance of Calvinism; unless this may be supposed to arise from the mere use of the words “predestinated,” and “elect.” It is no wonder that they should continue, after the example of St. Paul, in the occasional application of these epithets, so long as the Jewish economy subsisted; in order to assert, in opposition to the subjects of it, the vocation of the Gentiles to the church, agreeably to divine purpose, declared long before the giving of the law. It is not a little remarkable, that, in the fathers immediately succeeding, there is very rare recourse, if any, to the same way of denominating the Christian character. And the change was natural, as soon as the old economy was confessedly put an end to, by the destruction of the temple, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation. For then there ensued, as there should have ensued long before, the full effect of “the breaking down of the partition wall;” and of “Jew and Gentile being one in Christ.”

Since the work of Mr. Toplady and of Dr. Haweis, there has come into notice a production, which has excited attention in England, and has been reprinted in the United States—“A history of the Christian Church,

by the Rev. Joseph Milner," who seems to have been a clergyman of the church of England, of some celebrity. Like the two authors above-mentioned, he is a Calvinist; and although not so intolerant as they in reference to opposite opinion, never finds Christian doctrine in its integrity, except in alliance with Calvinism, or in what he thinks he perceives the complexion of that theory. Very unlike to Mr. Toplady, in discovering no more than a few grains of gold in the writings of the fathers, Mr. Milner seems to have thought them to abound in ingots of that metal, as appears from his many quotations from their works. These he would not have made with such decided approbation and praise, if he had been of the aforesaid opinion of Mr. Toplady; or if he had consented to the representations of Dr. Haweis, so evidently expressive of contempt. In one respect, there is the same professed object of the last mentioned historian and of Mr. Milner; that they both aim at a search after the invisible church of Christ, or the influence of the Christian religion over the hearts of its professors. Now, although the true object of ecclesiastical history is such publick characters and events, as have had a visible influence on its concerns; and the measures of real piety, in different times and places, cannot be estimated by the documents which have been handed down in them respectively; the mass of which, in any time or place, must have depended on some circumstances not connected with the numbers of real christians; yet, that where any thing occurs in antiquity, tending to adorn the profession, the historian may laudably and profitably display the same, is not to be disputed. Mr. Milner has selected specimens of this

with judgment; and in doing so, has not confined himself to extracts savouring of Calvinism; although, he evidently thought, that when this was wanting, there was not an entirely correct view of the dispensation of grace. It may be proper, to point out another material difference between the two historians. It has been remarked of Dr. Haweis, that however prejudiced against some fathers of the church, celebrated by her in all the ages succeeding them, he possessed abundance of a singular kind of charity, in supposing piety to abound in heretical and schismatical communions; even where there were no documents in his support. Not so Mr. Milner; who, on the contrary, is not sparing of his censures on people of that description.

The stating of these facts is intended principally with a relation to Mr. Toplady. If, in what appeared to him in the shape of Calvinism, in the apostolick fathers, nothing of the kind was seen by Mr. Milner, who agreed with him in principle, but is here supposed to have stood higher in the publick mind, as to a comparative estimate of their abilities; it is a circumstance on which there may fairly be laid a stress; and it will not be unreasonable in us to ascribe to bias to system in the other writers in question, there being found stronger traces of it in them, than in their more ingenious coadjutor.

The only evidence of his system, which he discovers in the epistle of St. Clement, is the father's use of the terms "election," and "elect:" of which no more needs be here said.

From the epistles of St. Ignatius, the only extract made as having a bearing on any point of Calvinism, is

in the already noticed superscription to the church of Ephesus; who are said to be “predestinated before the world, to be perpetually permanent in glory, immovable, united, and elect in the genuine suffering.”* And is it possible, that a man of Mr. Milner’s judgment and acquirements could suppose, that the martyr would have addressed such language to all the members of any church? Yes, it is supposable, because the same construction is given to the like language from St. Paul. But it is still conceived, that so manifest an impropriety of address ought to rescue both the words of the apostle and those of the bishop of Antioch, from so dangerous an interpretation; and refer them to the church as a community, and to their militant state on earth.

On going beyond the apostolick fathers, it is necessary to quit Mr. Toplady; because he did not consider any beyond them as worthy of his notice. Not so Dr. Haweis; who, professing to write a history, found himself under the necessity of weighing the merits of distinguished characters, within the bounds of his narrative; if it were only to show how much, when weighed in his balance, they were wanting. This writer professes, that through the whole tract of time, run over in his cursory history (so called) he is “inquiring after God’s secret ones, the remnant whom the world knoweth not, the chosen, and called, and faithful:”† undoubtedly meaning, by that description, persons who held the doctrines since held by Calvin; because he includes under the description given, none but such as held those doctrines; or rather such as he supposed to

* Chap. i. Cent. ii. page 156. Amer. ed. † Vol. i. page 345.

hold them, in consequence of something which gave him a favourable opinion of their characters: For as to any writings of theirs tending to that point, there are absolutely none. It is surprising, that of those whom he supposes—and on good grounds—to be holy men, not an individual is found, who proclaimed to the world, in any known work, the doctrines of grace in Dr. Haweis's sense of the expression, to be a protest against the notorious dearth of them, discoverable in all the works which have been transmitted to us.

It was a singular enterprise in the author here noticed, to undertake to write a history on the plan expressed in the quoted words, and under similar expressions in different parts of his work. It has been justly remarked of civil history, that it would give us a more unfavourable opinion of mankind, than is just; were we not to recollect, that from the very nature of the province of the historian, his attention is much more drawn to daring crime, which forces itself on the publick eye, than to modest virtue, which delights rather in retirement from it. The same has happened, in regard to ecclesiastical transactions. In the record of them, we are shocked by the instances of ambition and crooked cunning which we meet with; although, doubtless, we are also gratified by opposite instances of sublime virtue. In addition to these, there was an immense mass of piety, the existence of which has been manifested in its effects; while the possessors of it have been unknown to fame.

If, in persons of the last description, Dr. Haweis should think he finds his "secret ones;" still, there will lie on him the task of proving, that they had embraced

the all important points, as he considers them, of his theory. But this he presumes all along. Besides, he does not doubt, "but among the bishops themselves there were blessed men, of true faith and primitive manners, such as Hosius of Corduba, and Paphnutius, and many others in the established church as well as among the Novatian, Donatist and Melesian prelates."* Any reader, uninformed in history, but knowing Dr. Haweis's standard of ecclesiastical integrity, would suppose that there were some evidences of the orthodoxy of these persons, in his sense of the word. But it may safely be affirmed, that not a particle of evidence can be given, of their having held the doctrines of Grace, as maintained afterwards by Austin; and recently by Dr. Haweis and other followers of Calvin. Of Hosius it is certain, that he commanded the veneration of the whole Christian world. But this does him little honour; if they had departed so far from the truth, as the narrative of Dr. Haweis supposes. The strict life of Paphnutius is mentioned, merely because of the weight which it gave to a very correct sentiment expressed by him, in the council of Nice, on the subject of marriage; and nothing further is known of his opinions, except, that he was on the orthodox side, on the subject of the Arian heresy. Of the other descriptions of persons mentioned, it is certain that they caused needless divisions in the church: and although a beneficed clergyman, who professedly countenanced the like separations from the church of which he was a minister, might, on that account entertain a prepossession in their favour; yet, how he came by his knowledge of their evangelical character, according to

* Vol. i. page 299.

his own idea of the terms, is wholly unaccountable. In short, the passage quoted and others like it, are indirect ways of intimating, what could not, consistently with decorum, have been affirmed—that in those days there were some at least, who believed the doctrines now generally known under the name of Calvinism, and held up by Dr. Haweis and others, as exclusively entitled to the honourable commendation of being the doctrines of Grace.

It is then no small evidence of there having been no such theory in the early ages, that it was not found by Dr. Haweis, who set off professedly in search of it. And the author to whom the plan of the present work invites attention in the first place, is Justin Martyr; a man celebrated in his own, and in every succeeding age; and constantly appealed to, in proof of the worship and the discipline of the primitive church. But of this eminent character, Dr. Haweis only “hopes that the root of the matter was in him;”* and this, from reverence of him as a martyr. The historian finds many things suspicious in the martyr’s writings; among which, the only matter to the present purpose, is “his reasoning on the freedom of the human will, nearly” [he might have said exactly] “in the strain of the modern followers of Arminius.”† That Justin speaks very unlike a Calvinist is evident, where he says‡ —“That we should have existed in the beginning, was not of ourselves, but to follow those things which are agreeable to him,” (God) “choosing them by the help of those rational powers, given to us by him, he persuades us and draws us to the faith.”§

* Vol. i. page 188. † Page 189. ‡ Page 15 Ed. Thirley.

§ λογικῶν δυναμῶν.

Mr. Milner, noticing the passage from Justin, in which he speaks of “a self determining power in man,”* and in which to the same Justin, there is ascribed his “using of much the same kind of reasoning on the subject of freewill, as has been fashionable since the days of Arminius,” adds—“he seems to have been the first of all sincere Christians, who introduced this foreign plant into Christian ground.” There will be occasion to notice, that there is some appearance in Justin of those philosophick views of freewill and predestination, which were distinctly opened in the third century, and were very familiar in the fourth, and which were in direct contrariety to Calvinism. Accordingly, as there is an agreement with Mr. Milner in the fact, that Justin innovated in the particular referred to, it may be proper to notice the point of difference. According to Mr. Milner, Calvinism now began to give way to what has been called Arminianism, in modern times. According to the present writer, scriptural predestination discontinued to be spoken of, because of the discontinuance of the ground of the controversy, which gave occasion to what we read concerning it in the writings of the apostles. If, as Mr. Milner thought, Calvinism received its mortal blow in the primitive church, from the stroke of Justin, it must be confessed to have expired afterwards without a groan. This seems implied, indeed, in what Mr. Milner afterwards adds—“The language of the church was silently and gradually changed, in this respect, from that more simple and scriptural mode of speaking used by Clement and Ignatius, who knew the election of grace, but not the self-determining power of the human will.”

* Vol. i. page 199.

In short, it is here conceived, that there are two material defects in the present part of Mr. Milner's work: First, that while he faults Justin, for the profession of Arminianism, he gives very insufficient cause for the complimenting of Clement and Ignatius, with that of Calvinism: And secondly, that if the change begun by Justin, were of the description ascribed to him, it is impossible to account for his high and universal reputation in the church; no champion of the truth appearing to protest against his error.

In the second apology of this blessed martyr,* we find the scheme of the Stoicks censured; and in opposition to it, he writes as follows—"But lest any, from what we have said above, should think that we say, that whatever things come to pass, are brought about by necessity of fate, because we have said that they were foreknown, we will also refute that. For, learning from the same prophets, that punishments, and torments, and rewards also, will be assigned to every one, according to the deserts of his works, we affirm it to be true. If this be not so, but all things are destined by fate, there would be nothing in our power. For, if it is of fate, that this man is good, and that other evil; neither is the former to be approved of, nor the latter blamed. And unless mankind had a power, by freewill, both to shun what is base, and to practise what is honest, there would be no foundation of blame of those things which are done. But that men, by free choice, live virtuously, or fall through sin, we prove in this manner. We observe the same man carried to contrary things. But if it were determined by fate, that he should be good or evil; he

* Page 64, Thirlby.

would never be capable of contraries, and change so often. Neither indeed would some be good, and others bad: For either we must resolve, that fate is the cause of evil; and that she does things contrary to herself; or, that which we have before said must be seen to be true, that virtue and vice are nothing, and that good and evil exist in opinion only; which, as true reason declares, is the highest impiety and injustice." The martyr goes on to other similar remarks; concluding the subject with affirming, that his doctrine was that of the prophetick spirit; and quoting to this purpose Deuteronomy xxx. 15—19, and Isaiah i. 16—20.

If any one should be disposed to deny, that there is a resemblance between the Stoical doctrines of fate, and the predestination maintained by Calvinists, it would be little to the purpose; because the reasoning of the writer goes as much to the merits of the one, as to those of the other. There shall be but one more passage brought from the same author, although many things might be copied from him to the same effect. In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew,* he says—"For God, willing that angels and men should be, through freewill, every one of his own power, that each might do as he was able, created them such."

All this we read in a work, written within half a century after the last of the apostles; not left by the author in his closet, but addressed to the civilized world, in favour of the faith which he professed. In particular, his apologies are directed, the first of them to the emperor, and the second to the senate; and profess to give the sense not merely of the author, but of the whole body

* Page 332, Thirlby.

of professing Christians; and this at a time, especially calling for fidelity and circumspection; it being during the rage of a bloody persecution. Accordingly, Justin has been here introduced, not for the sake of his own opinion merely, but as giving testimony to the faith of the Christians of his day. For, had his testimony been considered by them as false, it is to the last degree improbable, that his memory would have been so honoured, as we know it to have been, ever since. What would be said by the members of any modern Calvinistick church, were an individual of their body to give an account of their belief, under such representations as those which have been recited? The answer may convey some idea of the antidote, which would have come down with the supposed poison of Justin, had the church of his day been of the faith, to which the character of Calvinism is at the present time attached. If this be not presumable, what is to become of the army of martyrs, by whose blood we have supposed the church to have been watered, during at least the first three centuries of the Christian era?

The writer next claiming attention is Ireneus. As Justin lived in the middle, so Ireneus in the close, of the second century. Considering that he wrote against the heresies of his time, it would have been natural for him to have included the sentiments in contrariety to Calvinism, had they then been deemed heretical. If it should still be insisted on, that they had not yet showed their heads, the contrary is evident in Ireneus himself, particularly in the 71st and 72d chapters of his 4th book; which are full of matter to the purpose. A part of the 71st only shall be cited. It is well known, that the

original Greek of this work is lost; nothing remaining but a translation of it, in very bad Latin; in which the passage intended to be here given in English, is as follows—"But another thing which he" [meaning God] "says—how often would I have gathered your children and ye would not—hath manifested the old law of the liberty of man; because God made him free from the beginning, having his own power, as also his own soul, to make voluntarily a use of the disposition of God, and not forced on the part of God. For there is no force from God, but a favourable disposition" [or wish] "is always present to him. And because of this, he gives to all good counsel. But he has placed a power of choice in man, as in the angels. For the angels were made rational, that they who should obey, might possess good; given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. But they who did not obey, are justly not found with the good, and receive merited punishment: because God indeed kindly gave the good; but they did not diligently keep it, nor esteemed it precious; but despised the supereminence of goodness." In the remainder of this chapter and in the 72d, which is much longer, the good bishop of Lyons goes on in a strain of reasoning, evidently as anti-calvinistick as ever was written by Arminius or any of his followers.

There is something singular in Dr. Haweis's treatment of the character of this celebrated person. "He quits" (says Dr. Haweis) "the scriptural grounds of God's election, and grace;—and supposes all that self-sufficiency of the human intellect, and human agency, which bespeaks a man too little acquainted with his own heart."* Not a circumstance of this sort appears

* Vol. I. page 190.]

in Ireneus; unless it be discoverable in the single instance of his sentiments, on points now comprehended under the Calvinistick controversy. After so harsh a sentence passed on Ireneus, Dr. Haweis had a delicate task to perform. That bishop presided in the church of Lyons, when, under the persecution of the emperour Severus, the streets flowed with Christian blood. This rests on the testimony of the ancient martyrologies, and on the authority of Gregory of Tours; a writer of the sixth century, and one not altogether to be relied on; yet, who could have been under no temptation to have described a persecution which never happened, and might even, if false, have been contradicted in his day. Neither is the silence of Eusebius, a disproof of an event, which might have happened among a people, who at the time had little intercourse with the countries coming under the view of that historian; although he has given a particular account of a bloody persecution in the same city, about twenty years before. Gregory was himself an inhabitant of Gaul; and might, therefore, even a long time after the persecution under Severus, have obtained particular knowledge of transactions in that country, not accessible to Eusebius. Be all this as it may, the general massacre, and the martyrdom of the bishop, rest on precisely the same evidence. But Dr. Haweis, not wishing to give up the former, describes it in glowing colours, saying of the constancy displayed—"I read, I wonder, and adore!" At the same time, it not being convenient to indulge the bishop with the credit of his part in the bloody sacrifice, which, to be sure, would have been incongruous, after the declaration of his entertaining corrupt opinions from the

want of a proper knowledge of his heart; it is added—
 “Whether Ireneus fell in the general massacre, or was reserved for a future martyrdom, is not absolutely certain.”* Now, it is neither more nor less certain, than the rest of the narrative of the massacre. And therefore, there was no reason to distinguish one part of it from another; especially, as Dr. Haweis allows, that the first strokes of vengeance would naturally alight on those who presided in the Christian assemblies.

