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COMPARATIVE VIEWS, &c.

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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.

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PART IV.

A Comparison of the Controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, with the Doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

INTRODUCTION.

Design—Some tenets not maintained by Calvin—Arminianism taught by fathers of the fourth century—Mistakes of Dr. Moseheim and Dr. Maclain—No influence of Calvin on the institutions of the church of England—Influence of the Lutherans—Greater of the fathers—An objection answered—Difference between Calvin and the English reformers, in respect to the canon of Scripture—Reference to lectures of Dr. Lawrence.

IT becomes a matter of no small moment to ascertain, in regard to the two parties whose principles are in contemplation, how far they may respectively be supposed to have had an effect on the church with which they are to be compared, in the construction of her articles and her liturgy. This is proposed as the object of the following introductory remarks: and the first step in the process will be the guarding against fallacies, attached to the names by which the parties are distinguished.

In regard to the Calvinists, it is here supposed that some of the doctrines usually passing under the name of Calvinistick were not sustained, at least in their subsequent extent, by the reformer. This applies particularly to the doctrines of a federal headship, the impu-

tation of the sin of Adam, and in some sense the final perseverance of the saints. Whether the author be correct or otherwise in this position, he conceives that the period to be looked to for the standard of Calvinism, according to the common use of the word, is that of the synod of Dort. At the said period, those doctrines were deliberately adopted and professed. It follows, that even if it could be proved, as indeed it cannot, that Calvin and those of his day who thought with him, exercised an influence over the deliberations which issued in the ecclesiastical system in question; still it would follow, that the system must vary materially from Calvinism, in the age of the controversy concerning the five points, and as it continues to be understood in the present day. The articles of the episcopal church, as a system of Calvinism, would be defective at the best.

When it is alleged, that the doctrines of the same church are conformable to Arminianism, it is not uncommon to hear the impossibility of this affirmed, on the ground, that her principles had been settled in their present form, long before Arminius was born. They who write or discourse in this way, proceed on the presumption, that he was the broacher of opinions altogether new. But this is so far from being fact, that even in the Dutch church, of which Arminius was a minister, there had prevailed a latitude of sentiment on the questions here in view, from the time of the reformation until the determination of the controversy, to which the writings of this divine gave a beginning. Even to this day, there remains an uncertainty, whether the said controversy would not have ended in an opposite re-

sult to that of the decrees of Dort, if civil considerations had not become interwoven with those of religion, by the Calvinist party's embracing of the cause of the stadtholder, and their advocating of the continuance of the war with Spain; while a different system of politics was adopted by the leaders of the republican party, who had embraced the opinions of Arminius; but who went down in the political scale, under the ascendancy of the prince of Orange. To perceive that the religious system of Arminius was not new, no more will be necessary than to refer to the known fact, that the leading doctrine of his system, the grounding of predestination on prescience, was as explicitly taught in the fourth century by Chrysostom, Nazianzen, and others, as since by a leader in any modern party. And as to the doctrine of Christ's salvation being for all men, it was the current instruction of early times, until Austin, in the fifth century, taught the contrary.

It has seemed expedient, thus to guard against misconceptions, arising from the mere use of names. On proceeding from this to the proposed subject, the author is aware of the disadvantage to which he is exposed, by so frequent and so confident a repetition of the position, that the articles of the church of England were designed to be Calvinistick; and that if ways are devised to prove them susceptible of another sense, it is by an evasion which the framers could not have foreseen. To him who writes it appears evident, that this position was not made, until times comparatively modern; and that it was common in earlier times, to censure what was afterwards called Arminianism, on the ground of its being contrary to the doctrine of the best

constituted churches, rather than on that of its being directly discountenanced by any express provision of the church of England in particular.

At any rate it is not to be denied, that, during a considerable tract of past time, the prejudice has been very extensively diffused; insomuch that a man of no less merited celebrity than Dr. Lawrence Mosheim, without any bias to the prejudice from his own ecclesiastical system, has not hesitated to affirm (Cent. 16, sect. 3, p. 2), that “when it was proposed, under the reign of Edward VI. to give a fixed and stable form to the doctrine and discipline of the church, Geneva was acknowledged as a sister church; and the theological system there established by Calvin, was adopted, and rendered the public rule of faith in England.” He goes on to state, that this was with the exception of not making a change in the episcopal form of government: a circumstance which, it may be thought—be it said with respect to the memory of so celebrated a man—ought to have prevented the hazarding of such an assertion, without at least the stating of some authority, whereby the assertion was supposed to be sustained. It is not on the face of the subject probable, that one church should be taken for a model of doctrine by another church, while in point of discipline, the latter should keep at a distance from the former, greater than had been taken by any protestant communion. And it is not a little remarkable, that, however generally attentive this historian is to give his authorities in his notes, he has deviated from his usual practice in this instance. Perhaps, however, it will not be unfair to adopt the opinion, that his omission has been supplied by his learned

annotator, Dr. Maclain; who in his notes, but a few pages after the quoted passage, states, in regard to some other particulars concerning the English church, that his author had taken his account of them from Daniel Neale's *History of the Puritans*. If Dr. Mosheim relied on this author, his partialities are so well known, as to render it unnecessary to apologize for appealing from his authority. His palpable errors were pointed out, soon after the publication of his work: it was however republished in his life-time, and since, without a revocation of the errors; although many of them must have been perceived.

But there is further evidence of the little care which the eminent Lutheran historian had bestowed on the present point; when he is found acknowledging, before the end of the section, that the English could not be persuaded to receive as public and national articles of faith, the doctrine that was propagated in Switzerland, in relation to the divine decrees. The inconsistency is evident. But the annotator, being himself a Calvinist, endeavours to do away the force of the sentiment in a note, by alleging that Mosheim was mistaken; yet giving no other evidence of this, than a concession of bishop Burnet, that the 17th article of his church was framed according to St. Augustine's doctrine; "which (says the annotator) scarcely differs at all from that of Calvin." How far bishop Burnet was correct in his opinion, will be considered in another place. In the present, it is enough to the purpose, that so far as the allied opinions of Dr. Mosheim and Dr. Maclain are concerned, they find no way of proving the articles in any respect taken from Calvin, except through the medium of their being first proved to have been taken

from St. Austin; which does away every allegation concerning Calvinism as such, and as the public confession of the churches of Swisserland.

A reader of Dr. Mosheim, in remarking such opposite sentiments in his history, might be tempted to doubt which of them was his mature sentiment, and which the effect of inattention, were it not, that this point is decided in that deliberate distribution of his matter, by which he has denominated the church of England a branch of the reformed church, as distinguished from the Lutheran. The church of England has certainly no reason to complain of the name so bestowed on her, when it is taken in its general meaning. But when designed, as it was by the historian, to be synonymous with Calvinistick, he of course considers this as predicable of the same church.

If however it should be supposed, that injury is done to the memory of an eminent man, in the idea of his being capable of the imputed oversight; let there be remarked a further evidence of the like fault, although in an opposite extreme. For whereas in one place he describes the church of England, in the reign of Edward VI. as adopting for her rule of faith the theological system of Calvin; in another place of the same section, he says of the same church under Charles I. that she then “publicly renounced the opinion of Calvin, relating to the divine decrees.” His annotator justly remarks—“It is not accurate to say, that the church of England renounced publicly, in that reign, the opinions of Calvin:” meaning, that whatever were the sentiments of a great proportion, perhaps the majority, of her divines; there was no authoritative proceeding to this effect. But ought not so learned a man,

who, being a native of Great Britain, must have known the same to be true in regard to any prior public proceeding for the establishment of Calvinism, to have given a similar testimony against the inaccuracy of the statement to the contrary? As to the church of England's acknowledging of a sister church in Geneva, it is difficult to devise what documents there can be, on the ground of which it was affirmed by Dr. Mosheim, and left uncontradicted by Dr. Maclain, to give any support to the position. It is certainly true of the church in question, that when she determined on retaining the episcopacy, as handed down to her from the apostles, it was with a moderation, which made her abstain from a denial of the validity of the orders of any other church, farther than the forbidding to all besides the episcopal, an admission to the ministry within her bounds. And it is evident, that she could not have accommodated to the opinions of other churches in this particular, without a sacrifice of her own. Under these circumstances, the supposition that she affiliated, as mentioned by Dr. Mosheim, with a church more remote from her in discipline than any other of the continental churches of the reformation, is utterly improbable in itself, independently of there being no evidence of it on record. If there should be thought any ground for the allegation, in the correspondence carried on between some of the English reformers and the reformer of Geneva; there is known a much more extensive correspondence between the former and the reforming divines of the church, of which Dr. Mosheim was so conspicuous an ornament. And of the fact here affirmed, there will be produced evidence in the proper place.

In what is to follow, there will be endeavours to prove—that the prevailing sentiments of Calvin could have had no weight in the construction of the system of the church of England—that there is abundant evidence of influence from another quarter, meaning the Lutheran church—but that the English reformers looked beyond both these sources; and while they took no other standard than the scriptures, yet, in their references to controversy subsequent to the age of Scripture, they had principally an eye to what had been transmitted to them from the fathers. Although in the establishing of these facts, there will be omitted much of the evidence, as coming in properly under the several points; yet there being also much of a general nature and connected with historic incidents and dates, it is thought that such may more conveniently be brought within the limits of this introduction.

In determining how far Calvinism had any effect on the system of the church of England, much depends on the exact noticing of the dates of the transactions, which have bearings on the question.

It is well known, that whatever attachment had existed in the minds of Luther and other Lutheran leaders, in the beginning of the reformation, to some opinions now considered as peculiarly Calvinistick, the said attachment had been done away, when there was delivered to the emperor, and the diet at Augsburg, in the year 1530, the celebrated confession, which continues to be the standard of the faith of all the Lutheran churches, to the present day. In that confession, the peculiarities alluded to are untouched. Luther, indeed, was still living; and it is certain, that he never formally revoked the opinions which he had declared, but passed them

by in silence. But Melancthon, who, under the eye of Luther, made his own elegant pen the instrument of the draft of the confession, had before that time explicitly declared the change of sentiment, in which he lived and died. So far was this from producing an alienation between these two eminent persons, that Luther publicly commended one of Melancthon's anti-calvinistick works; and lived in friendship with him until his own decease, in 1546; sixteen years after the confession of Augsburg.

Calvin published the first edition of his master work, the Institutions, in the year 1535. It was then only a sketch (as Bayle calls it, and as he quotes Beza calling it *Operis longe maximi Rudimentum*) of the work now known by that name. It went through several editions; but did not appear in its present enlarged form, until the year 1558; when, as Bayle affirms, it became divided into four books and eighty chapters; the number of chapters in the preceding editions having been only twenty-one.* The present writer hopes it will be no unreasonable liberty to hazard the suspicion, that in the original sketch, to which he has not access, the doctrines of Calvinism did not appear in the shape so offensive to Christians generally, as that in which they are seen in the present editions of the Institutions. The reason of the suspicion, is the friendly intercourse that subsisted between the Lutheran and the Calvinist leaders, until the violent dispute which commenced at Stratsburg in the year 1560; and which

* The present statement is confirmed by the recently published translation of the Institutes. The translator says in the preface, that the first publication was no more than an outline, afterwards several times improved and enlarged by the author.

led to the famous Lutheran form of concord; whereby a final separation was produced. Until the last mentioned date, the only matters of controversy bringing the parties into contact, were the questions concerning the eucharist, and the ubiquity of the person of the Redeemer. Even in these controversies, the party directly opposed to the Lutherans were the followers of Zuinglius. Calvin came in as a mediator; endeavouring, much to his honour, to effect a reconciliation. In his zeal for this good object, he evidently came as near as he could to the Lutheran doctrine of “*consubstantiation.*” And perhaps no disciple of Calvin, of the present day, will be offended by the opinion to be here given—that there is no subject on which this celebrated person has been so little happy in making himself intelligible to others, as in some things said by him on the subject here referred to. But be this as it may; the appeal is here made—whether it be probable, considering the temper of the times, the characters of the parties, and especially the ardent mind of Calvin, that there would have continued so long a peace between them on the points now called Calvinistick; if they had been maintained by him, at the time in question, to be of the essence of Christian faith; the point of view in which he upheld them, for some time previous to the date of the completion of the institutions.

His zeal in this direction, may reasonably be supposed to have begun in the year 1551; when we find him publicly opposed in church—certainly in a very disorderly manner—by Jerome Balsec, a physician, on the subject here in view: and it is this attack, which is said to have set him on his first work, professedly written on the subject of predestination. With what zeal

he afterwards supported the doctrine in his own sense of the word, is well known. But it can hardly be supposed otherwise, than that the zeal was recent, when it is considered that so short a time had passed, since his labouring to reconcile two bodies of Christians; one of which, the Lutherans, after professing his doctrine, or something like it, had at last avowed themselves of another sentiment; while the other had declared off, from the very beginning of their taking a part in the reformation. For whatever may have been the opinions of some of the Zuinglians, the sentiment of their leader was as here stated. And lest the assertion should be thought rashly made, the fact shall be given from Mosheim; who, in describing the changes made after the death of that reformer, says (Cent. 16, B. 2, sect. 3, part 3,) “The absolute decree of God with respect to the future and everlasting condition of the human race, which made no part of the theology of Zuingle, was an essential tenet in the creed of Calvin.”

Under the recollection of the preceding dates, let there be now attention paid to those connected with the articles of the church of England. These were first prepared in the summer of the year 1551; in the autumn of which, the attack was made on Calvin by Jerome Balsec. After being in the hands of the bishops, they were communicated to the king's council in the May of the next year. In September of the same, they underwent their last alterations; and early in 1553, they were ratified and published. Now let the question be asked,—Whether, independently on an influence of another sort to be demonstrated, there can be supposed to have been an influence on those articles, of peculiarities just then beginning to be subjects of discussion in

Geneva? And further, does there not result from this coincidence of dates, a confutation of an argument, which has been brought from correspondencies of Calvin with the protector Somerset and with Cranmer? These correspondencies were previous to the celebrity of Calvin, in the controversy concerning the doctrines now distinguished by his name. And there do not result from them any data, on which to determine, in what light he would have been held by the English reformers, had he shown himself, as was the case afterwards, so very distant from those with whom they had symbolized, from a very early period of the reformation.

Here, the author finds reason to return to the justly celebrated Mosheim, for a confirmation of the principles to be sustained, relatively to the church of England. The learned historian, in the section already quoted from him, represents the influence of Calvin as very limited, at the rise of the controversy above mentioned. Zuinglius had been of another mind; and although he was deceased, yet his influence had not been undermined by the rising reputation of his rival. In Swisserland, the points in question were debated with the greatest warmth; and it was not until the year 1554, that the Swiss could be brought into union with the church of Geneva. One of the earliest monuments of Calvin's influence beyond the limits of Helvetia, was the conversion of the elector Palatine in 1560; followed by a change in the profession of his subjects, achieved by force. There is no need to go further, in relating the progress of the Calvinistick system. No doubt, its influence became very great; for which it was indebted, not a little, to the popularity of its author, and

to the celebrity of the seminary in which he presided; resorted to, as it was, from almost all parts of Europe, for education. It was during this increase of public favour, that the persecution of the protestants took place in England in the reign of queen Mary. Of those who fled during that disaster to foreign countries, many came home, with a bias to the popular divinity of the day; and their zeal and their piety had the effect of rendering it popular in their own country.

The object of these statements is to show, how very improbable it becomes, on the face of Dr. Mosheim's narrative in one place, that it can be correct in another; since the former, in relating the progress of Calvinism on the continent, makes the latter an antedating of its influence in England.

In aid of the considerations stated, there is now solicited attention to the dates of transactions extraneous to the different churches spoken of; but belonging to the church from which they had all departed. The decrees of the council of Trent came out at about the same time with the articles of the church of England; so that, as the good old historian Fuller remarks, "truth and falsehood started both together." Now, whoever shall examine the decrees and the proceedings of that council will perceive, that Calvin could not have been known to them as an eminently influential person. It was their practice, to connect with the decrees of each session, some censures on what they thought the opposing errors: and the same are diffusively treated of by the speakers, in the preparatory debates of what they called the congregations; which were very like to what are called committees of the whole house, in modern legislation. In those debates, we find much mention made

of Luther, and of Lutheranism; but none of Calvin or of Calvinism: which is a strong proof, that both of these were in the infancy of their reputation. The remark applies especially to the decrees passed by the council, in the sixth session, on the subject of justification. Father Paul expressly says,* that in censuring error relative to predestination—"in the books of Luther, in the Augustan confession, and in the apologies and colloquies, there was nothing found that deserved censure, but much in the writings of the Zuinglians." From the offensive tenets of certain Zuinglians, as recorded by father Paul, it would seem, that they had wandered far from the opinions of him, from whose name they had been called; and who is affirmed to have entertained very different sentiments from such as are ascribed to these his followers. But why need they have had recourse to the writings of some unnamed Zuinglians, instead of resorting to the Institutions of Calvin; a work unquestionably of celebrity, from the date of the publication of it in 1535; which, indeed, must have been the effect of the eloquent dedication to the king of France, if there had been no other merit to recommend it. Let it be recollected, that the proceeding referred to in the council of Trent, was in the year 1546. Is not this strongly presumptive of the correctness of the suspicion intimated, of material additions relative to the present subject, when the work was confessedly enlarged in 1558? At any rate, the silence of the council shows the little notice at that time drawn to Calvin, on the subject on which, more than on any other, he became famous afterwards.

The author is the more inclined to the belief of this, on finding from Bayle, that Calvin published his first

* Page 197.

edition in haste, on account of a public slander laid by the court of France on the French protestants, that they held tenets inimical to magistracy. And it further appears from the same biographer, that the making of material alterations in successive editions, was a charge brought against Calvin while he lived. Bayle says, that among the calumnies or rather gross insults of Balsec against Calvin, this was one. Now Bayle must be good authority, to the points for which he is cited. He was born and educated among the Calvinists; and returned to them, after having been for some time a Roman Catholic. If he had finally any religion, it was that of Calvinism. To the memory of Calvin he is evidently very favourable; not only vindicating it from slander, but being very lenient to his faults; and not even touching on the part he took in the burning of Servetus; which was surely important enough to have found a place, in a professed narrative of the life of the reformer.

From these evidences of there having been no influence of Calvin, or of his system, on the matter which is the subject; let there be a transition to an influence coming from another quarter; of which there is here conceived to be abundant evidence.

It is well known, that in the very infancy of the reformation in Germany, an intercourse took place between those concerned in it, and archbishop Cranmer, who had the principal hand in framing the system of the church of England. His acquaintance with the leading Lutheran divines, began at the early period of his being sent to the continent by Henry VIII. on the business of his divorce: and even the archbishop's marrying of a niece of one of those divines, may be thought

to favour the idea of a tie of connexion, drawn close between them. So early as in the year 1535, there took place a correspondence between Cranmer and Melancthon; unquestionably the second, if not the first, as he is thought by some, on the list of Lutheran divines. Evidences of this correspondence remain, in the published letters of the last named excellent man; in one of which he thus opens his mind to the archbishop, on the subject of predestinarian disputations; which, however, before that time, had been discarded from among the Lutherans—"Too dreadful, in the beginning, were the disputations concerning fate, and they were an injury to discipline." Now it is very remarkable, that, during the whole time in which the articles of the church of England were under consideration, the divinity chair in the university of Cambridge was kept vacant, with the hope of its being filled by Melancthon; who had received from the government pressing invitations to it. It appears further, that during the expectation of the success of the application, the good bishop Latimer, the apostle of the English as some have called him, took notice of it in a sermon before the king, wishing success to the design; and recommending a suitable pecuniary provision for the expected visitant.* And yet this is the church, and this is the bishop, who have been since described, as meditat-

* What bishop Latimer said in his sermon before the king is as follows—"I heard say that master Melancthon, that great clerk, should come hither. I would wish him and such as he is, to have two hundred pound a year. The king should never want it in his coffers at the year's end." Latimer's Sermons, p. 47. It is not to be supposed, that Melancthon's utter contrariety to every thing since called Calvinism, could have been a secret to the bishop twenty years after the unequivocal dismissal of it at Augsburg.

ing the establishment of Calvinism; at the very time when they were endeavouring to avail themselves of the talents of the man, who had been more successful than any other man, in suppressing what at least bore a strong likeness of Calvinism—although not carried quite so far—in all the churches to which his influence extended.

This representation of the subject is further confirmed by the circumstance, that some whole articles of the church of England, and parts of others, were literally transcribed from the Augustan Confession; and from that of Wirtemberg, another Lutheran performance, drawn up under the superintendence of Melancthon. It is not probable, that one church should take even her language from another, with which she did not consider herself as affiliated in doctrine; since she might have expressed in her own words the truths in common with them. What evidence of this sort can be produced of a participation obtaining with any church, under the influence of Calvin? Far from it, there was an article in the reign of Edward, although afterwards left out under Elizabeth, comprehending a position against which Calvin had set his face with all the ardour of his character. It was that of the descent of Christ into the place of the damned: to which there was applied in the article, the much disputed passage in 1 Pet. iii. 19.

While from the facts which have been recited, it is here inferred, that in framing the articles of the church of England, an eye was carefully kept on institutions of an early date, in the Lutheran churches; the author of this work has his mind impressed by the conviction, that the framers looked much further back than to either Luther or Calvin; principally, indeed, to the holy scriptures; but in addition to these, and with a refer-

ence to questions which had arisen concerning the sense of scripture, to the fathers who lived some time before, and to those who lived some time after the council of Nice. When the author states the church as looking back for human opinion, no further than to the times mentioned; it is not as supposing, that she did not measure her esteem for such opinion in some proportion to the nearness of it to the age of the apostles; but because, according to his ideas, the ages still earlier had little or nothing to the most of the points, which are handled in the present work.

As the author had occasion to complain of Dr. Mosheim, and of his translator; so he further takes the like liberty again with the latter; on the account of his not having given accurately (in the section already referred to) the sense of bishop Burnet concerning the framing of the 17th article of the church of England. Bishop Burnet had said—"It is not to be denied, but that the article seems to be framed according to St. Austin's doctrine." And he goes on to apply this seeming to the point at issue between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians. But Dr. Maclain makes the bishop speak more positively; and, what is more important, without specifying the point to which the remark had been directed, the matter at issue between the two parties mentioned. Again; whereas Dr. Maclain speaks of the doctrine being expressed with a latitude, "that renders it susceptible of a mitigated interpretation;" the bishop, whose sense it was here professed to give, declares his opinion as follows—"That in which the whole difficulty lies is not defined." It is true, the bishop adds, as Dr. Maclain in substance repeats—"It is very probable, that those who penned the article

thought the decree was absolute." And the former further adds, in effect, that this not being specified, the subscriber to the article is not bound by it.

Bishop Burnet has another remarkable passage on the present subject, in his exposition of the 17th article; where he says, "In England the first reformers were generally in the Sublapsarian hypothesis; but Perkins and others have asserted the Supralapsarian way." This has been brought forward by sundry Calvinists, as a confirmation of their opinion; but if the passage be examined, there will appear little reason to lay stress on it. There is strong appearance, that the bishop, in this sentence, had principally within his view, the divines of the reign of Elizabeth; blending them with the first reformers; and then, accommodating his decision, to what he thought the general description of them. This is to suppose of a very eminent man, that in the present instance, he expressed himself without due precision. But it must be charged on him, let the interpretation be what it may. It would seem from the expressions used, as if Perkins were considered in them, as one of the first reformers: whereas, he was not born, until after they had suffered at the stake. Again, with what propriety can the first reformers be mentioned, in connexion with the dispute between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians? These were party names, invented after the age of the reformers. The origin of the distinction was in the low countries. There it kindled a great flame; which was not extinguished, until the parties united in hostility against the Arminians. Bishop Burnet has confessed, that the point of difference between these and both the former is not defined in the articles; and to justify the assertion that the first

reformers held what they hesitated to establish, it ought not to be taken even from so eminent a man as bishop Burnet; without at least some evidence of the fact, to be put in the balance against the apparent evidence to the contrary, which may be exhibited from ecclesiastical institutions.

The present writer would not willingly expose himself to the charge of arrogance: and he hopes he has a still greater dread of there being any workings of that passion in his mind. But having committed himself in an enterprise calling for a candid expression of his opinion, he declares it to be, that, even among those who are Anti-calvinists, the supposition of the Calvinism of the reformers of the church of England is very often taken for granted, without evidence of the fact. Doubtless, much matter has been produced from bishop Poinet's catechism, sanctioned by authority, and from writings of individuals of the day, to prove the holding of a predestination: but whether the decree were founded or were not founded on the point since at issue between the Calvinists and the Arminians, has not been decided by such of the testimonies as have come within the author's knowledge. If then there be a deficiency of materials for judging on the point—as the bishop himself implies—why should it be said with him in another place, that the compilers of the articles were probably Sublapsarians? And why should not the scale of probability be turned the other way, in consideration of their intimate alliance with the Lutherans? And indeed it would seem a very extraordinary latitude of expression, to be found in a church professedly Calvinistick; when almost any Calvinist, whether of past or of present

times, if satisfied that the latitude has been allowed, would consider it as a sacrifice of gospel truth.

But it appears to the writer of this, that the whole matter may be satisfactorily explained, if there be a looking back, with the bishop, to St. Austin's doctrine; and if, in connexion with it, the retrospect be extended to the doctrine maintained in the Greek church, both before and after the time of Austin; and in the Latin church also before his time, and until his great ascendancy made a change. Whoever will examine the passages, pertinent to the present subject in the works of Chrysostom, Nazianzen and Jerome, will perceive, that they represent the divine decree, as founded on foreknowledge. Now it is here supposed, that a zealous Arminian, in framing the articles, needed not have done any more, than to found it on the opinions of the authors who have been named; on the contrary, that a zealous Calvinist, engaged in the same work, would have found nothing to his mind more fitted for him than the principles of Austin; but further, that the reformers of the church of England, having other matters more at heart, and there having been little or no public discussion of the subjects in their country, framed the 17th article in such a manner, as to embrace the sentiments as well of Austin, as of Chrysostom and the others named. Doubtless, they knew what relation their institutions bore to the controversies existing on the continent. Perhaps there were shades of a variety of opinion among themselves. At any rate they must have known of the prevalence of it to a degree, among the clergy and the people. But, as is here conceived, they adopted that temperate medium, which they judged to be a

sufficient security of the truth, without bringing insecurity to Christian charity and peace.

The present writer is aware of a prejudice entertained by many, against what is here said of the opinions of the English reformers, in the supposition, that their principal guide on the subjects in question, was St. Austin: and this idea seems sanctioned by the respectable opinion of bishop Burnet. But neither the bishop, nor any one else has given direct evidence to this point; and as to presumptive evidence, it is entirely the other way. Although Austin is mentioned respectfully in the articles, so likewise are Chrysostom and Jerome; whose works are so different from his, in the matter of predestination. In the preface to the first edition of Cranmer's Bible, given by Strype, in his Appendix to the memorials of the Life of the Archbishop, there are two long extracts, one from Chrysostom and the other from Nazianzen, in commendation of the reading of the Scriptures. Would Calvin have paid such respect to these men, especially the former, whom he censures as to matters involved in the essence of the Calvinistick system? It cannot be supposed. Both these fathers, are mentioned with honour in the homilies: and in the first of these compositions, Chrysostom is characterized by the titles, "The great clerk and godly preacher." Why should it be thought, that the opinions of these men were less attended to than those of Austin? If the argument be in favour of the latter, from the institutions which are the result, it is considerable: But this is the very matter in question. When these things are considered, there seems something wanting besides the mere affirmation of any man, however eminent, to prove

that Austin was the father principally consulted in framing the thirty-nine articles.

There has not been overlooked the objection, which will be made to the representation here given—that on the ground of the correctness of it, there has not been obtained by the articles the object professed in the preamble to them; the avoiding of diversity of opinion. Doubtless this is true; if, by those expressions, there is to be understood every shade of difference; involving the presumption, that the framers aimed at the accomplishment of an object, which in no state of society has been attained to. But perhaps, to those whose prejudice is here contemplated, there may be a more acceptable answer in the words of the Calvinistick historian, Fuller,*—“These holy men (the framers of the articles) did prudently pre-discover, that differences of judgment would unavoidably happen in the church; and were loth to un-church any and drive them off from an eucharistical communion, for such petty differences; which made them pen the articles in comprehensive words; to take in all who, differing in branches, meet in the root of the same religion.”

This testimony of Fuller is introduced by him, after his having stated, under the reign of Elizabeth, the article concerning Christ's going down into hell, to preach to the spirits there. But although this gave occasion to the remark quoted; yet, in what Fuller immediately subjoins, it may be perceived, that the principle of it was designed to be more extensive. “Indeed most of them” (who prepared the articles under Elizabeth) “had formerly been sufferers themselves; and cannot be said in compiling these articles—an acceptable ser-

* Page 72.

vice no doubt—to offer to God what cost them nothing; some having paid imprisonment, others exile, all losses in their estates, for this their experimental knowledge in religion: which made them the more merciful and tender in stating these points; seeing such who themselves have been most patient in bearing, will be the most pitiful in burthening the consciences of others.”

What the historian says, applies rather to the revisers and the re-ordiners of the articles, than to the original composers; although this is the word used by him. The argument in favour of a reasonable latitude, applies alike to both cases: and that he must have so considered it, applying it also to the articles generally, appears from his remark, introductory to the passages cited. For he introduces them by saying—“Some have unjustly taxed the composers for too much favour extended in their large expressions, clean through the contexture of these articles; which should have tied men’s consciences up closer, in more strict and particularizing propositions: which, indeed, proceeded from their commendable moderation.”

The preceding testimony is the more worthy of notice, from its being given by an avowed advocate of the opinions called Calvinistick. This he sufficiently makes known; where, speaking of the Lambeth articles, he says—“As medals of gold and silver, though they will not pass in payment for current coin, yet will they go with goldsmiths for as much as they are in weight; so, though these articles want authentic reputation to pass for provincial acts, as lacking sufficient authority, yet will they be readily received of orthodox Christians, for as far as their own purity bears conformity to God’s word.”

It is difficult to account for the different effects which the same argument produces on different minds. But under the recollection of this diversity, the author takes occasion to mention, that he lays great stress on the grounds on which the church of England and Calvin respectively, rest the authority of holy scripture: for that the said church, in framing her articles, should take this reformer for her guide on predestination and its kindred points; and yet run so wide of him as to the source from which alone light is to be gathered concerning these matters and all others, seems altogether improbable. She rests the authority of the books alleged to be scripture, on the testimony of the church; affirming, in her 20th article, that this body is "a witness and a keeper of holy writ:" And she has not, in any of her institutions, given a hint of any other ground, on which we are to believe one book or another to have been given by inspiration. Had she conceived of any other test, it was of too great consequence to have been omitted. The church of Rome rests the same matter, not on the testimony merely, but on the decisive authority of the church. But perhaps the sense of these two churches cannot be better distinguished, than in the following statements from bishop Burnet, in his exposition of the 20th article.

"The church's being called the witness of Holy Writ, is not to be resolved into any judgment that they pass upon it, as a body of men that have authority to judge and give sentence, so that the canonicalness or uncanonicalness of any book shall depend upon their testimony: but is resolved into this, that such successions and numbers of men, whether of the laity or clergy, have in a course of many ages had these books pre-

served and read among them; so that it was impossible to corrupt that, upon which so many men had their eyes, in all the countries and ages of Christendom. The church of Rome is guilty of a manifest circle in this matter. For they say they believe the scriptures on the authority of the church: and they do again believe the authority of the church, because of the testimony of scripture concerning it."

The very different light from both of these, in which Calvin views the subject, appears in the 7th Chap. of his 1st Book; in which he first finds fault with the tenet above ascribed to the Roman church; and then establishes his own test of the divine authority of the sacred books, resting it on the testimony of the spirit, without noticing as maintained either by himself or by others, the foregoing position of the church of England. His sense is as follows, sect. 4.—“ Because religion, with profane men, is seen to stand only in opinion; lest they should believe foolishly or lightly, they desire and demand to be proved to them by reason, that Moses and the prophets spoke with divine authority. But I answer, that the testimony of the spirit is better than any reason. For as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his word; so likewise, the word will not find faith in the hearts of men, before it is signed to them by the inward testimony of the spirit.” The sentiment is amplified in the same and in the succeeding sections.” That it was designed to apply to the several books, is evident; in Calvin’s premising of his doctrine with noticing the inquiry made among other inquiries of the same kind, who shall determine that this or the other book is to be received? So that the solution is given partly in answer to this question.

The very test of authority here started, is adopted both in the Belgic confession and in that of Westminster; but in no document of the Lutherans, so far as is here known. Indeed that they must have been strangers to it, may be inferred from their not having been censured for such an innovation by the council of Trent, in their decrees of the 4th session, relative to the holy scriptures. Besides, it was of too important a nature, not to have found a place, if held, in the Augustan confession; where it is not. The result of the whole is, that Calvin's being so diverse from the church of England, in this important particular, is a proof that he was not considered by her as a guide on any other subject.

With the view already opened, of an argument from incidents and dates, it may be to the point to notice the great respect paid in the reign of Edward, to the paraphrase of the gospel by Erasmus. In the very beginning of that reign, there was a royal injunction, for the placing of a copy of it in every church throughout the realm; that, as the injunctions express it, "the people may read therein." And there was another injunction, that the whole paraphrase of Erasmus should be in the hands of all the clergy below bachelors in divinity; the said clergy to be examined therein by the bishops. Now although it has been said, with some appearance of reason, that Erasmus laid the egg of the reformation, which Luther hatched; yet, on the subjects of grace, free will, and the like, it is well known that the former did not go to the lengths of the latter; and much less to those of Calvin. Is it then to be supposed, that the English reformers, calvinistically inclined as some represent them to have been, would have paid so extraordinary an honour to a work, which must have been ex-

pected and is actually found to abound with sentiments, in direct contrariety to those designed to be the foundation of the fabric, which they were themselves preparing? To show further the extravagance of the supposition, it is here proposed to exhibit from the paraphrase of Erasmus, under each of the five points, his explanations of some of the texts in controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. It ought, however, to be remembered, that, as the order of the English council respected only the paraphrase of the gospel,* the reference will be to that portion of holy writ only; whatever advantage might be derived, by taking what relates to passages in the Acts and in the Epistles. The citations from Erasmus will be, as they are found in the translation of Nicholas Udal, dedicated to king Edward, in whose reign it was edited.

The author is aware, that his reasoning has been, hitherto, only from attendant circumstances; and he is free to confess, that, however strong he reckons those which have been stated, they ought to be considered as fallacious, if they should lead to senses contradicted by clear and express provisions. He therefore passes to the points of controversy in their order; with a conviction of mind, that, under every one of them, much additional evidence will result from the plain letter of the institutions of the church.

But before he proceeds, he takes occasion to mention a work lately edited in England, by Richard Lawrence, D. D.; being eight sermons delivered at the Bampton

* Collier speaks as if it was of the whole New Testament: but Fuller, and bishop Sparrow in his Collections, profess to give the injunctions at large. In these, the order is confined to Erasmus' paraphrase of the gospels.

Lecture, with ample notes attached to them. It is here conceived to be a work of great merit, and is mentioned as such; partly because other readers may be thereby induced to gather from it, as the author of this has done, much information on the subject; and also, because of the use which will be made of the notes, in what is to follow. They contain extracts from literary works, not accessible by the present writer, and perhaps not to be had in the United States: to which notes, accordingly, there will be a reference, where it may be deemed pertinent to the present purpose. Dr. Lawrence complains, that the articles of the church of England are commonly judged of by a comparison with modern controversy: and he argues, with evident propriety, that there should be taken into view the scholastic distinctions in use at the time, and the errors intended to be contradicted. How happily Dr. Lawrence has applied this position to the explanation of the articles, can be known to those only, who shall have perused his sermons and the attendant notes.

I. OF PREDESTINATION.

Seventeenth article—No notice of Reprobation—Nor of the hinge on which the controversy turns—Indefiniteness of expression—Cautions—Paraphrase of Erasmus—Calvinistick churches—Calvinistick Divines—Sense of the same, as to evidence of Election.

IT is here hoped, that if, under this and the other points, nothing were said in the way of declaration, that the present part of the work is not considered as adding evidence to the truth of the principles sustained through the whole of it; the same would be presumed. Neither the church of England, nor her offspring, the episcopal church in these states, is here wished to receive support and perpetuity any further than as they are agreeable to scripture. Nevertheless, in a work not expected to be read beyond the bounds of the church the last mentioned; and which, although perhaps not likely to be read by many within those bounds, is yet intended for their service; there has been thought a propriety in showing, that the theory is consistent with their system.

The order intended under this, and under every other of the five points, is, first to state the institutions applying to it; delivering, at the same time, what occurs as the natural interpretation: and then to sustain this, by showing the material differences existing between

the institutions in question, and the positions of Calvinistick churches, and Calvinistick divines of name.

The prominent decision of the church on the present point, is in her seventeenth article, as follows:

“ Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they, which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God’s purpose by his spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

“ As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust

them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

“ Furthermore, we must receive God’s promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy scripture: and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God.”

The episcopal church in these states has not, in any other of her institutions, made use of the terms expressive of there being a predestination or an election. The church of England, however, from whose principles this church has never intended to depart, makes use of the term “ elect” in three places: in her catechism, in which the person examined, in declaring his faith in the Holy Ghost, adds—“ who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God:” and the burial service, in which she has inserted the petition—“ beseeching thee, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom”—and in the collect for All Saints day—“ who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son.” As the episcopal church in these states retains the article, but drops the recited word from two of the places, it is probable that she has been influenced to this, by considerations wide of the present subject. The first clause is an exercise principally intended for a time of life, very ill suited to questions of speculative theology. The second came in connexion with a special reference to the person deceased; which it was thought expedient to omit. The third, has an evident reference to a visible communion.

But to take up the article: the first thing observable in it, is its silence on the subject of reprobation. This

is very unlike to Calvin, who said—"It is to be preached, that they who have ears to hear may hear;" and to Calvinistick churches, as will be seen in the proper place. This very circumstance, indeed, would have been so singular in a church contemplating the profession of Calvinism, that there arises a strong presumption of no such matter having been intended; and at the same time a demonstration, that, if intended, it was but in part carried into effect. Perhaps it would be more correct to say, not carried into effect in any degree: for since, according to Calvinism, the very source of predestination is in an illustration of the Divine sovereignty, election and reprobation are alike essential to the scheme.

But in the next place, and what may be mentioned as deserving especial notice, is the entire silence of the article, as to the hinge on which the controversy turns. Let it be remembered, that at Dort, the Calvinists and the Arminians agreed in acknowledging a predestination. But said the Arminians, the predestinating decree is founded on faith and works foreseen. No, said the Calvinists, it is to illustrate the sovereignty of God, independently on any such foresight. Will any one affirm, that this is a question decided by the article? Surely, nothing like it appears. It is true, the article was framed long before the days of the Synod of Dort. But was it necessary that Arminius, or that his successor Episcopius should have been born, in order to bring into notice the connexion above referred to, of pre-science and predestination? The sentiment was prevalent among the fathers of the fourth century; and also is to be seen in several works of fathers, who lived before that age. The English reformers, indeed, have

not noticed such a connexion in the article. Their doing so, would have been an exclusion of the adherents of Austin: and this, as was before conceded, was far from their design. As little was there within it, to follow Austin in such a manner, as to exclude all who should hold with the church generally before him; and with the Greek church ever after him. This is the knot of which bishop Burnet justly remarks, that the whole difficulty lies in it; and that, in the article, it is not defined. So far as falls within the compass of the present writer's reading, they who allege that the church unties this knot, do not attempt to prove it in any other way than by showing, that the framers of the article were Calvinists; and that therefore, they must have intended it in the extent of the Calvinistick sense. It is an object of the present discussion, to deny what is thus affirmed for fact, as to the opinions of the compilers. But were it ever so conspicuous, it would not follow, that they framed their institutions so rigorously, as to exclude a Chrysostom or a Nazianzen, if they had been their cotemporaries, from their communion.

What still adds to the weight of the indefiniteness of the expressions in the article—and this is the third particular to be noticed—is the collective complexion of the terms, by which the elect are designated. “Those” (says the article) “whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind.” It is true, that generals include particulars; and yet, much may depend on the order in which they are introduced. Accordingly when the article, instead of specifying individual election, speaks of the election of a body; it leaves to the reader the liberty of the interpretation, that God, having accommodated the whole proceeding to the corporate character, chose the individual, because of his falling within

the descriptive properties of it. Calvin carefully avoided all such indefiniteness of expression. In his definition of predestination* he makes the decree of God to be concerning every man.† Not so Melancthon, as quoted by Dr. Lawrence, from the “*Loci Theologici.*” He makes the same decree to respect a church‡ chosen among the human race.§ How consonant is this to the matter contended for in the introduction, of there being in the view of the reformers, not the Calvinistick system, but the Lutheran! especially if this should be found favoured by what is to follow.

Accordingly, there is here mentioned the fourth remarkable particular; which is, that the elect are said to be “called, according to God’s purpose, by his spirit working in due season.” The Latin liturgy has it “in a favourable season:”¶ which seems to refer to the party’s favourable state of mind for the work.|| There can hardly be a sentiment more Anti-calvinistick than this. But as it relates to a subject more properly belonging to another place, it will be sufficient in this, to have shown the force of the expression.

Then there come the cautions; on which much has been said, to prove that the compilers believed more than they thought it necessary to express. And here we are again met by the translator and annotator of Moseheim; who affirms¶ of these cautions—“They intimate that Calvinism was what it (the article) was meant to establish.” The very contrary appears evident to the present writer, on the face of them.

* B. 3, ch. 1, sec. 5.

‡ Ecclesiam.

† De quoque homine.

§ In genere humano.

¶ Opportuno tempore.

|| This remark is Dr. Lawrence’s. At least, it is not here recollected to have been met with in any other writer.

¶ Ibid.

Previously to the first caution, and in the same sentence, there is stated the proper improvement of the doctrine; which ought therefore to aid in the interpretation of the caution. The abuse of this, is what the improvement was intended to prevent. “As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things; as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God.” Perhaps there is not in all the institutions of the episcopal church, or of any other church, any thing more alien than the preceding sentence, from the spirit of the Calvinistick system. So far as the inquiries of the present writer have extended, this has uniformly treated of the knowledge of the individual, concerning his being within the bounds of grace, as a matter of immediate communication to him from the source of truth.* The article refers to the same important subject; but considers satisfaction on it as to be obtained no otherwise, than through the medium of the consciousness of the working of the spirit of Christ; evidenced in “mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing up the mind to high and heavenly things.” This is the only use of the

* It is common to combine with this source of satisfaction, an attention to the party's heart and conduct; and a conformity of these with the requisitions of the law of God. Still, the other is considered as a distinct and independent medium of knowledge on the subject.

subject of election, which the article contemplates. And doubtless to those who so use, and while they continue so to use it, there cannot but be unspeakable comfort in thinking on the steadiness of the Divine determination, terminating in the state of glory to which such an use will lead.