There may be use, in noticing a different treatment shown to Ireneus by Mr. Milner, from that of Dr. Haweis. The latter inferred from the Arminianism of the very early father, that he was a stranger to his own heart. The former, after noticing also his Arminianism, adds—“There is not much of pathetick, practical, or experimental religion in the work” (on the early heresies.) “The author’s plan, which led him to keep up a constant attention to speculative errors, did not admit it. Yet there is every where so serious and grave a spirit, and now and then such displays of goodness, as show him very capable of writing what might have been singularly useful to the church in all ages.”† It has been seen, that Dr. Haweis, besides pronouncing of the same venerable person, that he was a stranger to his own heart, made a feeble attempt to throw discredit on the history of his martyrdom.

But the question concerning the character of Ireneus, goes much further than is here stated. What are we to think of the flock, among whom the character of this bishop, so much a stranger to his own heart and to the doctrines of grace, was in the highest estimation; and

* Page 192. † Vol. 1. page 262.

who yet, as Dr. Haweis himself believes, were offered up in hecatombs on the altar of persecution? Or rather, what are we to think of the Christian church of that day in general; who so embalmed his memory, that its fragrance is still fresh to all those who have not adopted the maxim of—no Calvinist, no Christian? What an apostasy must there have been, within about a century of the last of the apostles! an apostasy so entire, that no one was heard to lift up his voice against prevalent corruption, and to show, that even martyrdom was to be no cover of error, striking at the very essence of evangelical truth?

There is a passage in Ireneus, which must have been peculiarly offensive to the mind of Dr. Haweis. It is in the 48th chapter of the 4th book, in which the saint interprets the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, in direct contrariety to the Calvinistick system, making it consist in the delivering of him up to the consequences of his own wilful unbelief. And on the same plan, there are interpreted Isaiah vi. 10. 2. Corinthians iv. 4, and others, all of them prominent texts with the favourers of the scheme here objected to; but which Ireneus explains, as laying guilt wholly at the door of men, which he says, indisposes them to the reception of divine illumination; as a disorder in the eye may make it averse to the light of the sun.

And there is yet another passage in the 76th chapter of the same book; in which this father, after stating, that God had left in the power of every man to improve his grace or to remain in disobedience, adds—"From his prescience of future things, he decreed heaven to those who should believe, and hell to those who should be unbelievers."

After these express testimonies against the system, it seems a small matter to mention that there are two chapters in Ireneus, the 12th and 13th of the 3d book, in which he professs to give the substance of what had been delivered by the writers of the four gospels and by the other apostles; but in which there is nothing of the subject here contemplated. And yet, even this silence is full of information. It shows that these subjects, as matters of controversy in the church, were at that time unknown.

In the same age with Ireneus, lived Tertullian. Notwithstanding the mixture of character truly ascribed to him by Dr. Haweis, no man is considered as better acquainted with the state of the church in his own day, or as more faithful in reporting it. Cyprian, whose orthodoxy has escaped impeachment, even from Dr. Haweis, was accustomed to call Tertullian his master. And it is a known fact, that he was never thought heterodox, any further than as relates to the latter part of his life, and to the error of Montanism into which he then fell. His admirable apology, addressed to the Roman senate, is, of itself, sufficient to render his name respectable in the Christian church. This celebrated work was written long before his fall: and if the doctrines called Calvinistick were such as pervades the whole system of revealed truth; it might be expected, that at least some slight traces of them would appear. But nothing of the kind is even alleged. In regard to his other works, this is not all. We find in them positive evidence of anti-calvinistick sentiment. And yet, that he was ever disadvantageously noted on this account, for varying from the current sense of the church, no man will presume to say. On the point of predestination, indeed, nothing directly

to the present purpose can be taken from Tertullian; because he is silent on the subject. But on the kindred question of freewill, he is explicit, as will be shown in the proper place. It should still be remembered, as to the former subject, that silence, considering the many works of the author spoken of, is the highest evidence that could have been exhibited, of the truth of the sentiment sustained. Opinion, had it been delivered, must have been liable to misconception. But when no trait of opinion is to be found, there seems in the circumstance ample proof of the want of interest in the subject.

Cotemporary with Tertullian, there was Clemens of Alexandria. It will hardly be said, that in the writings of this learned man, there is to be met with, any thing favourable to Calvinism; although, had it entered into his system, it might have been expected to have shown its influence, at least in his book called *Pædagogus*; which is an extensive delineation of Christian duty: a work of a kind of which there is probably no instance from under the pen of a Calvinist, without its savouring very strongly of his opinions, on the subjects of predestination and grace. But nothing of this falls from the pen of Clemens. On the contrary, it is worth while to notice the manner in which he uses the word, “predestination;” it being precisely in conformity with the sense contended for in the explanation of the same word, as used in scripture. The passage here alluded to is in his *Stromata*, and in the 765th page of Syllaburgius’s edition of this father’s works. Speaking of the one church, existing in the unity of the same faith, he defines the said church to consist of the persons whom God had “predestinated before the foundation of the

world;" thus showing, that the predestination spoken of related to profession in this world; and not as of necessary consequence, to salvation in the next.

This very passage of Clemens is adduced by Vossius,* in establishment, not of the point here sustained, but to prove, that the fathers held a predestination founded on prescience. The writer of these remarks takes the liberty of thinking, although with much reverence of the memory of so learned and sincere a man as Gerard Vossius, that he is not accurate in the above particular; and that the predestination of Clemens, like that of St. Paul, respects a state of covenant with God in the present life. It is however evident, that the diligent inquirer here spoken of, could find nothing in the fathers respecting the predestinated conditions of individuals in another life, whether founded on prescience or independent on it, until it was apparent to him in a passage of Clemens of Alexandria; whose philosophical character, as well as the time in which he lived, must make us the less wonder, if there should be in him an intimation of the doctrine, as it was unquestionably current in the fourth century; although in a much more moderate form than that afterwards given to it by Austin. In the third century, Vossius does not add to the name of Clemens, any other than that of Origen and even in doing this, he acknowledges some ground of doubt, how far the opinion of the latter ought to be of any avail as to the present point; because of the notion ascribed to him of the pre-existence of human souls. It is further remarkable, that Vossius quotes Beza, saying, that Origen drove most of the fathers, both Greek

* Book 6. Thesis 8.

and Latin, into this most base error, as he calls it, of a conditional decree. How far so great an influence is to be ascribed to Origen, the writer of this will not undertake to say: but he judges Beza to be right in the opinion, that it was in or near the time of Origen, when there arose the idea of individual election, connected with the other idea of its being founded on prescience; there having been no separation between the two, until it was accomplished by Austin.

There should be particular notice taken of the period, in which a predestination, founded on prescience, and both subjects as they relate to another life, first show their heads, in the works of Christian writers. Clemens of Alexandria has been quoted to this effect; although, as the present writer supposes, under a mistake. There is, however, a sentiment to the same effect in Ireneus, a cotemporary of Clemens, in a passage which was before recited. There has been also thought something to the same effect, in a passage of Justin; which, however, does not seem to the writer of this to come under the denomination treated of; because, although Justin speaks of prescience, it is not as having a connexion with predestination. The passage alluded to,* is where the martyr speaks of the delay of the destruction of the world, “until the number of the just be fulfilled; until he” (Christ) “shall have struck down the demons opposing him;” adding—“And until there shall be fulfilled the number of those who were foreknown by him, as who would be good and virtuous men.” If, however, it should be thought that the passage speaks as well of

* Page 68. Ed. Thirlby.

predestination as of prescience; it will only show, that Justin brought into this department of theology somewhat of the philosophy, which he professed before his conversion to Christianity. Vossius cites even the Roman Clement to the same effect: but the work from which he brings his quotation is the *Recognitions*; now well understood to be unworthy of any credit.

If Ireneus, Clemens of Alexandria, and Tertullian, be considered as authors of the second century, there seems no occasion to take notice of any of the third; except of Origen, among the Greeks; and of Cyprian, Arnobius, and Minutius Felix, among the Latins; what we have from others being mere fragments. And even those mentioned, are not introduced to make citations from them, for the reasons which will be here given.

There can be no use in making extracts of the little that appears to the effect, in the writings of Origen. For, although that little is directly to the purpose of a predestination founded on prescience, which is here allowed to have crept into the church in the time of Origen; yet, we know not how far it may have been his opinion, or that of his translator, Rufinus, through whose hands alone we have any of the works of the other, except of his book against Celsus; and by whom great liberties with them are supposed have been taken. Besides, Origen's well known fancy of the transmigration of souls, is so connected with the present subject, that there is no knowing how far the one may have been affected by the other. This use, however, may be made of the name of Origen; that his writing so much, and on such a variety of matter, and yet, his saying of little or nothing on predestination, is a proof, that it was not

much a subject of discussion, or of religious instruction, in his day. The fact may be easily accounted for. He lived at a time, when the scriptural use of the word had become little attended to, because the occasion of it had ceased; and when what is here considered as the more modern and metaphysical use of it had not yet appeared; or at least, had not become familiar. Notwithstanding all the intemperate abuse of Origen after his death, succeeding to the honour in which he had been held during his life, it is here supposed, that his testimony would at all times have been held good, except where his peculiar fancies were concerned.

On descending to the Latin writers, Cyprian, Arnobius, and Minutius; we find in them, to the point of predestination, absolutely nothing. This is especially remarkable in regard to Cyprian, as his works are many and large.

When the character and the writings of Cyprian come to be noticed by Mr. Milner, there begins to be manifested the contrariety in which his system stands—however little the circumstance may have been perceived by him—to that of the church of which he was a minister. One passage only shall be quoted to the effect. “In Cyprian’s time,” says Mr. Milner, “to call baptism itself the new birth, was not very dangerous. In our age it is poison itself.”* And yet no one can deny, that the baptismal offices are full of this supposed poison. But why was it not very dangerous in the time of Cyprian? Was it, that all baptized persons were afterwards adorned by Christian rectitude? The contrary appears, in the glowing accounts which we

* Vol. 1. page 315. Am. Ed.

have of the great declension, before the beginning of the Decian persecution. Of this, Mr. Milner himself says —“ The long” (preceding) “ peace and prosperity had corrupted both,” (the eastern and the western churches) “ and men in the former part of this century had forgotten that a Christian life, was that of a stranger.”† How then is it possible, that what is now poison in the church of England, should be ‘ not very dangerous in the time of Cyprian?’ But it is evident, that the ideas of baptism and regeneration, entertained by this father and by the said church, must differ from those of Mr. Milner.

That the writings referred to, should be barren of the subject in question, is a fact which may also be accounted for. It is well known, that during the coexistence of the Greek and Latin empires, whatever metaphysical subtilties were started in the church, began generally in the former empire; however they may have afterwards travelled to the latter. There have been already recited hints of what may be called the metaphysical doctrine of predestination, from Ireneus; and perhaps from the Alexandrian Clemens and from Justin. The first of these, although he finally settled in the western empire and had his bishoprick there, was a native of Asia; had his education among the Greeks; and wrote in their language: the present remains of him in latin being, as was before stated, a translation. The two others, if they are to be reckoned on the present occasion, were Greeks; in respect as well to residence, as to birth. Now, the metaphysical sense of the present question may reasonably be supposed not to have interested the western division of the empire, whatever influence

* Vol. 1. page 369.

it may have had in the eastern; which however, as is here believed, was not considerable. Neither is the inattention to the subject to be wondered at. There was no longer that mixture of Judaism with Christianity, which required the opposition of the national predestination of scripture. There had not arisen the heresy of the denial of the grace of God, which was conceived as calling for the absolute predestination of St. Austin. It is true, that intermediately to these two stages of the subject, the disposition of the Greeks to metaphysical subtilties, had led them to a conditional predestination; applying to individuals, what the scriptures had said of nations. But it required time to establish these, as prominent subjects of theological discussion.

Justice is not always done to the fathers, on the subject of mixing the dogmas of philosophy with the doctrines of the Christian religion. The practice, however finally prevalent in the church, was begun by hereticks. There is a striking authority for this assertion in Tertullian's book—"de Prescriptionibus;" confessedly one of the ablest of his works. He ascribes all the errors of hereticks, to their being introduced into Christianity from the philosophical sects, to which the patrons of these errors were respectively addicted. An appeal thus made in the face of the world, in favour of the integrity of the church in that particular, in Tertullian's day, is no small evidence of the fact until that time. That there was afterwards a deplorable falling off, must be acknowledged.

When we come down to the fourth century, it is natural to make a pause, and to look back on the preceding centuries, under the light furnished by the re-

cords of their transactions, as they stand in Eusebius. It is well known, that we have no other work, communicating to us so much knowledge of the times intervening between the gospel age, and that in which he lived. The amazing successes of the heralds of the religion of Jesus, in different quarters of the globe; the persecutions brought on Christians, and the fortitude with which they sustained them; the notices of the works of Christian apologists since lost, generally giving details of the subjects of their compositions; the accounts of bishops who had filled the most populous sees, not without delineations of the most conspicuous properties of their characters; these and many other subjects are parts of the history of Eusebius: and they are all such as afford openings for something to be said of the sovereignty of God, in a discriminate election, of deliverance from the weight of the imputation of Adam's sin, and of a grace irresistibly over-ruling all the faculties of the soul; if these or the like tenets had been thought branches of evangelical truth. But under the influence of such a theory, how must we be disappointed, not to find any thing coming from one quarter or another; and neither on the affirmative nor on the negative side of the questions, since become so famous! Of the subjects treated of by Eusebius, none gave such scope for what we have in vain looked for; or rather none so loudly called for it, had there been any thing of the kind to be recorded, as his professed design to give accounts of all hereticks, and heresies. Had predestination and its kindred points, been at all a subject of discussion, there must have been something

which would have been branded as heresy by some. Where is it? Certainly in no chapter of Eusebius's work. Nothing appears in it, that throws light on any of the questions comprehended under the general subject, since exciting so much contention throughout the Christian world. Had then heresy taken possession of all Christendom, or was there not a single heretick, as to doctrines supposed to be levelled at the very seat of heresy, in human pride? One or the other of these extravagant suppositions must be made, if the fact referred to is to be accounted for. But what gives the greatest interest to the point of view in which the work of Eusebius is here alluded to, is the melancholy picture arising on us from it, of the condition of former confessors, saints, and martyrs. They who are celebrated as such, must have lived and died without any acquaintance with what are called preeminently the doctrines of grace. For if the peculiarities of Calvinism deserve such a name, and if they were then known and held, that not a gleam of them should appear in the lives and deaths found in the history of Eusebius, and most of all, in the Triumphs of Martyrs under torture, or in the flames, is one of the most improbable suppositions which can be made; especially when all parties in religious controversy are in the habit of appealing to the book, as a faithful narrative of the events which it professes to record. Even Dr. Haweis, although he takes notice* of Eusebius's being "a favourite at court," and that this was "no good sign for a bishop;" yet† admits him to be "remarkable for his knowledge,

* Vol. i. 330.

† *Ib.* 329.

reading, and ecclesiastical investigations ” He indeed adds—“ Every thing I have seen and read, confirms me in his partiality, credulity, and unfair representations:” but this was “ wherever the interests of the party which he espoused were concerned.” By this Dr. Haweis, could not have intended any thing relative to the present question; but has in view the Arian heresy, of which he supposed Eusebius to be a favourer; although, as is subjoined, he is vindicated from it by the learned translator of Mosheim, and it might have been still added, by many others, much higher in the estimation of the world for learning and judgment, than Dr. Haweis.

But to go on with the fathers of the fourth century: the authorities against the sense of Austin and of Calvin, are so abundant, that they have not met the resistance of the feeble attempts made by some, in relation to earlier fathers. There shall be recited a few of the authorities; not for the purpose of supporting what has been considered the scriptural doctrine under the present point; but to show, that the predestination discoursed of in that age, although here thought an intrusion of philosophy into the dominion of the religion of the gospel, was under the view of its being founded on prescience: for although this aspect of the doctrine is here supposed to be quite different from the scriptural; yet, by keeping within view the change which the doctrine must have undergone, before it became presented in this form, we shall best perceive the steps, by which it passed from its scriptural to its metaphysical meaning.

The succeeding quotations shall be taken, as the passages stand in Vossius’s history of the Pelagian

controversy, Book 6, Thesis 8th. And a few authors shall suffice, from each of the two great branches, then considered as constituting the one Christian church.

To begin with latin writers: Jerome, whose high rank in the list of Christian writers there can be no occasion to establish, delivers himself as follows—“The heat of the sun is one, and according to the different qualities of bodies subjected to its influence, it makes some liquid and others hard; it dissolves some, and binds others; for wax is melted and clay is hardened, and yet the nature of heat is not different. So likewise is the goodness and clemency of God. The vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that is the people of Israel, it hardens. But the vessels of mercy which he hath prepared for glory, whom he hath called, that is us, who are not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles, he does not save independently on the dictates of reason and without judicial verity, but from causes going before, because some have not received the Son of God, but others were willing to receive him of their own accord. But these vessels of Mercy are not only a people of the Gentiles, but also they who, from among the Jews, were willing to believe, and the result is their being one people of believers. By which it is manifested, that the choice is not of nations, but of the wills of men.”* Thus writes St. Jerome, as zealous an adversary of Pelagius, as St. Austin himself; and yet, as Vossius remarks, treading in the steps of those who had gone before him, on the subject of the quotation given.

But it may be worth while, in consideration of the celebrity of this father, to attend to a few more extracts

* Page 555.

from his works. He says—"According to which he purposed to save by faith alone, whom he" (God) "fore-knew as believers, and whom he freely called to salvation, them, doing works tending to salvation, much more will he glorify."* Again, discoursing on the words—"Who separated me from my mother's womb,"† he states an objection of certain hereticks, afterwards proceeding thus—"To which it may be simply answered, that this comes from the prescience of God, that whom he knows as one who will be just, he loves before his birth, and whom he knows as a sinner, he hates before he sins. Not that either in love or in hatred there is iniquity with God, but that he ought not any otherwise to reckon those, of whom he knows that they will be either sinners or just. It is for us, as men, to judge only of the present; but for him, to whom things future are as though already done, to form his judgment from the end, and not from the beginning."‡

To Jerome shall succeed Hilary, the Roman deacon, or whoever was the author of the work commonly ascribed to him. If Hilary were the author, any objections of his day to his orthodoxy do not extend to the present point, on which he stands uncontradicted. And therefore fault found with him in other respects, even makes in favour of his authority in this particular. Besides, it is common to appeal to his writings, as illustrative of the doctrine of the church, at the time in which he lived.

Hilary writes thus—"Those whom he" (God) "fore-knew as devoted to him, them he chose to receive the promised rewards."§ Again—"He would have it understood, that they are worthy who are the children of

* Page 555. † Gal. i. 15. ‡ Page 555. § Page 554.

promise; that is, whom God foreknew as those who would receive his promise." And again—"The prescience of God is that, by which he holds it ascertained what will be every one's will in which he will remain, by which he will be either condemned or crowned." And again, discoursing on that in St. John—"None of them is lost but the son of perdition,"* he says—"So likewise of those whom God foreknew as believers, none of them is deprived of the promise, because it is so done, as God foreknew it would be."†

Other latin writers are cited by Vossius, but one more only shall be here mentioned. It is Austin, who may be considered in two characters on the present question; as adopting, first, the current opinions of his age, and afterwards in the Pelagian controversy, opinions until then unheard of in the Christian church.

Speaking of what is said in Ephesians i. 4—"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world," he remarks—"I do not see on what grounds it is said, unless from prescience of deserts—that is of faith and works of piety."‡ Discoursing of Jacob, he says—"He was not chosen, that he might be good, but being good, he was in a capacity to be chosen."§ And speaking of the elect—"God chose them according to his own favour, and according to their righteousness."||

Vossius notices, that after Austin's change of sentiment, and in his book of Retractions, in which, with the greatest candour, he acknowledges many errors appearing in his early works, he did not retract the above positions: which seems a strong proof, that he consider-

* xvii. 12. † Page 555. ‡ Page 557. § Page 557.

|| Page 557.

ed his lately adopted sentiments on the subject of predestination, as an innovation, and not to be too boldly obtruded on the Christian world; which might have seemed chargeable on a retractation, that must have involved in it a censure on all who had gone before him.

From Latin writers, the transition is to the Greek: and the beginning shall be with Basil, who acquired the title of “the great.” This eminent man writes as follows*—“Although the apostle says, that the vessels of wrath are fitted for destruction; let us not think, that Pharaoh was made bad. For thus, the faults would be transferred to his Maker. But, when you hear of vessels, understand that every one of us is made for some use: as in a great house, one vessel is made of gold, another of silver, another of shell, and another of wood. Therefore, the will of every one is compared to materials of this sort. For, the golden vessel is he, who is sincere and without guile in his mind and manners. The silver vessel is he, who is a little inferiour to the other in dignity and value. That of shell and of clay, who is wise to earthly things, and fit to be broken and destroyed. That of wood is he, who is easily debased by sin, and affords fuel for eternal fire. So likewise, he is a vessel of wrath, who, like a vessel, receives into himself every operation of the devil; and because of the filth which it has from corruption, is fit for no use, but is worthy to perish. Wherefore, when there was need that Pharaoh should be destroyed, the wise Ruler of our spirits sustained him so far, as that he might be a conspicuous and famous example to all; and rendered useful to others, because of the evils born with (since he himself was incapable, on

* Page 563.

account of his great wickedness.) He hardened him, aggravating the evil by long suffering; that at last, his iniquity growing to the height, the judgment of God on him might be shown to be the more just. Therefore, inflicting the plagues sparingly on him in the beginning, and increasing his hardness by little and little, he did not soften him; but found him, as a despiser of God in the beginning, so, after the punishments brought on him, bearing them by long habit. And even thus, he did not deliver him over to death, until he threw himself headlong into it; while, trusting in the arrogance of his heart, he dared to enter on the road of the just; and thought that the Red Sea might be passed, as by the people of God, so by him also." In this passage, there may be clearly perceived the anti-calvinistick principles, on which the case of Pharaoh is explained. His wickedness was from himself; while yet, God so ordered the course of nature; as that his own high designs should be carried into effect.

The next named shall be Cyril, of Alexandria; not so much from respect to his character, which is here conceived to have been marked by anti-christian violence; as because he rose on the controversies of his day, to be a sort of oracle in theology. Paraphrasing St. Matthew xx. 23—"To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give;" he says*—"It is not mine to grant to your request, the highest honour which is reserved in the foreknowledge of the Father, for those whom the highest degree of effort in contending shall have commended to it."

* Page 565.

It is not consistent with the design here entertained, to go below the fourth century, in quest of authorities to the effect stated. Vossius, however, has done this; and there is the use resulting from it, that it shows the long continuance in the Greek church of a predestination founded on prescience. St. Austin had driven it out of the Latin church, long before the days of many of the writers whom Vossius cites. Nevertheless, as there is regarded the limit of the fourth century; the only remaining writer who shall be noticed, is St. Chrysostom. In the character however of this celebrated man, there are some circumstances, which seem to demand especial attention to his doctrine.

Chrysostom, speaking of the sentences pronounced on Jacob and Esau, says—"This was not rashly done, but that there might be fulfilled the prediction of God concerning works; which saith, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. For, since God foreknew the future, he predicted the virtue of the former, and the wickedness of the latter."* In another place, the same father speaks thus of the same case of Jacob and Esau—"That it may appear, says he, the apostle, that the election was made according to foreknowledge."† And in another place, commenting on the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, he says—"His people, whom he had before foreknown to be fit, and to be recipients of the faith." Other passages might be cited from the voluminous works of the same author; but they are rendered unnecessary, by the explicitness with which Calvin mentions his name and his opinions, as in opposition to his own theory.

* Page 552. † Page 553.

To show still further the notoriety of the fact, the following epitome of Chrysostom's sentiments on predestination, is here transcribed from Du Pin's review of his publications. Du Pin, having exhibited his author's doctrine on the subject of freewill, states these as the conclusions which he draws from them—"God did not predestinate men, but as he foresaw their merits: Foreknowledge is not the cause of the event of things, but God foresaw them, because they shall happen. He calls all men; Jesus Christ died for all men; he prepared his grace for all; he predestinates those whom he foresaw would use his grace well."

But, as was already intimated, the name of Chrysostom deserves to have an especial stress laid on it, because of his fervent piety and his eminent reputation throughout the Christian world; for a time indeed under a cloud, in consequence of a party made against him by the empress Eudocia; but abundantly cleared and an object of universal homage, after his decease.

For his opinions have been here brought forward, not so much to show what he thought, as for the bearing of the fact on the question of the creed of Christian people of his day. Although he died in banishment, yet it was not long afterwards, when his remains were translated, by imperial order, from the place of his death in an inhospitable country, to be buried in the capital of the empire, and in the church, in which persuasion had so often hung upon his lips. His corpse being brought by water, and having to cross the Propontis in the way, the waves of this sea are said to have been covered by boats and vessels, filled with spectators of the procession. On its reaching of Constantinople, it was carried to the

place of its deposit, in the chariot of the reigning emperor; who, attending with his sisters, put his face to the coffin, and threw his mantle over it, in testimony of his sense of the wrong done by his father and his mother, to the venerable deceased. Even they who, in the lifetime of the holy man, had entertained prejudices against his character, now joined in the general voice of Christendom, which had been loud in his favour while he lived. And thus, as Dr. Cave remarks, in the conclusion of his history of this great man—"After all the envy and malice of men against him, God brought forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as noon day; and showed, that however oppressed for a while, the memory of the just shall be blessed, and his name be had in everlasting remembrance."

Such was the reputation of the confessedly anti-calvinistick Chrysostom. But is it not astonishing, if the Calvinistick theory be correct, that not an individual should have stepped forward to impeach the bishop of an imperial city, for departing from the doctrines of grace; and to tarnish a reputation, which flourished with a denial of them? And yet among calumnies the most cruel, a charge, so reasonable as this would have been on the principles supposed, is not to be met with. Not only so, when Austin, within less than a century afterwards, broached opinions in contrariety to those of Chrysostom, it does not appear, that the recent popularity of the modern doctrine had the effect of bringing the more ancient under condemnation. The reason is obvious. The former was rendered diffident, by a consciousness of its recent origin. The general and just indignation against the Pelagian heresy, prepared the way for the reception

of the opinions of Austin, but could not so far stem the stream of past habits of thinking, as to find dangerous error in those of Chrysostom. Indeed, this could not have been done, without involving Austin himself in heresy, during the greater part of his ministry. For, as was intimated before, he had written as much like an Arminian, as Chrysostom himself; nor did he discover the error, if it were one, until he was carried to a different theory, in the heat of his opposition to Pelagius. In short, if Chrysostom, throughout his life, and if Austin during the greater part of his, are supposed to have been strangers to Christian verity; it is a charge, which drags all Christendom along with them.

What then shall we say to these things? Could the great lights of the Christian church, while she was yet bright with the glory of her recent martyrs, have proclaimed, in the most populous cities of the Roman empire, the doctrines which have been cited from them? Could they have done this, not only without contradiction, but while they continued to fill the highest rank of honour and estimation? And yet, shall they be supposed to have done it on the ruins of a preceding doctrine, like that now called the Calvinistick; which must thus be supposed to have gone down, no one knows how, and to have perished, as to any record of its past establishment? This is too extravagant a supposition, to be admitted; and should be precluded by the acknowledgment of Calvin, adverted to in the beginning. For it has been seen, that he charges the fathers with conceding too much, lest they should draw on themselves the ridicule of the philosophers; quoting, in another place, many passages to this effect; and saying,

that he should have quoted more, had he not been restrained, by the apprehension of being accused of craftily passing by what made the most against him. There was therefore too much of the same matter, even for the limits of his large volume; and this is the reason of his acknowledging of the fact so amply and unequivocally, as it must be confessed he has done; and in language, that applies not to the fourth century only, but to all the time preceding: so that while Mr. Toplady endeavours, by partial quotations, to divert a few fragments of sentences to the Calvinistick theology; Calvin is so ingenuous, as to renounce all endeavours of this sort. Dr. Haweis, indeed, has not been so quick-sighted as Mr. Toplady, in the discovery of supposed truth, in the quarter here referred to; but has taken another course, that of denying the character of Christian, to almost all the celebrated characters of their respective ages; endeavouring to make up for the loss of Christian virtue in those who have themselves written, or who have been written of by others, by the strange charity of the supposition, that truth and real piety must have existed among, and been confined to persons, who have neither written themselves, nor have had their merits recorded by their cotemporaries. Even with this help to calculation, he would have found it difficult to have made up the army of saints and martyrs, had he not called in to his assistance the hereticks of the respective ages, supposing them to have possessed virtues of which history has left no record, and doubting of the reality of crimes, of which the most unequivocal testimony appears.

But to return to Austin and his cotemporaries, and

to those who, like Chrysostom and others noticed, lived not long before him: It is evident, that at the time when the Pelagian heresy arose, it might be said, during the whole tract of time before (but the subject leads to the notice of that period in particular) the Christian church was entirely a stranger to the doctrines now called Calvinistick, so that it might be said, in the words of the psalmist, on the supposition that the said doctrine held so important a station as some suppose, in the scale of Christian theology, that "truth was perished from the earth;" until she arose at the call of Austin, to combat the heresy of the Pelagians.

This was indeed a very bold error, dispensing with the necessity of divine grace; which the church of God had always taught to be essential to the beginning of all good in man, and to its subsequent increase and perfection. Austin might have been sufficiently fortified against the assault of the Pelagians, by the scriptures; and if it had been necessary, by what had been held by all the Christian bishops who had lived before him. But those people so pressed him with difficulties, attendant on subjects brought under notice by their heresy, that his ardent mind, instead of resolving those difficulties into the imperfection of the human powers, seized on any dogma, that seemed fruitful of philosophical answers to his opponents. And the further it was from their opinions, the more welcome it became to the mind of Austin.

To show how different was the mind of Austin before the appearance of Pelagius, the following is here given from what he says, when commenting on John viii. 47—"He that is of God, heareth God's word."

What follows?—"Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God, is affirmed of those who are not only corrupted by sin—for this is an evil common to all—but also foreknown as persons who would not believe with that faith, by which alone they might be freed from the obligation of their sins." And there is more to the same purpose.

If the Calvinistick doctrine be indeed of the essence of grace, as some suppose, it might have been expected, that when the light of truth arose at last on the mind of Austin, he would have perceived, that he had hitherto been a stranger to the free grace of God. But no: for although he taught otherwise than he had done formerly; yet he does not appear to have conceived of his new theory, that it was essential to Christian verity; as it seems to others, who have followed him in his doctrine.

It might also have been expected, that the fathers who had lived before him, both Greek and Latin, would have been declared to have lived and died under grievous error; and that the Christian world had been under the like error, in admiring such men as Chrysostom and Nazianzen, while living; and in honouring their memories, after they were dead. But no such thing happened; and they were happier in this respect, than Origen was in another; whose memory was roughly handled, because of errors transmitted to posterity in his works. Whence this difference? It was, because all men were aware of the novelty of Austin's second thoughts. They were made current by his high reputation, and by the merited abhorrence of the opinions of his opponents; but still, under the recollection that

the former were unknown, until the error of the latter brought them into notice.

But after all, the system of Austin was not altogether that, which has since been denominated from the name of Calvin. What is called the perseverance of the saints, is in direct contradiction of the former system, and it has nothing of what has been since called the covenant of works; invented for the giving of an air of justice to the imputation of Adam's sin. Even this does not appear in so offensive a shape as in the modern doctrine: for although, according to the representation of Austin, all incur eternal damnation by the fault of the first man; yet it is rather through the medium of a contamination of nature, than by the transfer of his personal sin, in consequence of his being considered in the character of a federal representative. Of free-will, Austin did not suppose that it is utterly lost; and he only held it to be much weakened; so as not to be competent to any good, without the grace of God: And in this, no Arminian dissents from him. The last mentioned matter is also placed in different points of view, in the ancient system and in the modern. For although Austin held, like those who had gone before him, that without it we can do nothing; yet he represents it as acting without violence to the will. Notwithstanding all these points of difference, the sentiments of St. Austin must be confessed to be Calvinistick, in respect to the independence of predestination on works or faith foreseen.