Then comes the caution, against the danger attendant on curious and carnal persons. The very term "curious," throws a degree of censure on the carrying of the disquisition further than the article has expressed. Nevertheless, to be exposed to the threatened danger, the persons must be not curious only, but carnal also; which may be descriptive of any thing, in contrariety to a truly religious spirit. The danger to such persons, is licentiousness on the one hand, or desperation on the other. Is there any danger to be apprehended from the truths of God as declared in scripture? Or, when the compilers were putting an end to the shameful policy of locking up the scriptures from the people in an unknown tongue, did they open them for the perusal of the godly only? Or, if the ungodly might profitably peruse all other parts of scripture, was it intimated to them, that they must carefully pass over all the passages, in which the great truth of God's predestination had been declared, lest they should be tempted either to despair or to presumption? Nothing like any part of this, can reasonably be supposed. But it was considered that a vain curiosity, pushing inquiry beyond what scripture had revealed and what the article had defined, and, combining with curiosity a vicious state of mind, might either tempt a person to abandon himself to licentious living, under a persuasion that he is nevertheless of the number of the elect; or else, perceiving the

inconsistency of this, yet still conscious of the dominion of sinful appetite, might conclude, that he is not of the number of those to whom the offer of salvation has been made; and therefore abandon himself to despair.

That this was the sense in which the caution was contemplated by the compilers, receives confirmation from its being found conformable to the language of Luther, as cited by Dr. Lawrence* from the 6th volume of the reformer's works. He writes thus: "Concerning God unknown, that is not revealed and laid open by the word, to know any thing of what he is, what he does, what he wills, does not belong to me. But this belongs to me—to know what he has taught, what he has promised, what he has threatened. When you intensely meditate on these things, you find God. Yea, he himself gathers you into his bosom; from which, if you fall, that is, if you presume to know any thing beyond those things which are revealed in the word, you rush into the abysses of hell. Rightly, therefore, a certain hermit gave the following admonition:—If you see, said he, a young monk ascend to heaven and already, as it were, put one foot in heaven, draw it immediately away: but if he put both feet there, he will seem to be not in heaven, but in hell. This saying gives no other admonition than that we should moderate our curiosity, and remain within certain limits prescribed by God. For it is not in the clouds, but on the earth, that he would have us tread." Again: "pernicious and pestilent is the inquiry concerning the 'wherefore;' and it brings certain destruction; especially when we ascend higher and are desirous of philosophising concerning predestination." Is it not

* Page 385.

here evident, that the investigation forbidden, is that which travels beyond the limits of the word? And is not this the very matter discouraged by the church, under the intimation of its being dangerous to curious and carnal minds? But the predestination involved in these documents, must be quite different from that comprehended in the institutions of Calvin; which is declared to be founded on many passages of scripture. Neither Calvin nor those who think with him, so far as the present writer is informed, are apprehensive of the said extreme of predestinarian speculation; except in the particular, of applying it to the determining on the condition of this or of the other man. Against such a practice, they give cautions: but it must be evident to all, that in the great field of speculation opened by the subject, there is a range forbidden by the passage quoted from Luther, which may be wantoned in without a stumbling on the difficulty forbidden by Calvin.

The next caution is—"Furthermore, we must receive God's promises, in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy scripture." Now let it be noted in the first place, that the article is far from affirming, in opposition to the promises of God, a divine determination rendering them ineffectual to some. The most expressed by a reference to these points is, that if some believe them, no practical consequences are to follow. But the truth of the case is here conceived to be—and evidence of it will be produced hereafter—that however some modern Calvinists may have made such distinctions, they are not only no part of the original system of Calvinism, but in fact inconsistent with it. Although this is to be more fully treated of, yet the author, aware that the proposition will seem singular to many,

simply rests it on the authority of their leader, Calvin. This celebrated person was far from allowing of there being promises to any other than the elect; which yet, according to the current meaning of words, abound in scripture under the forms of invitation. He states the objection made to his doctrine, that it interferes with the divine promises. But what says he in answer? Does he affirm that we must believe the doctrine, yet obey the promise? Nothing like it: he denies that there are any promises to the reprobate; while, in the contemplation of the article, the promises must have been indefinite. What Calvin says, is as follows. After stating the objection, that there is an inconsistency between the promises and the supposed decree of reprobation, he proceeds thus—*“This is far from being a just conclusion. For if we turn our attention to the effect of the promises of salvation; we shall find that their universality is not at all inconsistent with the predestination of the reprobate. We know the promises to be effectual to us, only when we receive them by faith.” We know of many conditional promises in scripture; such as, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;”† and in the Old Testament, “When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive;”‡ and many other places, the obvious senses of which will hardly be denied. If the meaning of Calvin be rightly understood, it is, that although the declarations of the divine word are to be preached in general terms—for which he specially provides—yet, in the character of promise, they do not apply, until faith ascertain the party to be of the number of the elect. But, says the arti-

* Book 3, ch. 24, sect. 17. † Ezek. xviii. 27.

‡ John vi. 37.

cle, the promises are to be taken as found in scripture: which evidently does not make any such distinction, as that of Calvin. In the former, there are conditional promises to the wicked. Soon after the above quotation from Calvin, he has a passage well worthy of remark. He again introduces the objectors, arguing against the absurdity of supposing a double will in the Deity. Does he defend the said doctrine of a double will, in any sense which can give it a place in theology? Not at all. His answer is—"This" (meaning the notion of a double will) "I grant them, provided it be rightly explained. But why do they not consider the numerous passages, where, by the assumption of human affections, God condescends beneath his own majesty?" According to Calvin's plan of interpretation, there was evidently no universal declaration of a favourable will, except in metaphor. But the article must surely have contemplated a will, made known explicitly.

The remaining caution in the article is—"And in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God." Must not every one perceive, that if there be a secret and a revealed will of God; and if the latter be declared in scripture; the other is to be gathered from an extraneous source? But is such a distinction a natural growth from Calvinism; which holds, that the will of God to save a determinate number and to damn another determinate number, is explicitly declared in the scriptures? Accordingly, whoever shall examine Calvin's explanations of texts of scripture, usually interpreted of a redemption wrought for all, will find, that he denies their carrying of any such senses. The real meaning of the caution, may be easier explained from the Lutheran

than from the Calvinistic quarter. Luther, in his last work of importance—his Commentary on Genesis—apologizes for what he had formerly written concerning predestination. The passage here in view, has been already referred to in Dr. Lawrence; and is as follows—“I wrote, among other matters, that all things are absolute and necessary; but at the same time I added, that God is to be viewed as revealed.” And again—“You who hear me will remember my having taught, that there is to be no inquiry after the predestination of an hidden God; but there is to be an acquiescence in those things which are revealed by vocation, and by the ministry of the word.”

Dr. Lawrence gives many like passages from Luther. The sentiments running through them all, tend to throw light on the caution in the article; showing it to be, not a Calvinistick caution in reference to a scriptural predestination; but a Lutheran caution, against men’s perplexing themselves with the speculations of fatalism.

Exactly in agreement with this of Luther, is what was before quoted from his friend Melancthon, concerning the stoical disputations agitated in their communion in the beginning. Here seems the clue to the caution. By the revealed will in the article, there is meant scripture; in contradistinction, not from other parts of itself, but from a will suggested by philosophical speculation. And the article shows the force of this train of thinking, where it says—“by his counsel secret to us.” How can it be called secret, if it be declared in revelation, that there is such a counsel? For let it be still noticed, that a body of a certain description, and not individuals as such, are mentioned as the objects of the decree: which precludes the idea, that the secrecy of the coun-

sel respects the knowledge of who are individually the objects of it. No: the existence of any such counsel is unrevealed; but it was thought to result, by reasonings *a priori*, from the attributes of God. It is remarkable that in the homilies, there is nothing said of predestination, as on other points of Christian doctrine, which those discourses were designed to amplify. Here is strong evidence of the broad foundation on which the reformers chose to leave the points in question.

It was intimated in the introduction, that there should be given, under the respective points, from the paraphrase of Erasmus on the Gospels, some texts with his explanations; which are on a quite different plan from that of all Calvinistick writers. This, considering the prominent station given to his work by the English reformers, was considered as their paraphrase; so far as essential doctrine can be thought concerned.

Matthew xiii. 13, 14, 15. "Therefore speak I to them in parables," &c. Paraphrase: "For this cause, I speake to them in darke parables; because they wyll heare the manifest truth, eyther with no profit, or els to theyr own hurte. For it cummeth to passe, through theyr frowardnesse, that whereas they have eyes and see manifest tokens; yet, being blynded with envye, they see not that which they see. And whereas they have ears and heare the trueth, that cannot be confuted; yet they heare, as though they do not understande it. Truely the saying of Esai is fulfilled in these menne," [thèn follows the quotation of the evangelist from the prophet Isaiah,] "truely these menne therefore be unfortunate, but not to be pitied, though they be verey miserable, which wittingly and willyngly seke their

own confusion and desolation, and rejecte theyre health and salvation.”

Matthew xi. 25. “I thank thee, O Father,” &c. Paraphrase: “I thank thee, O Father, which art the Lorde of heaven and yearth, and by whose wisdome all thynges be governed, because thou haste hydden this heavenly philosophic from them that be high mynded and puffed up with pryde, through an opinion of their owne worldly wisdome and policie; and hast opened it to the lyttle ones and to the meke, and to such as after the worlde’s judgemente are reputed but fooles. Truly, so it is Father, for so it hath seemed best unto thy goodnesse, to teache that thou art not pleased with the stoute and such as trust unto theyr owne justice and wysdome; and that they be great with thee for the simplicite of faythe, whom the worlde taketh for fooles and abjectes.”

John xiii. 18. “I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen,” &c. Paraphrase: “In dede I have chosen you all to the honourable rounth and office of apostles; but all of you shall not answer to the worthyness of this office.”

John xv. 16. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” &c.* Paraphrase: “In case ye were of the worlde, if ye loved worldly thinges and taught according to worldly desyres, then the worlde would know you and love you as his own. But because ye followe not the waies of the fleshe, but of the Spirite, and covete not worldly goodes, but heavenly, therefore the worlde hateth you; not that ye deserve it, but for that ye be unlike to the same, which is evil and wicked. In times

* This is the only text produced by Turretine on the question of prescience, as the foundation of predestination, and against the principle.

past, when ye thought perfect righteousness to consist in the grosse ceremonies of Moses' lawe and setting your mindes on transitorie thinges, the worlde did then well like you. But after I had once called you from this secte to the evangelical and heavenly doctrine, and grafted you in me as branches in the stocke, the worlde began to hate you, and that only because ye be mine."

Luke x. 20. "Notwithstanding, in this rejoyce not," &c. Paraphrase: "And yet it is not expedient for you to glorie or to vaunte yourselfs concerning any such thing, because spirites are subject to you; for these thinges shall be dooen also by evill and wicked menne. But rejoyce ye in this thing, that your names are alreadie written in heaven. For thither shall your meeknesse and lowliness, thither shall your simplicite bring you; from whence Lucifer, through his pryde and haughtiness of mind, fell: if ye shall still persiste and continue in this your entente and purpose."

Such are the views taken by Erasmus, of the texts which have been specified: and such were the illustrations held by Cranmer, Ridley, and their associates, to be agreeable to the gospel; and worthy to be placed in every parish church in England, for the instruction of the people. It is a cause of thankfulness to Almighty God, that there is now no occasion for such a medium of popular information, either in that country or in the United States of America: but let the question be asked, Should such an exigency occur in any place, would a Calvinistick church provide such a remedy? Would any exigency induce them to permit or to endure it?*

* As the paraphrase of the Epistles, although not to be read in churches, was enjoined to be studied by the clergy; there may be

But, says bishop Burnet—"The cautions intimate, that St. Austin's doctrine was designed to be settled by the article." That the cautions are consistent with the doctrine of that father, is not here denied. But it is hoped, that, without offending against modesty, the question may be asked, whether the inference be correct, that the said doctrine was intended to be settled. May not the compilers have taken from St. Austin, what would not have been offensive to St. Chrysostom; and yet, where these fathers differed, have observed a profound silence? This is here conceived to be the fact: but whether so or not, is irrelevant to the present subject; because it does not appear, that the cautions were comprehended within the plan of Calvin and his early followers.

It is time to pass to the last object of this subdivision—the differences between the article and the decisions of Calvinistick churches, and some divines of name, in regard to all the particulars above stated.

To begin with the church of the Netherlands; whose sense is evidenced in the confession in use before the synod of Dort, and by them approved, as also in the

propriety in giving, under each point, a specimen or two from Erasmus in this department of scripture. He applies what is said (Rom. ix.) of Jacob and Esau, to temporal inheritance. And in paraphrasing what is said of Pharaoh in the same chapter, he prefaces it by saying, that God does not harden men's hearts, as that thereby they are caused to discredit the gospel of Christ; but such as through malice and stubbornness refuse to believe, God used as instruments, to magnify his great benefits, and to set forth his mighty and glorious power. There has been given in the second part, the interpretation of 1 Pet. ii. 8: and many more passages might be mentioned, thought strong in favour of Calvinism; but to which quite other constructions are given by Erasmus.

canons made by them. The said Belgic confession is as follows: "We believe, that all the posterity of Adam, being thus fallen into perdition and ruin, by the sin of our first parents, God did then manifest himself such as he is; that is to say, merciful and just: merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom he in his eternal and unchangeable council of mere goodness hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works: just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves." The canons are to the same purpose, although somewhat more full.

Here is clearly a decision of the point, on which it has been shown, that fathers of ancient times, although not before St. Austin, entertained opposite opinions; and on which, at the time of the synod, the then recent opposition between the Calvinists and the Arminians, had occasioned the calling of it. This body did not fail to determine more explicitly than had been done before, the point on which the article of the church of England has been shown to be silent—whether election were founded on prescience? What they say concerning reprobation, represents it as the same with a passing by: and this seems to have been owing principally to the moderation of the English divines; who, however, were Calvinists.

In the fifteenth article under the first point, the synod, after stating, that while "some only are elected, others are passed by in the eternal decree;" and after amplifying this sentiment, add—"This is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the author of sin," &c.

On the subject of reprobation, the Westminster divines take a quite different course. They lay down the general doctrine as follows: *—“ God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

“ 2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

“ 3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

“ 4. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

“ 5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

* Ch. iii. sec. 1.

“ 6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called in Christ by his spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only.

“ 7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

“ 8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care; that men, attending to the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal salvation. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the gospel.”

In the above, there is not only settled the ^hinge on which the controversy has been explained to turn; but the compilers have not been afraid to look steadily at the gloomy picture of reprobation, from which the members of the synod of Dort, any otherwise than as an inference from election, were content to turn away their eyes. Not only so, by the former the glory of God's sovereign power over his creatures is made the

object of the difference of his dispensations to the elect and the reprobate; to which there will not be affirmed to be any thing similar in the episcopalian article.

Next to these citations from Calvinistick churches, the first place is due to Calvin himself; who defines predestination* “the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined within himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind.” “For (says he†) he adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some what he refuses to others.” Sentences to the same effect abound in his Institutions.

Professor Turretine, one of his successors in the divinity chair of Geneva, is not behind him. He says‡— “The predestination of men is that by which God, from the whole human race, to be created and to fall, preordained some to eternal life and others to eternal death.” From this definition it appears, that, in the controversy between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians, which became agitated in his day, he thought with the latter: and this he afterwards declares more explicitly. It is here declared, that, on the question of the sense of the article of the episcopal church, there is no occasion to make the distinction alluded to. It had not appeared in Calvin’s day, and at the time of the framing of the article; or at least, there seems no appearance that the distinction was then current. Of course, there is very little probability of there having been a reference to it in the Article.

It would be easy to fill many sheets with references to the same effect: but this is avoided as superfluous.

* B. 3, ch. 20, sect 5. † Ib. sect. 1. ‡ Locus 6, ch. 17.

There ought however to be the acknowledgment—and it is made with pleasure—that some Calvinistick divines have confined themselves to election; leaving out its twin sister, reprobation: with what consistency, it is not to the purpose to ascertain. An instance shall be given from professor Witsius. “ Election (says he*) is the eternal, free and immutable counsel of God, about revealing the glory of his grace, in the eternal salvation of some certain persons.” Of reprobation he says nothing.

The next particular in the inquiry, respects the connexion of the decree with faith and works foreseen; or its entire independence as to these. It has been shown, that the article is silent; and therefore leaves a latitude in this respect. Not so the confession of the synod of Dort, or that of the Westminster divines, as must have been evident from the quotations given.

These churches did no more than follow the standard of Calvin; who says†—“ Predestination, by which God adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death, no one, who would be thought pious, denies in plain terms. But they involve it in many cavils; especially they who make prescience the ground of it.” Agreeably to this, is the following from Turretine‡—“ The orthodox, with one consent, determine, that election as well to glory as to grace, is evidently gratuitous; so that there is no cause, or condition, or reason in man, for the sake of which God should choose him rather than another; but this depended on his own good will.”§

* B. 3, ch. 4, sec. 3.

† Locus 6, caput 3.

‡ B. 3, ch. 21, sec. 5.

§ In the passage now quoted from Turretine, grace is opposed by him to condition; which is here deemed to be incorrect. Grace

To the same purpose is Witsius; who thus defines the freeness of grace: “Which consists (says he*) in this; that God, as the absolute Lord of all his creatures, has chosen out of all mankind whom and as many as he pleased; and indeed in such a manner as that he foresaw no good in any man to be the foundation of his choice, as the reason why he chose one rather than another.”

The distinction here treated of, is so well understood to be the leading one between Calvinism and Arminianism, that there would hardly have seemed any use in setting down the foregoing authorities, were it not desirable to exhibit to the eye the difference of statement between the seventeenth article and the positions of Calvinistick churches and divines on the same subject. To the point in question, that is, whether the decree were or were not founded on prescience, the article says nothing: although it was a point which the compilers had before them, in writings above a thousand years old; and opposite grounds taken in regard to it, by men whom they revered.

The third particular noted—the collective complexion of the terms—must be perceived very alien from the individual allotment, which appears in the language of the same churches and divines. The fourth, respecting vocation, will come in more properly in another place. Of course, the transition is to the cautions.

is more properly opposed-to merit; while the opposite of conditional is absolute. But it happens often to Calvinistick writers, that, by confounding these two relations, they throw an imputation on their opponents which these disclaim.

* B. 3, ch. 4, sec. 24.

There has been noticed, in the clause preparatory to the first caution, a ground of rejoicing in Divine predestination, considered in connexion with “the mortifying of the flesh, and the drawing up the mind to heavenly things.” If the author mistakes the sense of the churches which have adopted the Westminster confession, he does not this willingly; but he cannot find in it any thing making such a test as the above the prominent, much less the only mean of satisfaction. Doubtless, the confession inculcates holiness of heart and life; pronouncing them the necessary fruits of faith. Not only so, it makes these a concurring ground of satisfaction to the mind. Still, the more conspicuous mean to this, seems to be an inward sealing and witness of the spirit. The chapter is not to be quoted here, because it will be considered more at large in another place. The Dutch church, is not to be mentioned on the one side or on the other of the question; because in her confession, she has said nothing concerning the individual’s assurance of his salvation.

Calvin, the prominent character in the estimation of the said churches, hath defined faith as follows:—
“Now we shall have a complete definition of faith, if we say, that it is a steady and certain knowledge of the Divine benevolence towards us; which, being founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in Christ, is both revealed to our minds and confirmed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”

There can be no doubt, that reforming divines generally distinguish between the believing of the facts of the gospel history, as we should give credit to a respec-

* B. 3, ch. 2, sec. 7.

table relater of the histories of Greece and Rome; and pure faith, which they defined to recognise an interest in the declarations of the Divine benevolence in the Gospel. This distinction is especially made in the Homilies, and it is evidently just. The other would not be faith; because it would overlook the very end of the dispensation pretended to be believed; which end is included in its very name. But the author is much mistaken, if in any Lutheran divine of much celebrity, or in any of the remains of the English reformers, there be required any thing of the revelation to the mind insisted on by Calvin.

This celebrated man even acknowledges, that the non-elect may have something like the communication which has been referred to; for he says,* “Not that they truly perceive the energy of spiritual grace, and the clear light of faith; but because the Lord insinuates himself into their minds; so far as without the spirit of adoption, his goodness may be enjoyed. The reason of this, indeed, in the Divine mind, is, to render their guilt more manifest and inexcusable.” Still, there is “a great similitude and affinity between the elect of God, and those who are gifted with a faith that is to perish.” Nevertheless, he affirms, that “there flourishes in the elect alone, that true faith celebrated by St. Paul, by which they cry out with an open mouth—Abba, Father.” Afterwards,† the same author introduces some objecting, that the faithful experience quite another thing; who, in recognising the favour of God towards them, are not only tempted by inquietude, (which oftens happens,) but are also sometimes shaken

* *Ibid.* sect. 11.† *Ibid.* sect. 17.

by the heaviest terrors; so great is the power of temptations to disturb their minds: which does not seem sufficiently to consist with the faith that had been described. He admits the truth of all that is thus objected; and he goes on to show, in what manner the temptation should be resisted: delineating the example of David, who was almost driven to despair; and yet, in the extremity, called on his soul still to trust in God. Calvin concludes, that, although there may seem a prostration of the faith of the persons spoken of; yet, they at last return to their former confident persuasion of the favour of God. Through all this and much more on the subject—for the chapter is principally occupied by it—the author of the institutions evidently contemplates an assurance of the Divine favour, communicated immediately by the Divine Spirit; and not gathered, as the seventeenth article supposes, from a right state of the affections.

Turretine's manner of stating this subject is not quite the same with that of Calvin. For to the certainty which the latter makes of the essence of faith, the former only ascribes much importance; so as that there is not one of the faithful, who has not his mind endued by the persuasion, some time before his death. And in stating the ground of the persuasion, instead of making it with Calvin, a matter of immediate communication, he represents a person reasoning with himself thus—"Whoever believes and repents, is of the elect: But I believe and repent; therefore I am of the elect." It may be said, that the professor intended such faith and repentance, as would issue in their proper fruits. Doubtless he did. But in the supposed reasoner, the fruits had not yet given the evidences of the tree. And,

therefore, the test is of quite another nature, from that presented in the article. Here is a remarkable difference between the said two great lights of the Calvinistick world; one of them insisting, that there is not in the mind a drop of faith without assurance; and the other, that this is not necessary to the existence of the faith; yet affirming that the assurance will come before death. And it is further remarkable concerning these learned men, that accustomed as they are to sustain their positions by passages of scripture, they should make asseverations so important to every man, without appearing to conceive themselves obliged to bring any authorities to the purpose.

When Dr. Witsius is consulted, it is found that the distinction to be traced between the article and the preceding authors applies to him also. Many passages might be brought in proof of this, from chapter seventh to the eleventh of his fourth book: but one shall suffice from the first of those chapters, which is entitled, “Of Faith.” He distinguishes between the faith which is presumptuous, and that which is saving, in reference to the affection of joy. After describing the superficial joy of the former, he says—“In a lively faith, there arises a joy much more noble and solid, from a love of those precious truths, by the knowledge of which the soul, taught of God, justly esteems itself most happy; from an hope that is not fallacious, and sure persuasion of its own spirit with the superadded testimony of the Divine spirit, concerning the present grace of God and future glory; and lastly, from a most sweet sense of present grace and a foretaste of future glory.” It is certain that Witsius is far from holding out a person’s full persuasion that he is in grace, as an essential proof of

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In the above, there is not only settled the 'hinge on which the controversy has been explained to turn; but the compilers have not been afraid to look steadily at the gloomy picture of reprobation, from which the members of the synod of Dort, any otherwise than as an inference from election, were content to turn away their eyes. Not only so, by the former the glory of God's sovereign power over his creatures is made the

object of the difference of his dispensations to the elect and the reprobate; to which there will not be affirmed to be any thing similar in the episcopalian article.

Next to these citations from Calvinistick churches, the first place is due to Calvin himself; who defines predestination* “the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined within himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind.” “For (says he†) he adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation, but gives to some what he refuses to others.” Sentences to the same effect abound in his Institutions.

Professor Turretine, one of his successors in the divinity chair of Geneva, is not behind him. He says‡—“The predestination of men is that by which God, from the whole human race, to be created and to fall, preordained some to eternal life and others to eternal death.” From this definition it appears, that, in the controversy between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians, which became agitated in his day, he thought with the latter: and this he afterwards declares more explicitly. It is here declared, that, on the question of the sense of the article of the episcopal church, there is no occasion to make the distinction alluded to. It had not appeared in Calvin’s day, and at the time of the framing of the article; or at least, there seems no appearance that the distinction was then current. Of course, there is very little probability of there having been a reference to it in the Article.

It would be easy to fill many sheets with references to the same effect: but this is avoided as superfluous.

* B. 3, ch. 20, sect. 5. † Ib. sect. 1. ‡ Locus 6, ch. 17.

There ought however to be the acknowledgment—and it is made with pleasure—that some Calvinistick divines have confined themselves to election; leaving out its twin sister, reprobation: with what consistency, it is not to the purpose to ascertain. An instance shall be given from professor Witsius. “Election (says he*) is the eternal, free and immutable counsel of God, about revealing the glory of his grace, in the eternal salvation of some certain persons.” Of reprobation he says nothing.

The next particular in the inquiry, respects the connexion of the decree with faith and works foreseen; or its entire independence as to these. It has been shown, that the article is silent; and therefore leaves a latitude in this respect. Not so the confession of the synod of Dort, or that of the Westminster divines, as must have been evident from the quotations given.

These churches did no more than follow the standard of Calvin; who says†—“Predestination, by which God adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death, no one, who would be thought pious, denies in plain terms. But they involve it in many cavils; especially they who make prescience the ground of it.” Agreeably to this, is the following from Turretine‡—“The orthodox, with one consent, determine, that election as well to glory as to grace, is evidently gratuitous; so that there is no cause, or condition, or reason in man, for the sake of which God should choose him rather than another; but this depended on his own good will.”§

* B. 3, ch. 4, sec. 3.

† Locus 6, caput 3.

‡ B. 3, ch. 21, sec. 5.

§ In the passage now quoted from Turretine, grace is opposed by him to condition; which is here deemed to be incorrect. Grace

To the same purpose is Witsius; who thus defines the freeness of grace: "Which consists (says he*) in this; that God, as the absolute Lord of all his creatures, has chosen out of all mankind whom and as many as he pleased; and indeed in such a manner as that he foresaw no good in any man to be the foundation of his choice, as the reason why he chose one rather than another."

The distinction here treated of, is so well understood to be the leading one between Calvinism and Arminianism, that there would hardly have seemed any use in setting down the foregoing authorities, were it not desirable to exhibit to the eye the difference of statement between the seventeenth article and the positions of Calvinistick churches and divines on the same subject. To the point in question, that is, whether the decree were or were not founded on prescience, the article says nothing: although it was a point which the compilers had before them, in writings above a thousand years old; and opposite grounds taken in regard to it, by men whom they revered.

The third particular noted—the collective complexion of the terms—must be perceived very alien from the individual allotment, which appears in the language of the same churches and divines. The fourth, respecting vocation, will come in more properly in another place. Of course, the transition is to the cautions.

is more properly opposed-to merit; while the opposite of conditional is absolute. But it happens often to Calvinistick writers, that, by confounding these two relations, they throw an imputation on their opponents which these disclaim.

* B. 3, ch. 4, sec. 24.

There has been noticed, in the clause preparatory to "the first caution, a ground of rejoicing in Divine predestination, considered in connexion with "the mortifying of the flesh, and the drawing up the mind to heavenly things." If the author mistakes the sense of the churches which have adopted the Westminster confession, he does not this willingly; but he cannot find in it any thing making such a test as the above the prominent, much less the only mean of satisfaction. Doubtless, the confession inculcates holiness of heart and life; pronouncing them the necessary fruits of faith. Not only so, it makes these a concurring ground of satisfaction to the mind. Still, the more conspicuous mean to this, seems to be an inward sealing and witness of the spirit. The chapter is not to be quoted here, because it will be considered more at large in another place. The Dutch church, is not to be mentioned on the one side or on the other of the question; because in her confession, she has said nothing concerning the individual's assurance of his salvation.

Calvin, the prominent character in the estimation of the said churches, hath defined faith as follows:—
"Now we shall have a complete definition of faith, if we say, that it is a steady and certain knowledge of the Divine benevolence towards us; which, being founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in Christ, is both revealed to our minds and confirmed to our hearts by the Holy Spirit."

There can be no doubt, that reforming divines generally distinguish between the believing of the facts of the gospel history, as we should give credit to a respec-

* B. 3, ch. 2, sec. 7.

table relater of the histories of Greece and Rome; and pure faith, which they defined to recognise an interest in the declarations of the Divine benevolence in the Gospel. This distinction is especially made in the Homilies, and it is evidently just. The other would not be faith; because it would overlook the very end of the dispensation pretended to be believed; which end is included in its very name. But the author is much mistaken, if in any Lutheran divine of much celebrity, or in any of the remains of the English reformers, there be required any thing of the revelation to the mind insisted on by Calvin.

This celebrated man even acknowledges, that the non-elect may have something like the communication which has been referred to; for he says,* “Not that they truly perceive the energy of spiritual grace, and the clear light of faith; but because the Lord insinuates himself into their minds; so far as without the spirit of adoption, his goodness may be enjoyed. The reason of this, indeed, in the Divine mind, is, to render their guilt more manifest and inexcusable.” Still, there is “a great similitude and affinity between the elect of God, and those who are gifted with a faith that is to perish.” Nevertheless, he affirms, that “there flourishes in the elect alone, that true faith celebrated by St. Paul, by which they cry out with an open mouth—Abba, Father.” Afterwards,† the same author introduces some objecting, that the faithful experience quite another thing; who, in recognising the favour of God towards them, are not only tempted by inquietude, (which oftens happens,) but are also sometimes shaken

* Ibid. sect. 11.

† Ibid. sect. 17.

by the heaviest terrors; so great is the power of temptations to disturb their minds: which does not seem sufficiently to consist with the faith that had been described. He admits the truth of all that is thus objected; and he goes on to show, in what manner the temptation should be resisted: delineating the example of David, who was almost driven to despair; and yet, in the extremity, called on his soul still to trust in God. Calvin concludes, that, although there may seem a prostration of the faith of the persons spoken of; yet, they at last return to their former confident persuasion of the favour of God. Through all this and much more on the subject—for the chapter is principally occupied by it—the author of the institutions evidently contemplates an assurance of the Divine favour, communicated immediately by the Divine Spirit; and not gathered, as the seventeenth article supposes, from a right state of the affections.

Turretine's manner of stating this subject is not quite the same with that of Calvin. For to the certainty which the latter makes of the essence of faith, the former only ascribes much importance; so as that there is not one of the faithful, who has not his mind endued by the persuasion, some time before his death. And in stating the ground of the persuasion, instead of making it with Calvin, a matter of immediate communication, he represents a person reasoning with himself thus—"Whoever believes and repents, is of the elect: But I believe and repent; therefore I am of the elect." It may be said, that the professor intended such faith and repentance, as would issue in their proper fruits. Doubtless he did. But in the supposed reasoner, the fruits had not yet given the evidences of the tree. And,

therefore, the test is of quite another nature, from that presented in the article. Here is a remarkable difference between the said two great lights of the Calvinistick world; one of them insisting, that there is not in the mind a drop of faith without assurance; and the other, that this is not necessary to the existence of the faith; yet affirming that the assurance will come before death. And it is further remarkable concerning these learned men, that accustomed as they are to sustain their positions by passages of scripture, they should make asseverations so important to every man, without appearing to conceive themselves obliged to bring any authorities to the purpose.

When Dr. Witsius is consulted, it is found that the distinction to be traced between the article and the preceding authors applies to him also. Many passages might be brought in proof of this, from chapter seventh to the eleventh of his fourth book: but one shall suffice from the first of those chapters, which is entitled, “*Of Faith.*” He distinguishes between the faith which is presumptuous, and that which is saving, in reference to the affection of joy. After describing the superficial joy of the former, he says—“*In a lively faith, there arises a joy much more noble and solid, from a love of those precious truths, by the knowledge of which the soul, taught of God, justly esteems itself most happy; from an hope that is not fallacious, and sure persuasion of its own spirit with the superadded testimony of the Divine spirit, concerning the present grace of God and future glory; and lastly, from a most sweet sense of present grace and a foretaste of future glory.*” It is certain that Witsius is far from holding out a person’s full persuasion that he is in grace, as an essential proof of

his being so—the shape in which it had been exhibited by Calvin. This author had explained “full assurance of faith,”* in Hebrews x. 22, as applying to the point. But Witsius, more consistently with the context, makes it steadfastness and firmness of assent. Among many declarations to this effect, the following is a specimen of what he taught. “Immediately after receiving Christ by faith, God declares in the court of heaven, that he” (the convert,) “is no longer under wrath; though perhaps the justified person may yet be ignorant of it.” Indeed the whole matter, in the view of an essential of faith, as it stands in Calvin, has very much died away among his followers: of which no stronger evidence needs be given, than the twelfth chapter of the Assembly’s Confession of Faith, as already quoted. Still, in regard to the means of obtaining the knowledge in question, the subject stands among Calvinists, where it did originally; and it is this, in which so striking a difference is to be seen between the Article and them.

The instability of the test in question, might be much confirmed by a more extended reference to different accounts given of the matter, in authors who yet lay a stress on the immediate communication involved in it. But of the same instability there cannot perhaps be a more decided assertion, than in the second part of the treatise of president Edwards on Religious Affections. There is not a circumstance considered as attached to an assurance of grace, by those who rest it on a distinct communication from above, of which this Calvinistick divine does not undertake to prove, that it is no evidence either of grace or of the want of it. Among the

* πληροφορια πιστεως.

circumstances thus affirmed by him to be indifferent to the subject, are—an extraordinary height of religious affection—its producing of great effects on the body—its rendering of people fluent, fervent and abundant in religious discourse—its not being excited in them by their own contrivance and strength—and its being attended by texts of scriptures, remarkably brought to the mind; with many other particulars currently heard of, as evidences that the persons to whom they apply have had their everlasting happiness assured to them. There would seem required strong evidence, to prove that God has encouraged men to look for an immediate communication from himself, as the ground of an assurance of their salvation; while yet he has left them in so much uncertainty, as to the marks which distinguish that communication from its counterfeits.

In justice to president Edwards, it should be mentioned, that he rejects the doctrine of a man's knowing of himself to be in grace, by an immediate suggestion of the Spirit of God. This subject is handled in the third part of the aforesaid treatise. The author explains "the witness of the Spirit," in Rom. viii. 16. and "the seal of the Spirit," in Ephes. i. 13. as meaning the work of the Spirit in the divine image on the heart, in all goodness. The writer of this does not support the precise interpretation given of those texts; rather believing, that they apply to a sensible testimony, in miraculous gifts and in the records of the written word; the Spirit thereby making himself one witness; and the other being in the party's self, in the consciousness of what he is and what he does. Still, it is thought pertinent to give the opinion of president Edwards, because his name stands high in the estimation of Calvinists; although he seems to differ from the current explana-

tions and from the doctrine of his church. His test of grace amounts to the same with that in the seventeenth article of the Episcopal church; which makes it "the mortifying of the works of the flesh and the earthly members, and the drawing up of the mind to high and heavenly things."

The author is aware, how liable he is to be misunderstood in the preceding; even to the cutting of him off, in the estimation of many, from all claims to the Christian character. Convinced of the piety and the virtue of some of those who may thus misjudge him; if he cannot do away the offence, he wishes to give a clear view of the point wherein he conceives the difference to consist.

He does not hesitate to consider religious satisfaction, or "joy," as it is called in scripture, as one of the fruits of the holy Spirit. And both in his reading and in his personal intercourse, he has found instances of holy men, blessed with a sweet serenity; the properties of which sufficiently proclaimed its source. There occurs a remarkable instance of it, in one of the epistles of St. Ignatius; which may be mentioned as an illustration of the point. This blessed martyr, when on his way to Rome, to be a prey to the beasts of the circus, thus writes in his epistle to the Roman Christians: "A living water spoke within me, saying, Come to the Father."—Doubtless the quotation from Ignatius bears an allusion to St. John iv. 14.—"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." How its speaking may interfere with the consistency of the figure, is not here adverted to. The place is only considered as evidence of a mind, enjoying a foretaste of celestial bliss. Still, the author judges from the nature of the subject, from the consti-

tution of the human mind, and from observation, that, in suitable recipients of such satisfaction, it may be much hindered by constitutional melancholy; while in those who are without any title to it, there may be a counterfeit appearance of it, in mere animal sensibility. Accordingly, he considers the making of it the test of a person's state, as one of the most dangerous of Satan's snares to effect his downfall. Of its accomplishing of this, there have been many instances within the author's knowledge. But be he correct or not in the matter; if the latter were the fact, and he could be convinced of his error, one of his first steps would be, to renounce all connexion with a church, which has not given the least hint of such an essential requisite in her articles, nor in her catechism, nor in her homilies, nor in any one of the great variety of her offices and her services; and who, far from this, in the very place of her articles where the sentiment, if entertained, would the most pertinently have appeared, has presumed, as the only way in which the satisfaction in question can be obtained, "the mortifying of the works of the flesh and the earthly members, and the drawing up of the mind to high and heavenly things."

The whole concerning the present point, has been written under the recollection of a right grounded on what was delivered in the preceding parts of the work, to make the following inquiry—What similarity is there between the predestination the last treated of, and the same subject as it appears in the first, the second, and the third departments of the general work? Consistency and candour dictate the answer—that there is no similarity between them. All ground of any question concerning the predestination of the Gentiles, as there explained, had been done away within a century after

Christ. The predestination intended to be defined by the article, was the subject as spoken of by metaphysicians, in their conceptions of an hidden Deity,* above referred to by Luther; with a "secret counsel" found in the article itself. If there be any thing in the articles militating with the sentiment, it is in the expression—"as vessels made to honour:" which words are found in the 9th chapter of the epistle to the Romans; and are applied, as was contended, to national designation. But in that chapter, the bodies in view are actually, although metaphorically, called vessels made, one of them to honour and the other to destruction. In the article, there is a mere comparison: and there may have been thought a resemblance between two subjects, not precisely the same.

The compilers of the articles of the church of England, in their contemplation of the divine attributes, as declared by reason and by scripture, must have conceived of them as not limited by either space or time. And when they considered, that all things must be at all times present to the view of God; they doubtless felt themselves unequal to the task of drawing a discriminating line, between the consequences of divine foreknowledge and those of divine determination. And hence, as is here supposed, they thought themselves called on to lay down a doctrine of predestination; although in the terms of latitude which have been exhibited. The author of this work does not perceive a single particular, in which their positions can be controverted with effect. Whether it would not have been a preferable line of conduct, to have considered the

* Absconditum Deum.

whole subject as a branch of theology worn out with Judaism, he does not think it needful to inquire in this place. The church has been pleased to declare, what he believes to be not contrary to gospel truth: but on the question of making the declaration, he bows with submission to her decision.

II. OF REDEMPTION.

Anti-calvinism on this point—Thirty-first Article—Proceedings at Dort—Seventh Article—Catechism—Homilies—Prayers—Prejudice of the Calvinism of the Compilers—Paraphrase of Erasmus—Texts given up by Necessarian Calvinists--and by some other Calvinistick Divines--Which is an Approximation.

AT entering on the present point, there arises the necessity of guarding against an apparent inconsistency, which some may think they discover in the compilers of the articles; if both the ground taken under the former article, and that to be now taken under the present, be correct. Under the former, there was affirmed a latitude, according to which, both the Calvinist and the Arminian might subscribe without reluctance: But under this, it will be contended, that the church is as Anti-calvinistick as words can designate her.

But the difficulty may be removed, by looking back to the theories which the compilers intended to bring together. They were not those of Calvin and Arminius, but those of varying fathers; such as Chrysostom on one hand and Austin on the other. These and the like fathers, however variously they may have written on predestination, agreed in language expressive of Christ's redemption of the whole world. Whether this was consistent in Austin and his followers, is nothing to the present purpose. The author of the present work is of

opinion, that the subject, after having been taken up by Calvin, was put in a more consistent form, than that in which it had been left by Austin. And the author further thinks, that it was made more consistent still, by the superadditions to Calvin's system, which were concentrated into a standard at Dort. But opinion out of the question; if the fact be as here stated, the charge of inconsistency is obviated.

The sources in the institutions of the Episcopal church, from which her doctrine concerning redemption is to be here drawn, are—first, her articles—secondly, her catechism—thirdly, her homilies—and fourthly, her prayers.

Of her articles, the thirty-first is principally intended and is as follows—“The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in which it was commonly said, that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.”

It is evident, that the article is directly levelled against certain errors of the church of Rome. This, however, does not detract from the universality of the expressions; or, on a subject exacting so much caution, permit the supposition, that the compilers may have represented salvation as common, while they held it to be partial. There is an obvious reason for its not being directly levelled at Calvinism, if the facts professed to be given in this performance have been correctly stated. The opposing positions of Calvinism, had not

been brought forwards. In Calvin's Institutions, although in the enlarged form in which they now appear, he carefully avoids the representing of Christ as dying for all mankind; yet he seems also to have avoided the declaring of the partial designation of his merits, in the explicit terms since adopted by his followers. What ought to be admitted as a very strong evidence of an origin to the opposing doctrine more recent than the article, is the silence of the council of Trent relative to that doctrine. It has been noticed, that the issuing of the decrees of the council, and the ratifying of the articles of the church of England, were cotemporaneous. Now it is well known, how positive and how particular the said council were, after all their decrees, in anathematizing what they considered as interfering errors. That they would have considered the doctrine of Christ's dying for a part of mankind only as erroneous, is evident from this, that they lay down the contrary position, in the third chapter of their decrees concerning justification. In the canons following the decrees, there are censured whatever opinions can with any reason be considered as Calvinistick, according to a term originated since the holding of that council. But there is no censure on the doctrine of a partial redemption. This seems strong presumptive evidence, that the doctrine had not been so started, as to have become a considerable subject of public disputation. Perhaps it may be thought, that the doctrine was designed, in the high toned opinions which had been maintained on the subject of predestination. But no: They who carried this the furthest had ways, by which they thought it was made consistent with a sentiment handed down in the church from the beginning. While "the horrid dis-

putations" spoken of by Melancthon, were at their height among the Lutheran divines, they never thought of denying the universality of redemption.

Perhaps there cannot be better illustrated the inconsistency affirmed to subsist between Calvinism and the thirty-first article, than by attending to the embarrassment, which the latter produced at the synod of Dort: and it should be remembered, that this was at a time, of which it has been confidently affirmed, that Calvinism was the prevailing belief of the divines of the church of England. When the question concerning the extent of the design of the death of Christ came on in the synod, in the seventy-fourth session;* of the four English deputies, Dr. Ward and Dr. Davenant maintained, that it was for all mankind; while the bishop of Landaff and Dr. Goad affirmed it to be partial: and when the thirty-first article of their church was brought into view, the bishop interpreted it as being intended of all sorts of men. Mr. Walter Balquhquall, also, a native of Scotland, and sent by king James to represent the church of that kingdom, spoke at large for the partiality of redemption. This, in him, was not contrary to the public profession of his church; which, although at that time episcopal, had been confessedly reformed on the Calvinistick plan. And although he was himself fixed in that system; yet, being a wise and prudent person, he laboured to bring matters to an accommodation, between the synod and his brethren from England. For it appears, that the disagreement among the latter made the synod apprehensive of great disorder. To carry with them the concurrence of the church of England, was a matter of

* See Brandt, vol. 3, page 217, and following.

no small importance: and the desire of this may be traced throughout the proceedings of the body. In the disagreement between the divines, to have established the one opinion or the other, would have been either to have made an explanation, or to have fixed a limitation, of the article of the English confession. And to expound the article one way or another, was big with important consequences. Such was the difficulty, as stated by the historian Brandt. To prevent the apprehended collision, meetings were held at the bishop's lodgings. The result for the present, contrived by Balquanquall, was, that the president of the synod should take no notice of the opinions of the English divines, but carry on the deliberations of the body, to the remaining articles. This gave an opportunity to the said divines, to write home for instructions; which they did: addressing themselves, says Brandt, to a certain eminent prelate, supposed to be the archbishop of Canterbury. There came, in consequence, an instruction from the king, that they should not oppose the article of universal redemption. The subject was again taken up by the synod in the one hundred and ninth and one hundred and tenth sessions.* In consequence of discussions then begun, determinations were made, not directly in contrariety to the obvious words of the English article, but not going to the extent of its position. In the judgments given by the English deputies, they are said to have complied with the instructions from England. In all this, there seems an accommodation of religious opinion to human and political considerations.

* Brandt, vol. 3, p. 255, and following.

There was little occasion either for their votes or for their arguments, towards the determining of the controversy; so general was the opinion for the limiting of the Christian economy, as to its design. The deputies of the palatinate, indeed, and those of Hesse and Swisserland, thought it worth their while to labour to establish the distinction, that the death of Christ was sufficient for all men, but not efficacious for all: explaining the terms in scripture—"the whole world," to mean "the world of the elect." The general sense of the synod, rose above such distinctions; and established the doctrine of Dort, as it remains to the present day.

The facts stated go very far to show, how much the thirty-first article stands in the way of Calvinism, in the estimation of Calvinists themselves. Here were the half of the number of the deputies from England, consisting of advocates of that system; a Calvinistick king, who had openly instigated the calling of the synod, when the whole party favouring the call, had for their avowed object the establishing of the system; and in addition, a Calvinistick archbishop of Canterbury* zealous in his opposition to the then growing influence of Arminianism in England. Yet, under all this weight of individual opinion on the one side, the church had spoken too explicitly on the other, for her sense to be mistaken: and hence the line of conduct so full of inconsistency, as is here conceived: for this especially appears in the ratifying of the decrees. In relation to what was laid down, affirming an original parity in the ministry, the English deputies thought themselves called on to protest, on the ground of the constitution of their church. Although this

* Dr. Abbot.

subject was sufficiently important to justify such an act; yet it is hoped there cannot be a mistake, in affirming the greater importance of the other subject; which, indeed, is connected with the high and leading sense of the Christian revelation. How then can a different conduct, in regard to this, be accounted for; but on the principle, that while the article of the church would have loudly forbidden a public contradiction, by the English deputies, of the doctrine of a general redemption; the private opinions of at least two of them, and probably those of their superiors in England, dictated accommodation to decisions, in which the doctrine of a partial redemption was intended to be insinuated, without an express disavowal of the other.

There is another instance of the conduct of these deputies, towards the close of the business of the synod, strongly corroborative of the representation given in this work. They declared, that they had approved of many things, not contained in the confession of the church of England; the same being agreeable to their private opinions, and not contrary to that confession. This cannot reasonably be interpreted of any other points, than some of those called Calvinistick; which these deputies perceived and acknowledged to be a superaddition, not found in the institutions of their church; and not warranted by any authority transmitted to them from this source. The declaration was made on their part, in consequence of there having been expressed, in the first draught of the proceedings, that the matters defined ought to be looked on as the doctrine of the reformed churches. The English deputies remarked, that they were not representatives of their church, although commissioned by their sovereign.

Still to add to be the weight of evidence adduced, there is to be laid a stress on the likeness of the article to the confession of Augsburg. In the Latin, the words are more alike, than they can well be made in English: yet even in a translation, the resemblance will not be lost. “The passion of Christ” (says the said confession) “was an offering and satisfaction, not only for the fault of origin, but also for all other sins.” Considering the celebrity in which that instrument had been for upwards of twenty years before the editing of the articles; it is hardly possible to suppose otherwise, than that the compilers had it in view, in the article under consideration. It has been noticed, that between the framing of the articles and the establishing of them, Melancthon was invited to England, and his settlement there expected. Had this excellent man accepted of the invitation, how must it have lessened his opinion of the church who was giving him a retreat within her bosom, to find her, if such were the case as some imagine, clothing her doctrine of redemption in almost the very language of his own pen; and yet coupling it with a species of predestination, which, so far as the Lutheran church was concerned, he had laid asleep at Augsburg! Whatever differences of sentiment may have prevailed as to the theology of the English reformers, all have agreed in commending their talents and their learning: and this consent ought to be decisive on the present question.

Besides the thirty-first article, which may be considered as the most prominent to the purpose, the doctrine of it is set forth in the seventh also; which says—“both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ.” There is not here forgotten the in-

terpretation given on the other side, to this universality of expression. But why should it be so much used, if the compilers had in view a system, which delights in a limitation of the terms? Much more, why should this be, if such a system had been kept in view, as an object of imitation?

Next to the article, there was mentioned the catechism. After a recitation of the creed, it is asked—“What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?” The answer is—“First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.” The latter part of the answer must be perceived to be very unguarded, on the ground of the Calvinistick theory; and with peculiar impropriety put into the mouths of young people; thus seasoning their minds with a sentiment, directly contradicting opinions to be communicated to them in succeeding life, if that theory be correct. But it was not the theory of those who penned the catechism; as especially appears from the juxta position of the recited words, with those which follow in the third part of the answer—“Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.” For in the English catechism, there is the word “elect,” omitted in the American: which is worthy of notice, when the inquiry is concerning the opinions of the compilers; whose ideas of election, must accordingly have been such as are coincident with the redemption of all mankind, by the death and passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Some have imagined that it savours of Calvinism, where the catechist admonishes the catechumen, that he cannot keep “the commandments of God, without

his special grace," which he must accordingly at all times "call for by diligent prayer." For "special" the Latin catechism has "singular;"* which is strictly expressive of something attached to the individual person or thing spoken of. The catechumen had acknowledged, as received in baptism, a grace which was common to all admitted within the pale of the church. But the grace now held up to view, was such as was suited to his peculiar necessities. After the catechumen had been taught to consider himself as in "a state of salvation," and only needing "grace to continue in the same," it would have been very inconsistent to make him pray for special grace, as a thing still wanting to make him what he had also before entitled himself—"a child of God." Besides, such a sentiment is inconsistent with Calvinism itself, which supposes special grace to be antecedent to any acceptable prayer.

The next mentioned of the ecclesiastical institutions of the episcopal church, are the homilies. In these, the compilers do not scruple to adopt an universality of expression, wherever it suits their subjects. Two instances only shall be mentioned; and they are relative to points, on which we might expect to find language of this description. In the homily for Good Friday, there is the following passage:—"So well pleased is the Father Almighty God with Christ his Son, that for his sake he favoureth us, and will deny us nothing. So pleasant was this sacrifice and oblation of his Son's death, which he so obediently and innocently suffered, that we should take it for the only and full amends for all the sins of the world."† Again, there

* Singularis.

† Page 349, Amer. ed.

is the following in the homily of the sacrament—"Now it followeth to have with this knowledge a sure and constant faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for the redemption of all the world, for the remission of sins, and reconciliation with God the Father; but also that he hath made upon his cross a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee:"* the design of the last clause being explained by the opposition in which it is placed to some opinions of the church of Rome. For there follows—"so that thou acknowledgest no other saviour, redeemer, mediator, advocate, intercessor, but Christ only; and that thou mayest say with the apostle, that he loved thee, and gave himself for thee. For this is to stick fast to Christ's promise made in his institution, to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thyself." The homilies were designed for people of all ranks and conditions, but especially for the uninstructed; who must have abounded under that immense number of uneducated priests of the day; of the effects of whose ignorance, the homilies were intended to be in some degree a remedy. Here were considerations, which ought to have been, and no doubt were, preventives of any such indeterminateness of expression, as would point evidently to error.

There remain passages in the prayers. The first to be mentioned, is that beautiful and affecting passage in the communion service, in the beginning of the prayer for the consecrating of the elements; in which the officiating minister says concerning the high priest of our profession—"who made there" meaning on the cross, by his one oblation of himself once offered "a full, per-

* Vide p. 379, Am. ed.

fect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." It would have been, indeed, a great oversight in the compilers of the articles of the church of England, if, having before them to the purpose many valuable monuments of the primitive church, and among these her customary consecration prayer, one of the most ancient of ecclesiastical remains, they had omitted the sentiment in question, obvious on the face of that prayer, in which it is said—“He who was the Creator of men chose by thy will to become man; the lawgiver to be under the law; the high priest to be made the sacrifice; the shepherd to be made a sheep; whereby he appeased thee his God and Father and reconciled the world, and delivered all men from the wrath that hanged over their heads.” This prayer is from what are called “the apostolical constitutions.” And although there has been sometimes asserted, in favour of these compositions, an antiquity too high; yet, the learned are agreed in considering them as descriptive of prevalent devotions and practices, within the first three centuries.

As sustaining the sense of the consecration prayer, there may be mentioned the words attendant on the minister’s delivery of the elements to the communicants. To each, as applicable to him or herself, it is said—“The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,” and—“the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee.” If that body had been given and if that blood had been shed for some only, under the denomination of the elect, how is the minister supposed to know, that the recipient is of the number? The episcopal church, has no where presumed in him such a knowledge of the hearts of those to whom he

ministers. In both of her forms of absolution, repentance is carefully held up to the mind of the party, as an essential pre-requisite of the pardoning mercy proclaimed. In short, without the admission of the inference here drawn from the terms referred to, the officiating minister must be understood as declaring to every communicant, that he or she is of the number of the elect. In the same spirit with the above, is one of the invitations to the communion, in which there are put into the mouth of the minister the following words:—“As the Son of God did vouchsafe to yield up his soul by death upon the cross, for your salvation.” The address is to persons who are backward to come to the Lord’s table. This is not a circumstance, under which the minister—if it be proper under any circumstance—would have been taught to speak to the persons reprov’d, as if they were all of the number of the elect. Yet under this description they are assured, according to the Calvinistick style, that “the Son of God did vouchsafe to yield up his soul by death upon the cross for their salvation.”

The prayers next worthy of notice, are those appropriated to Ash-Wednesday; where God is addressed in these terms—“who hatest nothing that thou hast made;” and in another place—“who hast compassion upon all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made; who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin, and be saved.”

In harmony with these, there is the prayer for Good Friday—“O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor desirest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live.” In order to perceive the weight of such lan-

guage, and how naturally it tends to exclude Calvinistick divinity from the episcopal church, it is but to conceive of one of her ministers, after going through her solemn service for the day the last mentioned, addressing his audience from the pulpit, in such a partial representation of the great sacrifice which had been celebrated, as the Calvinistick systems of divinity might supply him with. That a preacher of sincere intentions, might devise expedients for the reconciling of the sermon to the prayers, so far as to be satisfactory to himself, is what the writer of this will not deny. But he is persuaded, that the mass of almost any audience would perceive the inconsistency; and bewail either what they would think the unevangelical construction of the prayers, or the open opposition of the preacher to a leading sentiment of them.

It appears, that the only imitation in the English liturgy of any work of Calvin, is in the confession in the morning and evening services, with the precedent sentences and exhortation. These were not in the first liturgy. They had been put by Calvin, in a form which he prepared for the church of Stratsburg, before his settlement in Geneva; of which form he afterwards published a Latin translation. Pollanus, who succeeded him in Strasburg, becoming afterwards a refugee in England, published a Latin translation, made by himself, of the said form of prayer; subjoining to the confession in it an absolution. In the review of the English liturgy in 1552, the compilers took from the translation of Pollanus, with considerable variations, the sentences, the exhortation, the confession and the absolution; but carefully inserted in the confession, where the divine mercy is invoked, the following words—"according to

thy promises declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesus our Lord." From the circumstance, that what was taken corresponds with the translation of Pollanus, including his absolution, and not with the translation of Calvin; Dr. Lawrence* infers, that at the early period when this transaction took place, the production of the reformer was either little known, or not much regarded. At any rate, the confession was thought to call for the improvement, of an acknowledgment of the mercy of God to all mankind.

There is one of the collects of the episcopal church, which has been thought by many to wear a Calvinistick appearance. It is that for Easter Sunday; and the clause here in view is—"that, as by thy special grace preventing us, thou dost put into our minds good desires, so, by thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect." The expression has been already noticed, as occurring in the catechism. To the explanation given of it, there shall here only be added, that further satisfaction has been gained by tracing the history of the prayer.

It is taken from the Roman catholic ritual. In that, what is expressed in English, under the words "by thy special grace preventing us," is comprehended under the Latin words, signifying "which by going before thou dost inspire."† And what is under the expressions—"so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect," is in the words signifying "also, by assisting, bring them to perfection."‡ The evident relation of these two phrases in the Roman

* Page 199.

† Etiam adjuvando prosequere.

‡ Quæ præveniēdo aspiras.

ritual, and there being nothing answering to the English word “special,” suggested to the author—others may have observed it sooner—that “preventing grace” was not, grace going before, opposed to the Anticalvinistick sentiment of general grace; but is merely distinguished from “continual help.” There is no implication, that preventing grace does not operate on persons, who do not receive from it any good desires. Besides, the term “adjuvando” is so evidently the same in sense with “co-operando,” which Calvin indignantly scouts; that it seems impossible, a Calvinistick sense should have been intended. This is made still more evident by the circumstance, that the prayer is found in the Roman ritual. For although a considerable step was taken towards laying a foundation for Calvinism, when a bishop of Rome declared St. Austin’s doctrine to be a doctrine of the church; and although, from that time, the system continued to have its advocates, not however without there being opposers also, in the Roman church; yet, this does not seem to have had effect on the public prayers; which were principally of an older date than the day of Austin; and the effusions of an earlier piety. No protestant need be backward to acknowledge this; whatever errors may have been since embodied with the truth.

If after all it should be imagined, that the English reformers designed to give a Calvinistick turn to this ancient prayer, by the addition of a word, all ground for the supposition will be done away, by a reference to the Latin liturgy, which has “*singulari gratia*,” for what is translated “special grace.” The adjective “*singularis*” is applied *potentia*, to *virtus*, and to

many other words, to express the eminence or excellency of the matter spoken of: whereas "specialis," in its application to theology, has acquired a meaning not precisely the same. Singularis, as applied to gratia, in the place in question, only denotes the excellency and the great beneficence of the grace.

To the passages of prayers which have been cited, declarative of universal redemption, there may be added detached expressions, in which, although the subject may not have been directly within the contemplation of the compilers, they evidently entertained no concern as to the extent to which the worshippers might carry their conceptions. There is the absolution, in which it is affirmed concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, that he "desireth not the death of a sinner." There is the lity, in which the prayer is put up—"That it may please thee to have mercy upon all men." In the same are the earnest supplications—"O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world; grant us thy peace"—and "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." There is the general thanksgiving; in which is gratefully acknowledged "inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." And there is a collect, in which the Saviour is said to have "taken upon him our flesh, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility." Other citations might be made, but let these suffice. On the presumption of the truth of the Calvinistick theory, they are indefensible expressions. They are carefully avoided, so far as the author of this has either experience or information, by all intelligent and consistent advocates of that theory. Can it be supposed, that the compilers of the English liturgy were less intelligent and less consistent, than the great mass

of ministers possessing the same sentiments with themselves? Or were they engaged in a work of so small importance, and did they perform their task so hastily and negligently, as that they would be likely to make lapses, which can hardly be excusable in the ordinary exercises of the pulpit. Nothing of all this will be pretended: and therefore the opinions of these good men must have been in direct contrariety to the standard on the present point, established by the synod of Dort, when the English deputies kept silence under the glaring inconsistency between their private opinions and those established by their church.

Under this weight of evidence from the obvious sense of the articles, of the homilies, of the catechism, and of the prayers, it is natural to ask—On what grounds is the contrary opinion set up and maintained? And how has it happened, that so many have confidently affirmed the Calvinism of the church of England? The answer is—It has not been by adducing, with even a plausible appearance, any direct evidences from her institutions; but by confidently affirming, that they who framed them were Calvinistick in their opinions. Now if this were fact, it would not follow, that they were determined to bind all the sons of the church, to the extent of their own dogmas, on predestination and some other points. Even in that case, however, they would not have established the doctrine of a redemption designed for all. But it is here conceived, that the fact is not as the persons alluded to have supposed, under any of the points comprehended in the controversy. The men, whose characters are considered as principally bearing on the subject, are archbishop Cranmer, and bishops Ridley, Hooper and Latimer; concerning all of whom it is not

doubted, that they were consulted in, and approved of, the establishment made in their day; although the two first had probably the principal hands in framing it. Unfortunately, these two eminent men have not left behind them any literary remains, under their respective names. For which reason, the only sources of information, besides those in the ecclesiastical institutions already noticed, are historical facts, and what is found in cotemporary compositions.

They who affirm the Calvinism of Cranmer and Ridley very carefully avoid all those historic facts, which arise out of their long intercourse with the Lutheran churches and divines: And the documents on which the same writers principally depend, are Fox's Martyrology, and the catechism which went under the name of bishop Poinet. It is supposed, to have been more probably composed by Cranmer: At any rate, it was approved of both by him and by Ridley; and was prefixed, under public authority, to the first edition of the articles.

It has been already remarked, that Fox does not seem to have known of any extraordinary reputation attached to the name of Calvin, at the period in question; and that he represents the martyrs under Mary as accused, not of Calvinism, but of Lutheranism. It would seem, therefore, that the martyrologist could not have intended to describe them, as uttering a sense quite wide of the latter, in their confessions. A striking instance of the fact referred to is related by Fox, as having taken place at the burning of bishops Ridley and Latimer. To give a religious appearance to the occasion, there was a sermon, in which the preacher inveighed against what he called the errors of Luther, of Occolampadius,

and of Zuinglius; but does not appear to have said a word concerning Calvin. Of the said errors, the preacher considered Zuinglism as the worst: And of this, in particular, he accused the destined victims. Most probably, this was because of their being nearer to that divine than to Luther, on the subject of the eucharist. At any rate, Calvinism is foreign to the charge.

But the truth is, the very extracts usually given from Fox, in proof of the Calvinism either of Cranmer and Ridley, or of their coadjutors Hooper and Latimer, are as consistent with Arminianism, as with Calvinism. It is curious to find writers gravely producing sayings concerning God's care of his elect, without adverting to the circumstance, that the controversy is not on the question of there being an election; but on the question, whether it be founded on prescience. Yet, so far as the experience of the present writer goes, this oversight is conspicuous in all the authors, who have laboured the point here referred to.

The remarks made concerning extracts from the Martyrology, are equally applicable to those usually made from the catechism: the words "predestinate" and "elect" being commonly produced as undeniable proofs, of the opinions intended to be ascribed to those who use them. It would have been much more to the purpose of such writers, if they could have produced a single passage from the catechism, or from the numerous documents furnished by Fox, of a limiting of the extent of Christ's redemption, and of the designating of a proportion of mankind who cannot, and who were never intended to be benefited by it.

Of the good men who fell under the persecution of Mary, there is no one whom the Calvinists oftener cite as up to the height of their system, than Mr. Bradford. This martyr* addressed from his prison, to two of his friends, a long letter on predestination. But it is remarkable, that the pious martyrologist, in giving this to the world, has accompanied it with an additional instrument, evidently designed to make out what the letter wanted, to render it express to the purpose, of representing the decree as independent on faith and works foreseen.

The catechism is so far from being Calvinistick, that there are passages in it evidently inconsistent with the system: affecting indeed other points of the controversy, but in such a manner, as cannot consist even with an insinuated or implied partiality of the effects of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Redeemer. A few of them shall be here set down—"We Christian men, although by baptism we be made the children of God, and receive the Holy Ghost." Again—"The second birth is by the water of baptism, which Paul calleth the laver of regeneration, because our sins be forgiven us in baptism, and the Holy Ghost, is poured into us as into God's beloved children, so that by the power and working of the Holy Ghost we are born again spiritually and made new creatures. And so by baptism we enter into the kingdom of God and shall be saved for ever, if we continue to our lives end in the faith of Christ." And again, speaking of adults—"All these benefits we receive by faith, in the which, whosoever continueth to the end of his life, shall be saved:" And again—"Take

* Fox, vol. 3, p. 291.

this for a sure token and doubt nothing thereof, that the Holy Ghost, as he has begun these things in us, so he will finish the same, if we obey him, and continue in faith to the end of our lives." These are modes of expression so wide of the proper and customary language of the advocates of a partial redemption, that it is difficult to conceive of their being dictated by the same opinions.

The catechism called Poinet's, is understood to have been in substance the same with that published after the accession of Elizabeth, by Dr. Nowell the prolocutor of the lower house of convocation; and which has always borne his name. In reference to the present question, we find in this catechism, the following reason assigned why God is said to be our Father—"because he has regenerated us by the Holy Ghost, and elected us by faith in his Son Jesus Christ." This is affirmed of all professing Christians; and therefore it would seem, as if the publication in which it is found cannot consistently be claimed by a system, to which it is so manifestly opposed on a leading point of doctrine. But on the present question, dean Nowell's catechism must be considered as less pertinent than that of bishop Poinet; which was as at a period, coincident with the compiling of the articles and the liturgy.

Although archbishop Cranmer and bishop Ridley are generally allowed to have had more responsibility than any others, yet bishop Hooper is supposed to have been consulted; his character having been in high estimation, even with those who blamed his over-scrupulous reluctance to the episcopal habit. The only document which this good man professedly gave to the public, was an Exposition of the Ten Commandments. The

author of this has not access to it; but quotes as follows from the preface, as given by Dr. Lawrence—“The cause of reprobation or damnation is sin in man, which will not hear, neither receive the promise of the gospel. The cause of our election, is the mercy of God in Christ. Howbeit, he that will be partaker of this election must receive the promise in Christ by faith; for therefore we be elected, because afterwards we are made members of Christ. Therefore, as, in justification and the remission of sin, there is a cause, though no dignity at all in the receiver of his justification; and so we judge him by the scripture to be justified and to have remission of his sin, because he received the grace promised by Christ; so we judge of election by the event or success that happeneth in the life of men, those only to be elected, that by faith apprehend the mercy promised in Christ.” Again he says—“It is not the Christian’s part to say, God hath written fatal laws, as the stoic; and with necessity of destiny violently pulleth one man by the hair into heaven, and thrusteth the other headlong into hell;” and then adds, therefore “ascertain thyself by the scripture, what be the causes of reprobation and what of election.” Dr. Lawrence gives sundry other and larger quotations: And he affirms of them, that they are translations of similar sentences in Melancthon; and therefore, while they prove how far bishop Hooper was from Calvinism, are additional evidence of the symbolising which has been affirmed of the English and the Lutheran churches.

The following extract from the same preface, has been given by different English authors; and is here transcribed from one of them. “As far extendeth the virtue and strength of God’s promise to save men, as the

rigour and justice of the law, for sin to draw them; for as by the sin and offence of one man, death was extended and made common to all men unto condemnation; as Paul saith, Rom. v. so, by the justice of one, is derived life unto all men unto justification. If all then shall be saved, what is to be said of those that St. Peter speaketh of, that shall perish for their false doctrine? And likewise Christ saith, that the gate is strait that leadeth to life, and few enter, Matth. 7. Thus the scripture answereth; that the promise of grace appertaineth unto every son of man in the world, and comprehendeth them all; howbeit, within certain limits and bounds, the which if men neglect or pass over, they exclude themselves from the promise of Christ: As Cain was no more excluded, till he had excluded himself, than Abel; Saul than David; Judas than Peter; Esau than Jacob."

Of all the inconsistencies in the present business, not one of them is more palpable, than that of bringing good old bishop Latimer as a witness for the Calvinistick creed. It is rare to find his sermons in this country. Indeed the author knows of but two copies; one of which has been in vain looked to, as to any evidence of Calvinism; but is strong, as he thinks, to the contrary.

Good sense and fervent piety, alike distinguish the discourses of the venerable martyr. He inveighs with the utmost freedom against all prevalent vices, whether in the court or among the commonality; whether in the city, or in the country; whether among the higher, or the lower orders of the clergy. The whole is in a colloquial style, not accommodated to the fastidiousness of modern times; and abounding with the stories of the day, alike contrary to this standard. There is little on any

controverted points, except those at issue between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics; the errors of the latter being always reprov'd, whenever they came in the preacher's way. Whatever is said of the doctrines of grace, is exactly in the style visible in the compositions of the Lutherans. When he speaks of predestination, it is as lighting on all who believe in Christ; without any thing, designating whether the decree be founded on prescience or otherwise. Indeed, his being indeterminate in this particular, is conspicuous in the quotations so often adduced in proof of his Calvinism; although they are given without a noticing of the circumstance. On the subject of universal redemption, he is as express as language could enable him to be. Passages to the effect shall be here given. He says, in his sermon on the marriage which a king made for his son—"The promises of Christ our Saviour are general, they pertain to all mankind:" and in the same sermon—"Almighty God prepared this feast for all the world, for all those who will come to it:" and in the sermon for Septuagesima Sunday—"There are none of us all, but may be saved by Christ:" and in his sermon on the third Sunday after the Epiphany, having noticed the passage in the Acts—"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" and noticing that many took offence thereat; he says—"If the most part be damned, the fault is not in God, but in themselves; for it is written, God would have all men to be saved." There might be selected many passages to the same effect; because it is the familiar language of these ancient productions.

But there is no Calvinistick point, on which the advocates of the system are more express, than on that

of the final perseverance of the saints; the negative of which, is confessedly not consistent with a partiality of redemption. This bishop, in his sermon for the second Sunday in Advent, in the gospel for the day, from St. Luke, xxi, after setting forth the destruction of the Jews for unbelief, exhorts as follows—"Let us not follow them, lest we receive such a reward as they had, lest everlasting destruction come upon us, and so we be cast out of the favour of God, and finally lost, world without end." So, in his seventh sermon on the Lord's prayer,—“Whosoever publicly sinneth, he hath lost the Holy Ghost, the remission of sins, and finally Christ himself. But when we are fallen so, we must fetch them again at God's hand by this prayer; which is a store-house, where we shall find remission of our sins. And though we be risen never so well, yet when we fall again, when we sin again—what remedy then?” He goes on to show, that the guilt of old sins returns, as in the case of the servant who, after receiving remission of his own debt, was unmerciful to his fellow-servant. The issue of the case is stated by Latimer, as follows:—"Now that same man, afterward showed himself unfaithful and wicked: therefore the lord called him and cast him into prison, there to lie till he had paid the uttermost farthing, notwithstanding that he had forgiven him before." In this passage, there is, first, whatever can constitute the being in grace—then a fall—then a rising again—and then a fall which must have been contemplated as final, that being the issue in the illustration. And if this could be thought doubtful, it would be fixed by the clause which speaks of "losing finally Christ himself." In the sermon on the Twelfth day, after speaking of circumcision as "a certain, sure,

infallible, and effectual token of God's good will towards them to whom it was given;" and after having illustrated this truth in instances from the Old Testament, and of consequent trust in God, he adds—"So let us ever consider, in what trouble and calamity soever we be, let us remember that we be baptized; that God hath promised to help us, to deliver us from all our sins and wickedness, to be our God."* Here is baptismal regeneration, in opposition to final perseverance, confessedly incompatible with the other. So, in the sermon for Septuagesima Sunday—"When thou hast faith in Christ, then thou art in the book of life, and so art sure of thy election." And again—"If thou be

* The author has met somewhere with the following quotation from bishop Latimer, given in order to show his opposition to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration—"Ye must have regeneration. And what is that regeneration? It is not to be christened in water, as those fire brands (meaning the Roman catholics) expressed it, and nothing else. How is it to be experienced then? St. Paul showeth"—Then he quotes: and he interprets what he quotes of the preached word and says—"Thus cometh in our new birth." The whole argument, is on the necessity of preaching and the providing for it: which had been almost entirely disregarded for some ages before the reformation. The sentiment is here supposed to be, that a man is not now a christian, in virtue of his having been baptized in infancy; if the grace then given have not been since brought into operation, by the efficacy of the preached word.

It is not to be supposed, that the good bishop expressed himself in this manner, in reference to a doctrine of his own church, confessedly conspicuous in all her institutions: which also he had an hand in framing: and also in contrariety to his own sentiments delivered in his sermons. But he appears consistent with himself, when the subject is considered as affecting adults: and when, to the pretended sufficiency of christening, is opposed the necessity of subsequent instruction.

without Christ, and have no faith in him, neither art sorry for thy wickedness, nor have a mind and purpose to leave and forsake sin, but rather exercise and use the same, then thou art not in the book of life, so long as thou art in such a case; and therefore, shalt thou go into everlasting fire; namely, if thou die in thy wickedness and sin without repentance.”

But there is no point, on which the turn of sentiment of this holy man is more distant from Calvinism, than when he discourses of the certainty of saving faith. Let the following instances serve. In his aforesaid sermon for the third Sunday after the Epiphany, he says—“ We read in the scriptures, that Abraham believed God, and his faith justified him. Now when I hear this, I must apply it to myself in this manner: Abraham believed God, and his faith justified him; I will believe in God, and follow his word, then shall I also be justified.” Again, in the same sermon, “ I will tell you how you shall know when you are in the book; and there are three special notes, whereby we may know the same. The first note is, if you know your sin, and feel your own wretchedness and sinfulness.

Then followeth the second point, which is faith in Christ; that is, when you believe most steadfastly and undoubtedly, that God, the Heavenly Father, through his Son, will deliver you from your sins. The third point is, when you have an earnest desire to amendment, and hatred of sin.” The same sermon may be cited concerning the universality of redemption: for it not only affirms this, quoting to the effect 1 Tim. ii. 4; but in language resembling that already cited from Hooper, it affirms—“ Christ shed as much blood for Judas, as he did for Peter.” In the sermon for the fifth

Sunday after the Epiphany, there is this passage—
“Some peradventure will say—How shall I know whether I have faith or not? Truly thou shalt find this in thee. If thou have no mind to leave sin, but art content to go forward in the same; and thou delightest in it, and hatest it not; neither feelest thou what sin is; when thou art in such a case, then thou hast no faith, and therefore like to perish everlastingly. Again, that man is in good case, that can be content to fight and strive with sin, and to withstand the devil and his temptations; and calleth for the help of God, and believeth that God will help him, and make him strong to fight; that man shall not be overcome by the devil. And whosoever feeleth this in his heart, and so wrestleth with sin, may be sure that he hath faith, and is in the favour of God.” There needs be no pains to show, how different all this is, from the tests found in Calvin and in Calvinistick confessions.

Not only on the subjects of the preceding quotations, but on the irresistibility of grace, on the imputation of the sin of Adam, and in regard to whatever else is involved, in the contemplated controversy, the writer of this would as soon have expected that archbishop Tillotson or bishop Taylor should have been produced in proof of Calvinism, as that such a use should be made of the printed sermons of bishop Latimer. Neither does this judgment arise more from what he has said, than from his omitting to speak the language of Calvinism, where his subjects gave the best openings for it, had it been his creed. For instance, in his discourse on the king's marriage for his son; or that on the sowing of the gospel seed; or that of the hiring of labourers into the vineyard; a Calvinistick preacher

would hardly have thought himself excusable, in not introducing some points, which are not even hinted at by bishop Latimer.

There needs not then be any wonder concerning him, that he was one of the men, who authorized the reading of Erasmus's paraphrase in the churches. And although what has been affirmed and proved of him and his fellow-labourers, can hardly stand in need of confirmation from the reciting of the comments of another; yet, as there was perceived a reason for the giving of extracts from the said paraphrase under the first point, there may be a like use in doing the same under the second.

Erasmus, in the preface of his paraphrase, addressed to Charles V, writes thus:—" Being not ignorant, Charles, emperor most victorious, how much godly fear and reverence also is of due consequence to be given partlye unto all holye scriptures, which the holye fathers, through the inspiration of God, have left unto us; and especiallye unto that parte of scripture which maketh an upright and faithful relation of such thinges as the Heavenly Father, either wrought in facte or spake in wordes, for the health and salvation of the whole worlde, through his sonne Jesus: and being further privie to mine own unworthiness, &c. &c."

The same ancient author thus comments on John, iii. 17:—" For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved"*—" Albeit that, in time to come, the Father should judge the universal worlde by his Sonne at his last cumming; yet at this time, which is appoint-

* Paraphrasc.

ed for mercie, God has not sent his Sonne to condemn the world for the wicked dedes thereof; but by his death to give free salvation to the worlde through faith. And lest any body, perishing wilfully, should have whereby to excuse their own malice, there is given to all folkes an easie entrie to salvation.”

And the following is the comment given on John, vi. 51:—“The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”:*—“Even this fleshe which you see and look upon, and whiche I shall bestowe and give unto death for to redeme the life of the wholle worlde, is the living bread.”

Of the texts which apply to the question of universal redemption, specimens of Erasmus’s interpretations may be seen, by referring to what he says on 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6. He paraphrases precisely on the plan of those who maintain the doctrine.

To the above, there may here be pertinently added a fact given by the Rev. Dr. Daubenay,† concerning the first English bible printed after the reformation: a work, notoriously conducted under the authority of the men, whose sentiments are here in question. The prologue to the Epistle to the Romans runs thus:—“In this epistle, and namely, in the three first chapters, St. Paule sheweth that the gospell and grace thereof was foresene and predestinate of God from before the begynnyng; deserved thorowe Christe, and now at the laste sent forthe, that all men should beleve thereon, thereby to be justified, made ryghteouse and happy, and to be delyvered from under the dampnacyon of the lawe and capivitie of ceremonies.”

* Paraphrase.

† Guide to the Church, vol. ii. p. 185.

And the following is the summary of the contents of the first chapter—"The everlastyng ordinance and election of God, in savyng all men thorow Christe Jesu his Sonne. We are ordayned to good works. The dominyon of Christe."

It would be strange, had the fact been so, to find such wise and good men blundering against their system, in their first noble effort for a reformation.

There can hardly be need to contend in the shape of argument, that the authorities which have been here recited are in contrariety to what is taught by Calvinistick churches and writers. For the sake of the contrast however, the manner in which these speak shall be here exhibited.

The Belgic confession has nothing to the point of universal redemption, any further, than as the negative of it is a clear inference from what is said concerning election. As to the canons of the synod of Dort, they treat of redemption under the second point, confining it to the elect, but avoiding direct crossing of the position, that the sacrifice of the cross was for all mankind. It seems not unreasonable, to ascribe the reserve to a reluctance to a direct contradiction of the institutions of the English church. Be this as it may, the Westminster divines, who had released themselves from every scruple originating in the same source, have spoken expressly to the point.

The confession here in view,* after affirming the redemption of the elect, adds "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only."

* Ch. iii. sec. 6.

The same document,* professedly stating the design of Christ's mediatorial office, says,—“The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven, for all those whom the father hath given unto him.” And it says again,† “To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he does certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.”

To show the inconsistency of all this with the doctrine of the Episcopal church, it is but to suppose a minister of one of the numerous societies which acknowledge the Westminster confession, addressing God in his public prayer, in the language of the communion service, declaratory of Christ's having made “by the one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world;” or in the language of the devotions for Good-Friday, as having “made all men, and hating nothing that he hath made;” and as “not desiring the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live.” Or, the same minister may be supposed telling his audience in the words of bishop Latimer, that “Christ shed as much blood for Judas, as for Peter;” or in the words of bishop Hooper—the opinions both of him and of the other bishops being supposed explanatory of the sense of the church—that “Cain was no more excluded than Abel; Saul than David; Judas than Peter; Esau than

* Ch. 8. sect. 5.

† Sect. 8.

Jacob." In the event of such prayers and of such discourses as have been expressed, there is taken the liberty to suppose, that it would hardly escape either individual censure or ecclesiastical discipline.

On an examination of Calvin's institutions, it does not appear to the present writer, that he has spoken any further to the purpose, than as the negative of the subject is an obvious inference from his doctrine of election. It would seem probable, that the affirming of a redemption designed for all men having been the language of the church in every preceding age, the time was not yet come to deny the doctrine, however the language clothing it, might be abandoned. Perhaps also, Calvin may have been reluctant to so open an hostility to a doctrine of Austin, whom he seems to have intended to follow closely. And yet, although the reformer has devoted a whole book* to Christ, as the saviour, he very consistently forbears the denominating of his redemption, as for the sins of the whole world. Had the matter been distinctly a subject of litigation in Calvin's day, there would seem to have been a necessity of his speaking to it, in the sixth chapter of the said book; which is entitled—"To lost man there is to be sought redemption in Christ." But whether the redemption, as existing in the contemplation of the divine mind, be for all men, is not there said.

In the day of professor Turretine, the language expressive of a partial redemption had become common in Calvinistick theology. Accordingly, he delivers his mind as follows:† He states the question—"Whether there ought to be attributed to God a conditional will,

* The second.

† Locus 6. Cont. 2.

or universal purpose of pitying the whole race of mankind fallen into sin, of appointing Christ a mediator for all and every one, and of calling them all to a salutary participation of his benefits?" Then the professor says,—“It is not made a question, whether men are predestinated collectively and individually, whether they believe or not. For this opinion of S. H. formerly a minister of the Helvetic churches, is some while since exploded. Neither is there an enquiry concerning the general love of God, which he exercises towards his creatures,—but of his spiritual and saving love, by which he wills to have mercy on them, to the end of their salvation. Neither is there enquired, whether there be in God a will, teaching and approving the salvation of men; but whether, from such a will, approving and teaching to men their duty, there can be gathered any will or counsel of God, by which he intends the salvation of all, collectively and severally? Nor is it inquired, whether, by some absolute decree, he intends the salvation of them all and severally; but whether, by some conditional decree, God appointed to give salvation universally and severally, on the condition of faith. The question therefore is brought within these bounds—whether there be given in God some general decree, or there be declared a design and purpose or conditional will, by which God truly and seriously savingly compassionates all and every one; not by giving faith, but by sending Christ for all and every one; and by calling all and every one to salvation, under the condition of faith and penitence? which the favourers of universal-grace affirm, and which we deny.” The professor has drawn up his statement with no small address; so as to make his own opinion on the question, an inference contem-

plated as established by his preceding reasonings on predestination: Whereas, the natural order of the subject is—first, what the scriptures have delivered concerning redemption, their great object; and then, according to the issue of this inquiry, to regulate our ideas on the more recondite subject of the divine decrees.

After Turretine, the attention may be properly transferred to professor Witsius. He treats of the subject fully, in the ninth chapter of his second book. In the second section of this chapter, he states, that the obedience and the sufferings of Christ, on account of the dignity of his person, were of such value, as to be sufficient to redeem not only all mankind, but myriads besides, if it had pleased God and Christ, that so extensive a salvation should be wrought. In the third section, he declares that Christ, as a man, felt for all those whose nature he had assumed; so as not only to wish them well, but to lament the ruin of those for whom he had not engaged: And this is illustrated by the tears shed on the foresight of the impending destruction of Jerusalem. Then, in the next section, Dr. Witsius goes on to show, that even the reprobate receive benefit from the death of Christ, inasmuch as it occasioned the spreading of the gospel, which is productive of many temporal advantages.* Further, it is affirmed in the fourth section, that the satisfaction of Christ will avail for all who come to him; and that salvation by him is to be offered indiscriminately

* It seems to have been hardly worth while to mention those advantages; when according to the system sustained, there is attached to them the awful disadvantage of a condemnation aggravated by the rejection of a gospel not designed for the persons in contemplation.

to all. After these concessions, there comes in the sixth section, which is directly to the point, and is as follows —“ That, however, Christ, according to the will of God the Father, and his own purpose, did neither engage nor satisfy, and consequently in no manner die, but only for all those, and those alone, whom the Father gave him, and who are actually saved.” The learned author goes on to sustain his position, by the authorities usually conceived of by Calvinists as applicable. And then he says towards the end of the chapter*—“ The satisfaction of Christ for the reprobate had not only been useless, but highly unworthy both of God and of Christ: Unworthy of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, to exact and receive satisfaction from his most beloved Son, for those, whom he neither gave, nor wanted to give to his Son, and whom he decreed to consign to everlasting confinement, that they might suffer in their own persons according to the demerit of their crimes: Unworthy of Christ, to give his blood a price of redemption for those, whom he had not in charge to redeem. And, if we may speak freely, this also, in some respect, would be for Christ to account the blood of the new covenant, or the new covenant itself, by which he was sanctified, a common or unholy thing.”

If this sentiment of professor Witsius—which however is not peculiar to him—be here rightly apprehended; it states as an objection against there being a redemption for those who eventually perish, that there is thus a disproportion between the merits of the Redeemer and their results. Nevertheless, it is common with the very authors who express themselves in this

* Sect. 35.

manner, when they would ward off the force of scriptural authorities adduced for the establishment of the same doctrine, to say, that indeed the dignity of the Redeemer's character was sufficient to have extended the benefit of his death to men and angels without exception; but that this did not enter into the determinations of divine wisdom. There seems an inconsistency in these sentiments.

But what necessity is there to make such comparisons, between the sacrifice and its beneficial consequences? And is not such a proceeding founded on the mistaken principle, of there being a substitution maintaining an exact equality between the sufferings of the substitute on the one hand, and the demerits of the original party and the sufferings which he would otherwise have endured, on the other? Such a presumed equality is subversive of every idea of divine mercy, in the transaction: For there is no security in the release of a debt, which has been amply paid, or in dispensing with a penalty, on a consideration which could not but be accepted as an equivalent. And yet we are told—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.”

The honour of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is sufficiently sustained, by its being affirmed to be the appointed ground of the forgiveness of sin; not to be defeated of its object, by any measure of past demerit in the penitent offender; and not admitting of additional efficacy, from any measure of holiness in the most exemplary saint. But when, not content with this evangelical truth, we speculate beyond the data given to us in holy writ; and are thereby led to affirm, by reasonings *a priori*, what God cannot do, and what he must do, from

the propriety which we suppose to be exacted by the subject; such operations of our minds may tend to give consistency to a preconceived system, but cannot contribute to the establishment of its truth.