The author finds it proper, in this place, to state what he thinks the changes which the doctrine of predestination has undergone, from the time of the apostles to that of St. Austin.

1st. As the term is used in the scriptures, it has reference no further than to the election of Gentiles, to be in the same state of visible covenant with those of the Jews, who should embrace the faith of Christ. And there was great occasion to exhibit this subject under the view of an antecedent divine determination; in order to guard against the objections which would otherwise have arisen out of the clear evidences in the Old Testament, that the Jews were the peculiar people of God, and that their law was a dispensation divinely instituted for perpetuity. And further, the same reason which induced the use of the words predestination and election in the holy scriptures, extended to the use of them in the same sense; while there continued in the church any remnant of the distinction between Jewish and Gentile Christians. This may reasonably be supposed to have comprehended the term in which St. Ignatius wrote; but more forcibly applies to the day of the Roman Clement, who had been a companion of St. Paul; and who, like the apostle, uses the same words in reference to the same subject.

2dly. When there ceased the dispute to which the said subject had given occasion, there would naturally follow a disuse of the terms attached to it. And this is conceived to be the reason, of there being so little use of the terms in any sense, between the beginning of the second century and the beginning of the fourth: which will evidently appear to those, who shall peruse the authors within those limits, with a view to the present question.

3dly. At about the period the last mentioned, some of the most distinguished writers of the Christian church,

beginning to have a reference in their writings to questions agitated among the philosophers, occasionally touch on the question which relates to freewill, as it is called.* And in so doing, they universally—as is a point not denied—deliver their sentiments in favour of that attribute of the mind, and in contrariety to the doctrine of the Stoicks, which affirmed a fate, subjecting gods and men to what had been preordained. The result of this, was the taking of predestination from its original sphere, and the applying of it to individual condition in another life; still however in connexion with prescience, on which predestination was held to have been grounded.

But 4thly. At length arose St. Austin; who, in his early writings, trod in the steps of his predecessors; but having his mind afterwards irritated in his controversy with the Pelagians, conceived, that the further he removed from them, the nearer he came to the truth. This led him into the track of a discriminating predestination; which precluded a great proportion of mankind from the possibility of being saved. His great name gave a currency to his opinions; and their being countenanced by those who sat at the time and for some time following in the papal chair, riveted the hard chain on succeeding ages. For the same church, which had sainted Chrysostom and others, the teachers of a predestination founded on prescience, enjoined silence on all those who complained of the harshness of some of the opinions of St. Austin; although they were no more Pelagians than himself.

The most remarkable interposition of a bishop of Rome, in defence of the doctrines of St. Austin, was

* The “*Liberum Arbitrium*,” of the Latins and the “*αυτεξιστιον*” of the Greeks.

that of Pope Cœlestine, his cotemporary. This prelate, after the death of the other, censured some French presbyters, who had faulted his doctrine; and the French bishops, who had let such conduct pass in silence. Cœlestine drew up nine articles, under the name of Aphorisms, against the opinions opposed to those of Austin; which articles relate to grace and original sin, and say nothing of predestination.

Further, Cœlestine added to his articles a declaration, in which he alluded to some deep and perplexing difficulties, which he wished to avoid. The Roman catholic historian, Du Pin, remarks, that some supposed the deep and perplexing difficulties to be the efficacy of grace and gratuitous predestination. But the said historian, although he will not affirm that these are articles of faith, is of opinion that Cœlestine lays down the first of them and supposes the other, in the Aphorism; and that therefore, under the name of deep and perplexing difficulties, there were alluded to other matters, which are specified by the historian. And besides, as he remarks, the adversaries of Austin having principally opposed him on these two points; Cœlestine, whose purpose it was to confute them, could not but maintain those doctrines.

Du Pin's opinion is confirmed by the subsequent reputation of Austin, within the see of Rome; however inconsistent this may seem, with her veneration for Chrysostom, Nazianzen, and many others. And perhaps it is not a little owing to this circumstance, that the see of Rome has not found herself at liberty, in later ages, to speak explicitly to the present point; but has generally had recourse to language, which opposing parties have construed to their respective purposes.

In the council of Trent, when, after a long course of metaphysical investigation, the decrees were at last formed, the combatants, on each side, claimed to themselves the victory. Afterwards, in the dispute between the Jansenists and the Jesuits, although the court of Rome began in the same wary disposition; yet, they had not the forbearance to continue in it. In the first investigations which the controversy occasioned, the express decisions of Austin kept at bay the ascendancy of the interest of the Jesuits, and suspended the determinations of the popes. Even afterwards, when the bull of condemnation fell on five propositions of Jansenius, it was still with a salvo for the credit of St. Austin, whom, it was said, Jansenius had ill explained. To him who now writes it appears, that, in the bustle made by this business in France, each party was compelled by its situation, to attack its adversary on grounds different from those on which it conceived the merits of its cause to rest. The Jesuits, with their favourers, the papal and the regal courts, were averse to the opinions of St. Austin; but could no otherwise condemn them, than under the name of the opinions of Jansenius. On the other hand, the Jansenists, who believed the propositions which the papal bull condemned, instead of hazarding the expedient of denying the authority of the bull, had recourse to that of disputing the correctness of the quotations. And, although this brought on the carpet a new question, whether the pope were infallible in fact as well as in faith; yet, in resisting the pretensions of the former, they were sure of support, not only from the parliament and the people, but also from that great number of the French clergy, who were zealous asser-

tors of the liberties of the Gallican church. These circumstances are stated, merely as illustrative of the perplexity which is here supposed to have grown in the Roman catholic church, out of a contrariety existing between the opinions of the early fathers and those of Austin; sanctioned by that publick authority of his day, which declared in favour of his doctrines. In that church, considering her claim to an uninterrupted integrity of faith, any determination, applying to the hinge on which the controversy concerning predestination turns, could not but displace either the name of Austin, or the names of Chrysostom and many others, from the catalogue of saints. On this account, there cannot be denied the praise of discretion to the council of Trent, in regard to the general controversy; and to the court of Rome also, for a while, in the controversy about Jansenius. But, in regard to protestant churches, who profess to venerate the fathers, and yet not to follow them any further than they follow scripture, it is to be wished, that they would cut the knot which they will never be able to untie; excluding the subject from the sacred sphere of theology, and referring it to that of metaphysical philosophy.

Among the quotations of Mr. Milner from St. Austin, he has brought forward the father's application of the passage in the seventh chapter to the Romans, concerning the struggle between the flesh and the spirit; which he makes descriptive of the apostle himself, before his acceptance of gospel grace. This is a construction of the passage, confessedly subversive of Calvinism. But Austin had not yet laid the foundation of the system.

Further, on the subject of universal redemption, on which the father had been reserved, Mr. Milner de-

livers himself in favour of the doctrine, adding—"The notion of particular redemption was unknown to the ancients, and I wish it had remained equally unknown to the moderns."* Calvin would not have owned him for a disciple, with such a sentiment; and it may be questioned, how far it is fair for Mr. Milner to call his own opinions by the name of Calvinism, when they do not hang together with the consistency of that system; and when, in a very important point, they are zealously contradicted by the eminent man, in whose name they appear to glory.

But, in regard to the same father, the most glaring inconsistency of Mr. Milner, is his not noticing of the poison of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; according to the character which he had given of the doctrine, when found in Cyprian. Mr. Milner apologizes for the latter father, on the principle of the supposed purity of the Christian church, at the earlier period: he would not have pleaded any thing of this sort, as reaching to the age of St. Austin. But this father is as express to the point, as Cyprian had been; or, as is the church of England at the present day. Not only so, perceiving it to press on his novel system, he relieved this by the distinction of all grace given to the elect in baptism, except the grace of perseverance.

Concerning the subjects which have been referred to, it is well known how very much men in the pursuit of useful learning, are disgusted by the useless and often unintelligible discussions, which have grown out of them; and also, how much men of profane wit have

amused themselves and others, at the expense of those who have been so unprofitably employed. On the other hand, if these subjects are constituent parts of our holy religion, there is an irreligious levity, in discountenancing argument designed to explain and recommend them. But if the opinion here maintained be correct, of their being an excrescence on the body of revealed truth; it may be cut off, without danger to the constitution on which it has fastened.

2 OF REDEMPTION.

The Question not found in a controversial Form, in the Early Fathers—Passages from them—Inadmissibility of Evasion.

IF the Fathers were anti-calvinistick, on the first point of the controversy, it may easily be presumed that they were the same, on the other four points. Accordingly, we find them such; and that in the most decisive of all shapes, not as contradicting the opposite opinions, which do not appear to have existed in the minds of any persons; but as incidentally dropping sentiments, which Calvinism cannot reconcile to its doctrines.

On consulting the very early fathers, relatively to the point of the universality of Christ's redemption, we should look in vain for its being laid down in a controversial form. This very circumstance is evidence, that no controversy had been yet raised, by an endeavour at the limitation of its extent. Enough however is occasionally dropped, to show that such a limitation could not have been the current doctrine.

Ireneus, has been attended to, on the subject of election. Let him be heard again on the present subject; on which he speaks expressly, when he describes Christ as "made the mediator between God and men; propitiating for all, the Father, against whom we have sinned."*

Let Clemens of Alexandria speak next. He says—
"The Lord, since he loves mankind, exhorts all to an

* Book 5. ch. 17.

acknowledgment of the truth.”* Again—“Hear, you who are afar off and you who are near; the word is hid from none; the law is common; the light has shone on all men.”† Again this author, commenting on the divine offers to the wicked in sundry places of scripture, remarks, as the result—“It clearly demonstrates both of these points, that God foreknew the future; and that his benignity, gave to freewill an opportunity of repentance.”‡ This is said, immediately after noticing the case of Pharaoh, concerning whom God said to Moses—“Go and tell him to let my people depart; howbeit I know, that he will not let them go.” Clemens says also in his *Stromata*—“Since all men are called, they who are willing to hear, are denominated the called,”§ (meaning emphatically) And again—“All things are equally proposed to all, by the divine Being; and himself is without blame.”|| And again in the same—“Never then were mankind held in hatred by the Saviour; who, because of his excellent kindness to men, did not despise the weakness of human flesh, but having put it on him, came to the common salvation of men.” And soon after—“The eternal word is the same to every one, and the common Saviour of all men.”

Origen has been allowed to be a standard of Christian doctrine of his day; except in points, for which his name was called in question long after his decease. This learned man,¶ commenting on that passage of the gospel, in which Christ invites to himself the weary and heavy laden, under the promise that he will give them rest, makes the offer coextensive with the propensity to

* In his exhortation. † *Ibid.* ‡ *Pædagogus* chap. 9.

§ *Book 1.* || *Book 7.* ¶ *Against Celsus*, book 3.

sin; speaking thus—“Therefore all men, labouring and heavy laden on account of an inbred propensity to sin, are called by the word of God to accept of rest.”

The same Origen, speaking of Jesus, says concerning him—“Being willing to heal, not those only who are in one corner of the world, but all that is in it and those who are every where: for he came the saviour of all men.”* And in the same work—speaking of the Almighty Father, he says—“Not sparing his Son, but delivering him up for us all; being his Lamb, that he might take away the sin of the world; dying, the Lamb of God for every one.”† Further, in his Latin tracts on St. Matthew‡ he delivers himself as follows:—“Consider, that he” (Christ) “says that the kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world for none but the righteous; and that therefore Christ, their king, will give it to them; but that everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels; and not, as the kingdom for the righteous, for those to whom it is said: Depart from me, ye cursed. Because, so far as in him lies, he elected men, not to perdition, but to life and joy. But sinners join themselves to the devil. And as they who are saved are made equal to the angels and become children of the resurrection, and the sons of God and angels; so, they who perish are equalled to the angels of the devil and become his children.”

Many such passages as the above might be taken from Origen; and they ought to weigh, certainly not the less and perhaps the more, for the faults found in him in other respects; since the persecution which infested the memory of him would not have failed to have seized on

* Book 4. against Celsus. † Book 8. ‡ xxv. 34.

any thing chargeable with false opinion. Even in his lifetime, and in the height of his reputation, it would have been impossible to have obtruded on the Christian world such material innovations on their system, as the above are considered to be by some.

There can be no question of the orthodoxy of Cyprian; who compares the universality of divine grace to that of the light of the sun: "For," says he, "if this is poured on all alike, how much more does Christ, the true sun, bestow equally on all in his church the light of eternal life."*

Arnobius has never been supposed to have given any other than a true account of Christianity, in the contrast in which he has placed it with the religion of the Gentiles. This author, professedly answering the objection that all do not receive the benefit, although all are called, says—"The fountain of life is laid open to all; and no one is prohibited or driven away from the right of drinking."†

Gregory of Nazianzum, so much celebrated as a model of Christian piety and humility, eloquently sets off the sentiment here sustained, where he says—"The little currents of his" (Christ's) "blood have restored the whole world; and is to all men, that which rennet is to milk; gathering and joining us in one. Oh great and holy passover, and atonement of the whole world!" And, to show that the expression, "the whole world," is not used loosely and carelessly, he opposes universal redemption to what would have been partial: "Not," says he, "of a small part of the world, nor for a little while, but of the whole world, and a never dying expiation."‡

* Ep. 76, ad Magnum. † Bock 11. ‡ Orat. 41.

Cyril, of Alexandria says—*“ One, excelling all in dignity, placed his life for all.” And then he goes on to explain his sense of this universality, by making it co-extensive with mortality.

The celebrated Athanasius is full of the sentiment: And it is to be hoped, that his merit in combating for the Christian faith in one department, has not been counterbalanced by his sacrificing of it in another. In his *Treatise on the Incarnation of the Word*, he says—“ It was necessary that death should be born for all, in order that there might be paid the debt due from all.” And again—“ He” (Christ) “ died for the redemption of all.” And again—“ He quickly consummated the death endured by him for the salvation of all.”

But it would be tedious to select sayings of this sort from the writings of Athanasius, in which they abound so much. He is generally venerated by Calvinists, for his zeal against the Arian heresy; but surely no man’s language was further removed from theirs than his must be seen to have been, in this treatise of his on the incarnation of the word; in another, in *Exposition of the Faith*; and in others of his numerous compositions.

The inconsistency of Dr. Haweis is especially conspicuous, in the instance of his character of Athanasius. The great leader of the opposition to the heresy of Arius might of course, on that account, look for some mercy at the hands of the depraver of the characters of the fathers generally; not excepting those who were as inimical to the cause of Arius, as Athanasius himself. Accordingly, after many commendations of his doctrine, Dr. Haweis says—“ Take him for all in all, he seems

* *Ad Egyp. Monachos.*

the brightest ornament of that high station, to which he had been advanced. I shall look for greater Christians in humbler life, no where for a more able defender of the cause of God and truth.”* After this, it is natural to look for some little evidence of a title to such a character; or at least, some slight expression of what Dr. Hæweis considers as orthodoxy, on some one of the Calvinistick points. But no instance of this is produced, from any of the numerous works of Athanasius. The truth is, that no instance of it was to be found; and not this only, but that there were to be found divers contradictions of the leading points of that theory, of which there are instances in the quotations made. The overlooking of these, is a great relaxation from the severity of the system of Dr. Hæweis; which can be accounted for, only by a counterbalance of the merits of the same character, on other points. In any one destitute of the like advantage, the asserting of the universality of Christ’s redemption, would probably have been treated as an invasion of the prerogative of the divine sovereignty.

Epiphanius says—“First he” (Christ) “offered himself, that he might set aside the sacrifice of the old Testament, when he offered up a more perfect and a living one for the whole world.”*

The author of the book entitled: “Of the Call of the Gentiles,” which, although erroneously ascribed as to the authorship, is confessedly full of true Christian doctrine, records as follows, in book 2, chapter 16, entitled “That Christ died for all—There is no reason to doubt, that Christ died for sinners, of which number he was not himself one. Did not Christ die for all? But

* 1. vol. 329. † Hæres. 55.

wherefore did Christ die for all?" And afterwards—
"All, whether circumcision or uncircumcision, is included under sin; and one guilty state lay heavily on all; and among the more and the less wicked, there was no one who could have been saved, without the redemption of Christ: which redemption brought itself to the whole world; and was, without discrimination, made known to all."