The author is impressed by the opinion, that since the spread of the doctrine of philosophical necessity among the Calvinists, there has been among them less reluctance than formerly, to speak of redemption in terms of universality. By this, in the instances in which it takes place, their language is made more conformable to scripture; while yet, there is behind the curtain a reserve in the mysteries of philosophy. There is an example in the eminent necessarian president Edwards; and if an opinion expressed by Dr. Priestley* be correct, the first Calvinistick divine of that description. In the conclusion of his book, he applies the whole of his argument to the sustaining of Calvinism, on principles purely metaphysical; and he infers as follows: "From these things it will inevitably follow, that however Christ in some sense may be said to die for all and to redeem all visible Christians, yea the whole world by his death; yet there must be something particular in the design of his death, with respect to such as he intended should be actually saved thereby. As appears by what has been now shewn, God has the actual salvation or redemption of a certain number in his proper absolute design and of a certain number only; and therefore such a design only can be prosecuted in any thing God does, in order to the salvation of men." In this passage, in which there is an allusion to certain texts of scripture,

* This opinion of Dr. Priestley is stated in the Second Part of this work.

president Edwards evidently gives up those texts to the redemptionists on the universal plan; and narrows the scheme of Christ's salvation, by considerations of what he conceived to result from a speculative view of the attributes of God, and the constitution of the human mind. If any one should suspect, that the texts are here taken possession of, before they have been surrendered, it is but to refer to the explanations of them, in the writers just before mentioned—Calvin, Turretine, and Witsius. These writers deny, that “all men,” and “the whole world,” were in any manner intended. All sorts of men, and the whole world of the elect, and the like phrases, are what they conceive to be expressive of the mind of the Holy Spirit, in the places referred to.

Besides president Edwards, there shall be here mentioned one of his successors—Dr. Witherspoon. This divine rejects the necessarian scheme, as was shown in another part of the present work. However, he is not thereby prevented from expressing himself as follows, in his sermon intitled “Christ's Death a Proper Atonement for Sin.” “I am sensible, my brethren, that very great controversies have been raised in another view, as to the extent of Christ's death, and the import of this and other such general expressions in the scriptures.” His text was* “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world:” And the Dr. had explained this text as having a reference to Jewish prejudice; and as affirming, that the propitiation spoken of was for Gentiles as well as Jews. Then, in allusion to a question glanced at of another nature, he proceeds thus, “In this, as in most

* 1 John ii. 2.

other debates, matters have been carried a far greater length, than the interests of truth and piety require; and, as is also usual, they have arisen from an improper and unskilful mixture of what belongs to the secret counsels of the Most High with his revealed will, which is the invariable rule of our duty. Without entering therefore into these debates, which are unsuitable to our present employment; or rather, giving my judgment that they are for the most part unnecessary, unprofitable, or hurtful; I shall lay down three propositions on this subject, which I think can hardly be called in question; and which are a sufficient foundation for our faith and practice." If there be rightly apprehended the scope of the learned president in this passage, he distinguishes between the revealed will in scripture, and secret counsels; our knowledge of the existence of which, is adduced by reasonings from other sources; the distinction being precisely the same with that stated from Luther, under the first point. But this is not Calvinism, as it stood originally, if the term be here rightly understood. The system denies, that there is any revelation of the good will of God to all mankind, in reference to their eternal state; as may be seen in what has been quoted to the contrary, from Calvinistick writers of high authority. Nevertheless, there is here great satisfaction taken in such an approximation to the truth, as that of an allowance of the general tenor of the declarations of scripture; before weakened by distinctions, which will never seem natural to understandings not warped by systems. And further, it is here fully believed, that the approximation would be consummated by union; if there were universally discerned the true sense of scripture, on the correlative subject of predes-

tion: For then, the texts in favour of universal redemption would be seen in all their bright beneficence, without the intervention of the thought, that there is a darker medium, through which the object will sometimes present itself to our understandings. And if this apparent inconsistency were done away, it is to be hoped, that, to the humble mind, no further difficulty would remain: Since it requires no great degree of submission of our limited wisdom to the divine, to induce us to say with Job, “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?” In short, remove the embarrassment before referred to—which is here firmly believed to have arisen from misconstruction of scripture—and there will remain nothing incomprehensible, beyond what exists in nature; on the ground of which, if there had never been a revelation, it would have been impossible for us to account, either why God permits moral evil, when it was in his power to have prevented it; or why he created physical objects, for uses which they do not always reach. Considering the gross ignorance of man in his natural condition, he ought not to complain of revelation, that notwithstanding its inestimable discoveries, it does but enable him to “know in part.”

III. OF FREE-WILL.

The church is silent on the point, philosophically considered—
It is to be considered in relation to Original Sin—The ninth Article--The thirteenth--The opinions of Calvinistick Churches and Divines--A caution against Misapprehension—The sufficiency of the Theory here advocated—Extravagance of some learned and pious Persons—The different Language of the Church.

THE subject now proposed, may be considered in two different points of view; one of them philosophical, and the other theological. All the controversies of the former description may be supposed precisely what they now are, were man a sinless being; yet, in all respects, understanding and willing as he is found at the present day. But this is not the line, in which the matter was treated of, either by Calvin or by Arminius. It was presumed by both of them, that man, before the fall, had an inherent ability for a choice between good and evil: and they treated of no other slavery of the will, than that which was the effect of the apostacy.

It is remarkable, that in the thirty-nine articles, the article entitled “Of Free-will,” says not a word on the subject in a philosophical point of view. It is impossible, that the compilers could have been ignorant of “the horrid stoical contentions,” as Melancthon calls them, formerly subsisting, but at last suppressed in the churches under Luther: And accordingly, they avoided saying any

thing, tending to revive them in the church of England. But in the exercise of this caution, they do not fail to lay down, as a leading position of their system, what neither Luther nor Melancthon doubted of; and what Arminius, when he appeared, acknowledged as explicitly as either of them; that man, by his fall, lost the ability to do good; and that consequently any good, since found in any man, is of the grace of God through Christ. As the Calvinists and the Arminians concurred in this, at the synod of Dort; nothing more needs to be here said concerning it: and the reciting of the tenth article may the more readily be dispensed with, because of the occasion which will occur of bringing it into view, under the next point of the controversy.

But the point of free will is so connected with the doctrine of original sin, that on the question of the sense of the episcopal church, in regard to the former, the subject ought not to be dismissed, without a view of the doctrine, as held by the said church; nor without an inquiry, how far she favours either the one or the other of the parties, on this important question.

Here it will be necessary to recite the ninth article, entitled “Of Original Sin.”

“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the

lust of the flesh, called in Greek “φρονιμα σαρκος,” which some do expound the wisdom, some the sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, and are baptized; yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.”

In this article, the first thing aimed at is to enter a protest against the Pelagian heresy: concerning which, there is here no question made.

The article goes on to define, wherein original sin consists. It is “the fault or corruption of our nature;” and not the imputation of the act of another. It is that “whereby man is far gone from original righteousness;” and not that, by which he wills every species of evil; and is ready for the commission of it, if not restrained by motives which have no reference to moral principle.* “And thereby he is of his own nature inclined

* Stress has been laid on the Latin; which has for “far gone”—“quam longissime”—“gone as far as possible.” This is held up by many Calvinistick writers, as very important to their cause. But there is no reason for the construction; as will be perceived, if the state of the controversy, at the time of framing the article, be in view. There had been taken a distinction between the positive loss of righteousness, and a propensity to sin: and the scholastics had even considered positive righteousness, not as a connate quality, but as a supernatural habit. All had treated of it, as utterly lost in Adam; and in this, there was no controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. The distinction referred to was made, and had become familiar; so as to be explanatory of the article: which pronounces, in respect to positive righteousness, that man is gone from it as far as possible; and in respect to sin, that he is of his own nature inclined to it. This is a very different sentiment, from that of his being possessed of passions impelling him to all sorts of vice and mischief.

to evil"—not irresistibly impelled to it. And further, it is of such sort, that "the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit:" alien from the language of a radical corruption in all the parts of the soul, and implying that even in the unregenerate, to whom the text of scripture is here exclusively applied, there may be a mind approving of what is good.* Then follows a comment—"In every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." There is a deserveth, not an incurring of the matter spoken of. According to Austin, even infants, dying without baptism, are under the actual sentence of damnation; although, agreeably to the dictates of his own humanity, without any ground alleged from scripture—it was the lightest damnation of all: The article, however, speaks not of infliction, but of desert. Again—What deserves? The answer is—"It"—meaning the opposition of the lust of the flesh to the drawings of the spirit. This opposition, it may be said, considered as distinct from person, cannot be the subject of damnation. Certainly it cannot, as this word has become appropriated by use to a state of torment: but the matter is otherwise, according to ancient usage, and especially to the known extent of the word in Latin; which does not

* It is to be lamented, that not only authors, but some churches make use of figurative language, for the clothing of abstract propositions. We have no conception of the soul, as divided into parts; nor of any such relation among its powers, as that subsisting between a root and the shoots which grow from it. If the meaning be, that the infection spoken of extends to all the powers of the soul; so that they become perverted or abused, except so far as they become restrained and regulated under the agency of divine grace; the position is not here intended to be denied, but on the contrary is affirmed as an important truth.

necessarily imply any thing more than condemnation or censure generally.* This brings to the point, that the affirmed depravity of sensual inclination is opposed to the perfection of an holy God, and cannot but be an object of his disapprobation and displeasure. There needs no notice of what is added concerning the remaining of the infection of nature in the regenerate, any further, than to remark the application which the compilers have made of two Greek words.† The expression, as it stands in scripture, is evidently a personification of the corrupt and sensual nature of man; and agreeably to the interpretation, there is a choice of words given in the varied phraseology of—the wisdom—the sensuality—the affection—and the desire of the flesh: which is in itself, and can never be made otherwise than contrary to the holy law of God.

Further, the use made of the Greek expression tends to explain the scriptural quotation in an early part of the article—“so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit.” This is found in the seventeenth verse

* Mr. Lawrence (page 273) quotes from bishop Hooper, the following sentence: as giving an instance of the use of the word “damnation” in his day—“Of these words should those, that be damned by the magistrates, acknowledge, that it is not the magistrate that putteth them to execution, but God, whose ministers they be.”

There occurs in Brandt’s history a similar use of the word. In a paper given in to the synod, declaring the opinions of the celebrated Peter du Moulin, he made use of these expressions—“*Damno Arminium ejusque sectarios*” and—“*Arminii scholam damno et abominor.*” It cannot be supposed of this learned divine, that he used the word in any other sense, than that pleaded to be in the article.

† *Φρονημα σαρκος.*

of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians; where the words are used, not without a reference to the Holy Spirit of God. Nevertheless, the sense requires that we understand the spirit or intellectual principle of man; although this regulated by divine grace: And if so, since the will of the personified fleshly nature remained even in the regenerate, there was contemplated a superior agency in man; which might be in submission, either to heavenly inspiration on the one hand, or to blind appetite on the other. The more the two phrases of scripture are examined, the more—it is here trusted—the fact will appear, that the inspiration which indited them contemplated in man an approbation and a desire of moral good; but this, counteracted by propensities of an opposite kind: the latter governing him as he is by nature; but these being subjected to the other, when he becomes what he ought to be by grace.

It has been already intimated, that the confession in the morning and evening prayers, put in on the review, bears so much resemblance to one in a liturgy composed by Calvin, that this must be supposed to have been kept in mind in the composition. But to show the difference between the sentiments of this reformer, and those of the English compilers, on the subject of original sin, it is worthy of remark, that the latter left out these words in the form before them—“by which we are alike inclined to all evil and alien from all good.”* Not only so, they took a like liberty, with the confession contained in a liturgy drawn up for the church of Cologne, by Melancthon and Bucer. From

* Tam ad omne malum pronos, quam ab omni bono alienos.

this liturgy, there seems to have been in a great measure borrowed the confession in the communion service, beginning thus—"Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men." In the Cologne liturgy the worshippers deplore that they are by nature "prone to all evil and abhorrent from all truly good things."* But this is dropped in the English liturgy. So is what the said liturgy of Cologne had subjoined to the form taken from the Romish ritual, and found also in the English book, beginning thus—"It is very meet, right and our bounden duty, &c." Among other things there was added in the form of Cologne, but not copied in the English—"And when, being fallen from thee by Adam's sin, we had become thy enemies, and therefore liable to death and eternal damnation," &c.† The Augsburg confession itself, in reference to original sin, had used the terms—"condemning and bringing eternal death"‡—and again—"condemned by God."§ With these documents before the compilers, it can hardly be thought, but that the departure from the strong language of them was from deliberate design.

The facts just above stated are taken from Dr. Lawrence,|| who professes to take them from the original authorities.¶

* Ad quævis mala pronos et abhorrentes a veris bonis.

† Per peccatum adæ a te deficientes, inimici tui et ideo morti et damnationi æternæ obnoxii facti essemus.

‡ Damnans et afferens æternam mortem.

§ Damnati a Deo.

|| Page 281.

¶ It has been said, that the qualifying clause in the seventeenth article is, "nearly copied from Calvin's Institutes; and that the

The thirteenth article of the church, entitled "Of Works before Justification," has so much coincidence with the ninth, that the former shall be here given, and remarked on:

"Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

Perhaps there is no article of the church, more generally misapprehended than this: and it cannot be

latter part of it is a literal translation from that reformer's caution against the abuse of this very doctrine" (predestination).

On this position the following remarks occur. First, that the Latin phraseology of the Institutions, and that of the Latin articles, are materially different, as will be seen below: which is presumptive evidence, that the composers of the one had not the other within their view. As to the sentiment of the clause, it was common to Calvinists and Arminians.

Secondly, If the compilers may be supposed to have had an eye to Calvin's Institutes, their not going with him beyond what an Arminian may subscribe, is no slight evidence of their not thinking with him to the extent of what is found in his Institutions.

Latin article: *Deinde promissiones divinas sic amplecti oportet, ut nobis in sacris literis generaliter propositae sunt; et Dei voluntas in nostris actionibus ea sequenda est, quam in verbo Dei habemus diserte revelatam.*

Calvin: *Suis promissionibus (Deus) vult nos esse contentos, neque alibi quaerere an futurus sit nobis exorabilis.*

Proinde, in rebus agendis, ea est nobis perspicenda Dei voluntas, quam verbo suo declarat.

rightly understood, without reference to old times and distinctions, not occurring in modern theology; even, as is here supposed, in the church against which the article was intended. The schoolmen, as they are called, had invented two species of merit—that of congruity and that of condignity. The first attached to deeds performed by man in his natural strength; in consequence of which, as was conceived, it was fit that God should extend to him supernatural aid; and therefore, this would certainly be done. Whatever the sinner, now converted, should accomplish under this aid, was supposed worthy of reward, on the terms of the gospel covenant; and was therefore called merit of condignity. It is the former kind of merit, which the article contemplates, and is therein denied. The article must have been framed, for the especial purpose of meeting the error; and it speaks of works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his spirit. Nothing can be wider of the sentiment intended, than the fancy entertained by many, relative to baptized persons of a Christian education, that in succeeding life, there must be a critical moment of conversion; previously to which, all they do, not excepting their very prayers, are strictly speaking sins. If this be a correct idea, the whole system of the church must be radically erroneous, as will be shown in the proper place. But if, as the church presumes, all who are fit subjects of baptism, and have received it, are therein made Christ's, by a grace given to them in the transaction; all works done by them, as the gospel has commanded, are good, not only formally, but as to their principle. But of the works spoken of in the article, it affirms, that they are not pleasant to God. Actions may be contemplated, as

they are in themselves, or as in alliance with the motives, and with the habitual state of mind from which they issue. However good an action in itself; yet, if it be not also good in the circumstances stated, it is not from the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit; and it cannot be pleasant to God, according to the article; which, however, says nothing as to any outward discrimination in the condition of mankind; whereby some may become objects of the grace of Christ, while others are necessarily barred from all access to its pale. Works, in which the said grace is wanting, have not the fictitious merit of congruity: and the mischief of the error here alluded to, was what the article principally intended to protest against. It goes further; and affirms of such works, that they have the nature of sin—not that they are sins; as if this applied to works beneficent in themselves; yet done by worldly men, from worldly, though not from base motives. Such works, do not prevent the performers of them from being in a sinful state; and although not sins, they have the nature of sin; which had been affirmed, in the ninth article, as attaching to those irregular desires, involuntary yet inordinate, which may be excited in the regenerate. In short, as bishop Burnet remarks, “there is but one point to be considered in this article; which is—whether man can, without any inward assistance from God, do any action, that shall be in all its circumstances so good, that it is not only acceptable to God, but meritorious in his sight, though in a lower degree of merit.” When the question is put into this form, it is to be hoped, that there is no intelligent and humble Christian, who will not answer in the negative; discarding all claim to merit, and placing the whole de-

pendence on grace. Yet this needs not hinder us from concluding with the same bishop, as follows—“By this we do not pretend to say, that a man in that state can do nothing; or that he has no use of his faculties. He can certainly restrain himself on many occasions; he can do many good works, and avoid many bad ones; he can exercise his understanding, to know and consider things according to the light that he has; he can put himself in good methods and good circumstances; he can pray, and do many acts of devotion; which, though they are all very imperfect, yet none of them will be lost in the sight of God; who certainly will never be wanting to those, who are doing what in them lies to make themselves the proper objects of his mercy, and fit subjects for his grace to work upon. Therefore this article is not to be made use of to discourage men’s endeavours, but only to increase their humility; to teach them not to think of themselves above measure, but soberly; to depend always on the mercy of God, and ever to fly to it.”

The author of the present work does not understand bishop Burnet in the foregoing paragraph, as supposing that even the first motions to the matters described by him, are other than from the divine Spirit; but understands him as merely affirming, that the compliances, even with the first holy motions, is in our power. This being kept in view; it would seem, that what he affirms is fully attested by experience.

On this exhibition of the sense of the church concerning the subject of original sin, it is of importance to remark, that there is not the least intimation of that branch of the Calvinistick representation of it, which supposes the imputation of the sin of Adam to his pos-

terity. It is here firmly believed, that when the articles were framed, the position had not been noticed in any public transaction, any further than as matter of private opinion. If there be any traces of it among the Lutherans, it did not enter into their public confessions. The opinion had been delivered in debate by Catherinus, a distinguished member of the council of Trent: But of its having been thrown out by any of the supposed heretics, no intimation is given in the histories of that body. The same Catherinus had avowed another sentiment, since become a dogma of Calvinism—that of a covenant supposed to have been made with Adam, for himself and his posterity. From these two facts it would seem, that the opinions referred to originated in the speculations of the schools. At any rate, they had not yet been advanced to stations in any public confession of faith.

If the compilers of the articles of the church of England had believed the said doctrine of imputation, but had sent them out defective in this particular; it might be supposed that they would have supplied the want, when they delivered their minds on the subject, in the more enlarged form of an homily “On the Misery of Man.” It will not be rash to affirm, that on the supposition of the truth of the doctrine, the homily is lamentably defective; since not an hint is given on the subject. In regard to the corruption of human nature, it is far short of the language of Calvinism; although describing in very strong terms the sinfulness of man, both by nature and in practice. It is not to be denied, that some of the homilies of the Second Book, go further than the aforesaid homily of the first. But this circumstance, is not decisive as to the sense of the

reformers. The second book, although composed in the reign of Edward, was not established until after the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth: And there is internal evidence, of its having undergone a review. It must be confessed of some of the homilies of the second book, that they contain sentences which go to the extent of the imputation of the sin of Adam. If this were designed, it is at the expense of incongruity with the Anti-calvinistick sentiments of some of the homilies of the same book.

What the language of Calvinists is on these subjects, and how far removed it is from that of the church, remains to be exhibited.

It must be confessed, that the Belgic confession has avoided the sentiment of imputation. Neither does it say a word concerning federal representation, and of an alleged covenant of works. Hence it would appear, that the theory had not been enlarged to its present extent, either when the confession was composed, or when the synod of Dort was held; to whose canons the same remark applies. Indeed, the formularies here spoken of seem not materially different from the article of the church of England, on the same subject. But these deficiencies—as they must needs be according to a more recent theory—are abundantly supplied by the confession of Westminster, which speaks as follows, in the 6th ch. sects. 2, 3, and 4.

“By this sin,” meaning of Adam and Eve in paradise, “they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and

corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions."

That from the reign of Elizabeth down to the time of the aforesaid confession, the Calvinistical divines of the church of England, had not considered her article on original sin as going to the extent of their doctrine; may be gathered from this circumstance, that the divines of the assembly, so long as they entertained the project of a new modelling of old articles, contemplated, as is stated by Neale, the following alterations of the article in question. Before the words, "It is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man," they inserted, "together with his first sin imputed:" They put "Man is wholly deprived of," for "Man is very far gone from." Whereas it was said "hath of itself the nature of sin," they substitute, "is truly and properly sin." If these alterations be improvements; can there be a doubt, that the article was essentially short of evangelical truth, in the Calvinistick sense of the expression?

It was the design to exhibit, under each point, something to the purpose from the paraphrase of Erasmus on the gospels. But under the present point the thing is rendered difficult, by the paucity of authorities brought by Calvinists from that portion of holy writ. So far as the New Testament is concerned, they bring principally detached passages of argumentative parts of the epistles. The only text produced by Turretine from the gospels, is John iii. 5, 6. "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

The Arminian theology so expressly maintains, that man by nature is divested of all external right to immortality, founded on the divine promise; and of all internal preparation from inherent holiness; that it is not thought needful to go in this place into an interpretation of the above recited passages; especially as it will be introduced elsewhere, and can hardly be alleged to contain sentiments exclusively Calvinistick.

In respect to original sin, the Anti-calvinism of Erasmus will be sufficiently evident, on attention to what he says of Rom. v. 12. and following—and of Rom. vii. 9. and following. He interprets the former of temporal death; and makes the latter applicable to the struggle between grace and sin, in the natural man.

It will now be proper to look to other sources for the genuine language of Calvinism; and to show, how distant it is from that of the church in question.

Calvin, as was stated, says nothing of imputation; but on the other branch of original sin, he writes as follows: In the first section of the third chapter of the second book, he describes the subject as the hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, spread over all the parts of the soul. To perceive the full intent of this description, it is necessary to attend to the dilating of the sentiment in some of the succeeding chapters. For in the second and third sections he adverts to what St. Paul says in the third chapter to the Romans; there quoted from the 14th psalm, concerning “all being out of the way and all being become abominable:” He applies this, and the black catalogue of crimes connected with it, to human nature generally; and then he goes on thus—“I grant, indeed, that all these crimes are not exhibited in every individual; yet it cannot be deni-

ed, that this monster lurks in the hearts of all. For as the body, which already contains in itself the cause and matter of a disease, although it has yet no sensation of pain, cannot be said to enjoy good health; neither can the soul be esteemed healthy, while it is full of such moral maladies. Although this similitude will not correspond in every particular: For in the body, however diseased, there remains the vigour of life; but the soul, immersed in this gulf of iniquity, is not only the subject of vices, but totally destitute of every thing that is good." From this Calvin goes on to consider an objection which he foresees, in the fact, that in all ages there have been some, who, under the conduct of nature only, have given themselves to the study and the practice of what is virtuous. His answer is, that in the said corruption of nature, there is still some room for the grace of God; which restrains, but does not cleanse it. Then he continues thus—"For should the Lord permit the minds of all men to give up the reins to every lawless passion, there certainly would not be an individual in the world, whose actions would not evince all the crimes, for which Paul condemns human nature in general, to be most truly applicable to him. For can you except yourself from the number of those, whose feet are swift to shed blood; whose hands are polluted with rapine and murder, whose throats are open like sepulchres; whose tongues are deceitful; whose lips are envenomed; whose works are useless, iniquitous, corrupt, and deadly; whose souls are estranged from God; the inmost recesses of whose hearts are full of pravity; whose eyes are insidiously employed; whose minds are elated with insolence; in a word, all whose powers are prepared for the commission of atrocious and innumer-

able crimes? 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." Then he goes on to state, that, in the elect, God provides a remedy for this great enormity; but that, in others, he merely gives some checks in the principles of fear, shame, ambition, and the like: these leaving men under the sway of all the vicious dispositions which had been described; but so far preventing its excesses in act, as to provide for the preservation of the human species and of nature.

The meaning of this seems very clear; and it must be, that all men are inclined to all manner of wickedness; and that they carry all their evil propensities into act, except so far as they are withheld by shame, or by fear, or by avarice, or at best by ambition. For it would be an injury to the memory of Calvin, to suppose him capable of conceiving with some, that there are inclinations in the heart to evil; and a grace restraining them from act; while, in the mind of the party, there is no consciousness either of the inclinations, or of the grace. And further, if there should be supposed to have been designed an exception from the opprobrium of the positions, in those who soar above the common character of mankind; the contrary might be made appear, from what follows in his discussion of the subject. For he states the objection which might occur, that he makes no distinction between a Camillus and a Catiline. This

leads him to speak of the reputed virtues of the most eminent men among the heathen. He allows the qualities in question, to be eminently commendable; and says, that they are gifts of God, bestowed for the benefit of mankind; but denies that they have any effect, as to the excepting of the doers of them, from the guilt before charged on the species in general. Can any thing like the sentiment of Calvin, be found in the articles, or in any other of the institutions of the church of England? It is here confidently believed, that they cannot.

Calvin however, under all this high colouring of the condition of humanity, kept clear of the other branch of the doctrine—the imputation of the sin of Adam, as a sufficient cause for the damnation of his posterity, without any sin of theirs, otherwise than as they are supposed to have given consent in him. But Turretine, who came not long after Calvin, is express to this matter also. He considers original sin* as “imputative,” and as “inherent.” The former he defines—“the very sin of Adam, which is imputed to us:” although adding—“I would rather say, that it is reckoned and accounted ours, because we sinned in him.” He defines inherent original sin—†“that sinful disposition, by which a man is indisposed to all good, and disposed to all evil.” It is evident, that, in the first definition, the professor goes beyond his predecessor; and that he goes to the full extent with him on the second, although not in language equally energetic.

Witsius is not behind Turretine, either on the one branch of the subject or on the other. On the former of

* Locus 9. ch. 34 and 35.

† Locus 9. chap. 36.

them, he writes thus*—“ It remains now, lastly, to consider, how, as Adam, in this covenant, stood as the head of mankind; upon his fall, all his posterity may be deemed to have fallen with him, and broken the covenant of God.” And again,† “ It is therefore necessary, that the sin of Adam, in virtue of the covenant of works, be so laid to the charge of his posterity, who were comprised with him in the same covenant, that on account of the demerit of his sin, they are born destitute of original righteousness, and obnoxious to every kind of death, as much as if they themselves, in their own persons, had done what Adam did.” And on the other branch of the subject, Witsius says,—“ Adam departing from the rule prescribed to him, forfeited the beauty of the image of God in which he was formed, for himself and for all his posterity, and while he willingly affected a forbidden equality with God, came most to resemble the devil, and like that malignant spirit, deformed himself by his own crime: than which nothing can be imagined more hideous or base.” Afterwards it is said‡—“ Adam propagated this vile resemblance of the devil to his posterity, not excepting those whom divine grace has sanctified.” And these sentiments are amplified through several succeeding sections of this chapter.

Besides the authorities thus produced, nothing would be easier than to continue the chain of them, in a long line, from writers who fall into the same track of sentiment. But it is to be hoped, that the few specimens given are sufficient: and the author has to add the impression at this moment made on his mind of the senti-

* Chap. 8. sect. 30.

† Sect. 31.

‡ Sect. 17.

ment, that if all this be involved in the doctrine of grace, the episcopal church cannot say to her members as St. Paul said to the Ephesian clergy—"I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."

It is here wished to guard the representation made of the subject, against the imputation of its being calculated to suppress that sensibility of a sinful nature, concerning which, in truth, the author judges that it is not only an essential circumstance of true penitence, but the only ground of any reformation, going beyond mere decency of conduct, and accomplishing a renovation of the heart; and not this only, but that it enters into the very spirit of prayer, and a dependence on heavenly aid, the life of christian virtue, and the only security for its permanency. But all these considerations, show the importance of obtaining such conceptions of the subject, as, being consistent with what we observe in others, and what we experience in ourselves, may be brought home to the bosom of every serious person, and enter into his religious exercises. In regard to the imputation of the sin of Adam; however a man may declare it to be a part of his religious creed, we may doubt whether it have an influence on the direction of his affections. If, in consequence of his having been in the loins of Adam, he is to be considered as having consented to his sin, and therefore liable to his punishment, repentance for the same sin is obligatory. But can such a sentiment be so realized to any mind, as to excite a pang of penitence? It is here supposed to be impossible. Next, in regard to human nature, as described by Calvin in the passages quoted from him above; it is to be hoped, that there cannot often be found a religious Calvinist, who, on looking back to former days of sin-

ful living, ought to admit, that he then entertained dispositions which, had it not been for some prudential motive, would have tempted him to murder any man, with the view of possessing himself of his property, or to blast his character for the gratification of malice; or to contemplate, to his injury, any species of deceit or fraud, with approbation and a wish to carry it into effect. And; if the character here contemplated do not reproach himself for such enormous wickedness as this; and if he do not feel deep humiliation, under the recollection of it; there has not been performed by such a person the repentance called for by his creed. And this deficiency—so general as is here supposed—affords a strong presumption of the error of the sentiment in question; and at any rate, proves it to be inefficient over the heart and the life.

In all this, however, there is nothing to hinder the liveliest sensibility to the property of human nature, described in scripture as “the carnal mind which is enmity against God,” and as “a body of death to be delivered from.” It is fruitful of motive in every way, to induce us “not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think.” And while, with all, it is a ground of humiliation, the best of men may perceive in it those remaining dangers, against which they are to watch and pray; and sinners may remark in it the greatness of the change which they are to undergo, if they should ever be “turned from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God.” But as to repentance, on account of works to which the depravity of their nature impelled; there seems no conceiving how such repentance can take possession of the mind, unless the evil have been seen in connection with a resist-

ance which has been experienced to it, in a knowledge and in convictions which have been disregarded. And this very struggle has been decribed in the scriptures, under the expressions of “the flesh lusting against the spirit:” while in the same scriptures, every inward drawing from the sinfulness of nature, is ascribed to an holy influence from above, persuasive yet resistible; which would seem a property essential to the responsibility of the agent.

This view of the natural condition of man, appears to be sufficient for every religious exercise, intended to elevate him above it. If, however, any one should conceive of a nearer approach to the truth, in the awful view of the doctrine displayed by Calvin; let there not be pleaded the authority of the episcopal church, to sanction this opinion. For it has been shown, as is here conceived, that she has carefully avoided it in her services; in which there is not a single penitential acknowledgement of any sin, other than such as a man in his own person has committed; and as it was in his power, through divine grace, to have avoided.

But as St. Paul speaks of “a voluntary humility in the worshipping of angels;” so it is worthy of inquiry, whether, in this line also, a man may not imagine to himself a fictitious merit; which rises in proportion as he sinks himself in his conceptions of the depths of wickedness to which he is naturally impelled. And besides there are some, who delight to describe themselves, even in their gracious state, in terms according to which, if correct, it is really difficult to perceive, what great difference there is between the saint and the sinner, in regard to a preparation for heavenly bliss. An instance shall be given from that excellent man bishop

Beveridge: in justice to whom, however, it should be mentioned, that the work from which it is taken was written at a very early period of his life. The work is his "Private Thoughts," and the passage alluded to is as follows: "I do not only betray the inbred venom of my heart, by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also, with sin. I cannot pray but I sin; I cannot hear or preach a sermon, but I sin; I cannot give an alms or receive the sacrament, but I sin; nay, I cannot confess my sins, but my confessions are still aggravations of them; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again in the blood of my redeemer." If all this be exacted by evangelical humility, it would seem, that the more quiescent a man can keep his intellectual powers, he will be proportionably in a lower grade at least, of sinfulness. But there is no warrant in scripture, for this species of self condemnation. We should never have been incited to prayer, to the hearing of the word, to the giving of alms, and to the receiving of the sacrament; if, in those very performances, we sin. And as to repentance; it is surprising that the pious author did not recollect, that the only repentance required in scripture, is that which is "not to be repented of."

The Rev. John Bradford, one of the martyrs under queen Mary, has something of the same kind in one of his compositions during his imprisonment, recorded by Fox in the Martyrology. In enumerating the different species of inbred crime, which Mr. Bradford declares to have accompanied all his religious professions in times past, he lays special stress on his hypocrisy. And not content with this, he declares himself sensible of

the same vicious bias of heart, in the influence it had on the acknowledgments which he was then making. Surely, if there be reason for such things; gospel morality, as described by inspiration, is, to all practical purposes, little more than a creature of the imagination: so that, although the sinner may be somewhat further distant from it than the saint, yet the distance of both, in respect to moral purity, is so immense, that the difference between them is scarcely to be discovered. When men of real piety give such representations of themselves; the motive, doubtless, is to put in a strong point of view that "infection of nature," which, as the church article expresses it, "remains in the regenerate." The same article implies, that nature is under subjection to grace. But they do not seem aware, how much the contrary idea is countenanced by the language which they utter. And it becomes the like religious persons to consider further, that what they give vent to from their sensibility to the evil of sin, is very often cantingly abused by others, into an apparent humility; as the most specious foundation on which to erect the superstructure of spiritual pride.

As the present discussion is with a respect to the episcopal church; there shall now be given from the second part of her homily "on the misery of man," the language wherein she rather chooses to clothe the sentiment, which the author has here supposed to have been in the minds of the excellent persons named by him; but which they have not been so happy in expressing.

"Let us all confess with mouth and heart, that we be full of imperfections: let us know our own works, of what imperfection they be, and then we shall not stand foolishly and arrogantly in our own conceits, nor chal-

lenge any part of justification by our own merits or works. For truly there be imperfections in our best works: we do not love God so much as we are bound to do, with all our heart, mind, and power: we do not fear God so much as we ought to do: we do not pray to God, but with great and many imperfections. We give, forgive, believe, love and hope imperfectly: we speak, think, and do imperfectly: we fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh imperfectly: let us therefore not be ashamed to confess plainly our state of imperfection: yea, let us not be ashamed to confess imperfection, even in all our best works.”

There can be no occasion to say much, in order to point out the difference between the sense of the church, as given in this passage, and that of some writers, as above referred to—between the imperfection of the best services of an imperfect creature; and sin, as conceived of to be necessarily attached to duty. Although we are constantly in danger of being intruded on by that insidious enemy; yet, let us have the consolation of believing, that we are not at all times harassed by his company; and especially, when in the act of sincere and fervent prayer.

IV. OF GRACE.

Tenth article--Preventing and co-operating Grace--Paraphrase of Erasmus--Calvinistick churches and divines---Question of Justification---Eleventh article---Calvinistick churches and divines---Connexion between Justification and Baptism, as held by the church.

THE difference between the Calvinists and the Arminians, turns on the question of the irresistibility of saving grace. This the former affirm, and the latter deny. What makes principally to the purpose in the articles, is the tenth; which was not recited under the preceding points, although denominated "of free will:" because it was thought that the article would come in with more propriety in this place.

"The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: wherefore, we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

The first sentence of this article, was not in the original establishment under Edward, but was added under Elizabeth, being taken, according to Dr. Lawrence, from the Lutheran confession of Wirtemberg.

The rest was from St. Austin, with a variation to be noticed hereafter.

The sense of the article, evidently goes to the affirming of an utter inability in ourselves; and of an ability, the effect of grace. But surely there is nothing applicable to the question—whether it be resistible or the contrary? Far from this, there is adopted a distinction, which, at about the time the article was composed, appeared in a suspicious shape to the mind of Calvin. The distinction here alluded to, is that between preventing and co-operating grace. Censuring Lombard who had maintained it, he writes as follows*—“He informs us, that two sorts of grace are necessary to qualify us for the performance of good works. One he calls ‘operative,’† by which we efficaciously will what is good; the other ‘co-operative,’ which attends as the auxiliary to a good will. This division I dislike, because he attributes an efficacious desire of good to the grace of God, he insinuates that man has of his own nature, antecedent though ineffectual desires after what is good.” “The second part of it offends me by its ambiguity, which has produced a very erroneous interpretation. For they have supposed that we co-operate with the second sort of divine grace, because we have it in our power, either to frustrate the first sort by rejecting it, or, to confirm it by our obedience to it.” Here it appears, that this whole distinction was from a quarter foreign to the Calvinistick theory; and that the former part of the distinction laboured under the suspicion of its implying more than was expressed; while the latter part was rejected, as in-

* B. 2. ch. 2. sec. 6.

† This, from the connexion in which it stands, can be nothing else than what is otherwise called “preventing.”

volving a sentiment avowed by the episcopal church; not only here in her articles, but also in several of her prayers: as in the collect for the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity—"Lord, we pray thee, that thy grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works." And yet, even in this sentiment of the English article, the sense is not so decisive as in the Latin; which, it should be remarked, was a standard equal in authority with the English. The Latin has it for—"when we have a good will"*—"while we have a good will"—which goes to the point of time, when we are in the act of willing. And further, in regard to "preventing grace," we are considerably aided by the Latin, under the clause of the seventeenth article, which speaks of being "called according to God's purpose, by his spirit working in due season." The Latin has it—"at a favourable time:"† which seems to imply, that the working of the spirit may be efficacious at some times, and not at others; and that its being the one or the other, depends on the fitness of the season, relatively to the state of the human mind. Of what consequence is this, if its powers can neither impede nor co-operate, with the grace in question?

The dislike of the sentiment of co-operating grace, seems to have descended from Calvin to his successor Turretine; who,‡ speaking of what follows conversion, says—"Because the adversaries, in this most weighty matter, occasionally use a distinction of grace into exciting and assisting, operating and co-operating, preventing and following; there is above all things to be seen,

* *Dum volumus.* † *Opportuno tempore.* ‡ *Locus 13. cap. 17.*

in what sense it may be admitted or rejected. If by exciting, preventing and operating grace, they understand the first motion of efficacious grace, by which we are raised from the death of sin to a new life, and are in very deed converted before any co-operation and concurrence of our will; and by assisting, co-operating and subsequent grace, a second motion which co-operates with the converted and helps them to act; we may safely admit this distinction, in the sense in which it was used by Austin. But we justly reject it in the sense in which it is used by them, that by exciting, preventing and operating, they mean only a grace sufficient, acting by illumination and moral suasion, which does not subject to itself the free will, so as effectually to incline and determine it to do; but which is subjected to free will, so that it rests with this to admit or reject it, to consent to or dissent from it; and by co-operating grace, that which co-operates with the will not yet converted, and with which the will, in its turn, not yet converted, co-operates. In this sense, I say, we reject the distinction; because it destroys free-will, of which we have treated, and shall again treat."

This was the divinity taught by Turretine: he treats of the sentiment, as a matter maintained by those whom he calls the adversaries; and in minute distinctions he shows, in what sense it may be borne with, and in what sense it is to be rejected. This looks very unlike an agreement of the church of England with another church; in which a distinction was at first reprobated, and afterwards coldly admitted at the best; while, with the former, it is authorized so expressly and so often.

When the whole circle of Christian subjects was before the synod of Dort, they must have had their at-

tention drawn to this ancient and current doctrine. But they did not comprehend it in their confession; which may be considered as virtually a rejection of it.

The same is still more conspicuous, in the instance of the assembly of divines at Westminster. They could not have overlooked the distinction between preventing and co-operating grace, meeting them so clearly in the articles, and so often in the prayers which they had customarily used. But they omitted it: which shows, that they thought it better suited to the system to be done away, than to the Calvinistick system which was to succeed.

But there are some further particulars worthy of notice, in the history of the article under consideration: and for what here follows concerning it, the author confesses himself indebted to the work of Dr. Lawrence.

It has been already remarked, that the first part of the article, stated to have been affixed under Elizabeth, was taken from the confession of Wirtemberg: and that the words of the second clause are those of Austin, with additions. These are the mention of “the grace of God by Christ,” and of “works pleasant and acceptable to God:” introduced, as Dr. Lawrence remarks, evidently with the view of directing the force of the sentiment against the scholastic notion of congruism. With the same view, the “operating” grace of God was made “preventing” in the article: words of the same meaning; except that the latter seems the most directly levelled against the offensive doctrine. And further, whereas the Latin of Austin had it “when we have that good will;”* the Latin of the church of England changed it

* Cum volumus.

to what strictly translated is—" at the time when we have that good will:"* as if to show, that, with the grace spoken of, there was understood to be an activity of the human mind. Dr. Lawrence remarks, and seemingly with great propriety, that there has arisen much confusion from the conceiving of this article, as if originally designed to apply to subjects of mere metaphysical disquisition. The design of it was against a species of pretended merit, invented by the schoolmen; destructive in its influence on practice, and the foundation of a great part of the rejected practices of the church of Rome.

There can be no reasonable doubt, that the distinction between preventing and co-operating grace, came to the church of England through the medium of the Lutheran. But the former term has been much misunderstood, in consequence of the flux of language. "To prevent" was anciently "to go before:" but it is now "to hinder." The original signification, which is entirely agreeable to the etymology, continued for some considerable time after the articles were composed; as appears in the common translation of the bible—1 Thess. iv. 15.—"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep." The meaning evidently is—shall not "anticipate," or "go before." Preventing grace supposes, that, of whatever may be good and holy in man, there can be nothing without the prior cause of an heavenly influence. But it does not follow, that the influence is irresistible.

* Dum volumus.

It has been already mentioned, that the Westminster divines, after throwing aside the article, took care not to include in their new confession the distinction which has been referred to: but it is further to be noticed, that, before their proceeding to the extent stated, they saw the nakedness of the article in question, in respect to the supposed all-important doctrine of irresistible grace: and therefore (as Mr. Neale testifies) while they projected the improvement of the old article, after the words “preventing us, that we may have a good will,” they inserted—“and working so efficaciously in us, as that it determineth our will to what is good.”

For the reasons stated, it is here thought not rash to affirm, that the case is much stronger, than if it rested on the mere silence of the church, as to a grace that is irresistible; although even silence might have been held conclusive, when the question is concerning a dogma, held by at least a great proportion of its advocates, to be of the essence of divine truth. But the articles have not been silent: and on the subject stated, the compilers may be considered as thus commenting in the paraphrase of Erasmus, ordered by them to be deposited in churches.

Matt. xx. 16. “Many be called, but few chosen.” “Therefore, whoso is called, let him forthwith make haste, or els he shall be called in vayne; excepte he take hede that he be also elected. And all be called, but fewe deserve to be accounted among the electe.”

Matthew, xxiii. 37. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,—how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”—“Nothing is let pass on my behalfe, whereby thou mightest bee saved: but contrari-

wise, thou hast done what thou canste to bring destruction upon thyselfe, and to exclude salvation from thee. But to whom free will is once given, he cannot be saved against his wil. Your wil ought to be agreeable to my wil.”

John, vi. 44. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” “Faith cometh not at all adventures; but it is had by the inspiration of God the Father; who, lyke as he draweth unto him mennes myndes by his Sonne, so, by breathing in faith secretly into mennes solles, he draweth them to his Sonne, in such wise, that through the operation of them both joyntly together, men come to them both. The Father doeth not give this so great a gift, but to them that be willing and desirous to have it. And truly, whoso doeth with a readie will and godly diligence deserve to bee drawn of my Father, he shall obtain everlasting lyfe by me.”

This is not the language, in which irresistible grace has been ever taught: but this is the language which was thought conducive to popular edification, by such men as Cranmer and Ridley; who nevertheless have been held up as favourers of that doctrine.*

It does not appear to the author of this work, that in the Belgic confession, the doctrine of irresistible grace is expressly taught; however it may be thought to grow out of the doctrine of irrespsective election. But in

* Erasmus, in commenting on Rom. i. 8; affirming the gospel to be “the power of God unto salvation;” instead of making this text subservient to the doctrine of irresistible grace, notices, that the power operates after faith; becoming, to those who believe, the power spoken of. And a similar interpretation is given of Eph. i. 19.

the canons of the synod of Dort, the deficiency was supplied. There is no occasion to recite the words of the canons, as they are in substance the same with what follow from the Westminster confession. This instrument has laid down the former in its full extent, in the first and second sections of the tenth chapter; entitled "Of Effectual Calling."—"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only he is pleased, in his accepted and appointed time, effectually to call, by his word and spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

If the sense of these expressions could be supposed to admit of any doubt, it would be done away by the next section; in what is said of the salvation of elect infants, that—"dying in infancy," they are "regenerated and saved by Christ through the spirit, who worketh when and where, and how he pleaseth:" an operation, in which the work of the spirit must be most evidently independent on any consent of the human will. Indeed, this idea of "elect infants," not known in the church until the introduction of Calvinism, seems to have been entirely,

although naturally, the result of it. For if the mind be necessarily passive in regeneration, according to the presumed signification of the word, what should hinder the mind of an infant from being the subject of it? And then, if the thing be possible; it was natural to hope, that irrespective election had fallen favourably on some infants; rather than that they were all the destined victims of hopeless misery.

The author takes occasion, to state in this place what he conceives to be the difference, in relation to deceased infants, between the sense of the episcopal church, and that of the churches which have adopted the Westminster confession.

The former pronounces positively concerning baptized infants, that they are saved; and this has been shown to be the result of the principles of her system: but concerning other infants she says nothing; evidently supposing, that, in regard to them, the divine word is silent. The leaving of it on this footing, in connexion with her ideas on the subject of baptismal regeneration, makes it not only an easy exercise of charity to conceive favourably of the purposes of divine goodness towards all infants, but excludes the previous necessity of some mysterious operation on them; by which, sovereign power effects a change as it does on matter, without any knowledge, any exercise of intellect, or any motion of the will, in the party operated on.

The Westminster confession, after stating what has been quoted from it respecting elect infants, affirms the same of "all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." Then, in the fourth section, the confession goes on to say—"Others not elected, although they may be called

by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved." The grammatical construction of these words, applies the sense of them to all within the Christian pale, besides the persons spoken of in the preceding section: and if so, the salvation of infants, with the exception of those who come under the denomination of "the elect," is denied.

If Calvinists of the present day should give a different interpretation to the above—for there are doubtless many of them, who admit the salvation of all infants—yet they will probably perceive on inquiry, that the contrary was what at first seemed the obvious consequence of their system. Accordingly, Dr. Lawrence* quotes Beza, the immediate successor of Calvin, thus expressing himself in a public conference with the Lutherans, in the year 1586—speaking of baptism he says—"Which many millions of infants receive; who, nevertheless, are never regenerated, but perish everlastingly."

The author of this work supposes, that the distinction between elect and not elect infants, dying in infancy, originated with Calvinism. The earliest traces of it which he can find---others may be more fortunate---are in the famous form of Concord, in the year 1549; about the time when, according to some facts which have been stated, Calvin is supposed to have carried his predestinarian scheme to the extent in which it now appears in his Institutions. The words of the form of Concord† are as follow—"Moreover we industriously

* Page 439.

† As quoted by Dr. Lawrence, p. 439.

teach, that God does not promiscuously imprint his energy on all who receive the sacraments, but only on the elect. For as he does not illuminate with faith any other than those whom he hath ordained to life; he so accompanies the mysteries with the efficacy of his spirit, that the elect may perceive what the sacraments offer." Melancthon is said to have been so offended by this passage, that he indignantly tore it from the copy of the articles of Concord, which had been sent to him. It was about two years afterwards, that there happened the public controversy between Calvin and the physician Balsec; concerning which, the same Melancthon, as quoted by Dr. Lawrence, in the page above referred to, writes thus—"Lelius has written to me, that so great are the contentions at Geneva concerning stoical necessity, that a certain person dissenting from Zeno, hath been shut up in prison. Oh unhappy event! The doctrine of grace is obscured by disputations foreign to it:" and again—"Behold the fury of the age. The contentions in Alpine Gaul,* concerning stoical necessity, are so great, that a certain person, who dissents from Zeno, is imprisoned." So wrote Melancthon, when he was receiving pressing invitations from the leading characters of the church of England: when also, those very personages are contended to have been acting under the influence of Calvin.

The doctrine of irresistible grace, as expressed by Calvin in the 10th section of the 3d chapter of his 2d book—is maintained by him with a censure on all the ages of the church before Austin, as accompanied by a

* *Certamina Allobrogicæ.*

choice on the part of man to obey or to resist the motion: in opposition to which Calvin teaches, that God works on the will efficaciously. From this, he goes on to censure St. Chrysostom's saying, that "whom he (God) draws, he draws with a consenting will." By which (says Calvin) he seems to insinuate, that God only waits for us with hand extended, if we chuse to accept his assistance. There follow many things to the same effect: and soon after, when the reformer is venting his displeasure against the positions of an operating and co-operating grace, he acknowledges that St. Austin uses the same language; but remarks, that he softens it by an accommodating definition. How far the schoolmen, whom Calvin censures, are right or wrong, is nothing to the present purpose. His censure of the language is noticed, only to show how wide he is of that of the episcopal church.

Turretine is equally express on the subject.* After stating sundry distinctions, he adds—"The question then returns to this—'Whether the manner of the operation of grace be resistible or irresistible? That is, whether, there being all the operations of grace, which God makes use of to effect conversion in us, there yet so remains the conversion itself in the power of man, as that he can either receive or reject it; and so convert or not convert himself.' " The last words in this statement would surely not have been allowed by those opposed to him; concerning whom, however, he goes on to say—"which our adversaries affirm, but which we deny—yea, we hold out, that efficacious grace works in man in such a manner, that, although he cannot but

* Locus 12. cont. 2.

resist at first, he can never so far resist, as that he shall finally prevail and prevent the work of his conversion.”

The opinion of Witsius goes to the same extent, when he says,* after speaking of the outward call of the word—“But that external call will bring none to communion with Christ, unless it be accompanied with the internal; which is accomplished not only by persuasion and command, but by the powerful operation of the spirit. There is a certain call of God, whereby he makes the things which he calls to exist, by that very call. By such a call, he calleth those things which be not, as though they were. For when he said—‘Let there be light,’ immediately ‘there was light.’ Not unlike this is that internal call of the spirit, of which the apostle writes---‘God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.’ But when he says to the elect, in the hour of their blessed visitation, ‘awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,’ it is no more possible for them to remain any longer in the sleep of death, than it was possible for Lazarus to continue in the grave, after Christ had said to him---‘Lazarus come forth.’”

Under the present head, it will be to the purpose to take a view of the doctrine of justification, as connected with faith and with works. As the question lay between St. Paul and the Jewish Christians, the merit arrogated by the latter to the deeds of the law, was of a covenant kind, founded, as they imagined, on the divine promises, and interwoven with their whole economy: All which, as the apostle shows, was a mistake;

* B. 3, ch. 5, sec. 21.

both because the economy contained in itself evident intimations, that it was intended to be temporary; and because the nation, as such, had not kept their part of the covenant: while yet, it could only have been on the ground of such a national fidelity, that the debt to the individual was due. With the polity of the Jews, the controversy so far fell, as to leave no traces of it in the fathers, until the time of St. Austin. This father, in his controversy with the Pelagians, perceived the subject of the freedom of grace in redemption to be so embodied with that of the exclusion of human merit; and the impotency of man by nature with the powerful efficacy of the divine aid; that in treating of the points especially belonging to the matter at issue, he was naturally led to take their kindred points along with them. Subsequent events demonstrated, that the instructions, as well of the father as of the apostle, were capable of uses far beyond those in contemplation, when the instructions were given. For by a concurrence of popular ignorance with the views of the Roman hierarchy, it came to pass, that the doctrine of human merit was professed without reserve, and became the basis of a profitable traffic. That the principles of the apostle, and those of the father, had so little effect in preventing and in detecting the delusion of the theory, can only be accounted for—it is here supposed—from the circumstances, that those of the former were locked up in an unknown language; and that those of the latter became entangled in the endless subtleties of the scholastics.

When the reformation had begun to dawn, the reformers naturally seized with avidity on the wholesome truths, which they found abounding in Austin's works: But in what degree, some of them—to use a scriptural

comparison—took with “the silver and the gold” a proportion of “hay and stubble,” this is not the proper place to inquire. Certain it is, that they fortified themselves successfully from the writings of that father; whose name continued to be revered, amidst positions and practices which those writings, in their consequences, could not fail to reprobate.

Among the errors which had crept into the church, were the notions of one species of merit said to be of congruity, and another of condignity. There may be propriety in repeating, that by the former, it was supposed to be in the power of the natural man, without a particle of divine grace, so to dispose his mind for the reception of it, as that there was a certain fitness in its being bestowed. According to the latter, the improvement of the prior grace was supposed to render the doer worthy of further measures of it; which therefore could not, consistently with justice, be withheld. These things were universally taught and sanctioned, in the age in which the articles of the church of England were framed, and during many preceding ages. And this is necessary to be kept in view, for the understanding of what she has laid down concerning faith and works. Both of those errors were intended to be denied; and, in the tenth article, one of them is actually named.

What the article denies, is the least degree of merit to the works of men, of any kind. And although this is to be understood universally; it is said with an especial view to those works of superstition, in which there was supposed to be either a congruity leading to grace, or a condignity on which it had been bestowed. In contrariety to the above, they hold up justification by faith: and not this, as if it were meritorious in itself; for, as it

is pronounced* “ We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” And further it is a faith, which, although opposed to merit, is not opposed to practice; because, as the twelfth article affirms—“ Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit.”

But although the doctrine was designed to apply, and will forever remain a protest against the scholastic doctrine of merit; yet it does not follow, that the language of the church and the language of Calvinism are the same. The following particulars may be noticed, wherein the differences are striking. And although the writer of this will not affirm, that they may not be partly the result of the different conceptions entertained of words by the parties respectively; yet they go to the point here in view, that there was no intended agreement at the time of the composing of the articles.

The first particular to be noticed, respects the imputation of the righteousness of the Redeemer. These were words so much used, and so much in favour with some at the time of framing the articles, that the omitting of them could not have been the effect of accident. Or if this be supposed to have happened in so summary a formula, they would hardly have been overlooked in “ The Homily of Salvation.” It was evidently designed, as

* Art. xi.

appears by a reference to it in the article, that the former should be considered as a larger explication of the subject common to them both. But not a word is to be found in it, concerning the imputation of the righteousness of our blessed Saviour; although his oblatory sacrifice for sin, and its being the meritorious mean of salvation, to which nothing in the way of satisfaction is necessary or can be added, is asserted over and over in the homily. There is evidently a difference between the two ideas. A prince may be moved to extend his mercy to rebellious subjects: This may be done, without a particle of merit on their part: He may be moved to it, by the intercession of his son: And the intercession may be made available, by some great achievement on his part, and bottomed on his deservings. Yet this is not the same with the considering of the son's obedience as so transferred to the rebels, that they shall be rewarded on the account of it. The application to the subject, it is hoped, is obvious; and was doubtless perceived by the reformers, when they avoided the sanctioning of an opinion not warranted, or at least the using of language very liable to abuse.

In this, they were very far from the manner of speaking, adopted by Calvinistick churches and writers. "We do not mean," says the Belgic confession, "that faith itself justifies us; for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our righteousness: But Jesus Christ imputing to us all his merits, and so many holy works which he hath done for us and in our stead, is our righteousness." The title of the next section is—"That our justification consisteth in the forgiveness of sin, and the imputation of Christ's obedience."

The Westminster confession cherishes the same sentiment in its eleventh chapter, intitled “Of justification;” which says—“Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, * * * * by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith.”

On this point, as on others, Calvin had given the tone to the churches following him. Speaking of justification by the righteousness of Christ, he remarks thus,* “Which is equivalent to saying, that a man is righteous, not in himself, but because the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation:” And again—“Nor does any objection arise from what he† states in another place, ‘that God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us;’ where he intends no other fulfilment than what we obtain by imputation.”

To the same purpose is Turretine; where he says,‡ “The orthodox think, that the satisfaction and obedience of Christ are imputed to us, so far as that by the gratuitous mercy of God, it is reckoned ours; and we, because of it, in the judgment of God are absolved from sins and pronounced righteous:” And again—“We determine, that the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ are so imputed to us by God, that it is the only foundation and meritorious cause, by the view of which alone before God, we are absolved from sin and obtain a right to eternal life.”

Witsius agrees with both; where, speaking of the righteousness of the divine Redeemer§ he says—“The

* Book 3, ch. 9. sect. 23.

† Locus 14. cap. 5. cont. 3.

‡ The apostle.

§ Book 3, chap. 4, sect. 37.

Father imputes the same to his chosen people, as he imputed their sins to Christ:" And again—"It is impossible to explain how Christ was made sin for us; unless in that sense that our sins are imputed to him that he might suffer for them, in the same manner we are made righteous in him, as his righteousness is imputed to us, that, on account of it, we may receive the crown:" And again—"It is not ours inherently, for in that sense Paul opposes it to ours; nor does the nature of the thing admit, that acts performed by Christ can inherently be ours. It therefore remains, that it is ours by imputation; God imputing to man righteousness without works."

Another striking point of difference between the doctrine of the church and Calvinism, is the connexion between justification and baptism; carefully kept in view by the former, but disregarded by the latter. This might be made appear from various documents of the church: But at present, there shall only be referred to the aforesaid homily "Of salvation," so pointedly made explanatory of the article "Of Justification." In the second part of the homily, the connexion is maintained where it is said—"We must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our high priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and remission, as well of our original sin in baptism, as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism, if we truly repent, and turn unfeignedly to him again."* It should be remembered, that when this homily was composed, the baptism of an adult being rare, it had not been thought necessary to prepare an office for such an occasion. But baptismal regeneration, as it respects infants,

* Page 24. American edition.

had been previously applied to them in the first part of the homily; where it is said—"Infants, being baptized and dying in their infancy, are by this sacrifice (of Christ spoken of before) washed from their sins, brought to God's favour, and made his children, and the inheritors of his kingdom of heaven."* But what perhaps speaks more precisely to the purpose than any other place, is where in the third part of the homily, baptism and justification are considered as synonymous—"Our office is not to pass the time of this present life unfruitfully and idly, after that we are baptized or justified; not caring how few good works we do, to the glory of God, and the profit of our neighbours."†

Although this speaks of the washing of infants from their sins by the sacrifice of Christ, it gives no countenance to the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin, in reference to eternal punishment. That we have suffered by that sin in the loss of immortality, and in the inheritance of a diseased nature, is held on both sides. It is reasonable to confine the sense of the homily to these subjects; because, if the other subject had been designed, it would have been found in the articles. The sense of these, is set forth more at large by the homilies; but the latter establish no additional doctrines.

The Westminster assembly deny the connexion between baptism and regeneration, in the following fifth section of the twenty-eighth chapter of their confession. "Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance; yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptised are undoubtedly regenerated." It appears in the next

* Page 17, Amer. edit.

† Page 24, Amer. edit.

section, that the latter part of the quotation applies not only to adults, whose outward baptism may not, in all cases, be joined with inward sincerity, but also to infants. For it is said—"The grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time." Agreeably to this, the grace is given, not to all infants duly baptised; but to those of them, who, according to a distinction in another part of the catechism, are of the number of the elect.

In the confession of Belgium, the article "Of Holy Baptism,"* seems to the writer of this, to show a strong likeness to the ideas of the church of England on the same subject: And there is something still stronger to the purpose in the liturgy of the former church, in what is prefixed to the service for infant baptism. These seem to be the remains of an early faith. Doubtless, the divines generally of the synod of Dort must have held, that there was nothing further in the institution, than its being significative of a future cleansing. The question naturally occurs—why did not they in some part of their decrees, extend their directions to the contradiction of that higher efficacy which had been affirmed? Perhaps this had been too much the language of the early ages, to be denied in form. And perhaps there was not a little weight in the consideration of the breach with the church of England, which must have ensued. For it is difficult to conceive, how the divines of that church could con-

* The 34th.

sistently have remained members of the assembly, after they should have contradicted a doctrine which is found in all her institutions.

The author thinks, that his sentiments are corroborated by the seventeenth article under the second point of the canons of Dort; which encourages believers to consider all their children, dying in infancy, as of the number of the elect. This is conformable to the mind of Calvin, however little there may seem of authority for it, on the principles of Calvinistick election. Still, Calvin goes on the presumption of there being, in the case of death, a change operated on the powers of the mind of the infant. The question occurs—why did not the synod provide for this? It seems not going too far to suppose, that there was some impediment in the circumstance of its being an express contradiction of the church of England; which, in such a variety of ways, recognises a regeneration of infants in baptism; and on the ground of this, pronounces them subjects of salvation; without the least hint of a change to be subsequently undergone.

But there is another particular, in which the contemplated systems materially differ—in language at least—let it be still added. It is, that whereas, Calvinistick churches and systems refer to some inward pledge of the reality and the acceptance of faith, distinct from its fruits*—no doubt, affirming that the

* Although the 12th article of the assembly's confession of faith rests personal satisfaction on the ground here stated; yet the 80th question and answer of their catechism refers to another source; to be of course taken in connexion with it—"the spirit's enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises

fruits will follow. The episcopal church, in her account of justification, conceives of no other way by which it can be known. In evidence of this, reference may still be made to "The Homily of Salvation." Justification is there distinguished into that which is on the part of God, and that which is on the part of man. Under the former head, are sustained the all-atoning merits of the Redeemer. Under the latter, a distinction is taken between that faith, which the scriptures apply to the devils "who believe and tremble;" and that which is "a sure trust and confidence in God's merciful promises, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey his commandments." Then it goes on to show, that such a faith as this "neither any devil hath, nor yet any man," who lives in the outward profession merely. From which it follows, that here is the test and the only one; since no other is given, whereby to distinguish the true faith from the false. Many similar passages might be cited: but it is to be remembered, that, under this idea, the stress is laid principally on the silence of the homily, as to a knowledge of the verity of our own faith, to be derived from any other source than that which has been here stated. Perhaps it will not be rash to affirm, that the difference of the systems now noticed could not have taken place, without its producing of important effects in every branch of theology.

If, however, there should be demanded a more direct testimony of the episcopal church to the point the last

of life are made." This approaches nearer to the language of the church; while the rest of the answer of which it is a part, and still more the article in the confession are such, as that nothing like them can be found in any of the institutions of that communion.

referred to, let the following be taken from the first part of the homily of Whitsunday—"Oh, but how shall I know that the Holy Ghost is within me? some man perchance will say. Forsooth, as the tree is known by the fruit, so also is the Holy Ghost. The fruits of the Holy Ghost, according to the mind of St. Paul,* are these, love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, &c. Contrariwise, the deeds of the flesh are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulation, wrath, contention, sedition, heresy, envy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony and such like." Here the question of a test is distinctly proposed, and an answer is professed to be given: an answer evidently tending to delusion, if there be, as some conceive, an higher and a more unequivocal source of satisfaction.

* Gal. v.

V. OF PERSEVERANCE.

Acknowledged Absence of this doctrine—Evidence of its not being held—Paraphrase of Erasmus—Calvinistick Churches and Divines—Inference.

RELATIVELY to the present point, the ground of the Anti-calvinistick opinion is even stronger than on any of the preceding points. For there is not even alleged—so far as is here known—from any institutions of the episcopal church, what is even supposed a direct sanction of the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. Perhaps it may be thought implied in that part of the 17th article, which says—“They walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God’s mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.” But who are the persons spoken of? They are the elect in the counsels of God “secret to us:” not all who are brought within the covenant of grace. To suppose that these two matters are the same, would be to take for granted the position to be proved. Besides, what must be thought of the judgments of those who framed the article, by persons who imagine that they held a doctrine considered by all its advocates as an indispensable branch of their system; and yet entertained so little reverence of it, as not to deem it worthy of insertion? On this account, it seems a great omission in those who have written to maintain the Calvinism of the church of England, that not an individual

of them—so far as is here known—has endeavoured the solution of this difficulty. The authors alluded to, give numerous and long extracts from Fox's Martyrology, of what the Martyrs under Mary wrote during their imprisonment, and said at the times of their execution; which, according to the partial interpretations given, are supposed to demonstrate a universal reception of the doctrine in question by all true protestants. And it is contended, to have been especially the opinion of the compilers of the public service. But why, under such circumstances, the compilers did not think it of sufficient importance to draw from them a position involving a direct acknowledgment, is a question here believed to have not been answered.

But it is easy to go beyond this, and to prove, that the compilers did not hold and could not have held, consistently with the rest of their creed, the doctrine now the subject. The first evidence of this shall be given from the sixteenth article, entitled "Of Sin after Baptism." "After we have received the Holy Ghost, (says the article) we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God (we may) arise again and amend our lives." Here are recognised the possibility of a fall; and the possibility (not the certainty) of a recovery from it.

It is a remarkable fact, in the history of the conference at Hampton Court, although easily accounted for, that the first specific demand made by the puritans, was the enlargement of this article, so as to make it consistent with what they thought the sense of the seventeenth. And they proposed that after the words—"may fall into sin," it should be added—"yet neither totally nor finally." The desire of those divines, was natural.

The article frowned on the doctrine of perseverance, lately come into fashion; but absolutely irreconcilable with what had been established in a remoter day.

The next evidence—still from the same source—is in the twenty-seventh article, entitled “Of Baptism:” which calls this ordinance “a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church: the promise of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.” Has scripture—has any public creed—has any theological writer used stronger language than this, when intending to describe the state to which the gospel privileges are attached? And yet that many, after baptism, fall from grace, could not have been intended to be contradicted by the article.

If it were possible to suppose a matter so unsupported by fact, the contrary would appear in the next evidence to be produced; which is from the homily entitled “Of falling from God.” To pass over the first part, which however is to the same purpose with the second—a few extracts shall be given from the latter; of which, indeed, the whole might be given to the point. The homily, after reciting the threatenings of God, addressed to his vineyard, in Is. v. and in Matt. xxi. proceeds thus—“By these threatenings we are monished and warned, that if we, which are the chosen vineyard of God, bring not forth good grapes, that is to say, good works that may be delectable and pleasant in his sight, when he looketh for them, when he sendeth his messengers to call upon us for them, but rather bring forth wild grapes, that is to say, sour works, unsavoury and unfruitful; then will he pluck away all defence, and

suffer grievous plagues of famine, battle, dearth, and death to light upon us. Finally, if these serve not, he will give us over; he will turn away from us; he will dig and delve no more about us; he will let us alone and suffer us to bring forth such fruit as we will, to bring forth brambles, briars and thorns; all naughtiness, all vice; and that so abundantly, that they shall clean overgrow us, choak, strangle, and utterly destroy us." It is evident from this passage, that they who sanctioned it considered the fall spoken of as consistent with the doctrine of election, which themselves had also sanctioned; whatever inconsistency was afterwards supposed by the divines of the puritan party at Hampton court. And as to the fall spoken of being final, it could hardly have been more explicitly declared.

But if of the latter there can be a doubt, it may be cleared by what is said soon afterwards. For the homily, after giving an awful caution against apostacy, grounded on the 51st Psalm, goes on thus—"Not only such places of David do show, that upon the turning of God's face from any persons, they shall be left bare from all goodness, and far from hope of remedy; but also the place rehearsed before of Isaiah doth mean the same; which showeth that God at length doth so forsake his unfruitful vineyard, that he will not only suffer it to bring forth weeds, briars and thorns, but also further to punish the unfruitfulness of it, he saith he will not cut it, he will not delve it, and he will command the clouds that they shall not rain upon it. Whereby is signified the teaching of his holy word, which St. Paul in a like manner expressed by planting and watering; meaning, that he will take that away from them; so that they shall be no longer of his kingdom, they shall be

no longer governed by his holy spirit, they shall be put from the grace and benefits that they had, and ever might have enjoyed through Christ; they shall be deprived of the heavenly light and life which they had in Christ, while they abode in him; they shall be as they were once, as men without God in this world, or rather in worse taking. And to be short, they shall be given into the power of the devil, which beareth the rule in all them that be cast away from God, as he did in Saul and Judas,* and generally in all such, as work after their own wills, the children of mistrust and unbelief.”

The homily, after pointing out the danger, manifests its design still further, by thus going on to apply its doctrine, to the guarding against the opposite extremes of despair and presumption.—“Let us beware therefore, good Christian people, lest that we, rejecting or casting away God’s word, by the which we obtain and retain true faith in God, be not at length cast off so far, that we become as the children of unbelief; which be of two sorts, far diverse, yea, almost clean contrary; and yet both be very far from returning to God: the one sort only weighing their sinful and detestable living with the right judgment and straightness of God’s righteousness, be so without counsel and be so comfortless, as all must needs be, from whom the spirit of counsel and comfort is gone, that they will not be persuaded in their hearts, but that either God cannot or else that he will not take them again to his favour and mercy. The other, hearing the loving and large promises of God’s mercy, and so not conceiving a right faith thereof, make those promises larger than ever God did,

* 1 Kings, xv.

trusting, that although they continue in their sinful and detestable living never so long, yet that God, at the end of their life will show his mercy upon them, and that then they will return. And both these two sorts of men be in a damnable state; and yet, nevertheless, God, who willeth not the death of the wicked, hath showed means, whereby both the same, if they take heed in season, may escape.”

It would seem then, that the doctrine of final perseverance is flatly denied in the homily; not less than if it had been formally and by name. That it is not contradicted there specifically, may be accounted for from the modern origin of the doctrine. It had not been professed by Luther or by Zuingle; the leaders of the protestants who were the most known, and had been the most influential, when the articles were composed. Even in the Institutions of Calvin, in the enlarged form in which they were edited about five years later than the articles, perseverance is declared not to belong to all persons, who are brought within the limits of grace.

But to return to the point of baptismal regeneration: the baptismal offices are full of it; there being used throughout them language to the last degree absurd—it would not be rash to say profane---but on the supposition of the possibility of a final fall from grace. The minister exhorts the congregation to pray, that the infant may be “born again.” A portion of scripture is read, as a warrant for the firm persuasion, that Christ, who authorizes the bringing of children to him, will “receive the present infant into the arms of his mercy.” The minister, as a person commissioned for the administration of the ordinance, had previously exhorted the congregation to pray that the child might be “regene-

rated by water and the Holy Ghost." And after the immersion or affusion, he and all the people give thanks to God, for the regeneration which has taken place. And finally, the church of England closes the transaction with the declaration---"It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." And it is worthy of note, that what the church affirms concerning baptized infants, is not an hope resulting from her charity; but a belief grounded on "the word of God." She says nothing to the contrary, that charity may prompt the expectation in regard to all infants, of their being within the reach of salvation by Christ. But keeping herself within the bounds of the covenant, she utters nothing on the subject, except what she conceives of as being fully warranted by it.

If there be error in what she affirms concerning baptismal regeneration; it is an error, which has shed its baneful influence throughout her system. On such a supposition, the baptismal services are a gross deception on the parents and the sponsors: Nor is this the worst. As soon as the infant becomes capable of lisping his catechism, he is taught to say, that he received his name in baptism; adding---"Wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." How full of delusion to the youthful mind; if there be a moral certainty in regard to the great mass of those for whom the answer was intended, that they are the children of the devil and the apparent inheritors of his kingdom; until rescued from him by a conversion, for which they are not yet ripe. The injury done to them, is continued in the rite of confirmation. For when persons, baptized in infancy, take on

themselves their baptismal vows in that succeeding ordinance, instead of any direction of an inquiry into the certainty of their regeneration, thanks are offered up for their having been regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost; evidently meaning in preceding baptism. When, arrived at a suitable age, they offer themselves for the eucharist, they approach the Lord's table without previous scrutiny, and as matter of right, provided there be no hindrance of an irreligious or immoral life. If the author be rightly informed, it is otherwise—and, as he thinks consistently—in churches which consider baptism as merely an initiation into a visible flock; by which infants are put into the way of future regeneration. This ought of course to be considered, before admission to an ordinance, designed for the faithful only. The sentiment here sustained, is continued in the visitation of the sick. In this form there is an exhortation, which, or the like to it, the minister is to address to the sick person. The party being supposed to have been baptized, and his baptism with its obligations being in explicit terms referred to, the uses of affliction are delineated, and a suitable improvement of them is inculcated. He is also to be examined as to his faith and the present state of his mind, relatively to repentance for his sins and his being in charity with all men. But how irrelevant is this, to the leading point of all; if—hypocrisy being out of the question—there may be baptism, consistently with the being still without the bounds of the covenant of grace! Neither hath the supposed poison spent its venom here. For the sentiment, after having been said over the professing Christian in his earliest infancy, after having vitiated his understanding in a more advanced stage of his still early years, having continued to do the same in his approach to maturity,

and having endangered him through life, especially in the trying season of sickness, it follows him to his grave, in an hope of his salvation: an hope evidently grounded on the circumstances, that the person had been in Christ in baptism, and not severed from him by ecclesiastical excommunication. The said expression has been prudently omitted, by the episcopal church in these states; because of the manifest suspension of the discipline referred to. But as the subjects stand in the contemplation of the whole system, all is consistent; yet not so, without the presumed truth of the regenerating grace of baptism.

Besides this, it is a circumstance worthy of especial notice, that the burial service can never be joined in by the Christian by-standers, without their praying—"Suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee:" a petition utterly impertinent, on the supposition of its being impossible to fall from grace once given.

It would be superfluous to mention all the passages of the prayers, in which there is the sentiment of baptismal regeneration. One instance more, however, shall be given. It is in the collect for Christmas day; in which the congregation pray—"Grant, that we, being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit." It would be contrary alike to grammatical propriety, and to propriety of a much higher kind, to imagine a design to prescribe to all the members of all the congregations in the realm of England, to pray, on the great festival of the nativity, for the grace of regeneration; acknowledging themselves, one and all, still strangers to it. But if this be not the meaning, it must be, that, conceiving themselves to have been regenerated in bap-

tism, they pray for that daily renewing of divine grace, without which the other will be finally of no effect.*

As on the preceding points, so on this, there may be use in giving the sense of the paraphrase of Erasmus.

Matth. xvi. 18. "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Paraphrase: "And truly upon this stone of thy profession, will I buyld my churche; that is to saye my house and my palaice; whych beeyng sette upon a sure foundation, I will so fortifie, that no power or strength of the kingdom of hell shall be able to beate it downe." This is one of the texts, which Turretine and others apply in support of the doctrine of perseverance.

John x. 28. "And I give unto them eternal life: And they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Paraphrase: "For of a truth these my shepe, (how simple and unlearned soever they be, after the judgemente of the worlde,) as long as they do acknowledge me the shepherd, and all the while they followe me as gyde, dooe, through my liberalitee get everlastynge life." The difference between this interpretation and the Calvinistick must be obvious.†

* An attempt has been sometimes made, to defend the propriety of the collect, on the ground of its being a prayer for regeneration, by the generality of expression in the prayer in the burial service—"We pray thee to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness." But the cases are not similar. We are not entirely raised from the death of sin, so long as there shall remain the least taint of fallen nature. And even in a state of absolute perfection, we should not be raised from that death, during the subjection of our bodies to the sentence of mortality, begun in Adam.

† Erasmus' plan of interpreting, in the epistles, the texts supposed to make for final perseverance, is evidenced in what he says of that thought a strong text to the effect, in 1 Pet. i. 5.—"Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation"—He hinges the preservation on the being ingrafted into Christ, and the following of his example.

The transition is now to the sense of the churches, and of authors, who adhere to Calvinism.

The doctrine in question, is not found in the Belgic confession: But it was carefully attended to by the synod of Dort; and expressed in as unqualified terms as those which will be here cited, and may serve for all Calvinistick churches, from the confession of the divines of Westminster; who thus declare the doctrine, in the first section of the seventeenth chapter of their confession, intituled—"Of the perseverance of the saints"—
"They whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."

In regard to writers, their representation of final perseverance is in one particular different from the faith of Calvin; inasmuch as he acknowledged infants to be regenerated in baptism, in the extent of the use of the expression in the episcopal church. And on this there must have been founded some sayings of his; as, that "Perseverance is a grace which God does not bestow on all;" and that some "persevere in the course begun, while others fall away from it." It must, however, be acknowledged, that he speaks of a certain assurance, the effect of faith, which is never lost. The present writer knows of no other way of reconciling these things; but on the ground, that without faith, of which infants are incapable, there may be an ingrafting into Christ, in the largest sense of the expression; that this is the state of acceptance with God, from which there may be a final fall; but that where an actual exercise of faith has been, the fall cannot happen. Whatever may be thought of the weight of this distinction,

for which there is certainly no authority in scripture, there seems no other way of reconciling Calvin with himself; who, if he has written inconsistently on the subject, must have done this, not from the want of clearness of intellect, but from the interference of modern and much relished innovation, with the language held in the church in all preceding ages; and particularly by authors whom the reformers esteemed and followed. For the latter part of what has been given as his supposed sense, there shall be added the following authorities.

He says*—“As soon as the smallest particle of grace† is infused into our minds, we begin to contemplate the Divine Countenance as now placid, serene, and propitious to us: it is indeed a very distant prospect, but so clear, that we know we are not deceived.” He goes on to show, that “in proportion as we improve, for we ought to be continually improving by progressive advances, we arrive at a nearer, and therefore more certain view of him, and by continual habit, he becomes more familiar to us.” “Thus we see” (as is afterwards added) “that a mind, illuminated by the knowledge of God, is at first involved in much ignorance, which is removed by slow degrees.”

It is easy to perceive the difference between the recited test of grace, and that furnished by the episcopal church, as given under the fourth point. And lest what constitutes the difference should not be sufficiently marked, it is still more precisely defined by Calvin, in what is said by him in the twenty-ninth section of the same chapter—“We make the foundation of faith to be the gratuitous promise.” And afterwards, laying

* B. 3, ch. 2, sect. 19.

† Gulta.

stress on the circumstance of gratuitous, he says—"A conditional promise, which sends us back to our own works, promises life to us only if we find it in ourselves. Therefore, if we wish our faith not to tremble and waver, we must support it with the promise of salvation, which is voluntarily and liberally offered us by the Lord, rather in consideration of our misery, than in respect of our worthiness." Here Calvin, like Turretine, opposes "gratuitous" to "conditional;" as if the former word were synonymous with "absolute." And besides, he does not fairly distinguish between his opinion, and that of those opposed to him; who would have pleaded, not for their own deservings, but for a conformity in themselves to the divine will, and for their thus being within the condition of the promise. When St. John said*---"Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him;" referring to what had been said in the verse next before ---"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth;" and when he added---†"If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God;" in the next verse grounding the confidence thus---"Because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight;" this favourite disciple did not mean, surely, to foster in men a proud conceit, founded on the supposed deservings of their performances. And yet he has given a test, very different from that of Calvin.

But to take the passage of the reformer, as it is; it cannot be denied, that he designed to represent the faith spoken of as indefectible. This appears in va-

* I. 3, 19

† V. 21.

rious of the remaining sections of the second chapter of the third book; and especially in the fortieth section, where he writes as follows—"Not satisfied with one attempt to destroy the stability of faith, they* assail it again from another quarter, by arguing, that although we may form a judgment concerning the favour of God, from the present state of our righteousness, yet the knowledge of final perseverance remains in suspense. Truly, we are left in possession of an admirable confidence of salvation, if we can only conclude from mere conjecture, that we are in favour of God at the present instant, but are utterly ignorant what may be our fate to-morrow. The apostle expresses a very different opinion:" and then he quotes Rom. viii. 38, 39. From the above it evidently appears, that although, in one view of the doctrine of perseverance, Calvin consented with the church of England; yet in another view of it, he is alien from her to the greatest extent imaginable.

Equally explicit with Calvin is Turretine, who treats of the subject under his fourteenth head.† After distinguishing the question from extraneous subjects, he divides his opponents into two classes. "Some" (says he) "contend for a temporary cessation of faith and justification; so that faith fails totally, but not finally; being restored by the special grace of God, before death. Others press not only a total, but a final apostacy of the saints. Both are here opposed."

In like manner Witsius‡—"Those to whom God has freely given faith and holiness, he likewise keeps with such solicitous care, that it is impossible for any true believer, totally and finally to fall away from that

* His opponents.

† Ch. 12.

‡ B. 3. ch. 13

holiness, when once it is begun, and thereby forfeit the salvation appointed for him." This position he supports through the whole chapter: but it is not necessary to recite more of it; the opinion being confessedly co-extensive with Calvinism.

Of the doctrine here in question it is well known, that the advocates of it are jealous for the honour of the sovereignty and faithfulness of God, which they think offended by the tenet in opposition: while the adherents of this, consider the other as having a tendency to ensnare the souls of men to their destruction. There is not the design of entering, in this place, on the merits of the question as it relates to scripture; nor yet of estimating the weight against the doctrine, attendant on what is here conceived to be its comparatively modern origin; which seems not to have been before the reformation. But what the author now thinks himself warranted to infer, is the impropriety of supposing the episcopal church to be Calvinistick in any one particular, when she is evidently otherwise in this. That Calvinism called for the doctrine, is here conceded: but why should there be a wish to prove the church Calvinistick, at the expense of ascribing to her a defect, which throws an air of inconsistency over all her institutions?

CONCLUSION.

Facts, subsequent to the English reformation—Intercourse with Calvin, Peter Martyr and Martin Bucer—The controversy at Cambridge—Lambeth articles—Two subsequent facts—The ground taken by the episcopal church—A principle which should govern, in the event of a review.

IN the introduction, it was argued from facts and dates, not only that the institutions of the church of England were framed without any reference to Calvinism, but that the characteristic properties of this system could not have had an influence on the church, at the time of her reformation. And it was contended that the same must appear, independently on the evidence resulting from her declared sense in her articles, her homilies and her services; of which, however a view has been since taken, so far as was thought exacted by the occasion. The object of this conclusion, will be to support the sentiment of the introduction; by facts which occurred after the framing of the system. There has been remarked the near affinity which subsisted, as well in correspondence as in opinion, between the reformers of the church of England and the Lutheran divines; from an early period of the reformation, until the year 1553, when the thirty-nine articles were edited. From that time, until the re-establishment of popery four years afterwards, the same har-

mony continued. And it is worthy of notice, that when, in Mary's reign, such numbers suffered on account of religion, the accusations brought against them were never that they were Calvinists; but, in many instances, that they were addicted to the Lutheran or to the Zuinglian errors. This appears in the Martyrology of Fox, as is noticed by Dr. Lawrence.

In regard to the little correspondence which took place between Cranmer and Calvin, and also that which ensued in consequence of the epistle of the latter to the protector Somerset, there does not appear to have grown from them any result of moment. Much has been said—but, as is here thought, without reason, of the influence of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, on the concerns of the church of England. The former had been a disciple of Zuinglius, whose sentiments were very different from those of Calvin. Peter Martyr, indeed, was a Calvinist; but as he came into England in the year 1549, which was several years before Calvin made a figure in the controversies, afterwards principally giving celebrity to his name; the author, agreeably to sentiments expressed in the introduction, must be permitted to doubt, in regard to the length which the disciple may be supposed to have gone during his residence in England, in what is now known to have been afterwards the theology of the master. That Peter Martyr at last went to the full extent of it, appears in extracts given from his correspondence. The letters from which these extracts are made, were written after his flight from Mary's persecution: therefore they are not proofs, that the sublimated Calvinism by which he was then distinguished, had accompanied him into England. As Calvin is supposed to have done at

the same period, he may have carried his opinions further, than in the theory with which he began. But independently on considerations of this sort, it does not appear of the two learned and pious persons whose names are here under notice, that, having accepted of the hospitable and honourable accommodations provided for them in the universities, they went beyond the bounds of the duties attached to their stations; or, that they at all intermeddled in the influencing of ecclesiastical measures. They were indeed consulted, on the editing of the second liturgy of Edward VI: and ever since that time, a considerable dissatisfaction has subsisted in the church of England, in regard to some of the alterations proposed by them, and adopted by authority. But as, on the one hand, they cannot reasonably be censured for giving their opinions, when invited; so, on the other hand, it would be unreasonable to infer from the incident, that their opinions, on any other occasion, were either asked or given. And in addition, there is evidence on record, that they continued modestly to exercise themselves in their proper duties, without interference of any sort.

From documents referred to by Dr. Lawrence* but not accessible by the present writer, it appears, that while the liturgy was under the second review, Martyr wrote to Bucer of his being in ignorance, as to the changes intended to be made; and of his being afraid to ask. There may have been a bias to Calvinism, in these learned men: But, as Dr. Lawrence remarks,† this no more proves the Calvinism of the English reformers, than Martyr's opinion concerning the Eucharist proves

* Page 247.

† Page 248.

that theirs was the same; whereas they are well known to have differed in that respect. Besides, what he wrote after he left England, is as far from proving conformity of sentiment in the matter at issue, as is Bernard Ochinus's writing in favour of polygamy, from proving consent in this also; if it should be argued that he came to England with Martyr, and like him received countenance and protection in that country. Dr. Lawrence observes further, that when the articles were framed, Martyr had not written on predestination. As to Bucer, Dr. Lawrence gives decisive evidence, in the place referred to, of the little share he had in framing the English system. The evidence is from the writings of Beza; and adduced by this writer in vindication of Bucer, from a charge brought against him of the very matter in question. But, says he to his correspondent —“ know that no extraneous person here was consulted concerning these things.” This renunciation of Bucer, was but a short time before his decease: and on the ground of it, Beza triumphs in having demonstrated, that he (Bucer) “ did not acquiesce in the English form; of which you (says he to the accuser) falsely and impudently make him the author.” If, in defence of Bucer, the allegation was treated with such contempt and indignation, how much greater would these have been, if Beza had been, in a like manner, roused to the defence of his master, Calvin.

That on the return of the exiles, after the accession of queen Elizabeth, Calvinism gained ground in England, has been conceded. But that it prevailed so universally, as is affirmed by some persons of later times, there is reason to question, or rather to deny.

The first incident bringing the clashing of opinion into public view, was the dispute which originated in the university of Cambridge, in the year 1585; when Elizabeth had been on the throne for the long term of twenty-seven years. Why did not the lurking evil sooner show itself? Was it that, all the while, Calvinism had been the universal and uncontradicted faith of the church? This has been insinuated by many, and affirmed by some; but is here conceived to be contradicted by the following facts. Dr. Baroe, whose preaching and whose lectures were complained of as the cause of the disturbance in the year 1595, had, so early as twenty-one years before, preached publicly against absolute decrees and reprobation; and so far as appears, without offence. He had also continued to disseminate his opinions in his lectures on divinity, without such interruption as afterwards occurred. Collier quotes his prelections, and they are Arminian in the highest grade. The same historian quotes bishop Jewell and dean Nowell, who speak decisively to the point of universal redemption; not only without censure, but consistently with the very high reputation in which they are known to have lived and died.