Jerome, in his second book against the Pelagians, says—"God, hath pity on the human race and is not willing that what he hath made should perish." Again—"He" (God) "wills that all should be saved and come to the acknowledgment of the truth." And again—"It is of the will of the Lord, that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

In the selection of the preceding quotations, regard has been had to the brevity of the passages: But there shall be a larger extract from Chrysostom, who thus comments in his 7th homily, on John i. 9.—"If he" (Christ) "thus enlightens every man that comes into the world, how happens it, that men remain unenlightened; since all know not the worship of Christ? How then does he enlighten every man? He does this, as much as in him lies. If any, of their own accord, shutting the eyes of their minds, will not direct their sight to the rays of this light; it is not from the nature of the light that they remain in darkness; but it is of the personal wickedness of those who render themselves unworthy of so great a gift. For if grace is spread over all, it does not fly from nor slight the Jew, nor the Greek, nor the Barbarian, nor the Scythian, nor the freeman, nor the slave, nor the male, nor the female, nor the old,

nor the young. It is the same to all; it easily manifests itself to all; it honours all alike. But they who neglect to enjoy the gift, may weigh this their blindness in the same equal balance. For since the entrance is laid open to all, and forbidden to none; it is only from their own wickedness, that abandoned and depraved men refuse to enter.”

And the same eloquent preacher, discoursing, in his 16th homily, on the 9th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, says—“It is not lawful to say, I cannot; and to accuse the” [Supreme] “workman. For if he has made us impotent—thus he” (St. Paul) “has afterwards taught—it is his reproach. Whence is it then, says he, that many cannot—whence, that many will not? For all can, if they will. Moreover, St. Paul also says, I would that all men were even as I, because he knew that all might be as he. For he would not have said so, if it could not have been.”

Even Austin, before his controversy with the Pelagians, discoursing on psalm 95, speaks as follows—“The Redeemer shed his blood and purchased the world. Do you ask what he purchased? Observe what he gave, and learn from it what he purchased. The blood of Christ was the price. Of so great a price, what is the value? What but the whole world? What but all nations?”

It would be easy to swell the size of this detail to a great extent. But the author desists from what he thinks a needless enlargement. He knows at the same time, that the remark applied to scripture authorities, distinguishing between all men, and all sorts of men, will claim a place in this department also. But setting aside

the very injudicious language, which, on the principle of this interpretation, has been made choice of by men eminent in their respective days; and further, how incautious it must have been in them, to be so heedless of the errors to which their writings would be abused; to give even plausibility to the distinction, it should at least appear, that the same writers have, in other passages of their works, expressed sentiments hostile to the doctrine of the universality of Christ's redemption—that the opinion should appear somewhere concerning the death of Christ, of its being designed for a limited and elect number only; and of its being over-ruled, in regard to all others, so as to make it the mean of their damnation. But it will not be said, that there have been made any declarations to this effect; which would have been a more definitive phraseology, limiting the extent of a way of speaking, otherwise appearing so loose and so full of danger.

3 OF FREEWILL.

A Caution—Sundry Fathers—The Subject as it respects
Original Sin.

BEFORE we enter on this point, as it respects the fathers, it may be proper to guard against misconception. They so abound with passages ascribing all good to the grace of God, that it would be a great error to suppose them attributing any thing to the will of fallen man, so as that it may be operative of good, of its own power and virtue. All is ascribed to grace; but this, consistently with human liberty, under the operation of the same, while, without it, there is no liberty, but the will is enslaved by sin.

We have a whole host of authorities in favour of what is understood by the word freewill; whether correctly used or not; and so far as is here recollected, not a single authority to the contrary. Most of the passages quoted under the former point, apply equally to the present, and it is here thought more proper to refer to, than to repeat them. But a few others, applying more pointedly to freewill, may be acceptable.

There has been already given from Justin, on the subject of predestination something which applies to this point also: But the following are more especially pertinent: In the first apology there is—“If man have not a power, by freewill, to avoid what is evil and to pursue what is good, no blame can attach to his actions, whatever they may be. But that it is of free choice either to live

rightly or to sin, we show thus.”* Again, in the dialogue after stating that it was in the power of God to have created the multitude of men at once, he goes on to show, that the divine plan took another course, thus—“ But, as he knew would be fit, he made both angels and men with freewill, to do well and justly; and he appointed the different times, according as it seemed good to him, that they should be endued with this freewill, and because, at the same time, he knew it would be good, he set forth his judgments both general and particular; there being yet maintained that free power of the will.”†

Ireneus writes thus—“ They who have done good shall have glory and honour, because they have done good; when it was in their power, not to have done it. But they who do it not, shall receive the just judgment of God, because they have not done good, when they might have done it.”‡

There follow two other quotations from Ireneus. “ But since all are of the same nature, and endued with power to retain and to work what is good, and also endued with power again to lose and not perform it; and since they are accordingly discriminated by men; how much more must it be so with God! Some are commended, and obtain a worthy testimony of their good choice and perseverance: But others are censured, and obtain a merited loss; because they have hated what is just and good.”§ And soon after—“ If then, it were not in us to do or not to do these things; what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord himself, to give advice to do some things and from some things to

* Thirlby page 64. † Thirlby page 356. ‡ Book 4. ch. 71.

§ Book. 4. ch. 72.

abstain? But since man is possessed of freedom from the beginning; and God is possessed of freedom, according to whose image man was made; there is always given to him the advice to hold to the good, which is performed by that obedience which is to God. And not only in works, but also in faith, God has preserved to man a will free and with the power of self determination."

Tertullian, against Marcion, writes thus—"Neither the reward of good nor that of evil could be justly dispensed to him, who should have been good or evil of necessity, and not of will."* Here from the opposition stated between necessity and will, it appears, that by the latter is understood a faculty with self determination.

To the above there may be added the quotation following:—"Some think, that God must necessarily bestow on the unworthy, what he has promised; and they make his liberty a slavery. But if of necessity he bestows on us the symbol of his death" (meaning baptism) "he does it unwillingly. But who permits that to remain, which he does contrary to his will? For do not many afterwards fall away? Is not the gift taken away from many? These are they who creep in, who having entered on the faith of penitence, build on the sand their house which is soon to fall."† The passage is not only to the purpose for which it is produced, but is hostile to the point of final perseverance. And yet, it does not seem to have been an object to condemn the doctrine; but the contrary to it is taken for granted. This is in consistency with what the present work maintains, of the comparatively recent origin of the

* Book 2. chap. 5. † Adv. Hermogenem.

opinion; and of its being utterly unknown in the ages here spoken of.

Tertullian is indeed very copious on the present subject. There shall be further given, not verbatim, but in a summary way, what he says concerning it in his 2d, book against Marcion. He sets forth, that man was formed with freewill; and that in no one thing was the image of God more conspicuous than in this. He further says, that this property of man's condition is confirmed by the law enjoined on him; because neither a law nor a threatening of death could have been given to one, who had not in his power the obedience which the law required. So far, Tertullian stands opposed to the necessarian scheme only: But what follows, is contrary alike to that and to Calvinism proper. For he goes on to say, that the same applies to subsequent laws; the discipline of which requires, that man should be free in his will, to obey or to contemn. Much follows to the same effect.

Tertullian elsewhere blames the same Marcion, for obtruding the principles of the Stoical philosophy on the Christian system. And he evidently considers him as contemplating Adam under a necessity of sinning. The point to which Marcion applied the doctrine of necessity was to prove, that Adam could not have been created by a being infinitely wise, powerful, and good; but, as the creed of this heretick pronounced, by a middle deity, between one essentially good and another essentially evil. This impious tenet would have been answered by a Calvinist, without reconciling, as is done by Tertullian, the prescience of God with the condition of man as a being, "*suæ potestatis*," or, who has a

power over his actions. But Tertullian held nothing in common with the Calvinists, as to this point. And yet, however much complaint was made of him because of his fall to Montanism, there has been nothing heard of his being objected to in early times, as a denier of the free and sovereign grace of God.

Clemens of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, writes thus — “If they do not repent, they shall be judged; some, because having it in their power, they would not exercise faith in God; and others, because having a will to that effect, they have not exerted themselves to be faithful.”*

The following authorities are from St. Cyprian— “Christ did not chide, or heavily threaten those who departed from him; but rather, turning to his apostles, he said: Will ye also go away? herein regarding the provision, by which man, left to his liberty and constituted in his own will, himself pursues for himself, either death or life.”† — “The liberty of believing or not believing, placed in the will in Deuteronomy: Behold I have set before you life and death.”‡

After such citations from the first three centuries, it must be superfluous to superadd the numerous concurring testimonies of the fourth. They combine to show, that in the ages of martyrs, there was professed publicly, and without reproach, and in various parts of Christendom, and by the most eminent doctors of the church, the very sentiment branded by Calvin with the accusation of arrogance, and affirmed by him to be the inspirer of that selfsufficiency, by which men are car-

* Book 8. † Book 1. Ep. 3. ad Cornelium.

‡ Book 3 ad Quirinum Tertium, 52.

ried to destruction. Strange, that so deadly a tree should be productive of so fine a fruit!

For the establishing that Chrysostom thought as is here stated, in this particular, Calvin's complaint of him on that account, will be a sufficient testimony: but there shall be given a quotation from Nazianzen and another from Jerome. The former says—"We are required to believe in paradise, that we may enjoy its felicity: We have received a commandment, that by obeying it, we may attain to glory. Not that God is ignorant of what is to come to pass, but that he gives the sanction of his law to the freedom of the will." Jerome comments on Is. 1. 19, 20, thus—"It saves freewill, that, on either side, the punishment or the reward may be not of the prejudging of God, but of the good deeds of the respective persons."

Not only do such men as Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, and Jerome, declare their minds openly and frequently, on that power in man which is denominated by the term freewill; but the same has been done by Austin, both before and after his controversy with the Pelagians. He continually affirms the existence of freewill in man; and that not lost, although considerably impaired by the apostasy. And it is a freewill distinctly opposed, not to force only, but to necessity likewise. Whether Austin were consistent in this, it is not to the purpose to determine. But it is certain, that justice has not been done, on this point, to the celebrated father spoken of. Calvin, who commends and follows him in so many particulars, but not in this, has not passed the suitable censure on him, for an opinion so radically corrupt in the view of that reformer. Austin has been often

cited, as laying the foundation, on which the doctrine of necessity has been since built. But it is here conceived, that this is very far from being a correct statement of his sentiments. If any inquiry should be made into the fact, considerable aid may be obtained from the work of Gerard Vossius, which brings into one point of view, the numerous passages found to the purpose in the different works of Austin, from which it will appear, that he was as strenuous an asserter of freewill as Chrysostom himself; who is especially blamed by Caivin on this account.

In another place, there will be given some of the testimonies to this effect, as collected by Vossius. But there shall be here given a passage to the purpose, not noticed by him. And it is selected because of the remarkable circumstance, that it is in a work of the father, composed some time after the beginning of the Pelagian controversy, but before he had written against the broachers of it. The passage is his comment on 1. John iii. 3. and is as follows: "Observe, how he does not take away freewill, in saying he purifieth himself. Who purifies us, but God? But God does not purify you against your will. Therefore, because you join your will to God, you purify yourself." The discourses on St. John's gospel and epistle are supposed to have been written about the year 416. And it was in the 422d that St. Austin began to publish in the controversy.

Agreeably to the plan of the present work it will be here proper to consider the point in question, as it respects the doctrine of original sin.

The challenge may be confidently made, for the producing of a single passage from any writer for the first 400 years, giving the least countenance to the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin; in such sort, as that all mankind incurred eternal damnation on its account. The writer of this was indeed surprised, at finding the idea expressed in the definition of original sin, in the very place in which Vossius is going on to show the consent of the fathers in that doctrine. But great was the author's surprise, at the inconsistency of this learned man; when, on examining the authorities, it appeared, that none of them go to the said point; although there are very many pertinent to the other points in his definition; which are temporal death, and the loss of original rectitude.

To search the fathers for a specifick contradiction of the comparatively modern doctrine above objected to, would be a fruitless labour: since it could hardly be expected to find any thing to this effect; if, as is here supposed, the idea was unknown at the time in question. It is accordingly conceived to be the proper way of treating the present subject, to take a view of some of Vossius's citations; and to show, how far they are from applying, as to the point here particularly in view.

The writer of this does not know or recollect any author, who has endeavoured to elicit a Calvinistick point out of Justin, except the above named Gerard Vossius; a man not only very learned, but also very candid; which is so eminently a part of his character, that, although a minister of a Calvinistick church, and living at a time, when the fire of animosity which had flamed at Dort was scarcely beginning to subside, he

had the courage to encounter obloquy and even persecution, by exhibiting, in the book here referred to, the unanimous sense of the fathers against the doctrine of predestination and some other points, as held by Calvinists.

Yet, the same excellent man* undertakes to give their consent in the doctrine of original sin, considered as comprehending these three particulars—Privation of original righteousness, subjection to temporal death, and eternal separation from God: and under the last, there is evidently not contemplated an entire extinction of being. But the greater number of the authorities which Vossius produces, apply no further than to temporal death; and some few of them apply to a corruption of nature; while, to the purpose of eternal separation from God, there is not a sentence. As a specimen, it is proposed to give a few of his citations, and to begin with one from Justin. This father speaks, concerning the Redeemer, to the following effect—“He did not endure to be born and to be crucified, as if he had need of these things; but he submitted to them for the sake of the human race; which, through Adam, had fallen under death and the seduction of the serpent: to say nothing of the proper fault of every one, acting wickedly for himself.”†

In this, there is surely nothing bordering on the idea of imputation, as held by Calvinists. But it should be remarked, in justice to Vossius, that, writing as he did against the Pelagian heresy, he might not have thought it incumbent on him, to take notice wherein his quoted passages did not go to all the three points mentioned

* Book 2, part 1, thesis 1. † Page 159.

by him, as included within the idea of original sin. They all made against the Pelagians, who held that sin to be merely personal. Had Vossius written with a professed view to the matter here intended to be established, he would probably have been more guarded. And perhaps it is but just to remark further, that there does not appear what measure of punishment he considered as attached to a separation from the presence of God. He quotes Austin, as saying of infants dying unbaptized, that although they are damned, yet it "is by a damnation the lightest of all;"* and he will not say, that it would have been better for them never to have been born. But these are evidently concessions of the generosity of those who make them, and not pretended to be grounded on any scripture warrant. It does not appear, that in the first three centuries, any difficulty arose on the subject of the salvation of infants. But on the ground of Austin's theory, and since on that of Calvin, the difficulty has seemed to press not a little. On that of either, the consequence in the mind of the writer of this would be, that the whole mass of infants, being incapable of faith and repentance, are indiscriminately assigned to hell. But Austin conceived of the effects of parental sin, as done away by grace infused in baptism; so that baptized infants were rescued from the general condemnation to everlasting misery. Calvinist churches of the present day, generally make the exception, not of baptized, but of elect infants. They reject the baptismal regeneration of Austin; but how the progress from nature to grace is conducted in favour of the infants on whom the divine election falls, these churches

* *Damnatio levissima omnium.*

have not given any account of, so far as is known to the author of this work. Probably, the personal belief of all intelligent Calvinists of the present day, is in favour of the salvation of all infants. But this, like the concessions of Austin, is evidently the result of their own generosity, in contrariety to the conclusions to which their system directly leads.

But to return to the fathers: Vossius, among the evidences of their consent, as to the property of original sin here in question, quotes two passages from Ireneus, taken from Austin, *contra Julianum*, Lib. 1. ch. 11. He says [Austin here quotes from Ireneus, B. 4. ch. 5]—"Men cannot be saved from the old blow of the serpent, unless they believe in him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, being lifted up from the earth on the tree of martyrdom, hath both drawn all things to himself and restored the dead." Again—"As the human race was subjected to death by a virgin, it may be released by a virgin; the virginal disobedience being balanced by virginal obedience. For, the sin of the first man being amended by the correction of the only begotten; and the wisdom of the serpent being vanquished by the simplicity of the dove; we are released from the chain, by which we had become tied to death."*

Another authority of Austin, and from him taken by Vossius, is that of Origen; who says—"The malediction of Adam is common to all men; and there is not a woman, of whom there may not be said, what was said of the (first) woman."†

* Ireneus, book 5, ch. 16. † *Contra Celsum* Lib. 4.