At the said period of the year 1585, there took place the dispute between the celebrated Mr. Hooker, and his competitor Mr. Walter Travers; recorded in the life of the former, prefixed to his ecclesiastical polity. Mr. Hooker had about this time been drawn from that obscurity, in which his modest merit was likely to have for ever lain; and had begun to be an object of general notice and admiration. It appears from the petition of his opponent to the queen's council, (attached to the

ecclesiastical polity) that one ground of offence taken by him, was the other's preaching in the Temple church against the doctrine of absolute predestination. In Mr. Hooker's answer, addressed to the council also, instead of denying or extenuating what he said, he thus defends it, in terms which every one must perceive to agree entirely with the doctrine since called Arminian—"In the other conference he (Travers) questioned about the matter of reprobation, misliking, first that I had termed God a permissive and no positive cause of the evil, which the schoolmen do call *malum culpæ*. Secondly, that to their objection who say, *if I be elected, do what I will, I shall be saved*; I had answered, that the will of God is not absolute in this thing, *but conditional, to save his elect*; believing, fearing, and obediently serving him. Thirdly, that to stop the mouths of such as grudge and repine against God for rejecting cast-aways, I had taught that they are not rejected, no, not in the purpose and counsel of God, without a foreseen worthiness of rejection going, though not in time, yet in order, before. For, if God's electing do in order (as needs it must) presuppose the foresight of their being that are elected, though they be elected before they be; nor only the positive foresight of their being, but also the permissive of their being miserable, because election is through mercy, and mercy doth always presuppose misery: it followeth, that the very chosen of God acknowledge, to the praise of the riches of his exceeding free compassion, that when he in his secret determination set it down—*Those shall live and not die*—they lay as ugly spectacles before him, as lepers covered with dung and mire, as ulcers putrefied in their father's loins, mi-

serable, worthy to be had in detestation: And shall any forsaken creature be able to say unto God, thou didst plunge me into the depth, and assign me unto endless torments, only to satisfy thine own will, finding nothing in me, for which I could seem in thy sight so well worthy to feel everlasting flames?"

It ought further to be observed, that Mr. Hooker, far from acknowledging his doctrine to be novel, in answer to his accuser's challenging of him to produce a sanction for it from the senses of churches and of approved authors, is not afraid or ashamed to tell the council as follows—"I was well assured, that to control this over-reaching speech, the sentences which I might have cited out of church confessions, together with the best learned monuments of former times, and not the meanest of our own, were more in number, than he willingly would have heard of: But what had this bootèd me?" Then he goes on to justify his reserve, by reasons bottomed on the personal character of his opponent.

It appears, that when the controversy between those two ministers, summed up under fourteen heads, was submitted to the archbishop, he gave his judgment on certain points, not connected with the present subject; determining them substantially in favour of Hooker, but qualifying the expressions in which his opinions had been clothed. The archbishop does not appear from the determinations given, to have reached the heads which respected the doctrine of predestination. It is certain, however, that both at the time referred to and always afterwards, until the early and much lamented death of Hooker, his principal patron was the same archbishop,

though, ten years after the dispute, he presided in the meeting of some bishops and other divines, who framed the Calvinistical articles, denominated from his palace at Lambeth. Whether the archbishop had not, at so early a period, reached the height of the Calvinistick theory, or was then more tolerant than afterwards of a departure from it, is more than the present writer has an opportunity of ascertaining.*

So it happened, however, that eleven years after the framing of the Lambeth articles, there arose the warm dispute in the university of Cambridge, already alluded to, beginning with an attack on the anti-predestinarian opinions of Dr. Baroe. This gentleman was a native of France, but had grown old in his English professorship. The Calvinistick historian Fuller gives

* In some of the late periodical publications of England, the Calvinism of Mr. Hooker has been spoken of, as an unequivocal fact. This is very surprising; considering the outcry made against him, for the use of language since precisely that of the Arminians. But there is quoted from his discourse concerning justification, an assertion of the perpetuity of the faith of the elect. This is not evidence to the point; as may appear from the notorious fact, that when the Arminians first presented their discriminating tenets, they went no further in regard to final perseverance, than the holding of it out as questionable. It may be made to consist with an election formed on foresight; although defectibility is certainly more congenial with this system; and was therefore at last admitted by the Arminians. Such minutiae are got rid of by the scripture doctrine of an election to a state of covenant.

It would be rash to suppose inconsistency in such a man as Mr. Hooker, on account of a few sentences incidentally introduced, and relating to a subject not treated of distinctly. For as to the other point of election founded on foresight, it is discoursed of professedly, in the aforesaid controversy with Mr. Travers, and submitted to the king's council.

him the character of “an inoffensive man, in whom no viciousness was chargeable.” He says further, that he had painfully spent his strength in the employment. And as for learning—“He who denieth it in Baroe, (says Fuller) plainly acknowledgeth no scholarship in himself.” Doubtless it must have been an offensive matter, that, in two co-ordinate professorships of the same university, there should be delivered doctrines directly opposite. For the other professor, Dr. Whitaker, who was in high favour with the archbishop, was a Calvinist, and lectured agreeably to his system. The result of the stir made, was the sending of Dr. Whitaker and another divine to court, with a letter addressed to the chancellor of the university, lord Burleigh, then high treasurer. In the letter, as given by Collier, there seems to the writer of this a passage peculiarly worthy of notice. It is, that although the signers allege a recent cause of offence, given in the university church; they also say, that there is “a complaint preferred against him (Baroe) by certain bachelors in divinity; that he hath not only in the sermon, but also for the space of fourteen or fifteen years, taught in his lectures, preached in his sermons, determined in the schools, and printed in several books, divers points of doctrine, not only contrary to himself, but also contrary to that which has been taught and received ever since her majesty’s reign; and agreeable to the errors of popery, which we know your lordship has always disliked and hated.” There being nothing elsewhere said, charging any error against this Dr. Baroe, other than what was connected with his theory of predestination; the amount of the additional complaint appears to have been, that his offence was not of recent origin, but had been going

on during the long term specified; being exhibited in such a variety of ways, as must have made it a matter of public notoriety. And there is something singular in the speaking of the contrary doctrine, as having been taught and received, ever since the beginning of her majesty's reign: as if the complainants were aware, that there could be no pretence for the establishment of their theory, on what had been done in the reign of Edward. The articles then framed, were now again the public profession of the church of England; and why were they not appealed to, if they had been thought to have spoken sufficiently to the point? But the principal particular to be here noticed, is the unaccountable circumstance, that a professor of foreign birth should have been permitted to go on in a divinity chair of an English university, lecturing in opposition to the known and established faith of the realm; if indeed the university had been decidedly Calvinistick, from the beginning of the queen's reign. This seems to be the sentiment intimated in the passage quoted: and as to the connexion between popery and the opinions opposite to those of the complainants, it is well known to have been a charge all along; and therefore may have been thrown in to create odium, without there having existed any special cause in the case of Baroe. What makes the above still more extraordinary, is that the professorship was a place to which the incumbent was elected every two years, according to Fuller; and every three years, according to Collier.

How far men will go, when their minds have become heated by opposition, not only in unjustly charging opposite theory with supposed consequences, but even in mis-stating opinions as found in authorized confessions;

may appear from Fuller's account of a particular transaction, connected with the aforesaid controversy: and let it be still remembered, that this historian was a Calvinist. About the time of Baroe's business, a certain Wm. Barrett, fellow of Caius College, in the same university, in an exercise sermon in St. Mary's, for the degree of bachelor in divinity, preached against the theory then prevailing, on the subject of predestination. His superiors exacted a recantation; which he made, in a manner evidently marked by hypocrisy. In this recantation, dictated to him, after reciting one of the errors charged on him—"that sin is the true and proper cause of reprobation;" and after declaring his present belief to be, "that the reprobation of the wicked is from everlasting;" he is made to add—"I am of the same mind, and do believe concerning the doctrine of election and reprobation, as the church of England believeth and teacheth, in the book of the articles of faith, in the article of predestination." Now among all the controversies concerning the true sense of the article, that reprobation has been passed over by it in silence, has been acknowledged always. How great then must have been the heat of controversy; when the seniors of so celebrated a university compelled this Barrett to make a public declaration, so notoriously contrary to fact! And how very much does this weaken their testimony to what they affirm as a fact, that the then prevailing belief was the same which had been from the beginning of the queen's reign! How could this have been, and yet Baroe have continued to be elected, until the appearance of the Lambeth articles; when the prospect of his not being elected, induced him to resign? What has been said concerning Barrett, has been grounded on

the narrative usually given of his business. But Dr. Heylin contradicts it; and affirms, that although a recantation was drawn up for him, he never signed it.

The Calvinism of the Lambeth articles, is not to be denied: but what occasion was there for them, if their sense had been already declared in the thirty-nine? And would it not have been an obvious remedy to the evil in Cambridge, to have insisted that the supposed innovations should submit to the public sense of the established church? And was it not a lessening of her authority to conceive, that this required the prop of an unauthorised act of a few bishops and some other divines, at a private meeting, although held under the superintendance of the archbishop? Doubtless, all this must have occurred: but it must have been perceived, that the thirty-nine articles went not to the points, on which it was now thought expedient to decide.

That the decisions given at Lambeth were of no authority, it is not necessary to prove. They however remain as a monument to show, that the thirty-nine articles were not conceived to have spoken sufficiently to the purposes of Calvinism. And this appears further, from what took place in the next reign, in the conference at Hampton court. There has been already noticed the effort of the puritan divines, for an addition to the sixteenth article, in order to guard against the obvious consequence of it as it stands at present; so unfavourable to the doctrine of final perseverance. And although the proposal of additional words was brought forward, with the professed view of making the aforesaid article agree with the seventeenth; yet it appeared plainly, that the same divines did not conceive of this article, as speaking with sufficient explicitness to the

predestination which is its subject; since, for the supplying of the defect, they proposed the adopting of the articles of Lambeth. But archbishop Whitgift and his successor Bancroft, who took leading parts in the conference, are set down as Calvinists. So is king James the first, who presided in it. But they gave such a check to the puritan divines on this very subject, as seems to make it questionable, whether they carried the doctrine further than is done in the seventeenth article; and this is short of Calvinism. As to Whitgift—whatever may have been his rigour at the time of the Calvinistick controversy in Cambridge, there has been something offered that seems to justify the supposition, of his having been more lenient ten years before: and there being no zeal manifested by him for the acceptance of his Lambeth articles, would seem to justify the suspicion, that he had become more lenient again. But whatever weight there may be, or whether any in the remarks here made concerning the king and the bishops; there can be no doubt of the sufficiency of the puritan divines, to judge of the need in which their system stood, so far as public authority was concerned, for a stronger confirmation than any yet existing in the establishment.

Another public event, tending to the same point with the preceding, is the royal declaration issued by king Charles the first; and to this day prefixed to the articles, in the authorized copies of the church of England. The complaints which followed this measure, came entirely from the quarter in which the Calvinistick construction of the articles was contended for. Why should such persons have taken offence at the direction, that “no man hereafter shall either print or preach to

draw the article* aside any way, but shall submit to it in the plain and full meaning thereof; and shall not put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense?" The truth is, and it was in that day avowed, that the plain, literal and grammatical sense, although, on the subject of predestination, acceptable so far as it went, was not thought by the favourers of the doctrine in the Calvinistick sense, to have gone far enough. And the defect in the articles, was to be made up in discourses from the pulpit.†

It is true that the parliament, in their vote of censure on this very instrument, declared their determination to adhere to the sense of the thirty-nine articles, which was established by parliament in the 13th year of queen Elizabeth. This legislative declaration, is a specimen of the manner in which religion is treated, when it mixes with the politics of the day. The design of the act of Elizabeth referred to, was not even to establish the articles; but only to provide against non-conformity, by requiring subscription to them; and by punishing the depraving of them. Very far indeed is the act from

* Meaning any of the articles.

† The Rev. Dr. Daubeny, in his "*Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae*," notices a very remarkable fact from documents accessible to him, but not to the present writer. It is the following acknowledgment of the very Dr. Whitaker, between whom and Baroe the controversy in Cambridge began. "For the points of doctrine we are fully persuaded, that Mr. Barrett hath taught untruth, if not against the articles, yet against the religion of our church publicly received. For although these points were not concluded and defined by public authority, yet forasmuch as they have been hitherto evermore held in our church, therefore they ought not to be controverted."

establishing any precise sense of them. Yet the parliament refer to some sense, which it established, and of which there is not a syllable in the act. But they seem to have intended to help out the deficiency of the act, by tacking to it “the general and current expositions of the writers of the church.” Thus it is, that from the friends of Calvinism within the bosom of the church of England, there is always escaping something by which they show, that they do not consider the articles as reaching to the extent of their system.

But there is another fact, which may be reckoned to speak decisively to the purpose. It is the course which was taken under the Long Parliament, by the divines assembled at their call. These divines, had uniformly expressed satisfaction with the body of the aforesaid doctrine; adding their wish for some further provisions, for the securing of the profession of Christian verity. Consistently with these declarations, they took up the thirty-nine articles; and made some progress, extending to the fourteenth, in the accommodating of them to their opinions. But there was soon found more difficulty than had been anticipated, in the sowing of the new cloth on the old garment. Accordingly, they gave over the design; and framed a confession, new in a great measure, in matter, and altogether, in language and in form. The result seems to prove, that mere additions would not have been adequate to the exigency; and would even have militated with what had been found ready to the hand. A wiser course was therefore taken by the assembly; which issued in a confession of their own composing. In this new confession, the doctrines of unconditional predestination, including not only partial election, but reprobation also; and besides these, im-

puted sin, imputed righteousness, irresistible grace, and final perseverance, were explicitly affirmed. Had they been so in the old articles; it would have been more consistent with former professions, and have contributed to the cause at a critical conjuncture, to have retained them. But the inconsistency was perceived, and another course was judiciously determined on and followed.

Archbishop Laud, who lived in those troublesome times, has been often reproachfully held up as the person, who introduced Arminianism into the church of England. According to the estimation of the author of this work, there was nothing in the opinions of this prelate, which needed to have induced him to draw that and its kindred subjects, from the ground on which they had been left by Cranmer and the other English reformers. Neither does it appear, that he wished for any innovation touching these matters, in the public institutions of the church. But there happened a coincidence of circumstances, the very opposite to that which existed in the Netherlands, in the same age. In the former country, the alliance of Arminianism with unconstitutional ideas of prerogative, and in the latter country, an alliance equally close of Calvinism with an affecting of a monarchical ascendancy in the republic, threw the affections of the people into one scale or the other, not entirely on religious grounds; but, as to many, in proportion as they inclined to the political systems, to which the religious respectively gave their aid. The political theory of archbishop Laud, went to the overthrow of those civil privileges which Englishmen had inherited; and which at last, in consequence of the tendency in human affairs, whereby extremes produce their opposites, brought the matter to an issue between

the asserted absolute authority of the crown, and a democratical form of government unknown to the constitution.*

But this was not all. The great zeal manifested by the archbishop in the placing of communion tables, and in respect to some ceremonies connected with that subject, contributed much to increase an apprehension, grounded on the manifest neglect of the laws against one description of dissenters,† at the same time that severity was stretched to the utmost limits of the law against another description of them, that the government was making rapid advances to popery. The writer of this is convinced, that no man in England was less likely to become a Roman Catholic, than archbishop Laud: And in regard to the partiality alluded to, it is well known, that he drew down on himself the lasting resentment of the queen, by addressing the king in council against unlawful Roman catholic proceedings, in her palace of Somerset house. It is never-

* It is not of choice, that the author mixes political opinions with the religious: And he does it in this place, merely on account of the aid of fact, in the ascertaining of opinion. To avoid being misunderstood, he finds it necessary to mention, that his apprehension of the events of that day is connected with the theory, that the Stuart kings entertained notions, which struck directly at the constitutional principles, derived to the people of England from their Saxon ancestors; which the power of the Plantagenet and Tudor princes had on many occasions over-ruled, but had never dared to endeavour to exterminate. To these principles, archbishop Laud is here supposed to have been hostile. Perhaps it was in the sincerity of his mind; but this hindered not, that his conduct was one of the principal causes—as it is here thought to have been—of the temporary downfall of the constitution of his country, in church and state.

† The Roman Catholics.

theless here believed, that there were other parts of his conduct, strongly tending to countenance the aforesaid apprehension. Of this stamp, was his zeal in the business of the communion tables; and the bowing to the altar, unauthorized by the rubrics. This was doubtless not only understood, but designed as a countenancing of opinions, which, on mature deliberation, had been discarded by the English reformers. These great and good men had changed altars into tables; and had shewn in their Latin liturgy, that they considered the priest not as a "sacerdos," but as a "presbyter:" the English word being retained, because its etymology explained it. And as to sacrifice, every appearance of it was abolished, except as the word was used in a figurative sense. That archbishop Laud really designed to make a retrograde motion to opinions so long discarded, is not here affirmed. For the placing of the tables, much was said on the topics of uniformity, and for the preventing of irreverence: to which last, they were certainly the more exposed in the middle of the chancels. As to his so much censured conduct in the consecration of a church; some of the worst circumstances, said to have attended it, were disproved at his trial; although enough remained, to deserve the character of an unauthorised sanction of superstition. All affirmed is, that his conduct, in various ways, produced an apprehension, that he, and those acting with him, were looking back to some opinions and practices, unquestionably anti-protestant; and that this contributed much to the fancied alliance between Arminianism and Popery.

All these things were aggravated, by the impetuous temper of the archbishop; combined with the opinion, erroneous indeed, yet entertained by the best characters

of former times, that it was the duty of the civil magistrate to compel conformity in worship, and to inflict temporal punishment for errors in religion. The author is aware, that this lenient censure on the archbishop will be thought far short of his demerits; by persons adopting the opinions of those writers, who represent as an high crime in this prelate, what they hold venial—perhaps a duty—in Cranmer, in Calvin, and in the very enemies of archbishop Laud, as soon as they got a taste of the sweets of power. But in one who abhors persecution in any shape, on its own account, and not because it was exercised by this man or the other, there may be an allowance to extend to every character, in consideration of the prejudices of the age in which it appeared, as great a measure of charity, as circumstances in the individual case permit.

Since the re-establishment of the church under Charles II. there is no connexion of opinion and conduct, tending to the object kept in view in this conclusion, except the two following facts, which apply to the whole of the intermediate time. The first of the facts is, that although the clergy of the church of England have been almost universally Anti-calvinistick, there has been no endeavour to introduce such changes as ought to have been endeavoured by them, had the articles been in contrariety to their judgments. There have been made, and always foiled, attempts of another nature; intended to draw towards Arianism and Socinianism: But on the ground merely of the supposed Calvinism of the articles, there does not appear to have been any discontent. At least, none has shewn itself in any considerable effects. Let those so disposed account for this, from there being affirmed to be no concern about the profes-

sion, any further than for the sake of emolument: an imputation, which, when thrown on a clergy, among whom there have been a considerable proportion of great and good men, who would have done honour to any church in any age—and there are perhaps in this age not fewer than in any other—may shew the ill-will of the accusers, but cannot pass for argument.

The other fact is, that of all the Calvinistick societies which have fallen off from the established church of England, not an instance can be shewn of their adhering to Calvinism, as existing, if it does exist, in that church. It is true, that the extent to which they have carried their opinions, has been generally destructive at last, of the truths to which they were allied. Of the great body of Calvinists who seceded from the church about the middle of the seventeenth century, it is well known, that in England there scarcely remains a vestige of Calvinism, in the communions which they formed. On the contrary—and it is here recorded with grief—at best Arianism, but more generally Socinianism, is the current doctrine in their houses of religious worship. Still, in the early stage of their existence, they made it evident, that they were to look further than to the thirty-nine articles, for their favourite theory.

It is not to be wondered at, that after the confident assertions which have been made, and after the great zeal which has been displayed, to prove the articles of the church of England Calvinistick; the protestant episcopal church in the United States, should for some time have hesitated, as to the expressly recognizing of them to be a part of their system. Whatever hazards might have been run in the editing of a confession materially new; the danger ought certainly to have been encoun-

tered in preference to the establishing of a standard, from which the sentiments of the episcopal clergy, and of episcopalians generally, would have been diverse: for that this incongruity would have been the consequence, can hardly be doubted of by any who know the state of the communion in question. It has contributed much to the union of that church; and, as may reasonably be hoped, will operate to her perpetuity; that, on mature consideration, there has taken place the conviction, that, while the articles contain all the necessary truths distinguishing the Christian system, they do not embrace the superstructure of Calvinism, unnecessarily laid on their foundation.

The author of the present work conceives it to be no improper method, before the concluding of it, to state the grounds, on which the retaining of the articles in their present form may be defended. For it has been sometimes asked—are they so perfect, as that on subsequent consideration, after so long a tract of time, and with the light arising from so much discussion, no change for the better can, in any instance, be devised? Perhaps there is not an individual, who will not answer, that, according to his estimation, there might be profitably made additions in some respects, and omissions in others. But every person, reflecting in this line, should also reflect, that the conceptions of others are to be duly estimated, as well as his; and that therefore it is problematical, whether, after a review, the system would be more to his mind, than it is at present. And it is a still more serious problem, whether the members of the church generally, will submit to what may be newly devised; if it should be in contrariety to their habits of thinking, even in unimportant instances, with

as much readiness as they submit, under the same circumstances, to the old. And especially it should be considered, whether, if dissatisfaction with the new should be general, the retainers to the old, persevering in their opposition, would not effect a very serious schism, in which there would be but one sentiment; while perhaps there would be an endless difference among the others, in regard to every point on which there has been something old omitted, or something new included. These difficulties are irrelevant to the subject, if the articles be essentially defective or erroneous; or neither of which is here supposed to be chargeable.

There is one particular, in which there is less provision exacting uniformity of sentiment in this church, than in the church of England. It is in the form of subscription: that of the former church being in words not admitting of the construction, that the articles require consent in every minute particular. Unless a candidate for the ministry be fully satisfied with them, as a body of Christian doctrine; he prevaricates, if he assent to them. But this does not pledge him to the extent, here affirmed to be avoided.

In support of what has been done by the American church in the premises, there may be propriety in remarking further, that the articles, as now existing, were the standard of her belief, before she made any declaration to that effect. Concerning a system once established, and to which the clergy in particular were bound by the most sacred obligations, the question occurs—By what authority is it supposed to have been changed? The answer shall be here given, and is of some importance to the matter in hand. When the allegiance of

the people of these states had become confessedly transferred from one sovereignty to another; the prayers for civil rulers, and whatever else pertained to the former political relation, had become inconsistent with moral duty; and were therefore repealed by Divine Providence, without any act of the church to that effect. The liturgy continued in all other respects, until it was reviewed by the general convention of 1789. So did the forms of consecration and ordination, under the same limitations, until altered by the general convention of 1792. The articles, although not recognized until the convention of 1804, were nevertheless the public profession of the church, in all matters purely religious. This being the case, every consideration of propriety was hostile to the abrogating, or even the altering of them, without a substitute; which should not only be an improvement in the estimation of those by whom it might be established, but have every appearance of being more satisfactory to the church generally, than the institutions to be done away.

The author further takes the liberty to offer his opinion, that whenever a review may take place---of which, however, he perceives no need at the present---there are two circumstances which should help to govern in the conducting of the business. One is, that the bishops, and a select number of other clergymen, duly chosen, and not too numerous for mature deliberation, with all necessary helps for the bringing of it to a prosperous issue, should devise the changes. The other is, that what may be so devised, should be accepted or rejected by the three orders in the church, without debate, and by a single vote of each body, after due time given for consideration. This would be a method, as near as

circumstances admit, to that taken in England, when her present system was adopted. It is here conceived, that the wisdom then manifested, and the subsequent long continuance of the effects of it, are powerful motives to the following of the example.

AN APPENDIX,

Occasioned by some late attempts, in England, to prove the established Church of that country Calvinistick.

DESIGN OF THIS APPENDIX.

SECT. 1.

Mr. Toplady—He overlooks the distinction of prescience—Affirms without evidence—Partiality of quotations—Personal Abuse.

SECT. 2.

Dr. Haweis—He misrepresents the Lutheran opinions—And Calvinistick influence—Evidence of unfairness.

SECT. 3.

Mr. Overton—Design of his work—His views of Calvinism—Error, in regard to the time referred to for the sense of the Articles—His various sources of evidence—Inconsistency on the subject of baptism—Sentiments on conversion—Inaccuracy of quotation—Instance in the case of Dr. Daubeny—Further illustrated, in what is said of Erasmus.

POSTSCRIPT.

Notice of the “*Vindiciae Anglicanae*” by Dr. Daubeny, accounting for the mistakes of Mr. Overton.

IT is trusted, that there will not be misunderstood the motive, to the taking notice of controversy carried on in another country. Whatever should prove the church of England Calvinistick, would prove the same of the episcopal church in these United States: and the publications to be here remarked on have been received by many, as weighty remonstrances of eminent clergymen in the parent church, against an alarming contrariety to

her institutions in the great body of her clergy. It is here contemplated to enter a caution against such a representation, so far as the doctrines of Calvinism are intended in it; and so far as there may be the danger of the implicit confidence of readers, in the works which shall be mentioned. In what degree the authors of them have been prompted by prejudice and by honest zeal, to make statements unsupported by authority; and in what degree it may have happened from the same cause, that they pass over facts unfavourable to their positions, yet presented to their notice in the very books from which they quote; it is not thought necessary to estimate. The writer is well enough acquainted with theological controversy to know, that much allowance of this sort is to be often made. He knows not, however, of any subject, nor of any controversial authors, calling for more of this species of charity, than those now to be reviewed. Some of the particulars, concerning which there seems cause to complain of unfair representation, have been already noticed in that very point of view. Yet there cannot properly be said to be repetition, in the again introducing of them; since it is merely to substantiate the charges in individual instances. The writers here to be noticed, are Mr. Toplady, Dr. Haweis and Mr. Overton.

SECTION I.

Of the Rev. Augustus Toplady's History of Calvinism.

THIS clergyman died in the year 1778. He was beneficed in the church of England; and conducted himself, so far as the writer of this is informed, conform-

ably to her rubrics and her canons. His zeal for Calvinism was so great that, to all appearance, he must have adopted the maxim—"No Calvinist, no Christian." Of his numerous publications, the only one here in view, is his "Historical Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the church of England:" in which title, he evidently intended, under the word "doctrinal," to guard against the idea of his being unfavourable to the episcopacy of his church; of which, indeed, he was a zealous advocate. Even of the work here named, no further notice is intended, than as the subject concerns the sense of the same church; to be gathered from her own declarations, and from the opinions of the compilers, so far as they can be ascertained. Mr. Toplady's representations, are supposed to be in contrariety to what may be obtained from both of these sources of information. But this will not be shown diffusively, or in the enumeration of a great variety of particulars, under the several charges to be brought forward. The object will have been accomplished; if what is to be advanced and intended to be proved, will serve to show, on a comparison of it with the work in question, that it is utterly insufficient to be a ground, on which an inquirer may make up his mind as to the sense of the church of England. This being the design, what is to follow must apply to questions of fact; and no further to questions of opinion, than as this may be the result of the other.

1 The first fact to be alleged against the work of Mr. Toplady, is, that he takes for granted the Calvinism of the authorized institutions of his church, not saying a word in proof of it; and that his only evasion of proof

from the opposite quarter, is his explaining of the term—"the whole world"—in the thirty-first article, as meaning the world of believers. Far from conceiving of there being any call on him to the effect stated; when he enters on the task of proving the Calvinism of the compilers, his prominent argument, is its being a system obvious on the face of their work—"The whole series of our public service" (says he) "the uniform tenor of our articles, and the chain of doctrine asserted in each book of homilies, are a standing demonstration, that the original framers and compilers believed in and worshipped the God of their fathers, after that way which papists and Arminians term heresy."

Is there so little, then, in the objections usually made to the presumed Calvinism of the church, that they are not worthy of notice, in a treatise under the title which has been recited? On the subject of predestination, is the point of prescience, as the ground of it, so explicitly denied in the seventeenth article, as to make it clearly a Calvinistick, and not an Arminian predestination? In reference to universal redemption, are the numerous passages in the liturgy, which have been alleged to affirm it, so evidently declaratory of the contrary, that there is no need to rescue them from the purpose to which they are supposed to have been misapplied? And if there were nothing more than the thirty-first article, and the perplexities occasioned by it at Dort; is there not in this circumstance a proof, that the meaning given by Mr. Toplady to the article, may at least admit a question? On the doctrine of original sin, is the matter of imputation and its attendant dogmas of fœderal headship, and a covenant of works, so

clearly laid down, as that an ordinary mind can be in no danger of overlooking them? When the church affirms, in her tenth article, that man cannot do any thing in his own natural strength, and without the grace of God; would there have been a waste of argument in showing, that the grace spoken of must have been considered as irresistible, although the same be not said? And is there not something in the very idea of co-operation comprehended in the article, however abominated by Calvin, which may lead unwary persons to imagine, that man's choice and his endeavours are necessary for the producing of the effect? Above all, in regard to the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, which is not alleged to have been expressed; would there have been no use in showing, that it had been intended to be implied; whatever may be pretended to the contrary from the articles, from the baptismal services, and from the prayers? But all this is ground, on which Mr. Toplady did not think himself concerned to enter. He presumed his theory in this quarter, in order to infer it in another. And indeed, it must be confessed, that on the subject to which he was proceeding, there required to be presumed as a fact, what, if it had existed, went to the extent for which it was brought; and not only so, but rendered needless whatever else he considered as demonstrating the Calvinism of the compilers.

In the work now under consideration, part of the labour of the author is bestowed in proving, in contrariety to his opponents, who had affirmed of the compilers, their bringing with them of a predilection for Calvinism from the church of Rome, that the said church was inimical to the system. The writer of this con-

ceives, that the disputants are in extremes. That the church of Rome, in the days of St. Austin, gave her explicit sanction to his scheme of predestination, now called Calvinistick, is unquestionable. Yet Mr. Toplady is here conceived to be right, in pointing out inconsistencies with this, especially in the business of Jansenius. However, her approbation of Austin stands unrevoked: and Mr. Toplady is thought to be incorrect in supposing, concerning the leading doctrine of Calvinistick predestination, that it was censured by the council of Trent. Some positions on the subject are censured; but by the very censures, the doctrine of predestination is presumed: and the question, how far it may be founded on prescience, is untouched. There are in the said church numerous bodies, especially the Dominicans, who go to the full extent of Calvin. In the council of Trent, there were some, who even went beyond him concerning original sin; affirming the doctrine of imputation, not taught by the reformer, although zealously maintained by his followers; who may therefore be said to have taken it, not strictly from the church of Rome, but from divines of eminence within her pale.

Although Mr. Toplady gives the usual strained interpretation of the Calvinists; yet it is here conceived, that the occasion called for much more. The difficulties occurring among the English deputies at Dort, confessedly Calvinistick—The influence it had on the measures of their government, equally determined in that system, as this author zealously contends—and the final silence of the deputies, when the correspondent part of the Belgic confession came to be established—are not such slight circumstances in the history of Cal-

vinism, as that the historian should have passed them over in silence.

2. The next fact to be stated, is, that this author keeps out of view the very hinge, as it is called by bishop Burnet, on which the whole controversy turns: That is, a predestination being presumed, whether it be founded on the divine foreknowledge of faith and works foreseen, and on the want of them. Perhaps, there was a design to throw a cover over the distinction, in the remark* that, at the time in question, Arminius was not born. But this will not serve the turn; because the distinction was well known, and had been long made; as may be seen in the documents given in the third part of the present work. But it must be obvious, concerning the numerous quotations given from the compilers and their cotemporaries, that there is no decision in them, in reference to the distinction here mentioned.

There shall be noticed two of Mr. Toplady's instances; one of them from a prayer of the duke of Somerset, under whose protectorate every measure for a substantial reformation was begun; and the other, from the prayer of his royal pupil, the excellent young Edward, just before his death. The protector prays thus—"I am the price of thy Son's death; for thy Son's sake, thou wilt not lose me. I am a vessel for thy mercy; thy justice will not condemn me. I am recorded in the book of life; I am written with the very blood of Jesus; thy inestimable love will not then cancel my name."† The prayer of the young king is—"Lord God, deliver me out of this wretched life, and take me among thy chosen."

* Page 245.

† Vol. 1. page 53

That these two eminent personages were possessed of the same leading principles with the compilers of the ecclesiastical institutions under them, is highly probable, and perhaps may be said to be certain. But to the present writer, there does not appear a particle of Calvinism, in these supposed prominent specimens of it. The mere use of the word "elect" is nothing to the purpose. And as to such expressions as the being "in the book of life," and the being "written with the blood of Jesus;" on looking back to what was quoted under the first point, from the very men whose sense is here in question, it will be evident that they did not contemplate the being in the book of life, as at all associated with the circumstance of assured perseverance; and that they conceived of Christ's blood as shed for all men. Under the recollection of this, it must be evident, that the prayer of the protector amounts to no more than that, from the applying to him of the aforesaid circumstances and the like, it was impossible he should finally fail, from the want of the divine support. But to suppose him intending to inform Almighty God, that it was impossible for him, the supplicant, however he might fall into sin, to forfeit salvation by it; would be to imagine a species of prayer, the sentiment of which, however supported in argument with man, has not appeared, so far as is recollected, in the addresses even of Calvinists, to the Father of their Spirits.

Mr. Toplady produces as unequivocal evidence of the Calvinism of the compilers—especially of Cranmer—the catechism called Poinet's, and proved by sundry circumstances to have been principally the work of the archbishop. But needs there be better evidence, even

to those who have no further information concerning this document, than what comes to them through the pen of Mr. Toplady, how very little it is to his purpose; than the finding from him a large extract to the point of predestination; while yet the extract shows no evidence of the basis, on which the Calvinistick sense of predestination rests? There are in the extracts from the catechism two sentences, unfavourable to the purpose for which they are given. One of them affirms—"As many as are in this faith steadfast (alluding to what had been defined before) were forechosen, predestinated, and appointed to everlasting life, before the world was made."* It would seem impossible to read this, without perceiving the stress laid on steadfastness in the faith; or to perceive this, and yet to consider it as at all in favour of Mr. Toplady's side of the controversy. The other passage is—"Not by the worthiness of our deservings, were we either heretofore chosen, or long agoe saved; but by the only mercy of God, and pure grace of Christ our Lord; whereby we were in him made to doe those good workes that God had appointed for us to walk in."† The being "heretofore chosen" and "long ago saved," refer to the being brought to Christ in baptism. "This"—the catechism means—"was not by the worthiness of our deservings, but by the mercy of God and pure grace in Christ." Here was the true preparation for good works; which are accordingly defined to be the fruit of it. If all, confessing these things, had been considered by the historian of the doctrine of Calvinism as of "the faith once de-

* Vol. 1. page 254.

† Vol. 1. page 256.

livered to the saints," it would have very much added to his estimate of the number of the elect.

This part of the work would be swelled immoderately; were the writer of it to transcribe all the documents of the book before him, in which the author pre-supposes the words "chosen," "elect" and "predestinate," to speak his own sense of the doctrine which they are used to designate. The object is merely to point out the distinction; and to illustrate it in such an extent, as must enable any reader, who may take it along with him in the perusal of Mr. Toplady's work, to detect the fallacy in every one of his quotations, relatively to the present subject.

3. The next allegation to be brought against the work of this author, is his affirming of supposed facts, without evidence. If the present design were to go into the subject beyond the period of the English history here contemplated, many instances might be produced. But the investigation being limited to that period, three particulars shall be enumerated.

The first, is the case of the free-will men, as they were called; whose opinions Mr. Toplady evidently endeavours to identify with those of the Arminians: and if he could accomplish this, it would certainly follow, that the reformers, in discountenancing the free-will men, discountenanced Arminianism, before Arminius was born.

The account of them is taken from Strype; whose history Mr. Toplady justly commends for its fidelity and impartiality. The historian describes the body of men in question, as Pelagians and Anabaptists; which last name was considered in that day, because of the wickedness committed under it in Germany, as descriptive of persons who were the very pests of society. A

circumstance tending to the supposition of their falling under this denomination, is its being mentioned of them, that they held learning to be useless and destructive: an opinion which—it is here conceived—has never been professed by any, who were not the fomenters of mischief; or else simple people, and fit tools for the purposes of the others. As to the Pelagian error, it is well known to have denied all effect of the fall, and all need of divine grace.

Mr. Toplady himself, in several places, recognises these people as Pelagians. But he had previously given notice* that his calling of them so, was because the name of Arminians was not then known; thereby insinuating, that this would have been the proper name, but for the reason given. To support this sentiment, in the next page, he quotes a passage from Strype; but thrusts in a few words of his own in a parenthesis, giving them a quite different complexion. The passage, with the parenthesis, is as follows. Strype is speaking of a congregation of free-willers in Essex, and of an old register, from which his account of them was taken: and he says, with an eye to the register—“From whence I collect, that they held the opinions [as far as free-will and predestination are concerned] of the Anabaptists and Pelagians.” The words between the brackets, are an interpolation.

Again Mr. Toplady, in the next page, commends Strype; because, although not a Calvinist himself, he allows the free-willers to be Anabaptistical and Pelagian; thus still obtruding the sentiment, that Pelagianism was a constructive interpretation of the profession

* Vol. 1, page 48.

of principles afterwards called Arminian: whereas, the very doctrines set down by Mr. Toplady, are the former without disguise; and such as must have been so acknowledged by Mr. Strype, without the aid of his known candour.

The case of the class of people in question, may be satisfactorily disclosed, by producing the account given of them by the same laborious historian, in his memoirs of archbishop Cranmer. *Strype there records as follows—“ And while the papists on the one hand were so busy in promoting their ends, there were a looser sort of professors of religion, who disgraced the reformation on the other. For some there were, that took the liberty of meeting together in certain places, and there to propound odd questions, and vent dangerous doctrines and opinions. Of these also the council having notice, they thought it very fit to discountenance and restrain them. January 27, a number of persons, a sort of Anabaptists, about sixty, met in an house on a Sunday, in the parish of Bocking in Essex; where arose among them a great dispute, whether it were necessary to stand or kneel, bareheaded, or covered, at prayers; and they concluded the ceremony not to be material; but that the heart before God was required, and nothing else. Such other like warm disputes there were, about scripture. There were likewise such assemblies now in Kent. These were looked upon as dangerous to church and state. And two of the company were therefore taken and committed to the Marshalsea; and orders were sent to apprehend the rest, viz. to sir George Norton, sheriff of Essex, to apprehend and

* B. xii. ch. 21. page 233.

send up to the council those persons that were assembled for scripture matters in Bocking: nine of them were named, being cow-herds, clothiers, and such like mean people. The like order was sent to sir Edward Wotton, and to sir Thomas Wyat, to apprehend others of them, seven whereof are named, living in Kent. February 3. Those that were apprehended for the meeting at Bocking, appeared before the council, and confessed the cause of their assembly to be, to talk of the scriptures; that they had refused the communion for above two years; and that, as was judged, upon very superstitious and erroneous purposes; with divers other evil opinions, worthy of great punishment. Whereupon five of them were committed; and seven of them were bound in recognisance to the king, in forty pounds each man. The condition, to appear when they should be called upon; and to resort to their ordinaries for resolution of their opinions, in case they had any doubt in religion.”

It is but to read this passage to perceive, how far *Strype* must have been from identifying these people with Arminians; and further, how likely it is, independently on any such association, and considering the maxims and the dangers of the time, that the meetings spoken of should excite the jealousy of the government. Still it may seem, that the very name of free-will men proves those who bore it to have been obnoxious, because of a principle held by them in common with Arminians. *Mr. Toplady* certainly intended to convey this idea, but there is no ground for it. Between the Calvinists and the Arminians at the synod of Dort, there was no debate on the subject of free-will. Both parties, however, took the word in a very different

sense, from that in the philosophical controversy concerning liberty and necessity. The loss of free-will, in the theological sense, meant that man, by the fall, had his will enslaved to sin; being deprived of a liberty, which he is supposed to have possessed originally; and which he recovers, in proportion as he is redeemed from the influence of sin, by grace. Of such a freedom as this, the necessarians have no idea: and although they object not to the term—free-will; yet they understand it as exclusive of coercion, not as exclusive of the sure effect of motive.

But it is surprising, when there has been such a change in the use of the term free-will, in the very system advocated by Mr. Toplady; that he should be so severe in his censures, on those who admit it: the very name itself being evidently, in his estimation, descriptive of radical error. Calvin, it is true, as was shown in the second part of this work, reprobated the term, as replete with arrogance. But Turretine, on whom Mr. Toplady bestows the epithet—"immortal," and who came not long after Calvin, treated the charge of rejecting it as a calumny: a fact, which has also been already shown. And in the present day, it is comprehended in the system of necessity; which might have reconciled it to Mr. Toplady; since he professes himself a necessarian, as well as a predestinarian.

Another alleged fact to be found in this author's work, but not in authentic history, is Luther's consent in the doctrines now called Calvinistick; and especially in the doctrine of perseverance: concerning which it is said* "Luther himself did not believe the being of a God,

* Page 300.

more firmly, than he believed the total and final perseverance of the regenerate elect:”* and the deviation of some Lutherans from the tenets of their leader is said not to have been until after his death. In regard to the leading doctrine of predestination, is it not enough to prove the contrary, that with the approbation of Luther, it was left out of the confession of Augsburg? Or if not, is not the deficiency supplied by his approbation, expressed towards the close of his life, of Melancthon’s last edition of his “*Loci Theologici*,” notoriously unfriendly to that doctrine? In regard to final perseverance, to avoid the unnecessary tediousness of quotation, the writer of this will content himself with referring to Dr. Laurence’s work,† in which there are recited pointed testimonies against it, from the works of Luther himself, from those of Melancthon, from the Wirtemberg confession, and from other documents. There can hardly be a fact of the kind more generally appealed to and conceded, than that of Luther’s departing, long before his decease, from some matters at first taught by him; and what concerns the subjects here treated of in particular: although not what concerns the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints; which was not only never taught by him, but is contrary to many things which he taught—as universal redemption and baptismal regeneration.‡ Yet all this vanishes be-

* Perhaps some ambiguity may have been designed under the expression—“regenerate elect.” The question relates simply to the affirmed perseverance of all the regenerate.

† Page 415.

‡ Dr. Laurence quotes (page 302) from some of the earliest works of Luther, passages which prove, that, from the beginning, he confessed resistibility of grace and human co-operation.

fore the stroke of a pen, without an authority cited, to afford a shelter for so singular and unqualified an assertion.

The third alleged fact, relative to the same author, is his constantly maintaining, without evidence, that Calvin had an influence in the review of Edward's first liturgy. That there were in it some matters savouring of the influence of the discarded system, is not to be denied: But when it is considered, that the English reformers attained gradually to the extent of truth at last professed by them; and that they made it an object to bring off the people with them from ancient superstition; there is no need to suppose, that they were led to further changes, otherwise than by their own convictions. Calvin's writing of some letters to the government and to Cranmer about the time in question, is no evidence that he influenced their measures. If it be, how much more evidence is there of a Lutheran influence, as well at the same time, as for many years preceding! But all this Mr. Toplady passes by; and fixes on slight circumstances, to induce the belief of an influence in another quarter: which is affirmed, but not proved.

4. The next fault to be here found with this author, is the exceeding partiality of his quotations. Instances of this abound so much, that it is here necessary to prescribe limits; and accordingly, notice shall be confined to those which he makes from bishop Latimer. In order to narrow this reformer's view of the subject on which he treats, there are made quotations, which do not touch the point of difference. Mr. Toplady* cites

* Page 295.

his exhibiting of the ransom paid by the Redeemer; and gives his own inference—not Latimer’s—that not one for whom the ransom was paid can finally be condemned. And then he gives from his author, that “Scripture speaketh not of impenitent sinners: Christ died not for them:” But the words following in Latimer, and given also by Mr. Toplady, shew, that the not dying for impenitent sinners, was in regard to the final effects. The additional and explanatory words are—“his death remedieth not their sins.” But why did not the author favour his readers with the express declarations of the good bishop; a few of which have been recited in this work? Instead of this, he puts them off with the old evasion of the interpretation given by Calvinists of the scriptural phrase “of the whole world.” He notices indeed the passage in which the bishop had said, that “Christ shed as much blood for Judas, as for Peter:” Which is explained by this author to mean, that the said precious blood would have been sufficient for Judas also had it been shed for that purpose. But against the more obvious interpretation, a very extraordinary argument is alleged. It is, that Judas hanged himself before the shedding of the blood, supposed to have been for him. The same argument would extend against its having been shed for John the Baptist; and for every saint, who had lived and died before the crucifixion.

It would be tedious to repeat the quotations from Latimer, concerning original sin and free grace. They are all given under the colour of a support to Calvinism: And yet there is not a single quotation, by which the matters at issue on those points between the Calvinists and the Arminians are at all affected.

But, there is no particular in which the same bishop is represented as speaking so much unlike himself, as on the subject of final perseverance. Mr. Toplady, apparently aware how much the contrary to his representation has been usually supposed of Latimer, resolves it into a partial error of this reformer; and entertained by him for a time only, concerning a temporary, although not a final fall from grace. There have been given passages from him, in which he clearly supposes, that men may die in their apostacy. Such passages Mr. Toplady has overlooked. And what has he given in their stead? Passages which affirm—what none deny—that God will not desert the righteous; that he loves his people, like a mother her sucking child; that the devil cannot assail them any further than God permits; and that these considerations are full of comfort to the godly. Mr. Toplady calculates on his quotations, as having a reference to the above purposes: And he might have given from Latimer as many more; without giving a single sentiment, which has a bearing on the dispute.

It may be of use to remark further, the singular cast of authorities which Mr. Toplady has adduced, of men who held the articles of the church of England to be Calvinistick. This remark is designed to apply to two of the three names, introduced by him on the occasion; which are those of Mr. David Hume, the Rev. Mr. Tyndal, who wrote the continuation of Rapin's history, and bishop Burnet. Nothing would have been more conformable to David Hume's hostility to the christian religion generally, than the availing himself of an opportunity of throwing an odium on the religion of his country. He has, occasionally, manifested a partiality for the Roman catholic persuasion; and he would have

done the same for mahometanism, had it served the same purpose. That this writer should array the established church of England, in properties tending to what he doubtless considered as absurdity, was consistent; when what was thus written by him must be resolved into matter of opinion, and did not implicate him as an historian.

Of the literary reputation of Rapin's continuator, the writer of this has never heard, except in the labours of the compiler; in which, however, Mr. Tyndal is supposed by many not to have been remarkable for his impartiality. Voltaire, in his *Age of Lewis the fourteenth*,* on a subject on which he had no irreligious bias, says, that Tyndal compiled from the Dutch gazettes. Mr. Toplady, to make the opinion given to his purpose, is obliged to reject one half of it; which supposes a latitude to have been designed by the compilers. It is but the opinion of an ordinary writer, at the best; and the weight of it should be in the whole, or else in none.

Doubtless, there is much more respectability in the opinion of bishop Burnet; who expressed himself as he is said to have done, by Mr. Toplady: and it ought to have the more weight, because of his opinion on the general subject, which differed from that ascribed by him to the reformers. Still, the contrary has been held, by men on a level for talents with this eminent prelate. At any rate, it is evident, that if the compilers of the articles of the church of England were in the sublapsarian hypothesis, they exhibited a degree of moderation, extraordinary for any age; but especially for that

* Vol. 2. chap. 19.

in which they lived. The independency of predestination on prescience, together with the decree of reprobation, the imputation of Adam's sin, irresistible grace and final perseverance, were all included in the sublapsarian theory; and yet, not one of them is to be found. And besides, Mr. Toplady had no right to avail himself of this bishop's opinion, in part only. If he thought the compilers sublapsarian, he also thought that they accommodated to doctrines, since called Arminian. But the opinion of bishop Burnet has been already considered, and has been shown to have been expressed with a want of precision; creating an uncertainty, whether his remark applied to the review under Edward, or to that under Elizabeth.

5. The last fault—and it is conceived to be a very heavy one—with which the present writer charges Mr. Toplady, is his excessive personal abuse of those with whom he had engaged in controversy. It does not affect the force of his argument, where he may be thought to have used any; but it ought to induce a jealous eye over his quotations, and the lights in which he places them; because, even without a deliberate design to be unfair, a man may be made so by any passion, and by none more than by an intolerant zeal for system. Mr. Toplady had engaged in controversy with the Rev. John Wesley and a Rev. Walter Sellon. Besides expressing his contempt for these men, as “a pair of insignificant adversaries,” and accusing both of them of “malice” and of “fraudulent perversion of truth,” he calls the latter of them—“retailer general”—“whitewasher in ordinary”—“understrapper”—and “pack-horse” to the other; and “a small body of pelagian di-

vinity, bound in calf, neither gilt nor lettered." He pronounces him "too blind to see and too disingenuous to acknowledge," not being "able to distinguish a barber's basin from a helmet," and as "dipping his pen in the common sewer." These are but few of the flowers of objugatory eloquence, taken from the early pages of the production; the like to which are scattered over the whole face of it. After all, the author apologizes for his not being more severe: but he says he was fearful of "sinning against christian meekness," and that he would "much rather endure scurrility than offer it." He complains however of his two adversaries, as having been less civil to him than he to them; and, in evidence of the charge, produces a list of no very courtly sayings; proceeding, as he affirms, from the pen of Mr. Sellon. The correctness of this, the present writer has not investigated. But he undertakes to give his opinion, that when a christian minister can reconcile to his conscience the language here remarked on, and believe it to be consistent with the precepts of the gospel; it should admonish other people to be aware of that weakness of human nature, by which passion blinds the judgment; and, on that account, to be cautious in admitting the representations which such a person makes of other men's opinions and of facts. And this is the only use, to which the present writer applies the notice taken by him of the excessive zeal of Mr. Toplady, in language so contrary to ordinary sentiments of decorum.

SECTION II.

Of the Rev. Dr. Haweis's History of the Christian Church.

THIS author, like Mr. Toplady, was a beneficed clergyman of the church of England; but was unlike him, by being one of those, whose consciences can reconcile to that character, the vows made at ordination and the enjoyment of the revenue of a parish, with open encouragement of avowed secessions from the establishment. The only production of his here contemplated, is the one noticed above, under a title which, so far as the reading of the present writer extends, he supposes to have been never applied with so little propriety as on this occasion. The present notice of the work will relate to the small portion of it, which respects the protestant establishment in Edward's reign.

For this purpose, however, a preceding period must be adverted to, as having an influence on that in contemplation. It having been contended in this work, that the Lutheran reformation was regarded in the English; if Dr. Haweis's representation of the Lutheran opinions be correct, the effect is precisely the same, whether these or the Calvinistick were kept in view. He gives extracts from what Luther wrote in the beginning of his career; to prove, that this reformer's system was predestinarian in the highest grade. But was it fair to state this fact; without also stating, that Luther departed from that system; as is well known, from his sanctioning of some of Melancthon's works against it? The silence of the confession of Augsburg,

will for ever remain an unequivocal and the most public evidence, which could have been given of the fact. Concerning this confession, Dr. Haweis has given a remarkable testimony. He says—"The leading doctrines of the Augsburg confession are, the true and essential divinity of the Son of God; his substitution and vicarious sacrifice; and the necessity, freedom and efficacy of divine grace upon the human heart." And he adds—"Where God, the Son, is thus known, as a real Saviour to the uttermost; and God the Spirit acknowledged in the experience of his influence on the conscience, why should any thing afterwards be permitted to break the bands of union, between those who have been admitted to friendship with God?"* If by the "efficacy" of grace, there be here understood its producing of its effect irresistibly, there is not a sentence to that purpose in the confession. But this single expression being put out of view, there are no disputes between the Calvinists and the Arminians, concerning any of the points mentioned by Dr. Haweis: and therefore, to be consistent, he ought not to blame the latter, for not going with him to the extent of Calvinism. But he cannot continue his charity, for five pages further: for within these limits, he introduces, as tending to the disgrace of Lutheranism in Mosheim's day, his following remark concerning it—"The doctrines of absolute predestination, irresistible grace, and human impotence, were never carried to a more excessive length, nor maintained with a more virulent obstinacy by any divine, than they were by Luther; but in these times, he has very few followers in this respect, even among those who bear his name." Now the question occurs—When did this change—so far as there was any, take place? Verily,

* Vol. 2. page 453. Cent. 16. Per. 3. Sect. iii.

it was in Luther's own day, and at a very early period of it. But how came the confession of Augsburg to be such a favourite with Dr. Haweis? It says not a word of that absolute predestination, and that sense of grace, the want of which Dr. Haweis considered as a stigma on modern Lutheranism. In short, his narrative is essentially defective in this particular, that he makes no distinction between the doctrine taught by Luther, in the beginning of his labours for a reformation; and what the Lutheran divines in general, not excepting Luther himself, subsequently held; particularly at the period, when their sentiments are supposed to have produced effects on the reformation going on in England. Dr. Haweis represents this change, as what took place after the decease of Luther. Now, that after this event, changes did actually occur, and that Melancthon was taking a lead in them, when he was in the height of his reputation in England, is true. But, the change in question was a long time antecedent. Dr. Haweis, like Mr. Toplady, even denies that Luther propagated the doctrine of universal redemption: concerning which the appeal must be again made to the documents before referred to. Dr. Haweis, in speaking of the change among Luther's followers, after his decease, considers as one instance of their deterioration, that they adopted what he calls the semi-pelagian doctrine of co-operation. This is extraordinary in a clergyman, who meets the sentiment so clearly in the tenth article of his own church, and in many of the prayers. She was, however, anticipated in this by the Lutheran churches; whatever may be said of their adopting of the idea after the death of Luther.

“Against this” the doctrine of co-operation, says Dr. Haweis, “the Genevan apostle, ably seconded by his colleagues, Beza, Zanchius, and others, strongly contended and supported the system, since called the Calvinistick, with such force of argument, that it was universally adopted through all the reformed churches, and became their discriminating feature; and must continue so, as long as the Helvetic confession, the catechism of Heidelberg, and the thirty-nine articles of the church of England, continue unrepealed.”* The anachronism of this sentence, is extraordinary. Beza had been in the ministry but about two years, when the articles of the church of England were under consideration; and Zanchius does not make a figure in history, until eight years after that time. But perhaps it may be said, that the churches mentioned are to distribute these characters among them; the influence of the two last being supposed exerted on Belgium, and that of Calvin on England. Why then mix such heterogenous matter? The writer of this will not say what was the motive; but he ventures to affirm, that the natural effect on the mind of an uninformed reader, is the inducing of the supposition, that the controversy referred to by Dr. Haweis had thrown light on theology in England: whereas it has been shown, that the articles had been settled, before the said controversy was begun.

Dr. Haweis is especially unfortunate, in introducing the dispute raised by Huber, as an instance of a falling off from Luther’s doctrine, after his decease. Huber is represented as bringing in the doctrine of universal redemption, until then unknown among the Lutherans. But this divine’s quarrel with his brethren, was on another ground. It shall be here given, as it stands in

* Vol. 2. cent. 16. part 3. page 477.

Mosheim*—“Towards the conclusion of this century, a new controversy was imprudently set on foot at Wittenburg, by Samuel Huber, a native of Switzerland, and professor of divinity in that university. The Calvinistical doctrine of absolute predestination and unconditional decrees was extremely offensive to this adventurous doctor, and even excited his warmest indignation. Accordingly he affirmed, and taught publicly, that all mankind were elected from eternity by the Supreme Being to everlasting salvation, and accused his colleagues in particular, and the Lutheran divines in general, of a propensity to the doctrine of Calvin, on account of their asserting, that the divine election was confined to those, whose faith, foreseen by an omniscient God, rendered them the proper objects of his redeeming mercy. The opinion of Huber, as is now acknowledged by many learned men, differed more in words than in reality from the doctrine of the Lutheran church; for he did no more than explain in a new method, and with a different turn of phrase, what that church had always taught concerning the unlimited extent of the love of God, as embracing the whole human race, and excluding none by an absolute decree from everlasting salvation.” Mosheim’s history was known to Dr. Haweis; who surely ought not, on a point on which the other was an authority so respectable, to have given an account quite different, without producing an authority to put in the balance against it.

This author, emphatically denominates Calvin the friend of Cranmer. If the correspondence between them be a ground for the supposing of such a relation;

* Cent. 16, sect. 3, part 2. chap. sect. 44.

how much nearer, in this respect, was Cranmer to Melancthon and other Lutheran divines! Of the correspondence of these, and of the striking similarity in their systems, and even in their language, the historian takes no notice. But the other idea, corresponded with an object to be accomplished in the same paragraph, that—"the church of Geneva was avowed as a sister church, united in doctrine, though different in government and discipline." This is a repetition of what has been noticed, as having been said by Dr. Mosheim. But whatever apology may be made for this author; who, however meritorious in other respects, has shewn, that he was far from having been minutely informed of the affairs of the church of England; the same cannot be made for a clergyman of this church, in hazarding such an assertion, without a document referred to for a proof of it.

The same remark of the omitting of authorities, applies to the whole of the production of Dr. Haweis. It is common with historians, to give references in their margins, to documents cotemporary or nearly so to the times of which they treat: and nothing can be more reasonable; since, if the truth of any statement should be questioned, the reader has it put in his offer, to bring the matter to a test. Whereas, this check being omitted; although there may still be an investigation of the fact; yet the historian, if so disposed, has an opportunity of imposing the fabrications of his own brain; while yet it may be impossible to ascertain, whether he may not have taken them from other, though insufficient writers.

Dr. Haweis has affirmed, in another part of his work, that there is more good sense in a few pa-

ges of the treatise of president Edwards on the human will, than in all the works of St. Austin. President Edwards' scheme is entirely that of philosophical necessity; and the same which, according to Dr. Maclean, quoted also in a former part of this work, has spread among the clergy of the continental European churches; and which has contributed to the support of Calvinism. This being the case, how inconsistent with himself is Dr. Haweis, in the following passages! *— Speaking of the state of religion on the continent of Europe, he says,—“ What is singular enough, the wide spreadings of Arminianism, which infected the protestant countries, have begun even in them, to give way to the more philosophical doctrine of necessity, leading to fatalism and ending in atheism.” Again, † “ The Calvinists as well as Lutherans” (meaning in Germany) “ have too generally imbibed the principles of the infidel philosophy. Excluding the government of the all-wise and righteous Jehovah, they have placed blind fate upon the throne, and substituted the doctrine of necessity, for God's predestination and grace.” This is a very unnatural association in the estimation of the present writer; but is improperly complained of by an advocate of the scheme of president Edwards; who must have been among the earliest—Dr. Priestley affirms him to have been the first—of those considered as applying the philosophical theory to the support of the Calvinistick doctrines. It is not here doubted, that there has been a considerable spread of infidel philosophy, as affirmed above by Dr. Haweis: but it is not believed—what he evidently intended to insinuate—that the parti-

* Vol. 3. page 141.

† Page 302.

cular species of infidelity which allies itself with the doctrine of philosophical necessity, grew out of Arminianism. On the contrary it is here supposed—and the supposition derives much countenance from what will be found in a note of Dr. Maclean—that the principal prevalence of the necessarian hypothesis, has been in countries in which Arminianism has been borne down or discouraged by the authority of the governments. Whether any considerable number of the Lutheran divines have gone into the former scheme, is more than the present writer has been informed of.

It is singular, that Dr. Haweis should so much commend Zuinglius, as an orthodox divine; when nothing can be more evident, than that on points which the historian considers as essential to Christian verity, the reformer was in a contrary belief. Of this, there shall only be given the following testimony from Mosheim—“The absolute decree of God with respect to the future and everlasting condition of the human race, which made no part of the theology of Zuingle, was an essential tenet in the creed of Calvin, who inculcated with zeal the following doctrine: that God, in predestinating from all eternity one part of mankind to everlasting happiness, and another to endless misery, was led to make this distinction by no other motive, than his own good pleasure and free-will.”*

The writer of this, having represented what Dr. Haweis calls his history in an unfavourable point of view; and having done so, for the avowed purpose of giving a caution against too easy credit to the composition; there shall be occasion taken, in order to guard

* Cent. 16. chap. 2. sect. 12. p. 2.

against a wrong construction of an undertaking apparently so ungracious, to exhibit one instance, out of many of the said doctor's extreme unfairness on the subject of persecution. It is not exactly pertinent to the subject of this section; but may contribute to the object of it, by still further showing, with how much scrupulousness a composition called *impartial* in the title page, should be read.

Dr. Haweis loses no opportunity of professing himself an enemy to persecution for religion: but with what measure of distributive justice he deals out his censures against persecutors, it is here proposed to ascertain in the instances of archbishop Laud and Calvin.

The mangling punishment of Alexander Leighton, in the reign of Charles the first, was recorded by Laud in his diary—"with apparent satisfaction," says Dr. Haweis. No terms expressive of satisfaction are given: Gray, in his answer to Neal, declares, that all the words in the diary, relative to the subject, are—"part of his sentence was executed upon him at Westminster:"—Neal had given, as from the diary, the particulars of the punishment; which Gray denies to be there recorded: but even the former says nothing of apparent satisfaction. Dr. Haweis calls the punishment an act of cruelty, injustice and malignity; perpetrated under the cloak of law and religion. Such is his opinion of an infliction for a book full of seditious matter; among other things, calling the queen a daughter of Heth, a Canaanite and an idolatress. But however lightly these crimes may be estimated, they were prosecuted as civil offences, and in a temporal court; and not under the plea of religion. However the present writer may disapprove of the said species of punishment in any case;

yet perhaps to some it will seem merciful, in comparison of that which would probably have awaited the offender, had his trial been in the King's Bench: for the two lords chief justices declared their opinions, that his crime was treason. But says Dr. Haweis, "When sentence was pronounced in court, Laud, pulling off his cap, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, gave thanks to God, who had enabled him to behold his vengeance on his enemies." The writer from whom this matter, as it respects Leighton, is always taken, is Rushworth, who does not even mention Laud's name on the occasion; which is the more to be noticed, as Rushworth was a zealous adherent to the parliament, and stands accused of great unfaithfulness in favour of their cause. Daniel Neal, who was almost as remarkable for his inaccuracies, as for his prejudices, takes the story from Rushworth; but recites, as from Laud's diary, the particulars of the punishment, and the giving of God thanks, with the pulling off the cap; as Rushworth does not in either instance; which also are not in the diary, according to the testimony of Gray. But when the story has been in the hands of Dr. Haweis, it comes out embellished by the circumstances of Laud's lifting up his eyes to heaven; and the describing of the thanks to be for vengeance on his enemies: Neal himself would have despaired of having this believed, as coming from the lips of a member of the court, and in its presence.

It appears from Fuller, that this business of Alexander Leighton was not noticed on Laud's trial. Rapin says nothing on the subject. Gray is confident, that Neal fabricated the circumstances of pulling off the

cap, and giving God thanks; not being able to find them in any one else.

William Harris, in his virulent *Life of Charles I*, says, he had read the greatest part of Leighton's book, and could not for his life see any thing deserving so heavy a censure: meaning, as that passed on it by Rushworth the parliamentarian. Mr. Harris was too full of party zeal, for the expecting of an impartial opinion from him, even if he had read the whole book. But although he urges the case of Leighton as an objection to the character of Laud, he does not go to the extent of Neal, in professing to draw from Rushworth's materials what is not to be found among them. And yet, the misrepresentation is transmitted, in alliance with many others, from edition to edition.

There has lately appeared in England a *History of the Puritans*, by Benjamin Brook. The present writer has glanced at some passages, sufficiently to perceive the excessive unfairness of the author. In the present business, he goes even beyond Dr. Haweis, in adorning Laud's part of it with fabrications. He is described, not indeed as lifting up his eyes, but as lifting up his hands; and as calling on his associates of the star-chamber to inflict the heaviest punishment in their power. And for these things he cites the authority of Rushworth, who says not one word concerning the archbishop on the subject.

When the character of the aforesaid Leighton comes under review, there is some consolation in thinking of the compensation which he made to the church, in furnishing her with a son so very unlike the father, as archbishop Leighton; to whom it will not be too much

to apply what St. Paul says of certain saints of old, that —“the world was not worthy” of them.

Let there now be taken the same Dr. Haweis, dealing out his justice to Calvin, on account of the burning of Servetus. Persecution ought to be odious in every shape; and the only palliative of it, is the general error formerly entertained, that the magistrate is to guard the faith by penal laws, with a view to the civil welfare of the community. But Servetus was not a subject of the republic, in which he was tried and put to death. To bring him to his fate, Calvin sent to Vienne letters addressed to him by Servetus, in former correspondence. This unfortunate man escaped from that city, and was merely a traveller, in his passage through Geneva, when he was seized by the procurement of Calvin; who would have come forward as his accuser, had not this, by the law of the place, required a temporary confinement in jail. To submit to confinement, must have been both unpleasant and derogatory to Calvin; who accordingly devolved it, together with the office of accuser, on one of his domestics. In all this, there could be no pretence of civil right and duty. If it be pleaded, that the reformer was nevertheless actuated by religious principle, operating in a mistaken way, not a word shall be here said in denial.

It may be hoped, that the irritation which had taken place in controversy, and the invective and contempt injuriously thrown on him by Servetus, did not contribute to the result. For all this, Calvin has answered at an higher than any worldly tribunal: and even if any human sentence passed on him should be unfavourable; the writer of this is aware, how awful would be the result, if God should judge rigorously, whereinso-

ever there may be applied the saying of Christ—"ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." But what says Dr. Haweis, to a transaction so contrary to his professed principles of toleration? "The sufferings of" (he mentions several, but particularizes) "the ever remembered Servetus, put to death by the Genevan magistrates for his Socinian and infidel opinions, have brought an odium on Calvin's name, as having instigated them to such acts of violence; at least not having exerted the authority which he was known to possess, to prevent the shedding of blood: and if this were a just charge, let the reproach rest upon him."* Such is the distributive justice of Dr. Haweis, between Calvin and Laud. On such an occasion, the cause of toleration may be considered as saying—"non tali auxilio"—"the proffered aid may be dispensed with."

The present writer is confined by his subject, to a very small part of the production brought under consideration. But whoever wishes for a more extensive view of its unfaithfulness, may find it in a review annexed to bishop Skinner's defence of episcopacy, re-published in New-York. Of the many just charges there brought, no notice has been here taken; except, that the review faults in few words the slight and hypothetical censure passed in the business of Servetus.

* Vol. iii. C. xvi. p. 494.

SECTION III.

Of "The True Churchman ascertained, by the Rev. John Overton, A. B."

THIS gentleman, is a clergyman of the church of England; and his work purports to be an apology for those of the established clergy, to whom there has been appropriated the title of evangelical preachers.

Mr. Overton differs from Dr. Haweis, in being a zealous advocate for order in the church of which he is a minister: faulting those who violate it, particularly Dr. Haweis by name. Mr. Overton also differs both from Mr. Toplady and from Dr. Haweis, in this respect; that, in the mentioning of some eminent divines, both of former times and of the present day, who were notoriously anti-calvinistick in their opinions, he delivers himself in such terms as show, that they were supposed by him to hold the substance of Christian verity.

Further, it is understood, that Mr. Overton is respectfully spoken of, both in his ecclesiastical and in his private character. And the work itself shews, that he is far from being inconsiderable in point of talents.

If Mr. Overton sometimes indulges himself in asperity, against those of his brethren in the ministry, who had faulted him and others as not true sons of the church, on account of a plan of preaching, which they thought called for by fidelity to their sacred trust; there is no knowing, at this distance, how far such asperity may have been provoked, by something similar on the other side. That a proportion of the English clergy ne-

glect the laying of a due stress on the constituent doctrines of the gospel; is a fact, attested by the acknowledgments and the consequent reproofs of some of the most eminent of the English bishops. Under such circumstances, a contrary conduct in any clergyman is of course commendable. And if, in repelling misdirected censure on it, he should in any instance give too great a scope to his feelings and to the expression of them, the fault seems venial; provided, as in the present instance, it fall far short of intemperate passion and downright abuse: such as are visible in the productions of Mr. Toplady and Dr. Haweis. On the other hand, if the writer of this may judge from some facts, of which he thinks himself well informed, relative to the clergy of the parent church; and further, from some which have passed under his notice in the United States; the claim of evangelical preaching is often made, either in the way of denying that any thing short of Calvinism is gospel doctrine; or else, as resolving all religion into animal sensibility. The name in question, when assumed with a view to the making of a distinction on such grounds, has a tendency to slander many faithful ministers, who make conscience of opening to their flocks the whole counsel of God; but do not consider the opinions here alluded to, or any practices connected with them, as comprehended within the design. On this account it is here supposed, that a clergyman may be truly evangelical in his preaching; and yet, not wish to be characterized by a name, so far as it is abused to an unworthy purpose. In this line, as in that of morals, he may be "as becometh the gospel of Christ;" however this may have a tendency to put an unworthy brother to open shame:

but there is a great difference between his fidelity in either instance, and the assuming of a name of party; rendering him indirectly, yet intentionally, an accuser of his brethren. That Mr. Overton is not free from this fault, appears not only from his professedly passing from the character of an apologist to that of an accuser; but from a comparison of some of his quotations with the places to which they relate, as will be more fully stated, towards the conclusion of these remarks.

The general design in regard to Mr. Overton, is, not to go into the great variety of matter, comprehended in his book; but merely to consider it, as it relates to the alleged Calvinism of the church of England. There will however be a use, in regard to this, in first making some general remarks concerning his view of the Calvinistic system: After which, there shall be attention paid to the evidences brought by him, to sustain his position of the Calvinism of the church.

It is not a little singular, that in a work like that here noticed; intended to affirm the Calvinism of an established church against gainsayers, and held up by a numerous body of the establishment, as having proved the matter, beyond the possibility of refutation—for this is said to be the reputation of the work, with those who claim an exclusive property in the title of evangelical preachers—there should not be a disclosure of what are the ideas of the author, as to the system in question; any further than an intimation, that they differ from those of many, by whom the same system is upheld. To what end is argument; when perhaps nothing more than explanation is wanting, to discover to the opposite parties that they are agreed? And that in some instances in the present case, such a discovery would be

an effect of a statement of the meaning of terms, the writer of this supposes very probable.

In a dispute, in which some affirm and others deny, that the doctrine of the church is Calvinistick; they should either state their precise ideas of Calvinism, or refer to some standard, which they agree in considering as unequivocally Calvinistick. Perhaps there cannot be taken any standard more proper, than the determinations of the synod of Dort; in connexion with the keeping in view of the precise points of difference, on which the determinations were formed. Accordingly, these shall be regarded, in the remarks to be now made on the publication of Mr. Overton. If Calvin's celebrated work called "The Institutions," should be preferred as the standard, it will equally agree with the view to be here taken of the subject.

On the first point at issue, the difference between the Calvinists and the Arminians consisted in there being affirmed, on one side, that predestination was founded on prescience; and, on the other side, that the former was for the illustration of the divine sovereignty, without any regard to faith or to works foreseen. On this question, Mr. Overton seems to express himself with extreme inconsistency. Towards the end of his book,* the only place in which he precisely notices this discriminating feature of the controversy, he declares in favour of the Calvinistick tenet: And yet he had before,† in behalf of himself, and of the divines whose cause he pleaded, disclaimed the doctrines of "absolute decrees and reprobation; extravagancies," says he, "which we utterly disavow." The term "absolute" is always

* Page 354.

† Page 96.

used as correlative to conditional: And accordingly, the question occurs—How can a conditional decree be independent on prescience? The severing of election from reprobation, is an expedient unknown in any confessedly Calvinistick churches. In the canons of Dort, in the Westminster confession, and in the Institutions of Calvin himself, they are but different branches of the divine sovereignty, exercised over the human race; contemplated, on the Supralapsarian plan, as liable to fall; and on the Sublapsarian plan, as fallen. Where is the author, owned as orthodox in any church of which the Calvinism is not denied, who would not be considered as contradicting the public creed, by a separation between these two subjects? And what right, then, has Mr. Overton to separate them; thereby using language, in a sense which has a tendency to mislead?

On the point of redemption, as on the foregoing point, the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians is reduced within a very narrow compass. Here, the subject is pronounced, on one side of the controversy, partial; and on the other side, universal. Mr. Overton acknowledges,* that the established forms of his church do not use the language found in the institutes of Calvin, respecting the extent of Christ's redemption. And is this all? Do not the former use language, in direct contrariety to the latter? Let any one fairly estimate the terms, in which the doctrine is expressed in the thirty-first article—in the consecration prayer of the Eucharist—in one of the answers of the catechism—and in many other places which have been recited in this work: and then let him ask, how far the

* Page 94.

construing of these matters into silence on the subject, is consistent with the zeal expressed on other points in "The True Churchman ascertained," for the reception of the institutions of the church of England in their literal and grammatical sense.

On the third point at issue between the Calvinists and the Arminians, the parties were agreed at Dort. Nevertheless, much having been since said on the subject of original sin; it may be proper to remark here concerning Mr. Overton, that there is not a sentence in his work, concerning the imputation of the sin of Adam. Although, on the other branch of the doctrine, human nature is pronounced by him, in general terms to be wholly corrupt; yet there seems room to question, whether the ideas of this divine go to the extent of those of Calvin, in affirming of man, as he is by nature, that there is no crime which he will not commit; unless restrained from it by some motive, that has nothing in it of morality of principle. If Mr. Overton believe this, he has not said any thing to the effect.

On the fourth part of the general controversy, there is no medium between the opinions of irresistible grace, and of that of its being resistible and suasive. What is Mr. Overton's opinion, or how he conceives his church to have spoken in regard to this, does not appear. He is equally silent on the subject of final perseverance. No one would find out from his performance, that the said doctrine is a branch of Calvinism. The probability is, that the Calvinistick dogmas on these points were among the matters concerning which he says* "they" (meaning the English reformers)

* Page 94.

“were aware of the extremes to which some had proceeded on these subjects, and of the liability of the doctrines of grace to abuse; and wished therefore to express themselves with moderation and caution.” In short, under every one of the particulars here referred to, Mr. Overton has given reason to believe, that either he rejects it, or does not admit it in such an extent, as to entitle his theory to the epithet of Calvinistick.

But perhaps, the consistency of this divine may be thought to find a retreat, under the shelter of moderation. For he speaks* of the “moderate Calvinism” of his church; and† he pronounces her “moderately Calvinistick.” In ancient controversy, these would have been thought strange terms; but since they have been introduced of late years, it may be worth while, if possible, to ascertain their meaning. This, however, must be a work of conjecture; as the writer of this does not recollect ever to have met with definitions of the terms; or a line of discrimination drawn between Calvinism proper, and the same subject in this its new form. Being thus reduced to his own conjectures, he is under the necessity of stating, that he can form an idea of a moderate Calvinist; but not of moderate Calvinism.

A man may be a consistent Calvinist, as the name has been commonly understood; and yet not so far a zealot of his system, as not to perceive the irrelevancy to the subject of many of the texts of scripture, usually pressed into its service. Dr. Doddridge, in this sense of the words, was a moderate Calvinist; having had the candour, to give to sundry passages interpretations different from those of Calvinistick expositors generally. If

* Page 95.

† Page 97.

Mr. Overton had been drawn more fully into the subject, and had been then found a Calvinist in any sense, it would probably have been in this.

Or a man may be honestly persuaded of the truth of the Calvinistick system; and yet not be such a bigot to it, as to make it the test of christian character; so as to pronounce of the opponents of it, that they reject the fundamental doctrines of the christian system. In this sense of the words, Mr. Overton has manifested himself a moderate Calvinist; because he speaks of many Anti-calvinistick authors, both of former days and of the present, in such terms, as are presumptive of his supposing them to possess the essence of divine truth. Among celebrated men of remote ages, he mentions Mr. Hooker; whose opposition to what was afterwards called Calvinism, unequivocally appears at the very time, when, according to the principles laid down in this work, the system had recently become general; or at least was very prevalent in the church of England. Among divines of late and present times, there are mentioned with especial and merited praise, archbishop Secker, and bishops Porteus, Horsely, Horne, Barrington, and Prettyman.

But when we proceed to enquire for moderate Calvinism, by what marks shall it be known? Is it by the exclusion of one or of more of the points, and by the retaining of the rest? To such a disjointed system, it is hardly worth while to give a name. Calvinism—to do it justice—is a connected body of doctrine, the several parts of which are mutually dependent on one another. When St. Austin, on introducing what is now called Calvinistick predestination, held it in connexion with the possibility of a final fall from grace, nothing

can reconcile it with the general opinion entertained of his great talents; except, that the latter point, by its alliance with the rite of baptism, had become incorporated with the habits of thinking of all orders of persons throughout the christian church. But for such a disjunction at present, there would be no excuse. This being excluded, what room is there, on any one point of the controversy, for a medium between extremes—unless, perhaps, on the point of original sin? Predestination—taking the word as used in the controversy—must be founded on prescience, or independent on it, redemption must be universal or particular. Grace must be resistible or irresistible; and a falling from grace, is either possible or impossible. Even on the subject of original sin, that of Adam is imputed, or it is not: although on the other branch of the question man may be “far gone from original righteousness,” (or even as far as possible) as the article expresses it; and yet not entertain an inclination to every species of wickedness, however kept back from it by fear or shame. Whether Mr. Overton rejected some of the points and retained the rest, or took what he thought a middle course, the most agreeable to his peculiar conceptions, it was incumbent on him to define his meaning. As he has not defined it, there seems no resource of conjecture; but the supposing of it to come in under some inconsistent form, which would be exposed to detection by its being delineated.

However groundless the distinction between moderate and immoderate Calvinism; the supposition of it is essential to the scheme of Mr. Overton; because, without it, there seems an impossibility of reconciling with his reputation for understanding, his not hesitating to

bring from early documents so many quotations, which are pertinent, only on the presumption of that distinction; and of which the force disappears, on their being brought to the known line of discrimination between the Calvinistick and the Arminian theories.

To examine the general properties of his evidence of the Calvinism of the church of England, was the next matter proposed.

Here, it is of especial importance to notice the address of Mr. Overton, in fixing the attention of his readers on the reign of queen Elizabeth,* as “the very period when our articles assumed their present form and authority.” They certainly then assumed the authority, which they carry in England to the present day. But as to their form, and their substance also—except in a few particulars, having no connexion with the controversy here treated of—they originated in the reign of Edward the sixth. Accordingly, that is the period, to which we should look for the consenting testimonies of individuals, in order to ascertain the meaning of the articles. Let there be supposed an act of a civil legislature, repealed soon after the passing of it, continuing dormant about six years, and then re-enacted. Doubtless, the re-enaction is the ground, on which it is to stand in future: but if there should occur a question as to the meaning of the act, any light to be thrown on it would come better from the opinions of its contrivers, than from those of its restorers. By reversing this order, Mr. Overton gains much. For although it is not to be conceded to him, that the divines of the church of England were generally Calvinistick, at the time of

* Page 57.

passing the act of uniformity under Elizabeth; yet it is contended, that at this very period, and on the return of the exiles from the continent, there began the leaven, which at last leavened the greater part of the lump.

It will be sufficient, to take under review the second chapter; which is divided into two sections.

The object of the first section, is to seek for the true sense of the articles, from the forms, as they illustrate and explain one another; from the title of the articles; from the preamble; from the circumstances and the object of the reformers; from their other public and approved writings; and from the authorities they respected. That true sense, as understood by Mr. Overton, is declared throughout his whole book to be Calvinism. He indeed hints, in various places, that he does not go to the extent of Calvin's doctrines. But as he has not in any place, defined wherein his moderate Calvinism differs from Calvinism proper; and as the writer of this has already confessed his inability to form an apprehension of the meaning of the expression; he is obliged to understand the term Calvinism, according to common use; and to enquire, how far any thing, coming under that description, can be gathered from the sources specified.

It is extraordinary, that Mr. Overton should have introduced the first of these particulars; and yet have thought himself excused from giving a single instance, in proof of his point. He says* "The doctrines of the articles," (by which he understands Calvinism) "are 'woven with much industry into her' (the church's) 'forms of public worship.'" There needs not be repeated, what the writer of this conceives the unequivocal

* Page 45.

cal instances produced by him, in the proper places, of passages in the liturgy absolutely inconsistent with Calvinism. These passages have been so often urged to the same effect; that the entire disregard of them, is a material omission in a controversial treatise of the description of that of Mr. Overton.

The title of the articles, expresses their being framed for the avoiding of diversities of opinion. The notice of this, is designed by Mr. Overton against certain divines, quoted in his first chapters. How far the sense of these divines has been fairly interpreted, it would be foreign to the present purpose to enquire. The writer of this is acquainted with the productions of some of them; who, according to his judgment, have taken too great a latitude in this particular, and on grounds not defensible. He further believes, that the articles were framed to avoid, not indeed all possible difference of opinion, on questions which may be raised on religious subjects; but difference as to the points, on which the framers of the articles thought it necessary to determine. Accordingly, on this abstract question, there is nothing to be here opposed to Mr. Overton.

Concerning the declaration; the instrument itself shows, that they by whose influence it was procured, considered the Calvinistical divines as going beyond the plain, literal, and grammatical sense, and as superadding to what the articles had established; while themselves kept to the genuine doctrine of them. They professed adherence, not only to the letter, but to the spirit of the articles: Whereas Mr. Overton represents bishop Burnet as stating, that they availed themselves of the strict and grammatical sense, to clear themselves of the charge of prevarication. The writer of this has

in vain looked for any such sentiment, as applied by Bishop Burnet in his exposition, to the Calvinistick controversy; although, in the ninth page of the introduction, it is applied to the diversity of sentiment, concerning the clause in the apostle's creed of Christ's descent into hell; which the bishop states to admit of three senses, on grounds not at all applicable to the other controversy. And then he adds, in the very words quoted by Mr. Overton—"In which soever a man conceives the article, he may subscribe it, and he does no way prevaricate in so doing." If the preface be the place intended by Mr. Overton; which would seem to be the case, since what is quoted as applying to the present subject is actually there, although applied to another; he was exceedingly incorrect in adding, as the words of the bishop,—“To support this, that declaration was set forth:” for the words are not there found. But there is no need of the evidence of bishop Burnet, on this subject. The declaration itself, in connexion with the occasion of it, shows, that the framers considered themselves as holding to the extent of the articles; and their opponents as superadding from their own system, what they could not obtain from public authority; but which they thought wanting, agreeably to acknowledgments made in the preceding reign, at Hampton Court. And that the declaration was understood as here stated, is evident from the loud complaints of the Calvinistick clergy, concerning the restraints laid on them by the instrument. What occasion was there for such complaints, if it were a mere cover of the apparent prevarication of the other party? Under such circumstances, the Calvinists might have censured the lenity extended to others; but could not have

pretended, that it was a restraint on themselves. In treating on this subject, Mr. Overton is even driven to the extremity, of representing archbishop Laud as a Calvinist: for nothing short of this is essential to his argument *a fortiori*,* that of the two parties into which the church was divided, the most moderate professed to reach the standard; while the other, which consisted of a great majority, was supposed to exceed it.

Under the fourth particular, Mr. Overton instances the articles; evidently not with accuracy, because his professed object, in the present section, is to ascertain the sense of them. Nevertheless, on finding them introduced, it is natural in a reader, to have his attention awake to some evidence of their Calvinism. Not a word, to that effect, is said: nor is any article, or a part of any one made a subject; not to say in this place, which called for it especially, but in any page of the volume.

But dean Nowell's celebrated catechism is thought to prove the Calvinism of the articles, coterminously established. Here, the reader is again carried forward to the reign of Elizabeth; of which it has been already remarked, that any documents from it are not strictly relevant. It is true, that this catechism is understood to be the same in substance with a former one by bishop Poinet, under Edward; and undoubtedly patronised by archbishop Cranmer. As to the additions made to it by dean Nowell; if, under his name, it have any tendency to the doctrine of Calvin; it would not follow, that the same property attached, under the earlier form in which it was issued by bishop Poinet. This is said,

* Page 48.

more with a view to distinctness of argument, than from any idea, that Calvinism was so prevalent in the beginning of the reign of that queen, as it became towards the conclusion of it. Of the catechism, more will be said in what is to follow. At present it will not be foreign to the purpose, to remark the circumstance, that Mr. Toplady and others produce from it in favour of their system, such passages only, as do not go to the points, on which the Calvinists and the Arminians divide. And this sentiment receives confirmation from now finding a Calvinistick divine, appealing confidently to the same instrument; without thinking himself obliged to produce extracts, which go to the extent of justifying the application of it to his theory.

But the supposed testimony of the catechism is sustained by the public confessions and declarations of the English martyrs and confessors, under Mary. In which of them? Mr. Toplady, indeed, might have been considered as having rendered the labour of quoting them unnecessary, if his quotations had proved the point. But the contrary, it is hoped, has been shown in this appendix. Mr. Overton, however, refers to writers, whose Calvinism it is as lawful to deny, as to affirm without proof.

It was especially incumbent on him, to be attentive to any productions of this sort, after declaring them to deserve the more attention—"because it is common to insinuate, that the interpretation of the articles now termed methodistic or Calvinistick, was only introduced by the return of the exiles, on the accession of Elizabeth, and was not in the primary intention of our church."*

* Page 59.

This is, indeed, more than insinuated; it is positively affirmed, and supposed to have been proved; and there is no evidence in Mr. Overton's book, not to say that proves the contrary, but that is at all relevant to the point.