Austin goes on, and Vossius from him, to cite authorities which all apply to the question between them and the Pelagians; and yet not one to the question here handled—the being obnoxious to eternal condemnation. Indeed, the general tenour of their authorities especially applies to the circumstance of the mortality induced, by the fall which had been directly contradicted by the Pelagians. Accordingly, although when the inquiry is concerning (not the name but) the doctrine of original sin, Vossius pertinently remarks, that Austin has been unjustly censured as having introduced it into Christian theology; yet there is a difference between the subject to which his cited authorities apply it, and that to which it has been applied by Calvinism—a state of existence in an eternal separation from God.

There is something remarkable in the terms, in which Vossius defines this attribute of original sin; and what he says shall be here translated, in order to show still further the difficulties in which learned and judicious men entangle themselves, when they go beyond the scriptural account of this matter, and superadd what is necessary to accommodate it to a system. After stating the first and the second particular, in which he defines original sin to consist, he says of the remaining one—“The third is the worst; partly, because it is the irreparable loss of grace and glory; partly, because it not only devest, of good things, but also (at least in those who suffer punishment for actual faults) it inflicts the penalties of the heaviest torments. It must be evident to every one who considers the words comprehended in the parenthesis, that the consequences of the system are such as constrain its advocates, in order to make it as little

as possible offensive as well to reason as to feeling, to have resort to a future condition, neither of happiness nor of misery; of which scripture gives no account. And surely, there ought to be a jealousy of a process of reasoning, of which such is the result.

From the whole, it is here concluded, that nothing is to be gathered from the fathers, carrying the doctrine in question further than subjection to temporal death with its attendant evils; and what such a change naturally induced—weakness of intellectual powers, and strength of appetite; of which the one more exposed to sin, and the other became less a restraint from it, than was agreeable to the original constitution of human nature.

There is a remarkable passage in St. Austin, in which he gives an explanation of original sin, similar to that which is sustained in this work. The passage is in his discourses on the gospel of St. John, and is as follows, being a comment on chapter 3, verse 37. “He did not say, the wrath of God shall come on him; but the wrath of God remaineth on him. All who are born, have with them the wrath of God. What wrath of God? That which the first man Adam received. For if the first man sinned and heard—Dying, thou shalt die, he became mortal, and we began to be born mortal. We were born with the wrath of God. From thence came the Son, not having sin, and as he was clothed with flesh, he was clothed with mortality. If he shared the anger of God with us, shall we be backward to share the grace of God with him? Whoever therefore will not believe in the Son, the wrath of God remaineth on him. What wrath? That of which the apostle speaks. For we were

ourselves the children of wrath, even as others. All are the children of wrath, because coming under the curse of death.”*

This was written, like the passage the last quoted from the father, after the beginning of the Pelagians, but before his publick controversy with them. It is evident, that he considered the threatening in paradise as accomplished by mortality; although doubtless, this with all its natural effects.

* Volume 9. page 29.

4 OF GRACE.

The Question stated, as it respects the Fathers—Passages from them—Of the Subject, as it regards Faith and Works.

BEFORE an entrance on this subject, as it respects the fathers, it may be proper to ascertain, in what way we may expect the matter found in them to apply to the sentiment here sustained, supposing it to be correct.

It would be in vain to search in them for direct contradictions of the doctrine of the irresistible grace of God; because, as is contended in opposition to this doctrine, the idea having not occurred in those early days, it would be unreasonable to expect to find contradicted on the one hand, what had not been yet affirmed on the other. Nevertheless, the fathers abound with declarations, ascribing all good in man to the holy inspiration of the spirit of God. And the only way in which they can be expected to apply to the present purpose, is their falling short of the terms expressive of the doctrine of the Calvinists. If the doctrine of the grace of God be declared in such terms, as that neither the freedom nor the need of it is impaired by the supposition, that it may be either complied with or resisted; this is all that can reasonably be expected, in favour of the system here maintained. Nothing stronger could well have been expressed, while dispute on the subject was unknown. The same reasoning does not apply, in favour of the opinion here opposed. If it be essential, as is affirmed, to the glory of the divine sovereignty, some evidence of the belief of it, by some one living in so long a tract of time,

might have been expected. Or rather; in works so full of piety and humility, abounding within that tract of time, there would have been traces of the sentiment, visible over the whole face of them.

Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho, addressing himself to that person and his companions, says—"Do you think, O man, that, we could have understood these things in the scriptures, unless by his" (God's) "pleasure willing it, we had received grace to understand them?" And just before he had said—"Unless, therefore, any one receive of the grace of God, to understand the things that are said and written by the prophets, he will not be the wiser for the things which appear to be said or to be done: if he have not also wherewithal to give the reason of them."

Ireneus remarks thus—"Paul, declaring the wickedness of man, says, I know, that in my flesh dwells no good thing; intimating, that the good of our salvation is not of ourselves, but of God."* Again—"The Lord hath taught us, that none can know God, without God's teaching of them: That is, without God himself, he cannot be known."† And again—"As the dry earth, if it does not receive moisture, does not fructify; so we being dry wood, shall never bring forth the fruit of life, without the rain of heaven."‡ It is evident, that the last quotation, being figurative, must be construed agreeably to a law applicable to all figurative writing; which requires stress to be laid on the point of comparison. This is the equal necessity of rain in one case, and of grace in the other. The subjects, which are earth and

* Book 3, ch. 22. † Book 4, ch. 14. ‡ Book 3, ch. 19.

man, must be taken according to their respective properties.

From Ireneus, there may be a proper transition to Clemens of Alexandria. “Toward which” [that is good*] “we have the greatest need of divine grace, of correct instruction, of a chaste and clear affection of the mind, and of a drawing of the Father to himself.”† Again—“He” [that is Christ] “calls Peter happy, because flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but his Father, who is in heaven; making it manifest, that to know the Son of the Almighty Father is not from the flesh, which was carried in the womb; but from the paternal power itself.”‡

Tertullian follows: In his book *de Anima*, he says—“To whom is the truth discovered, without God? To whom is God known, without Christ? To whom is Christ displayed, without the holy Spirit?”§ Again, speaking of the effect of grace, he says—“This will be the power of divine grace, being more powerful than nature, and having in us the free power of the will subjected to itself.”||

In the spirit of the same sentiment, St. Cyprian says—“Whatever is good is not ascribed to the virtue of man, but is predicated as of the gift of God.” And soon after—“All that we can do is of God. From thence we live; from thence we have power; from thence, having taken and renewed strength, while we are here stationed, we perceive the tokens of the future.” And again—“Only let fear be the guardian of innocence, that the Lord, who has mercifully influenced by the falling of his heavenly indulgence on our minds, be re-

* Το Καλον. † Stromata b. 5. ‡ B. 6. § Cl. 1. || Cl. 21.

tained by the entertainment of a mind delighting in his righteous operation.”

Origen says—“Those things, without a better inspiration and a more divine virtue cannot come into the contemplation of men. For as no man knows the things of a man but the spirit of a man which is in him, so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.”* And again—“But I know, that this argument has need of very many confirmations; God by his grace enlightening the mind, that is worthy of the knowledge of such things.”†

These instances may be sufficient for the purpose, for which they are adduced, that is to show the manner in which the early writers speak of the grace of God; a manner fully accommodated to the idea of giving all possible glory to him; and also to the producing of the most profound humility in themselves; but entirely destitute of that metaphysical form, into which the doctrine of grace has been since fashioned; and of which we know, that it has a tendency to create distinctions without meaning, and to foster disputes without end. The notion of a grace irresistible, and pronounced efficacious, to distinguish it from that which the scriptures expressly speak of as what we may resist and grieve, seems to have been absolutely unknown in the ages of martyrs and confessors. Were they the less sensible of the power of religion? For an answer to this, look at their lives—Look at their deaths—And look at the effects of both, in the conversion of an unbelieving world. When Austin engaged Pelagius, he did not fail to avail himself of the armour left to his hand, by

* Lib. 4. contra Celsum. † Lib. 5.

the combatants who had gone before him. Strange; that he should produce such passages as those which have been recited; and not perceive, that, from his novel doctrine of predestination, there followed another doctrine, which put his predecessors in the wrong if he were in the right. It followed of course, yet he does not appear to have seen it, in its extent; since he has some saving for the freedom of the will; which Calvin, by more consistent reasoning, discarded.

Perhaps it may seem expedient, under this point, that there should be said something on the question occasioning the controversy concerning faith and works. But there is little to be said on it here; because we scarcely find any thing to the purpose, in the early fathers. St. Paul's controversy with the Jewish Christians, had not reference to merit strictly speaking; as if this people imagined God to be obligated by their obedience as such. No, it was what may be called a covenant merit; or a claim founded on promise; such as the Christian is warranted to claim in consequence of divine assurances, in themselves of mere Grace. In this, as applied to the works of the Mosaick law, those Jewish Christians were under an error; having not been sufficiently attentive to the end of the law, recently revealed. Still, it seems to have been the result, not so much of arrogancy, as of the not looking beyond the letter, to the spirit of the economy under which they had lived.

By the time that the church had become deprived of the apostles, and of the men to whom there can be applied, with any propriety, the name of apostolick fathers, all ground of that dispute had been done away,

by the evident ceasing of the polity and dispersion of the nation of the Jews. Hence it happened, as might have been expected, that we hear no more of the question of the comparative efficacy of faith and works. Christian preachers did indeed inculcate faith in Christ; and so they did holiness of heart and life, in every way, and neither the one nor the other to be accepted, otherwise than through grace.

When Pelagius at last appeared, with so much noise about the sufficiency of nature; Austin and others who opposed him, in establishing the orthodox point, that all strength possessed by man is from Divine assistance, were naturally led to insist much on the kindred truth, that all acceptance of him is of Divine mercy: not that this was more essentially a part of the system of Austin, than of that of Cyprian or of Chrysostom; but because these had less occasion to insist on it, and to make it a prominent part of what they taught. How it happened, in subsequent ages, that, in the same church which continued so loudly to proclaim the orthodoxy of Austin, there should arise the kind of merit attributed in the same church to human works, this is not the place to inquire. It will be sufficient to remark of the ages in view, that they were between the time when the question turned on the interference of Jewish prejudice with Christian liberty, and another tract of time, when a question, like that in words and not in substance, was ingrafted on the opposition seen to exist between a merit originating in monkish superstition and the honour due to the mediatorial righteousness of the Redeemer. That there was such a tract of time, in

which controversy implicating this was unknown, is evident even in the circumstance, that there is no reference to error on that point, and no necessity of declaring the opposite truths, in such apologies as those of Justin, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix, professedly written to give a true account of Christianity to the world.

5 OF PERSEVERANCE.

St. Austin did not extend his System to this Point—Sundry Fathers—A Concession of Gerard Vossius—The Opinion of Calvin, not altogether consistent with present Calvinism—Result.

ON this subject Calvinism has the least to say, in regard to the appearance of it in any theological writer during the early ages. As to the few scraps of sentences in which an overweening zeal has supposed the doctrine to appear, they are in the fathers called apostolick and have been considered under the first point. Later supposed authorities than these, the author does not remember to have met with.

Even when Austin had invented what is now considered as the Calvinistick doctrine of predestination, he did not perceive the effect of it, in the final perseverance of the saints. This did not occur to any, until the era of the reformation; nor even in the early part of that, as may be inferred from a passage, which will be quoted under this point from Calvin. If there be any exception from the truth of this remark, it is in the instance of the controversy raised in the 9th century by Godescalius, who is thought by some, to have hit on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. There is indeed a difficulty in perceiving wherein this persecuted monk differed from Austin in his doctrines, except in his bold avowal of all their consequences.

As to Austin, he held perseverance to be a special gift, vouchsafed to some and denied to others, both of whom had been brought into a state of salvation, by other influences of grace. It was indeed impossible, in any other

way, to reconcile to the mind the modern doctrine of decrees, without a relinquishment of all the leading ideas entertained on the subject of baptism, in every preceding period of the church. It had been entitled "Illumination" and "Regeneration;" and no one had ever called in question the position, that duly given and received, it was an introduction of the baptized person to all the benefits of the Christian covenant; which were considered as sealed to them, in this initiatory ordinance of Christ's religion. To have made an entire change in the language and in the habits of thinking, then prevailing on a subject which came home to every bosom, would have seemed, in the age in question, to have been a tearing up of the foundation. The only substitute, was that which Austin thought of. This solved the difficulty for a time; but was at last renounced, as an excrescence on the predestination scheme, which it might profitably part with.

The following are specimens of Austin's manner of expressing himself, on the present subject. In his book written expressly concerning it, he says—"Why, of two pious persons, perseverance is given to one and not given to the other, are among the more inscrutable judgments of God."* As Vossius remarks, there could not have been here understood a feigned piety; because, just before, the faith spoken of had been defined that "which worketh by love." And soon after, the persons spoken of had been all described as justified by faith. Again—"Why it is granted to some, that they should be taken from life in a justified state, while other justified persons are kept, by a longer life, in the same dangers,

* Chapter 8.

until they fall from justification, who have known the design of God?"*

It would be endless to quote passages to the same effect, from this celebrated father. And it is observable, that he does not give his opinion, as if it were on a controverted point. There was indeed a controversy, as to the general necessity of grace; in which the Pelagians had argued, that if this were divinely given, it would not happen, that some should fall away from justification. That some fell away, was admitted on both sides for truth. But Austin warded off the argument by saying, that all grace was given, except the grace of perseverance. And this continued, uniformly, to be the opinion of the church into which Austin's ascendancy introduced it, until after the reformation.

The following is a remark, which Vossius makes of the fathers generally, in relation to the present subject: and the remark must seem the more worthy of notice, when it is considered as coming from a learned divine of a Calvinistick church. Speaking of the opinion opposed to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, he says in his 6th book under thesis 12, to this effect— That they only of his day denied the former opinion to be the common one of the fathers, who, however learned perhaps in other respects, were strangers to antiquity. And he further says of them, that they have their minds so enslaved by the opinions of others, as rather to see with their eyes, than with their own.

The same Vossius, has referred to sundry of the fathers before Austin; and noted to the purpose, passages of their works; naming Justin, Clemens of Alexandria, Cyprian, Tertullian and others. Although the

author of the present work has had recourse to the greater number of the passages, and judges the use thus made of them to be correct; yet he avoids the reciting of them; on the principle, that they are merely incidental sayings, without any recognising of the subject, as professedly under discussion. And indeed, what is here thought to make the most strongly against the Calvinists, is there not being in those days any express allusion, either on the one side or on the other, to a point which they now think so important to Christian verity.

Perhaps, what will the most conspicuously demonstrate the recent origin of the doctrine here in question, is the producing of the passage already alluded to in Calvin himself. He says thus—"Therefore, since we all naturally labour under the same disease, they alone recover to whom the Lord hath been pleased to apply his healing hand. The rest, whom he passeth by in righteous judgment, putrify in their corruption, until they are entirely consumed."* And then he goes on to state, that "as it is from the same cause, that some persevere to the end, and others decline and fall in the midst of their course; perseverance itself also is a gift of God, which he bestows, not on all men promiscuously, but imparts to whom he pleases." And he adds, that "if we inquire the cause of the difference, why some persevere with constancy, and others fall through instability, no other can be found, but that God sustains the former by his power, that they perish not; and does not communicate the same strength to the latter, that they may be examples of inconstancy."

From this passage it appears, how long a time there was required after the gospel age, to mould what are

* Book 2, ch. 5, sect. 3.

called the Calvinistick doctrines into the systematick shape in which they are now found. Protestants think—and justly, as is here conceived—that they sufficiently refute the pretensions of the papal hierarchy; when they trace the steps by which it attained to its present gigantick stature, by natural deductions from principles speciously introduced; and of which the first patrons could never have imagined the result. The author does not intend this remark in the way of reproach; but as a hint to the sincere inquirer, to trace the history of the opinions here controverted. For, if the scriptures be the rule of faith; whatever helps to the understanding of them may be derived from facts, which existed in the ages immediately subsequent to the time of the apostles; there can be no better disproof of any body of doctrine, than its being shown to have been gradually built up, improved, and perfected into a system; not known until within ages comparatively modern.

CONCLUSION.

Application of Authorities to the General Question of the Five Points—The Importance of this Branch of the Subject to Protestantism.

ALTHOUGH, in the introduction, there was given a caution against the supposition, that the fathers were to be set up, as supplying what might be imagined to have been omitted in the scriptures; yet it is here again notified, that the former are cited merely in attestation of facts; but of these, as helping much in the inquiry into the sense of scripture.

In order to perceive in what manner the argument applies, there may be propriety in taking a summary retrospect of the matters supposed to have been ascertained.

On the subject of predestination, the object has been to show, that, in the age of the apostles, and for at least a hundred years after them, it was never held as applying any otherwise, than to a participation of the benefits of the Christian covenant, and to the question of the description of persons to whom these belonged; that for about a hundred years afterwards in the Greek church, and for about double that term in the Latin, there does not appear to have been any question raised, which can give an insight into what was thought or said, that by degrees an opinion, purely metaphysical, and yet by no means Calvinistick, appears to have been ingrafted on the mere words of the scripture, there applied to another question, which had long since been put

to rest; and that at last, owing to incidents which have been stated, the Calvinistick opinion had its rise in the beginning of the fifth century: which brings it to a period, more distant, by about a hundred years from the beginning of the Christian dispensation, than is that in which we live from the beginning of the reformation. So that, through all this tract of time, the Calvinistick opinion must have been dormant, and unseen in scripture; if it be really there, as is supposed by Calvinism.

Next, in regard to universal redemption, it has been shown, that the expressions of the fathers are general, in favour of all mankind. The scriptures, indeed, are the same, as is conceded; but to do away the force of the concession, a distinction is taken between a will revealed, and another secret: a distinction necessary to the fathers in the interpreting of scripture, if it be so to us; while yet, it is not alleged, that there is any thing to that effect, in any one of them.

Under the third point, it has appeared, that however express the fathers to the effect of the sin of Adam, in the mortality of his posterity, and in an attendant debility and vitiation of their powers; what they say does not extend to the Calvinistick sentiment of imputation. Even in regard to inbred corruption, it amounts to no more, than what was intimated by St. Paul, under the idea of a law in the members, warring against a better law in the mind.*

The fourth point, so far as it is agreed on by both parties in the controversy, is very luminous in the authors cited, and in many more which might have been cited to the purpose. They declare, that salvation is

* Romans vii. 23.

altogether of grace, and that every thing holy in man is produced in him by the operation of the Holy Spirit. But when to this there is added such an irresistible energy, as makes man wholly passive in the business of his salvation, there is no document establishing the point, that such an idea had been entertained.

Lastly, concerning final perseverance; it has appeared, that the contrary to it was the current doctrine of the church, not only during the four hundred years in which its kindred doctrines were unknown also, but even after the admission of these; the natural consequence of which, in regard to this particular, was overlooked from Austin's time until the reformation; above eleven hundred years afterwards.

It is then contended, that these facts have a weighty bearing on the question of the sense of scripture, in which it is supposed by the advocates of the Calvinistick doctrines, that they are held up in so important a point of view, as that, by denying them, we contradict the sovereignty of God existing in nature, and his equally sovereign grace, manifested in the Gospel. Did ever any religious sect—did ever any association, for the accomplishment of a laudable object, so soon forget the most distinguishing characteristicks of the bond of union, into which they had been brought by their immediate forefathers? Did ever any tendency to such a dereliction manifest itself, without there being at least some to lift up their voices against the deterioration of the body? That some should soon begin to insinuate novelties into the system; that they should be ingenious, in discovering what might be plausibly brought forward as a sanction for them, in any slight circumstance; and that they should at last succeed, in

conciliating their brethren to the design; is accountable for, from what we know of human nature. It is the effect of that imperfection, which led the Jews gradually to submit to the inventions of will worship; until at last, they “made the word of God of none effect through their traditions.” And their example has been imitated in the Christian church, by similar additions to Christian faith and duty. Of these we can trace the rise and progress, accounting for them in the circumstances of intervening times; but for so sudden and so great a change as must have taken place, according to the principles opposed to those here sustained, it is utterly impossible to account, from any thing we know of man and of the experience of the world.

It appears to the writer of this, that they from whom he dissents, are drawn, by their courses of reasoning, into a track, by which they give a great advantage to another denomination of fellow Christians, from whom they and the Episcopal church dissent—those of the church of Rome. Protestantism has a right to avail itself of the evidences which appear in the early times, of the gradual manner in which the errors of that church obtruded themselves on Christendom. But, in order to serve this purpose, it is necessary, not only to give credit to recorded facts of the ages soon after the apostles, but to reason from them to the belief and the practice of that age itself. They who entertain the Calvinistick opinions, reasonably plead for the bringing of all things to the test of scripture; but are backward to admit the portion of light which arises from the immediately succeeding times, towards the ascertaining of its meaning. And further, the history of the controversy in

question, goes a great way towards contradicting the claim of infallibility set up by that church. Although it is generally supposed by her members to rest in a general council, yet the sources of the unerring direction of such a body, are held to be in the sound faith of its constituent members, sustained by traditionary information, handed down among them from the apostles. Now, let it be remembered, in what manner this claim operates, in regard to the subject here stated. To begin with the time of Chrysostom, who has spoken often of a predestination founded on prescience. This eloquent bishop stood high in the estimation of the church of Rome; which indeed, at that time, claimed no jurisdiction beyond her bounds; yet took a decided part with Chrysostom, against his enemies, and embalmed his memory. There will not be denied by any well informed Roman Catholick, what is stated by Calvin, although so adverse to his theory, that the sentiments of the Christian bishops of Chrysostom's day, were conformable to his on the present subject, as already given. But soon after that father, came Austin, who taught, at first indeed like his predecessors; but afterwards, a predestination not founded on prescience. In this, he was followed by Christian churches generally, from their zeal against Pelagianism; and by the church of Rome in particular; whose bishop, Celestine, sharply reprov'd certain bishops in Gaul, for their having endured the faulting of some of the harshest of the opinions of that father, by some of their respective priests. Austin reigned triumphant, from his own age to that of the reformation, both in the churches and in the schools; to the exclusion of any publick proceeding derogatory to

his doctrine, unless there should be thought an exception in the case of poor Godeschalc; which, however, interested but a small part of the church, although the permitting of the cruel treatment of him has always seemed surprising on the part of Rome; because, between his opinions and those of Austin, which she patronized, there are but slight shades of difference. After the beginning of the reformation, there came the council of Trent. It is impossible, but that the learned of this body must have perceived the inconsistency between the doctrine of Chrysostom and that of Austin. Both of them, however, were too fast bound on the church of Rome to be disengaged, consistently with her professed principle. The course taken by the council, under the pressure of this difficulty, was the most discreet that can be imagined. They had the address to frame their decrees in a manner so accommodated to the opposite sentiments which had been delivered by the theologians during the preceding discussions, that these combatants continued their metaphysical war after the decision of the council; each side contending, that it was in their favour. In the 17th century, Jansenism became in France, what Calvinism was in England. On each side of the question, different bishops took different sides. And yet, in the breasts of these bishops were the sources of traditionary truth, from whence there was to have issued an authoritative declaration of it, had any council been called for such a purpose. The whole thread of the history of this controversy, is unfavourable to the claim of the infallibility of the Roman Church; but the early period of it is peculiarly so. For there we have an instance of the change of sentiment of Christian bishops generally, with-

in the compass of an age. The change extended also to the bishop of Rome himself, and to his church considered within its provincial bounds; the only bounds within which he was considered as acting with authority, until within a short period of the time when the change took place.

When the writer of this speaks of the church of Rome as not extending her authority beyond her bounds until a certain period referred to, he means it exclusively of any proceedings of the bishops of that church, on the ground of the common concern which was supposed obligatory on all bishops, for the maintaining of the integrity of the Christian faith throughout the world. In the case of essential error, any one bishop would have been thought justifiable in rejecting the communion of another. The period referred to, is the time of the decrees of the council of Sardica, which extended the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, as it did also the jurisdictions of three other bishops, beyond their respective provincial limits.

Let there then be due stress laid, not only on what the fathers testify; but on the effect of their testimony, in ascertaining the states of opinion in times before them. St. Paul gives the instruction to a Christian bishop—"The things that thou hast heard of me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* And St. Peter says—"I will endeavour that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance."† No doubt, the care which they and other apostles exercised to transmit the faith entire, must have

* 2. Tim. ii. 2. † 2. i. 15.

had some traditionary effect on times succeeding. If any one ask—On what principle is the degree of it to be estimated? The answer is—By what is known of human nature and the laws which govern it, in all similar circumstances of importance. That perpetuity is not to be expected, there is abundant evidence in every line, to which the principle may be applied. On this account, there is reason to rejoice, that God has vouchsafed to give a more permanent rule in the scriptures; which, agreeably to this his design, have been preserved in such integrity under the operation of his providence, that contending parties almost universally consent in them, however they may differ in their interpretations. And it is here conceived, that the difference would be much less in this respect, if, agreeably to the medium intended to be observed in this division of the work, due deference were paid to the testimonies of the writers of the church, in the first three centuries; yet, not without making a considerable distinction between those who were near the source of inspiration, and those who were more remote from it.

The author, in the conclusion of these remarks, has his mind impressed by that passage of scripture, in which, on the opening of the fifth seal, there were displayed, in prophetick vision, under the altar—“The souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:”* Words designed to apply to the martyrs, during the early persecutions. And the question forced itself on his mind—Is it possible, that these holy men should have been commended as “faithful unto the death,” without a correct apprehen-

* Rev. vi. 9.

sion of the saving truths of the profession for which they suffered? This must have been their condition, if what is now called Calvinism be of the essence of divine truth. For, of election and reprobation, as exhibited by that theory; of the imputation of the sin of Adam; of a natural inclination in all men to all manner of wickedness; of an irresistible grace; and of the impossibility of falling from it finally; there is not a record to show, that they were taught, or even heard of, in the ages anticipated in the prophecy which has been quoted. And yet, of the martyrs suffering within that term, it is said—"White robes were given to them;" expressive of the honour by which they are distinguished in the state of rest, wherein they look forward to the consummation of bliss, as well in body as in soul. If Calvinism was unknown to these, it cannot make any part of "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

PART III.

AN APPENDIX;

Containing an Argument against Calvinism. from some Circumstances attending the Introduction of it into the Church.

Design—Late Introduction of the Theory of St. Austin—Its Contrariety to the precedent Faith of the Church—He at first agreed with the early Fathers—His Innovation offended many—It appeared in a mis-shapen Form—Opposite Positions of this Father—He never censured as essentially erroneous, the Opinions which he had abandoned—A Circumstance, showing his Propensity to needless Speculation—Inference.

IN this third part of the present work, there have been occasionally remarks, tending to the point to be here maintained; yet directed, severally, to the more restricted purposes, for the sake of which they were made. It has therefore been judged to have a tendency to the object of the whole, to embody the remarks into an argument against the Calvinistick system generally. The argument will relate to those innovations made in theology, in the beginning of the fifth century, which have all along been held out, as the substance of the Calvinistick theory.

But there is another reason, in thus bringing into view the remarks which have been made on the changes introduced by Austin. It is, that there is thought a use in setting down from this father, some passages on one

side, and some on the other, of the controversy; in order to give strength to the argument, intended to be drawn from the change which took place in himself, and in a very great proportion of the Christian world.

The first matter to be noticed, is the introduction of the system at so late a period; and then, principally owing to the combination of the influence of a single doctor of the church, with circumstances favourable to the effect which followed. Exclusively of the question—How far the theory is taught in the scriptures, which is the principal point at issue; the present writer may reasonably proceed on the ground, that of the remains of the fathers of the church, transmitted to these times, there is no evidence of the Calvinistick sides of what have been called the five points.

There shall be here made a very brief reference to what has been already cited from Calvin himself, to this effect—It has been seen, that concerning the question of freewill, which enters into every department of the controversy, he considered the fathers as allowing too much to nature: which he supposed to be owing to their dread of provoking the ridicule of the philosophers. He was aware of his seeming to do a prejudice to his cause, in making the confession. Nevertheless, it is amply made; and as to predestination founded on prescience, he says it has had great advocates in all ages. Of advocates of his own opinion in the Christian church, he does not mention any, and therefore it is presumable that none were to be found.

Of the presumption concerning Arminian writers to the same purpose, there shall be mentioned that of bishop Burnet only. It is in the preface to his exposition;

where he says—"I follow the doctrine of the Greek church, from which St. Austin departed, and formed a new system."*

It would be easy to multiply authorities, in which this matter is taken for granted: but let it suffice to name one more authority—that of a Calvinistick divine already noticed—Gerard Vossius. After having given quotations in his work, from page 550 to 571, he says—"Augustine, that he might the more bravely encounter Pelagius, added this appendix to the opinion which had been common to the fathers; and defended by himself, after he became a bishop—That grace is offered to one in preference to another, and is more efficacious in one than in another, comes from the absolute decree of God." Vossius then goes on to prove what he affirms, by quotations. It is not here known, that the assertion of this respectable writer has been assailed; although it has been long before the world, in a work of so high a reputation, as that of his history of the Pelagian controversy.

It has been noticed concerning a late writer in the controversy, Mr. Toplady, that he conceived of his having discovered, in writers antecedent to Austin, some fragments of sentences savouring of Calvinism. Probably, other such writers as Mr. Toplady might be found on inquiry. But it is here presumed, that their labours in this line will be generally perceived to be resolvable into such an extraordinary degree of zeal for their cause, that, in point of authority, they will not be put in competition with authors, so much higher in reputation for talents and learning: among whom is Calvin

* Page 6.

himself; who cannot be supposed to have been so incautious, as to have unnecessarily made a concession, very unfavourable to his whole theory.

For that this is to be affirmed of it, rests on the utter improbability—and what, indeed, from our knowledge of causes and their effects, may be called a moral impossibility, that, after the revelation made to the world by Jesus Christ and his apostles, the very spirit of the system—the very doctrines which manifested it to be of grace—should, for the first three hundred years, discontinue to make a part of the faith of Christians, and to influence their practice. And then, that such a defection should be an indelible stain on the ages, which, according to the estimation of all Christendom, the most abounded with shining examples of every Christian grace, and in which the church was the most plentifully watered with the blood of martyrdom, seems one of the last positions, which the known principles of human nature should permit us to believe. The sentiment has been sufficiently unfolded in the body of the work, and is now introduced, only for the assemblage in which it is to be exhibited.

The second particular to be named, is the opposition in which the theory of St. Austin stands, to sentiments of eminent doctors of the church, in the ages before him; who had been all along held in admiration and in honour; and who did not cease to be so, under the increasing popularity of his principles. There have been quoted in this work, St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and many others, who affirmed a predestination founded on prescience. It is presumed, that instructions to this effect would never have been born with by

any church, in which the current doctrine was a salvation founded on the sovereignty of God, operating in the election of some and the utter reprobation of others, without regard to faith and works foreseen of them respectively. Or, if the former doctrine had crept into any particular church and prevailed there for a time; it may be presumed, that the error, when detected, would have destroyed all credit to the men, by whom it had been either introduced or patronized. But, neither of these was the effect in the present instance. Is it not evident, that when the new theory showed her face, with a diffidence and a toleration so ill suited to her subjects, it must have been from a consciousness of her novelty?

Sdly; it has been shown, that St. Austin himself agreed in principle with the fathers who had gone before him, until he changed his mind during the progress of the Pelagian controversy. Were such a change to be affirmed, concerning any distinguished character of a Calvinistick church at the present day; there is perhaps no hearer who would not presume, that an acknowledgment of having been heretofore under dangerous and essential error, had preceded present influence and estimation. Is any thing to the amount of this to be found in Austin? Far from it. For although in his book of *Retractations*, he very honourably revokes certain past mistakes; yet he is far from humbling himself under the error in question—fertile as it is supposed to be of spiritual pride; and striking directly, as it is also affirmed to do, at the sovereignty of God.

This father, before the appearance of Palagius, had written three books on freewill, as unreservedly as had

been done by any of the fathers, who have been quoted in this work. Being accused of this by the Pelagians, he made, answer in his retractations, that the books had been written against the Manichees, who affirmed the origin of evil to be in God. It was in contrariety to these, Austin says, that he had affirmed evil to be from the human will, without taking into view the question of the grace of God, which was now the matter at issue, but had not entered into the former controversy. This seems a sufficient answer, so far as the Pelagians were concerned. But in the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians; the latter, who are as far as the other from denying the grace of God, may remark, that in doing this, he has adopted the very language which they use in contradiction to their opponents; and that it must be true in regard to them, if it be truly held up against the others. There seems less weight in another ground of defence, which Austin has taken in his retractations. The plea now alluded to is, that the liberty which he defended was predicated of man in his first estate, and not in his fall. This is contradicted by the whole thread of the argument, in the three books on freewill. The argument is carried on in the form of a dialogue, which connects the question with the practical subject of human conduct, in the present life. The matters here affirmed will appear in extracts from these books, intended to be subjoined.

4thly; Another circumstance marking the novelty of St. Austin's doctrine, is the surprise which it occasioned, and the opposition which it met with from persons of high respectability in the church, who, however, did not fall under the charge of heresy, or under any judicial censure on that account.

Considering the popularity attaching to the writings of the ablest defender of the faith against the Pelagians; and further, the great authority of the Roman see, which was put out in its full vigour in favour of the new theory; it may easily be conceived, that there may have been multitudes of dissentients every where, without their complaints having been transmitted to these times. And it is only in consequence of existing documents of correspondence between St. Austin and his friend, St. Prosper, and between the former and Hilary, afterwards bishop of Arles, that we have information of the extreme dissatisfaction, occasioned by some positions in Austin's work, to the clergy and the monks in and near Marseilles. From the correspondence it appears, that these persons considered the doctrine as unheard of in the church, till then. In regard to the quality of the complainants, Prosper calls them "very famous men; and excellent in a studious attention to all virtues." And he further writes of them as follows—"To the authority of those who think thus, we are not equal, because they both much excel us in a good life, and some of them are above us in the lately obtained honour of the priesthood." Hilary, in like manner, writes—"There are such persons on that side, that it is necessary for the laity to entertain towards them the utmost reverence, according to the custom of the church;" and—"It is worthy of your prudence to discern what is to be done, that the intention of such and so great men may be overcome or tempered." In this correspondence, care is taken to distinguish between those who assailed St. Austin on Pelagian principles, and the persons described; who are represented as

holding anti-pelagian sentiments, in regard to the necessity of divine grace. Now, although it is true, that the bishop of Rome, much the friend of St. Austin, discountenanced the objecting clergy and monks in the south of France; yet, it was far from being in such a manner, as implied the charge of heresy, and as prevails in every communion, in which the theory opposed is the known and established doctrine. The union of the authority of Celestine and that of Austin, shall not be here ascribed to the motive attributed to them by the infidel Voltaire; who, in his *Treatise on Toleration*, after describing the former as a merciless tyrant, says—“He” (Austin) “truckled to the bishop of Rome, only for the sake of playing the tyrant in Africa.” Of these two men it is here conceived, that, instead of being partners in iniquity, they were very pious and virtuous persons, who were sincere in maintaining what they conceived to be the truth; but whose zeal in the propagation of it was considerably damped, by the opposition in which it stood to the hitherto prevailing doctrines of the church. A similar application might be made of an event which took place in the monastery of Adrumetum; occasioning a correspondence of their abbot with St. Austin.

There is a remarkable fact, relative to one of the French clergy, to whom the opposition in Marseilles is ascribed. The person meant is Cassian, who was in the highest reputation, both as a writer, and as a man of a very holy life and conversation. He was a cotemporary of Austin. The works of Cassian are said to have been full of good sense and piety. Although they are known to have contained many things in opposition

to the sentiments of St. Austin, on the subjects of predestination and freewill; yet, in defiance of the popularity of the latter, and the countenance afforded to them by the papacy, the other work continued to be admired and much read, in monasteries and elsewhere," having something "so powerful and divine"—thus Du Pin quotes from Photius—"that the monasteries which observed that rule made themselves eminent for their singular virtues;" "and besides"—continues Photius—"there are none, in my judgment, that are more useful, spiritual, and tend more to piety and true devotion." Certain it is, that the dominant authority of the times was obliged to yield to diversity of opinion in this instance, on subjects concerning which it had positively decided. It was not congenial with the temper of the papacy at the time—it has not been congenial with the views of any Calvinistick church in any time—to bear with such deviations, from what is conceived of as the very essence of divine truth. Consciousness of novelty is the only principle, which can account for its being born with at the time referred to.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there was born with the error of Cassian and others of Marseilles, consisting in what took the name of semi-pelagianism. This, although it acknowledged the necessity of the grace of God to perfect good in man, denied the necessity of the same grace, to the beginning of it. There is no ground for such a distinction in the scriptures; which speak on the subject so generally, as to comprehend what, in the succeeding times, took the name of preventing grace. And indeed, much of scripture to the point is brought into view, by that argument of St. Austin, against the

Pelagians—applying equally against the semi-pelagians—in which he remarks the absurdity of praying for the salvation of sinners, on any other supposition than that of a grace preventing or going before any salutary motions of their wills. The only way of accounting for the opposite error in such persons, is the little discussion which the subject had undergone, until brought under minute examination by the controversy excited by Pelagius. St. Austin himself stands in need of this apology; since he acknowledges, that before the said period, he had not admitted what he at last perceived to be the full import of the declaration of the apostle, that faith itself is the gift of God. These circumstances may account for the tolerating of semi pelagianism, until about a century after the time in question, when it was formally condemned. Be these things as they may, it is evident—and this is the only use for which these facts are introduced—that in some districts of the church, and probably in many more than those noticed, there was felt a shock from the novelty accompanying the opinions of St. Austin.

5thly. There is no small evidence of the new invention of the theory in the beginning of the fifth century, in its then appearing in such a misshapen form, as required to be better modelled by Calvin and those who followed him. What is here especially alluded to, is there being suffered to prevail the hitherto received opinion, that there may be a final fall from grace. “The perseverance of the saints” was a doctrine not conceived of in the days of Austin; of which, evidence has been already given. It equally escaped him, to devise the expedient of a covenant of works, and the imputation of the sin

of Adam, in order to account, as they are supposed to do, for the justice of the divine procedure. Conspicuous as is the figure which original sin, makes in the theory of the father, it is inherent: the stain being thought sufficient to justify the damnation of all unbaptized infants; but done away in baptism, although the propensity may remain. Without their being contemplated in the person of their progenitor, and their being affected by the act of him as their representative; their inheriting of his depraved nature, seemed sufficient for the purpose, in the age referred to. But there was afterwards thought an advantage gained, from the circumstance of the representative's offending against a known law. How far the constituting of such a representation is a credible hypothesis, is another question. It is satisfactory to those by whom it is affirmed; but Austin seems to have been a stranger to it.

The imperfection of the system of Calvinism, as left by St. Austin, may especially appear from the following concession in the late work of Mr. Milner—"From the review of the Pelagian controversy, the attentive reader will see, that the article of justification must be involved in Augustine's divinity, and doubtless it savingly flourished in his heart, and in the hearts of many of his followers; yet the precise and accurate nature of the doctrine itself seems not to have been understood by this holy man. He perpetually understands St. Paul's term, to justify, of inherent righteousness, as if it meant, sanctification. Still, he knew what faith in the Redeemer meant, and those parts of scripture, which speak of forgiveness of sins, he understands, he feels, he loves: but St. Paul's writings concerning justification he

understands not sufficiently, because the precise idea of that doctrine entered not formally into his divinity.”* Mr. Milner professes to have taken the above, from “The Theological Miscellany for September, 1785.” another Calvinistick work of celebrity.

The writer of this proposed, in the beginning, to exhibit to the eye some instances of the contrariety in the sentiments of St. Austin himself, before and after he became engaged in his conflict with the Pelagians. But it will be proper to note the points, to which the quotations will apply. With the fifth point of the controversy—perseverance—there will be no need to meddle; because the ancient faith, as to that particular, continued to be maintained. They who impugned his doctrine perceived and maintained, as an objection to the new theory, that the ancient was contradicted by it. Doubtless, this was a consequence fairly drawn. The present writer entertains the opinion, that Austin perceived the tendency of his theory to be hostile to the doctrine of universal redemption, descended to him along the stream of antiquity; and to bring the subject into the shape in which it now appears, in the standards of churches confessedly Calvinistick. Certain it is, that in his controversial writings, he hesitated to pursue his principles into their consequences: so that they who affirm him to be a maintainer of universality, are obliged to call on the testimony of his friend St. Prosper; who, on slender grounds, vouches to that effect. The reserve of the father on the subject made it more easy, some centuries afterwards, to persecute Godeschalch; who did but say, in plain terms, what had been indirectly said by one whose orthodoxy had never been impeached, and

* Vol. 2. page 441.

whose authority continued to be triumphant. For the reasons given, the prominent points will be—predestination, freewill, and grace. The passages will be translated from Vossius.

From works before the Pelagian controversy. “No one is chosen; unless already differing, in character, from him who is rejected. Wherefore, I do not see why it is said—because God has chosen us before the foundation of the world; unless by foreknowledge: to wit, of deservings; that is of faith and piety.”*

Again he says, speaking of Jacob—“He was not elected that he might become good; but being good, he might be elected.” And explaining certain words of our Saviour in St. Matthew—“But God chose them, as says the apostle, according to his grace, and according to their righteousness.”†

In commenting on John. 8. 47.—“Ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God,” he remarks—“It is said to those who were not only depraved by sin (for this is an evil common to all) but foreknown as not believing with that faith, by which alone they could be freed from the bond of their sins. Wherefore, he foreknew, that they to whom he said such things would remain in it, because they were of the devil, that is, to die in their sins and impiety, in which they were like him; and would not come to the regeneration in which they would be the sons of God; that is, born of God, by whom they were created men. The Lord spoke according to this predestination; not that he found any man, who, according to the regeneration, could be already of God; or, according to nature, might not already be of God.”‡

* Vossius, page 557. † Idem, *ibid.* ‡ Idem, page 569.

In reference to Matthew xxv. 34, he writes thus—
 “It is not unworthy of God to say—Go into everlasting fire, to those who, through freewill, reject his mercy; and to say—Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom—to those who through freewill receive his faith, confess their sins, perform repentance, are displeased with what they are, and are pleased with what they have become through him.”*

It will hardly be denied, that the above extracts are exactly agreeable to the creed, long since called Arminian. There shall now be given extracts, which apply as strictly to the Calvinistick creed.

“The effect of divine pity cannot be in the power of man, so that he shall have mercy on him in vain, if man is unwilling; because, if it were his will to have mercy on him, he might so call, as were requisite for them, that they should be moved, and understand and follow:”—and soon after—“God will not have mercy in vain; but whom he will pity, him he also calls, in a manner which he knows to suit the case, so that he may not reject him who calls.” And after some other things—“When one is moved to the faith thus, and another thus, and the same thing said in one way sometimes moves and sometimes does not move; and moves one and not another; who may dare to say, that there was wanting to God a manner of calling, by which Esau also might have given his mind and united his will to that faith, whereby Jacob was justified?” And afterwards—“It may be most tenaciously and firmly believed, that God will have mercy on whom he will, and harden whom he will. †

In another work—“No will of man resists him”

* Vossius page 569. † Idem page 572.

(God) "willing to save him:" and afterwards—"It is not to be doubted of, that human wills cannot resist the divine will, so as to hinder him from making of them what he will."* In another—"This grace which is secretly given to human hearts, by the divine bounty, is by no hard heart rejected."† In another—"Of two infants alike bound by original sin, why one is taken and the other left; and of two adults, why this is so called that he obeys the calling, and the other is not called, or is not so called that he obeys the calling, are the inscrutable judgments of God."‡ And in another—"If any force us to search into this depth, why one is so addressed, that he is persuaded, but another is not so; two things only occur, which I choose to answer—O, the depth of the riches! and—Is there iniquity with God?—Let him who is dissatisfied with this answer, seek such as are more satisfactory. But let him be aware, that he find not such as are more presumptuous."§

When St. Austin had changed his mind on the subjects of predestination and grace, he does not appear to have revoked his preceding errors in any such manner, as is expressive of his apprehending of them to be fundamental. Many a follower of his doctrine, and admirer of his character, would conceive of any minister of the Gospel, in whom such a change should take place at the present day, as bound to think himself then, and not before, taken hold on by the resistless grace of God. St. Austin had especially an opportunity for this, when he wrote his book of *Retractations of former Errors*.

* Vossius page 573. † Idem Ibid. 574. ‡ Idem 574.

§ Idem. Ibid.

But whoever reads that book will perceive, that there is no such humiliation, exacted by the importance of the occasion, as it is estimated by modern theory.

In his book “of the Predestination of the Saints,” referring to his former opinion on the subject, he ascribes his present better knowledge to a due consideration of the text—“What hast thou, that thou didst not receive?”* Now, it seems surprising, that so good a man, and so distinguished a bishop as Austin had become, before the appearance of Pelagius, could ever have conceived the contrary to what this text affirms, in any sense in which it can be taken. But the sense in the place in which it stands, is really no more than what relates to the possession of such gifts, as ordinarily create a rivalry. The sentiment is substantially the same with what the very heathen acknowledged; of which there is a specimen in Homer, in what Agamemnon says of Achilles, without any subtle distinctions concerning divine grace and human liberty—“Know, that the ever existing gods have made you warlike;”† involving the acknowledgment, that every gift is from a higher power: however the proper cultivation of it may require the putting forth of human energy, which was equally given from on high.

But, without going further into the sufficiency of Austin’s reasons for his change; the fact is confessed, that the change was made: a change from a theory of religion, which is thought to rob God of his sovereignty; to another, which is thought to ascribe to him all his glory. Now, it is contended here, that there are no

* 1. Cor. iv. 7. † Εἶδε μὲν αἰχμητὴν εὐεσθαι θεοὶ αἰὲν ὄντες.

evidences in Austin's works, of that penitence and that sensibility to divine grace, as it respected the being rescued from error, which would be thought exacted at the present day, by a similar illumination of divine truth.

The writer of this supposes, that it will be not improper, but in agreement with the general design of the work, to note a circumstance in the character of this celebrated father, accounting for what are here considered as his needless speculations in theology. The circumstance is, the fondness for speculations of that description, which he seems to have brought with him from philosophy; as will appear from the passage to be here translated from the first of his three books on free-will. The work is in the form of a dialogue: and when Evodius, who bears the other part in it, had asked concerning the origin of evil, Austin answers—"You propose the question, which exercised me vehemently when I was a young man, and drove me among the hereticks, and cast me down. By which accident, I was so unhappy, and being oppressed with heaps of vanities, I so prated, that unless my love of finding out the truth had obtained for me divine help, it would have been impossible for me to emerge from thence, and to breathe again my very first liberty of seeking the truth."* In the passage quoted, there appears the naturally speculative bent of the mind of this eminent man. And it may with truth be added, that a great proportion of his voluminous works are a comment on the confession. Do the scriptures, in any place, impose an obligation on Christians, to perplex themselves with the inquiry,

* Aug. Opera, vol. 1, page 140, Paris ed. 1571.

which so exceedingly harassed the father in early life? It will not be pretended that they do. Accordingly, the next inquiry is—Whether it be not at least probable, that the refined reasonings, introduced by him, as little concern the ordinary Christian, as does the constitutional character which led to them.

The writer of this, having cited the preceding passage, thinks it may be of use to remark a sentiment in it, which, although not disowned in the retractations of the father, is certainly in hostility with his anti-pelagian armour. It is the connexion recognised between his original sincerity, and his attaining at last, through divine aid, to freedom of inquiry. The sentiment is precisely the same with that of St. Paul—"I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief."* It is far from being here thought, that any good is accomplished, without a preceding divine motion. But surely, to justify either the sentiment of the apostle or that of the father, the obeying or the disobeying of the motion cannot be altogether independent on the agent.

Such is the opposition of opinion, between St. Austin at one time of his life, and the same father at another; he having been, at both the periods, a bishop; and enjoying a reputation, at least equal to that of any bishop or other doctor of his day. When so manifest a contrariety is contemplated; and when it is considered, that the sentiments of the later period were rendered popular principally by his influence; that they are different from the opinions of the Christian writers of the preceding ages; that there are evidences of sensibility excited by their novelty, and complaint made of it; that after all, the newly fabricated system did not innovate sufficiently to

* 1. Tim. i. 12.

be consistent with itself; and that the influence of it ought to be the less, because of his not having felt the weight of his error, if it were indeed one; the conclusion is, that, these particulars combine in disproving the theory, and of course Calvinism; which is confessedly the same in substance, although rendered more consistent and complete.

END OF VOLUME I.

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The first part of the document is
concerned with the general principles
of the law of the land. It is
the duty of the government to
protect the rights of the people
and to maintain the peace and
order of the community.