The defect is not supplied by the appeal of this divine to certain public instruments, drawn up in the reign of Elizabeth; not only because they do not relate to the period in question, but because there are not given any specimens of their contents, and because, as is here conceived, the giving of them would defeat the design for which it would be done. It is as little to the purpose, merely to name and to affirm the sense of contemporary authors, especially bishop Jewell; who may be pronounced, but will never be proved to have been a Calvinist.

Mr. Overton* mentions the case of Baroe, as an evidence of there having been, previously, an uninterrupted profession of Calvinism, in the university of Cambridge. The direct contrary seems the proper inference from that case: and it may be presumed, that Baroe would not have been permitted to persevere so many years in teaching a theory, known to be in opposition to the established religion of the kingdom. Here is also another instance of the inaccuracy of Mr. Overton. He represents Baroe as expelled. It was not so. He was left out, on the return of a periodical election: or rather, apprehending such an event, he declined the being a candidate.

It is probable, that Mr. Overton had not inquired, very particularly, into the events of the time between

* Page 83.

the accession of Elizabeth, and Baroe's loss of a re-election to his professorship by a contrariety to Calvinism. Nothing else can account for our finding, in the book under review, the number of those who did not adhere to it reduced to four or five, during half a century, in the two universities and the whole aggregate of divines in the nation. Unequivocal facts to the contrary, have been exhibited in this work. And as to the four or five specified; instead of their being obliged to hide their heads, as is represented, they lived and died in the highest reputation: Which is especially true of the same Baroe; whose case is stated, with circumstances so foreign to those which authentic history records. Mr. Overton would hardly affirm, that the celebrated Hooker was obliged to hide his head. It is well known how highly he was honoured, by the rulers both in the church and in the state; and it may be presumed, that nothing prevented his rising to the highest dignities of the former, but his early death. And yet, what evident proofs do we find of his dislike of Calvinism, in the narrative of his controversy with Travers!

The last source stated, is the authorities had recourse to by the reformers. There is no cause of wonder under this head, that Mr. Overton should perceive the necessity of ridding himself of the important fact, of the ordering of the paraphrase of Erasmus to be kept in every church. Here, he quotes a passage from the translator's preface to the Acts of the Apostles; to prove, that the sentiments of Erasmus were not altogether in harmony with the opinions of the reformers. And further, he compares what was done in favour of the work of Erasmus, to a similar order in favour of Fox's Mar-

tyrology; although, in one place, it throws out a censure on the laying of so much stress on the wearing of the episcopal habit, in the case of bishop Hooper. But there is no ground of comparison in the two cases. Fox's very slight censure was not on the wearing of the habit, but on the compelling the wearing of it, in that particular case. It related to a scruple that had been put to silence in Edward's time, and had not yet re-appeared under Elizabeth; the revival of it being since 1564. This single scruple, was relative merely to a matter of ecclesiastical order, and that of no great consequence: Whereas the supposed errors of Erasmus, on the controverted points, applied to doctrines of very great moment; and such as, in the opinions of Calvinists, affected the very essence of Christianity. Besides these things, Fox's work was placed only in the cathedral churches, and in the common halls of the dignitaries of the church; where, no doubt, they served as valuable preservatives against a relapse to the errors of the church of Rome. For although Strype says, that they were lodged in all the parish churches; yet, notwithstanding the general accuracy of this writer, he may be supposed to have been mistaken in this particular; it being otherwise stated by historians generally. Only Collier and the *Biographia Britannica* shall be here named.

But the most material error in this part of Mr. Overton's work, is in what he says concerning the preface of the translator of Erasmus. Any one would suppose, that he had apologized for a bias to popery, in his author. Nothing is further from the truth. In that preface, all existing hostility to the work is ascribed to hatred of God's word, and the grace of the gospel, which Eras-

mus had laboured to bring to light. And it is afterwards, in reference to smaller matters, that there is the acknowledgment made, not of actual, but of possible mistake. If there should be a doubt that the sense is here correctly stated; it may be established, by reciting the following passage from the preface to the gospels. After many commendations of his author, the translator adds—"In justification of faith, in honouring God onely, in repentance and puritie of a Christian mannes lyfe, in detestyng of ymagery and the corrupt honouryng of saintes, in openyng and defaceyng the tyrannie, the blasphemie, the hipocrisie, the ambition, the usurpacion of the see of Rome, in noting of abuses of all the abominable sects of counterfeit religions and ydle cloysters, in beyrayng the jugleyng sleightes and fyne practice of popery, in choyce of meates, in estemyng the difference of dayes, in manefestyng of vain ceremonies, under the colour and pretence of holyness crepte into Christes church, in reprehending pilgrimages, with all circumstances of idolatry and supersticion, in descrybing of a prince's office, in teaching obedience of the people towards their rewlars and governours, in declaryng of a pastores duetie, in sheweyng the part of an evangelical preacher, and what or howe hys doctrine ought to be out of the scriptures, in elasing the anti-christian decrees of popery, under the name of tradicions and constitucions of our mother church, in deciding the right difference between the spirite and the lettre, and finally, in all other pointes or articles of our religion, havying now of leate yeares been in controversie, Erasmus, lyke as he is no where vehemente, so is he every where both syncere and full."

It is impossible that a translator, who also became a violent Nonconformist, should write thus concerning his author; and yet conceive himself called on to apologize for any leaning in him, to the errors of the Roman catholic church. But to do away all pretence of this sort, it is best to examine the paraphrase itself, or the passages of it which relate to texts usually applied by the Roman catholics to their purposes; when it will be perceived, that the senses of the latter are quite foreign to those given to the world by Erasmus. He may have abhorred the reformers, as Mr. Overton quotes from Dr. Jortin. And this may have arisen from dissatisfaction with some of their proceedings; or from his not having the spirit of a martyr, as himself is said to have confessed. Be this as it may; he was a doctrinal protestant, before Luther began the reformation.

The authorities positively referred to by Mr. Overton, are in the first place Luther; who, at least in the latter part of his life, should be put in the other scale. Then, he refers to the whole body of the confessions of all the reformed churches. Does he include the Lutheran in the number, in which the doctrine of predestination is not even named? Does he even include the Belgic confession, framed long before the synod of Dort, and still of authority in the Helvetic churches; in which, although the doctrine is named, nothing is decided on the question of prescience, as the foundation of the act? It is well known, that the Calvinistick churches on the continent received the complexion of their present system, at the time of the decision of the controversy concerning the five points. And their original omitting of a determination that predestination was indepen-

dent on prescience, could not have been from accident; because the distinction had long been current; and the point is to be found decided on in Calvin's Institutes. The fact here stated, is in favour of a position sustained in this work—that the rigour of the Calvinistick system began to gain its ascendancy, long after the beginning of the reformation, and after Calvin had distinguished himself in controversy on another subject, but not on this.

The next authorities named, are the primitive church, and the works of St. Austin. The general ground of primitive antiquity Mr. Overton names, but does not enter on. Concerning St. Austin he adds—"No human authority had certainly so great weight with them" (the English reformers) "or was so frequently resorted to by them."* No proof is or can be given, of this assumed fact; showing, that the reformers paid more regard to him, than to some others of the fathers. For as to the opinion given of bishop Carleton and Dr. Ward; it was too long after the period in question, to amount to testimony; especially as they were not impartial on the subject. The compilers have, indeed, introduced the name of Austin into the articles: so have they the names of others; as was shown in the part of the work, to which this is an appendix.

Mr. Overton concludes the section with remarking, how much of testimony on the subject, had been suppressed by the gentlemen against whom he writes; on which, the remark shall be here made,—that much testimony has been suppressed on the other side; especially the intercourse of the compilers of the English

service with the Lutherans; and the strong evidence, on the face of the institutions of the former, of there being an intended resemblance of the latter. No one would ever gather from the work here under review, that any stress had been ever laid on this collateral evidence, against the opinions there sustained.

The second section of Mr. Overton, entitled "The true interpretation of the articles sought from the known private sentiments of our reformers," is little more than a repetition of his authorities in the first section, with a mixture of some other matters; which shall be here noticed, without a repetition of the answers already given to the other.

First, he argues from the universal testimony of men of all sentiments, and of the utmost respectability. But this universality, when displayed, amounts to the opinions—not the testimonies—of bishop Burnet, David Hume, the *New Annual Register*, the critical reviewers, Dr. Maclaine, Mr. Strype, Mr. Wilson and Dr. Smollett: although it is added—and numberless others. Of bishop Burnet and David Hume, there has been enough said, in this Appendix. Can any stress be laid on the opinions of Dr. Mosheim and his translator, as to this particular point; when the former states, and the latter lets pass without contradiction, the palpable mistake, that, in the reign of Edward, the church of England acknowledged the church of Geneva for a sister church? The said divines, however, are more excusable than Mr. Toplady and Mr. Overton; in adopting this assertion of a foreign author, without concerning themselves to inquire for any document of it, in the church of which they profess to be the de-

fenders. The writer of this, knows nothing of the religious complexion of the *New Annual Register*: but of the *Critical Review* he has always supposed, that the authors of it are far from having a favourable leaning to the established religion of their country. Smollett's looseness to religion is too notorious, not to bring him under the same censure. Of the Mr. Wilson alluded to, nothing is here known. There is a disposition to respect the opinion of Mr. Strype; but, it is not perceived to be as represented. In one particular especially, Mr. Overton has misapprehended him: that is, as relative to the opinions professed in the early part of the reign of queen Elizabeth. It is not a little surprising, that such writers as Mr. Toplady and Mr. Overton should crowd the names of infidel writers into their list of the supporters of their representations of the church of England; when nothing can be more notorious, than that persons of such a cast are apt to take any line of argument, which shall throw odium or ridicule on the public ecclesiastical system of any description of persons, with whom they most converse.

On an hasty perusal of this part of Mr. Overton's work, the reader might suppose, that he has not had full justice done to him: for there are lists of names, not at present noticed. But of every unnoticed character, it will appear on attention, either that it is in proof of a similarity between Calvin and the doctrine of Austin, which is not denied; or that the resulting evidence attaches to a period of time, later than that in question.

But, had all the persons introduced been unexceptionable; what is the amount of their statements? It is not the bringing of testimony, as the head under which they are introduced would lead the reader to expect; but

mere private opinion, without proof, as to what were the private sentiments of the reformers.

But now comes the second head; which professes to give from the writings of the reformers themselves. And here, Mr. Overton confines himself to Nowell's Catechism, lord Bacon's Confession, and what passed concerning the Petition of Thomas Talbot and his brethren: not one of which has any direct bearing on the sentiments of the reformers; who had departed this life, before any of those documents were in existence.

Dean Nowell's Catechism, being commonly understood to be that composed in the preceding reign by bishop Poinet, with additions; it is evident, that the prevalent theology of the one period, considering the intervening events, ought not to be measured by that of the other.

Further, the circumstances under which the dean's work came before the world, refer it rather as a test to the doctrine of 1570, the twelfth year of Elizabeth, than to that of 1562, her fourth year. At the last mentioned period, it was sent by the lower house of convocation to the upper house. From this time, to the editing of it in 1570, by the then archbishops of Canterbury and York, it appears from the history of it to have gone under sundry reviews; so that it is impossible to ascertain precisely, how far, in its present form, it agrees with the copy sent by the lower house.

Throughout the instrument, there are but few passages, to which there can be thought appendant a question of their Calvinistick tendency. In a late life of the dean by the reverend Ralph Churton, he considers that charge as fastened on particular passages of

the instrument, by their being drawn from their connexion. He notices, that there is avoided the point of the independency of election on prescience of faith and obedience. On the other hand it is remarked, that the dean has expressly taught the doctrine of universal redemption. And it is said, that in the index to the larger catechism—for there is a smaller one by the same dean—*prescientia* is given as an equivalent and purer term than *predestinatio*. The same biographer inclines to the opinion, that the instrument sanctioned by the lower house of convocation, was the smaller catechism; because in that before the house, it is mentioned under an English title; which suited the latter work, whereas the original of the larger one was in Latin.

These suggestions, are occasioned by the great stress laid on the instrument, to prove the Calvinism of the church of England, in the fourth year of the reign of Elizabeth: which has been thought to derive confirmation, in a publication of the Latin copy of the work, with remarks, by the late much revered Dr. Cleaver, bishop of St. Asaph. The sanction of the convocation, has been represented as exhibited by him in a stronger point of view, than his words warrant. Translated, they are as follow—“Moreover, in explaining the thirty-nine articles of religion, no small light is to be furnished by this catechism; since from hence it may appear, that the English convocation were unwilling to sanction by law the Calvinistick interpretations of the scriptures, whatever at that time, not a few, and they men of great name, thought concerning them.” So far as the opinion of Nowell himself is concerned, bishop Cleaver considered it as Calvinistick; although,

himself, not in that theory: but in the preceding passage, Calvinism is affirmed, not of the convocation, but of not a few, and those of great name.

The confession of lord Bacon, as given by Mr. Overton, has not a sentence applying to any one point, on which the Calvinists and the Arminians differ.

The petition of Thomas Talbot and his brethren, taken with the issue of the business, is a decisive proof, that sentiments substantially the same with those since called Arminian, were not thought heterodox by the men in authority in the church, in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth; however they might interfere with Calvinism, then recently imported. The only point of view, in which the case of the people in question can be supposed favourable to the cause of Mr. Overton, is their complaining of their being called free-willers, as well as Pelagians, Anabaptists and Papists. This term "free-will," has so changed its meaning in the writings of Calvinists; that they ought to cease to reason from it, for the establishment of what they affirm to be the tenets of any description of people. It has been shown, that although Calvin had reprobated the term, Turretine considered the charge of rejecting it as a calumny. In the beginning of the reformation, it was considered as opposed to the grace of God: and the article of the church of England cannot be considered as denying free-will; any further than as her doing so may be an inference, from her affirming of the necessity of divine grace, in opposition to Pelagianism; and to the refinements of congruity and condignity. Her caution in the article is the more remarkable; as she could not have been a stranger to the dispute which

had previously subsisted on the subject, between Luther and Erasmus: while yet, she has expressed herself in terms, which would probably not have been objected to, by either of the litigants. It must have been in the sense defined, that Mr. Talbot and his brethren spurned the name of free-willers; which, among the protestants, had been hitherto owned by Anabaptists and Pelagians only. It is probable, that after the reign of Charles the second, there was no decent society of professing Christians, who would not have abhorred the being called fifth monarchy men: and yet the term might have been innocently taken from that place in Daniel, in which, after prophesying of the four great temporal monarchies, he describes another kingdom—doubtless meaning the spiritual one of the Messiah—which should stand for ever. But the mischievous enthusiasts, who had appropriated to themselves the name, had rendered it opprobrious: and on the same principle, the Pelagian Anabaptists, who, in Edward's reign, under the name of free-willers, had been routed by his council, must have so stained it with ignominy, as to have made it unacceptable to men under Elizabeth, far distant from them in faith. Certain it is, that these men explicitly renounced some favourite positions of Calvin and Calvinists; and yet do not appear to have been faulted on that account, by those to whom the queen had committed the concerns of church and state. It should further be remembered, that the same ideas on the present subject must have been common to the Calvinists and the Arminians, at the synod of Dort; since, under the article of free-will, they agreed in man's natural impotency, and had no debate concerning the

term in question. It is evident, that the sentiments of Thomas Talbot and his brethren had not been recently taken up; but must have been entertained, under suffering, during the Marian persecution; and, it may be presumed, had been professed by them before it, without offence. It was on the return of some of their brother protestants from the continent, that their principles began to give offence. But surely, if the bishops, in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, had been Calvinists, they would have faulted those people, because of their rejection of the doctrine of reprobation; which was, as much as election, a part of Calvin's scheme; and was, accordingly, adopted by the churches which followed his theory; as is evident in the canons of Dort, and in the Westminster confession. In short, if the term "free-will," be the matter in question; Calvinists themselves should be agreed on its merits, before they make it a test, in one way or another. If the question be of human ability, independent on divine grace; it makes no part of the controversy between the parties.

The third argument of Mr. Overton, is from the confessions and the reasoning of avowed Arminians. Here comes up bishop Burnet the third time. Next to him, is Dr. Peter Heylin. But the extracts from the latter writer apply to a late period in the reign of Elizabeth; and therefore cannot substantiate the truth of any position, concerning the beginning of her reign; and much less, any concerning the reign of Edward. Still further is this from being affected by what the same Dr. Heylin acknowledges, concerning the prevalent opinions in the reigns of James the first, and Charles the first. The truth is, the extracts, insulated as they

are in the work of Mr. Overton, convey very different ideas from those which accompany them, in a consistency with the principles of the narrative. In this it is contended, that Calvinism had insinuated itself into the universities, to the undermining of the ancient system; but that now, those who adhered to this, stepped forward for a revival of it. The sentiment suggested by the statement of Mr. Overton, is the uncontradicted reign of Calvinism from the beginning.

Of what follows in the chapter, some particulars have been noticed in the beginning of these remarks; and the rest is here passed over, as not calling for any especial animadversion.

It is remarkable, that this author, however zealously he contends—and justly, as is here conceived—for the accepting of the institutions of the church in a grammatical and strict sense, gives evident intimations of his departing from that maxim, on the subject of baptism. Can any expressions be more unequivocal, than those in which infants are said to be brought by this ordinance into the covenanted favour of God, in the highest and strictest sense? And yet, Mr. Overton* pares down this to their being “in some sense called to a state of salvation.” With the like reserve—if there were reason for it—she must be understood as affirming, that they are “in some sense made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.” And so, she must be understood of those who die in infancy, that they are “in some sense undoubtedly saved.” Surely, the authors of whom Mr.

* Page 102.

Overton justly complains, because of their contending for an unreasonable laxity of interpretation, need not ask for more latitude than that impliedly conceded, by the explaining away of a sentiment delivered so clearly, and repeated so often, and under so great a variety of expression. In like manner, he says in the next page—"The initiatory rite of baptism inculcates the necessity 'of an inward and spiritual grace,' of a 'death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness;' as well as 'the outward and visible sign of sprinkling with water,' and represents to us our profession, which, it is said, 'is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him: that as he died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.'" Here are doubtless two important matters inculcated—the necessity of regeneration, and that of a suitable life and conversation. But who would not perceive, from the manner in which they are introduced by Mr. Overton, that he designs to represent them as alike relative to the future? Now a literal and grammatical construction, will never extort from the service such a sense. Regeneration is considered, throughout, as coincident with the ordinance; and the other is considered as affecting the succeeding life. Great unfairness may also be found, in the manner in which the present subject is handled, from the 102d to the 108th page. It would seem, as if the matter at issue were in effect the same, as the question—whether the being within the pale of the visible church, and the being a real Christian, were the same. What friend of religion would not thank Mr. Overton, for

rescuing it from so destructive a representation? But no: the doctrine affirmed is, that, in baptism, divine favour is assured for the present, and divine aid pledged for the future. If the aid be unimproved, there ensues a fall from grace: and the party may still be Christian by profession, while he is heathen in practice. On this subject, the real point of difference between Mr. Overton and his opponents, or rather, between him and the doctrine of his church, is not that they make baptism the cover of a hypocritical or a formal profession, while he only is for an inward character suited to it; but that they consider this character as concurring with the rite, duly administered and received; while, if Mr. Overton would speak out, he would probably require, what his principles evidently point to, a subsequent conversion; to make the persons really regenerate, who had been before so "in some sense." In a subsequent part of Mr. Overton's work,* he unequivocally insinuates his disapprobation of the opinion, that they who are not capable of repentance, are justified in baptism. Surely, a writer who can reconcile this with the articles, the catechism and the baptismal offices, has no great reason to contend for strict and grammatical interpretation. Or, if it had seemed good to Mr. Overton to apply this principle or to overlook it, as either might be convenient to his theory; he should not have accused clergymen of his communion, who profess to adopt it in all its consequences, of a licentious opinion not owned by them; and even contrary to what they teach professedly, and in the plainest terms.

It is true, that Mr. Overton speaks of conversion, in one respect, very differently from what is taught by a

* Page 181.

great proportion of Calvinistick writers, and by Calvin himself: or at least what is an obvious consequence of their principles. For we read†—“The affirmation is false, which represents us to teach, ‘that no one knows Christ, or is a true Christian, until he can specify the precise time and hour of his conversion.’ What we insist upon is, that professors of christianity should have scriptural ground for concluding that they have, in fact, turned unto God by true repentance, and that, in fact, they possess the dispositions and character of his faithful people.” He afterwards, with the same propriety, qualifies this by adding—“Yet surely, there is no absurdity in the supposition that a wicked man may know something of the time ‘when he turneth away from his wickedness, and does that which is lawful and right.’” In all this, Mr. Overton very reasonably supposes, that, repentance being a change, not only of outward conduct but of inward character, it is impossible but that the penitent must be conscious at the time, and retain in succeeding life the recollection of the processes of the mind, which produced so blessed an effect; and of the principal incidents accompanying them. But there is a manifest difference between this—the author of the book is also aware of it—and the making of the feeling of any precise moment the test by which to know, that repentance had then reached the grade of sincerity, at which it found acceptance. In these things, Mr. Overton must be perceived to be correct, by every one who contends for something in religion, beyond decorum of the conduct. But the point in which Mr. Overton so manages his statements, as to admit

† Page 110.

something alien from the doctrine of his church; is the apparent implication, that there must be undergone by every one such a repentance as is spoken of—such a change from a state of sin, to a state of holiness. On the contrary; if the church be correct in her ideas of baptism, it follows, that young persons, therein made “members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven,” if, in consequence of a religious education, and religious impressions made on their minds, they do not fall into what may be called a state of sin, need nothing that comes under the idea of subsequent conversion. It is in vain to allege, that such persons do not act up to the extent of their baptismal vows. What adult convert, from the time of his conversion, has been sustained at this grade of Christian perfection? Let the holiness of the divine law be applied to the two cases, alike; and with it, the grace extended to frailty and imperfection. And then, the inference will be, that conversion is obligatory on the one, but surely not on the other of the supposed characters.

Before the concluding of these remarks, a caution may be usefully given to the readers of Mr. Overton's book, against too easily confiding in the correctness of his quotations, from the authors whom he considers as his opponents. There have been already given some instances of inaccuracy of quotation. In regard to the greater number of the authors now in view, the writer of this is not acquainted with their works. But having at hand the work the most pointedly attacked,—“A Guide to the Church,” by Dr. Daubeny, the writer takes occasion to compare some passages of it, with parts of them as they stand in “The True Churchman ascertained.” The immediate effect of this com-

parison, grounded on the first references which presented themselves, is as follows; and is here thought to dispense with the going further.*

Mr. Overton,† after complaining, that some divines are not “protestants enough, wholly to exclude our own merits in this matter of our justification before God,” and after mentioning some on whom he conceives the censure to fall, says—“Mr. Daubeny, although, on some occasions, he verbally disclaims it, is justly chargeable with the same doctrine. Thus, in vindication of his own notions, he produces a passage from the ‘Erudition of a Christian Man,’ which says expressly, that ‘good works be *meritorious* towards the attaining of everlasting life!’ And if there is any meaning in the use he makes of Revelations iii. iv; and

* There is not seen any occasion for Dr. Daubeny’s distinction between a first and a second justification. At the same time, all idea of merit being explicitly discarded by him, it is considered as a question of words.

Further, all difficulty on the subject may be supposed to have arisen from the confining of the use of the term to some precise period of time. Surely, this was not in the mind of St. Paul, when he said (Rom. iv. 3.) “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness”—being thereby justified, as appears from the verse immediately preceding. The margin very properly refers to Gen. xv. 6: which relates to a period of the life of Abraham, in which no one conceives of an incipient justification. As Dr. Daubeny, apparently in consequence of overlooking this property, of the subject, makes two justifications, another late writer—the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, in the first of his “Checks to Antinomianism,” contends for four species of it. All such sources of dispute may be traced to the abandoning of the broad intendment of the word, not limiting it to any precise time.

xxii. 14, it must be something of this kind. He talks of 'works,' 'obedience to the moral law,' as constituting men 'relatively *worthy*;' and giving them as he explains the latter of these scriptures, 'a right of grace on the part of God,' to the tree of life; and of God becoming their 'debtor.' A right of grace, and God 'man's debtor,' in consequence of his obedience to the moral law! for this is what Mr. Daubeny is enforcing: this surely is strange, if not utterly incomprehensible doctrine! The Apostle, however, is very intelligible and express on the subject. 'To him that worketh,' he allows, 'the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt.' 'But if it be of works,' he adds, 'then it is no more grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works.' "

Here are two passages of Dr. Daubeny in view. The first alluded to is in the appendix to "The Guide,"* and is as follow: "Our reformers, if I mistake not, in 'the Erudition of a christain Man,' published in 1543, spake still more strongly on this point; when under the article 'good works,' they say, 'forasmuch as they be done in the faith of Christ, and by the virtue and merits of his passion their imperfectness is supplied, the merciful goodness of God accepteth them as an observation and fulfilling of his laws; and they be the very service of God, and be *meritorious* towards the attaining of everlasting life.' " What is excepted against in this passage; is the expression involving the notion of merit. Now Dr. Daubeny does not adopt the expression; but merely refers to it, as going beyond his statement. Had his censurer been reviewing "The

* Page 242.

Erudition" itself; whatever fault he might have found with the term, he ought to have been so just to the instrument, as to notice the connexion with the virtue and merits of Christ's passion, as the source of the merit ascribed to human works: whereas this circumstance is disregarded in the representation. Dr. Daubeny seems to refer to the composition; under the idea, that it had been approved of by the reformers: and although he may have been mistaken in this, as the book has been supposed to be rather the king's than theirs; and was, as Collier calls it, a reforming backwards; yet the expression is referred to, and not adopted.

The other passage, is in page 275 and 6 of the Guide; and is as follows: "But if works are weighed in their proper scale, not as man's *title* to eternal salvation, but his *qualification* for it, upon the gospel axiom, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' it appears to be of essential importance that they should be pressed upon christians at all times, as the *condition* upon which they are taught to look for the completion of the divine covenant. 'They shall walk with me in white,' says Christ, 'for they are worthy.' Revelations, iii. 4. *Worthy*, not absolutely so in themselves, but *relatively* so; worthy in that sense in which God, through Christ, graciously thinks fit to consider them. In this sense, 'blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have *right* to the tree of life, and may enter into the city of God.' Rev. xxii. 14. A conditional right established by *grace on the part of God*, not by *merit on the part of man*; for that, we trust, is universally disclaimed. God has graciously condescended to become, in a *certain sense*, man's debtor; in the language of St. Augustine, 'non aliquid debendo,

sed omnia promittendo, Deus se facit debitorem.' Upon this ground works become intitled to reward; not because they possess *in themselves* a title to reward, but because a gracious God is pleased, through Christ, to regard them as proper subjects for it.' ”

It would seem impossible to read this passage, and to know it again in the work of Mr. Overton, were it not for the reference to it in his margin; so effectually has he kept out of view the expressions designed to draw the line of designation between a right of merit, and one founded on promise. It is to be hoped, that this gentleman would not expunge from the Bible the quoted texts. If they are to remain there; it is difficult to perceive, what other interpretation can be given to them, than that given by Dr. Daubeny. But if his opponent conceived of a better, it would have been an act of charity to have brought it forward. As to what is said of God's being “man's debtor,” in the sense intended, it is precisely the sense in the passage quoted from St. Austin; the father so high in the estimation of Mr. Overton; and, according to whose theory, he conceives the articles of the church of England to have been framed. Did not truth require, that the quoted authority should have been noted? Ought not Mr. Overton to have dealt out the same measure to the father, and to the supposed unevangelical clergyman against whom he wrote? And are not Mr. Overton's exclamations and notes of admiration founded on the idea of something, very different from any thing in the work on which he comments? It is here supposed, that these questions must be answered in the affirmative. And as the writer remarked on, in order to induce a favourable opinion of his fairness in quotation, promises in his preface to confine himself

to the very words of those against whom he writes; it is worth the while of any reader, to notice how punctually such a promise may be complied with, and yet clauses of different sentences be put together, to make out a sentiment held to be incorrect. The expressions "obedience to the moral law," and "relatively worthy" are certainly in different parts of Dr. Daubeny's book: But they do not meet in the sentence, or even in the paragraph referred to, as Mr. Overton would lead his readers to suppose.

In the very part of the said book here referred to, there is so much to the purpose of denying all merit to human works; that it is extraordinary to find the author of it represented, as speaking so directly contrary to himself. There shall be quoted from among many passages, one standing but a few pages after the preceding. "The gospel scheme of salvation can then only be complete, when the whole of it is taken together; when each part of the Christian obligation, comprehended under the general terms of faith, repentance, and obedience, is suffered to have its due weight in the scale of human estimation. In a word, that man is not to be saved by any works of righteousness of his own, because, in consequence of their imperfection, they can have no merit in the eyes of God, but by what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for him, is a doctrine which cannot be too unequivocally expressed; at the same time it is to be remembered, that the qualification of the party, through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, is the indispensable condition, upon which salvation through Christ is suspended."*

Such are the sentiments of the respectable divine, on

* Page 296.

whose work Mr. Overton has founded his preceding criticism. But it is the less wonderful, that this writer should represent an argument in an unmerited point of view; when he can put down even words, in direct contrariety to what are found in the book which was before him. For whereas Dr. Daubeny expressly states his opinion,* that “Man’s claim is but a claim of grace;” Mr. Overton† represents him as contending, that man’s final salvation “depends wholly on his works.” There is nothing even resembling this, in the work which was under examination.

Further, in the fourth page of Mr. Overton from what is quoted above, it is here conceived, that he has done great wrong to Dr. Daubeny; by exhibiting this gentleman’s distinction between actual salvation and a salvable state, and his use of the expression “a state of acceptance with God,” in points of view not appearing from the connexion to have been designed by him. He indeed considered justification, as putting a sinner in a salvable state only; on account of his liability to fall. And when he considers works as necessary to acceptance, he clearly distinguishes this as final; and means no more, than that although justification is of grace through faith; yet, the condition of good works, the fruit of faith, is essential to salvation.

In other parts of Dr. Daubeny’s work, he speaks of a first and of a second justification; applying the latter term to final salvation. How far there is, in scripture, a sanction for such a use of the word, is one question: The design of the distinction, in the mind of him who used it, is another. Of merit in works, he saw none. Of condition also he saw none, so far as respected reconci-

* Appendix, p. 244.

† Page 215.

liation with God. But he saw condition, in reference to the final issue: and this is what Dr. Daubeny calls final justification.

The very high toned Calvinists object to the use of the term "condition," as applying to either faith or works: But it is not probable, that Mr. Overton and those who think with him, strain the matter to this extreme. And yet it seems to grow out of Calvinism; which ascribes all to God in such a sense, as that there is no choice or determining power in man. To be sure, the scriptures abound with promises and with invitations, hanging on the conditions of faith and obedience, according to the ordinary use of language. But these are probably interpreted into an analogy with system, by the persons here referred to.

If the instances of incorrect quotation, already exhibited, should not be sufficient to do away any appearance of the want of charity in the preceding comments; the writer of this thinks himself safe, in being willing to test Mr. Overton's manner of quotation, by an examination of it in instances which have relation to a book easily accessible. It is the life of Erasmus, by Dr. Jortin. Mr. Overton quotes this judicious writer, as representing Erasmus saying, that "he abhorred the reformers:" And this is urged to show, that "his works should be received with some qualifications." The sentence, as it stands in page 442, runs thus—"I abhor the evangeliis, as for other reasons, so because it is through them, that literature is declining in every place, and entertained with coldness and contempt, and upon the point of perishing." It appears, that this great man's supposition of a contrariety between the reforming interest and the cultivation of letters—in which, however, he was mis-

taken, as his biographer remarks—was the principal ground of the dissatisfaction of the former. And although he alludes to other reasons, yet it appears, in many places of Jortin's work, that they could have been no other than the disturbances, which grew out of the reformation. For although the cause of these was in the persecuting rage of princes and of prelates; yet, in the mind of a man, who, in addition to his confessedly peaceable disposition, was so candid as to declare, that he had no inclination to die for the sake of the truth, the blame of the dissensions might seem to lie at a mistaken door. But so far as the errors of the Roman catholic church are concerned, the question may be easily resolved by a consultation of the paraphrase; in which it will be found, that the texts of which the advocates of that church avail themselves are interpreted in such terms, as no protestant will object to. And doubtless, this was duly considered in the reign of Mary; when there was a prohibition of the importation of the book, made so much of under her brother.

Mr. Overton, might have learned from Jortin another remarkable fact. It is, that when the controversy concerning the five points had arisen, the Calvinists in the Netherlands—not excepting those in Rotterdam, the birth-place of the celebrated person whose work is here in question—pursued his memory with a bitterness, not less than that which they manifested to the names of Grotius and Episcopius. They could not even bear the sight of the statue, erected to the memory of Erasmus: and their hatred of him, was because of the shelter which his principles extended to the Arminian cause. Were these Calvinists mistaken, or were the English reformers mistaken, as to the drift of the principles of

Erasmus? The supposition here entertained is, that neither of the two parties made any such mistake, but that they materially differed; and that hence, the works of Erasmus were acceptable to the one, and odious to the other.

But to show more extensively the aberration of Mr. Overton in this very place; let there be taken two other pages referred to in his margin, of the work of Jortin. One of these pages is the 482d: and the matter here intended, must be where Erasmus is represented as maintaining, that certain heretics might be put to death as blasphemers and rioters: descriptive terms, quite foreign to the purpose for which he is referred to by Mr. Overton. Erasmus had been a steady opponent of persecution, on account of religious opinions. His declarations against the putting of heretics to death had been quoted by the reformers, to throw odium on the persecutions of the Roman catholic princes. That Erasmus should be fearful of offending such persons, was consistent with his constitutional character: and accordingly, such is the cause to which it is imputed by Dr. Jortin. But who would not suppose, from the shape in which the subject appears, that this writer had described his author, favouring the destroying of heretics as such? There is, however, nothing like it. The weight of the remark falls on blasphemers and rioters; of whom, it must be confessed, there were too many sheltering themselves under the name of protestants. It is true, that Dr. Jortin, who was a consistent friend of civil and religious freedom, pertinently remarks—“The good man did not consider, that if he had been seized himself as an heretic, and the monks had sat in judgment upon him, he would infallibly have been pro-

nounced one of those heretics who deserved death." This tends to show, that the concession of Erasmus was unguarded, and not that the principle of it was false: much less, that it was in contrariety to the general tenor of his writings, against persecution on account of conscience. There is a great difference between the reviling of the reformers as such, and the censuring of any unjustifiable proceedings in some of the body. How far Erasmus was from the former, appears from the manner in which he may be found expressing himself concerning Luther, in the following pages of his biographer—131, 156, 232, 241, 247. Similar instances might be given of his high opinion of Melancthon, and his great regard for him. But notwithstanding all the panegyrics on Luther, which appear in the work referred to; it appears also, that he was sometimes censured by Erasmus, for the vehemence of his character. Let there be given to Luther, the credit of accomplishing a reformation, for which the mild temper of the other was one of the causes which disqualified him. But let not the censure above referred to, however erroneous it may have been, be transferred from the reformer's person to his doctrine. The only controversy in which Erasmus engaged with Luther, was that on the subject of free-will: and Jortin ascribes the chusing of this subject, to the desire of having the merit of writing against the reformer, without being under the necessity of censuring his other doctrines. The biographer also ascribes to this controversy, the subsequent moderation of the Lutherans on the subject.

The other page is the 608th; in which there appears the concession made by the translator of Erasmus, in the preface to the Acts of the Apostles, which has been

spoken to already. As to material error in Erasmus; how far Jortin was from conceding it, may appear from what he says towards the conclusion of his book—"If he* could have seen the confession of faith, presented to Francis the first, by the poor persecuted remains of the Albigenses or Waldenses, he would probably have approved it: and the learned reader will, I dare say, be pleased to find it here." And under this, there is given the confession in a note.

Thus does Mr. Overton, within the small compass of part of a sentence, represent Dr. Jortin, in three instances, as expressing sentiments which he does not appear to have entertained; and which are indeed contrary to the general tenor of his work. The design of this exhibition, is to give a caution generally, against presuming on the correctness of Mr. Overton's quotations; but not to deny the reasonableness of any plea which may be made for them, grounded on misconception.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE the making of these strictures on the work of Mr. Overton; the writer of this has obtained a book, before unseen by him, written professedly in answer to it—"Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ," by the Rev. Dr. Daubeny. There was indeed an especial call on this gentleman to take notice of a production, in which he was represented as having written, not only what had never proceeded from his pen, but what was directly

* Erasmus.

contrary to his sentiments, as delivered by himself. This respectable writer has of course gone more largely into the subject of the controversy, than is called for by the present design. On a perusal of his work, the writer of this sees no cause to review the sentiments which he has expressed; but he will take occasion to state, that on an examination of some of the many instances, in which Dr. Daubeny complains of misrepresentation of his meaning, those so examined are here thought liable to the charge; which may therefore be supposed to apply generally.

The passages here noticed, have been remarked on by Dr. Daubeny in his answer. But while he complains on account of the great unfairness of the quotations of his antagonist, he makes* an apology for him, founded on a report, that, being the draftsman for an association of ministers in the same sentiments with him, he founded his statements on documents collected for him by his associates. It is easy to perceive, that a writer, under such circumstances, may have issued misrepresentations, which he would not have covered with the sanction of his name: but how far it was allowable in him to commit it to such an extent, may be made a question. It is here supposed of such implicit confidence, if bestowed, that it was unwarrantable; and that at any rate, after so flagrant an abuse of it, an apology should have been made.

There is entertained additional confidence in the preceding statements; from the circumstance, that the misrepresentations and misquotations noticed by Dr. Daubeny, were complained of by him so far back, as in the

* Page 182.

year 1803. The charge is of such a nature, as that, without a great extent of charity, it must be thought to implicate the moral characters of the persons, to whom it was intended to apply. But no answer, so far as is here known, has been given.

If, as is here supposed, no public acknowledgment of error have been made, it is a melancholy instance, to what an extent the zeal of theological controversy can cause the losing sight of the most obvious dictates of charity, and even of ordinary justice.

The author, in referring to a religious controversy carried on in England, and between two clergymen of the church of that country, wishes to be understood as giving opinion, no further than in illustration of the point to which it is designed to be applied. The misrepresentation of Dr. Daubeny's work, has been considered as a ground of suspecting the like, in regard to other works not accessible.

In one particular especially, Mr. Overton puts in the wrong those to whom he sets himself in opposition, and their abettors, if their sentiments have been exhibited by him with fairness. It is, as to the point of Christian morals; which they are said by him to bring down to a low standard, in comparison with that of himself and his brethren; although they are accused from the opposite side, of undervaluing morals for the advancement of faith. If it were warrantable to judge of the state of parties at a great distance, from observation nearer home, the decision should be as follows—From one side of the question, let there be excluded all who have no efficient sense of religion on their minds, but object to positions on the other side, because in contrariety to the intellectual faculty: as the same description of

people hold in contempt transubstantiation, and other incredible doctrines of the Roman catholic church: in either case, their unbelief being an argument with devout, but uninformed people, of the truth of what they hold. On the other side of the question, let there be excluded all, who, although in theory they contend for both faith and morals, can reconcile to the Christian character, in themselves, or in others, the grossest violations of the latter; if there be occasionally an high excitement of passionate devotion, or appearances of it, the mechanical effects of habit. When the two masses have been thus purged; it is probable, that the remainder, on each side, are advocates at least of Christian morals.

GENERAL APPENDIX.

I. Of Baptismal Regeneration.

INTRODUCTION.

The subject is related to all parts of this work—Difficulties—
They originate in an erroneous theory.

THIS is made an appendix to the work generally, because the subject has been introduced under every part of it; while yet, there has been no opportunity for a discussion sufficiently extensive; without an unseasonable interruption of some argument, more immediately important to the design.

There has been no department of the work, entered on with more sensibility to the circumstance, that the doctrine to be sustained is conceived of by very many, as in essential opposition to whatever is spiritual in religion. The author, if he knows his heart, would renounce the doctrine; if he could see it in a point of view, even bordering on such a character. Not only so, if there be any whose piety is so interwoven with the opposite prejudice, as that the one cannot be corrected without an endangering of the other, he wishes both to continue; rather than that such an event should be the consequence of a separation. And yet he is free to declare, that he knows of no one error, into which so

many errors of modern times resolve themselves, as that of quitting the ground of baptismal regeneration; which, as is here conceived, and of which proof will be endeavoured, was not only delivered by Christ and his apostles, but reigned in the church without contradiction, until within three centuries of the present time.

And yet, as was remarked, it is a doctrine which gives great offence, and that to many devout minds. For in the first place, taking the word “regeneration” as if signifying in scripture a transformation of the powers of the human soul, and not perceiving the slightest evidence of a moral change on the dispositions of a baptized infant, they naturally think it contrary to common sense, to say in the language of the church, that such an infant has been “regenerated and born again of water and of the Holy Ghost.” But if the objectors could be brought to see, that in regeneration, according to scripture, there is the mere beginning of an holy influence, to which they justly assert a right to dominion over the whole man; and that a principle, commensurate to this in future process, is stipulated in baptism; it is to be hoped, that they would recognise in the very nature of the ordinance appointed to accompany the regeneration spoken of, the most unlimited assurances of the favour of God and a covenanted right to heaven.

The stumbling block has not done all its mischief here. It comes in the way again, in relation to young persons as they are advancing to maturity. If such young persons, say the objectors, be attendant on the offices of devotion and orderly in their moral conduct; the doctrine of baptismal regeneration dispenses with all conversion of the heart—all spirituality of devotion

—all renovation of the inward character. Before an answer to this, let there be accurately understood the sentiment, intended to be conveyed. Is it presumed, that there may not be instilled into the infant mind, by seasonable instruction from time to time, the idea of a Supreme Being, infinitely lovely in himself, and the bestower of all benefits, whether received or looked for? And further, of a Redeemer, who hath brought life and immortality to light; and who has displayed, in his temper and in his conduct, every grace for our imitation? Or, such instruction being given, that the youthful mind will of course, until a sensible conversion, hate the Being thus described as good; and the more so, because of the good freely given? With those who imagine this, in contrariety to many places in scripture, and to the instance given in the person of Timothy; it is not expected, that the present argument will have weight. But on the other hand, if it be acknowledged, that, in the season of advancing youth, there may be religious impressions made on it by steps not to be accurately defined, and through the medium of opportunities hardly to be remembered; impressions prompting a piety, neither hypocritical nor in mere form; and having an influence on the conduct, not in order to be seen of men, but to secure the favour of God; it is difficult to see, wherein the need of conversion lies. Most certainly, the word is never so applied in the scriptures, as will be shown in the course of this appendix. Be it acknowledged, that such a person has a constant call for humility, and for divine aid, in order to the sustaining of him in the grace wherein he stands. And besides, he is amenable, not only for any actual transgression of the divine law, but for whereinsoever he

falls short of the standard of purity and perfection. But would not this have been true of him, had he been arrested by conversion at a mature age, and then plucked as a fire-brand out of the fire? In short, to suppose that the doctrine in any degree lowers the importance of inward piety and evangelical obedience, is to mistake the sense of it. But how far it lessens the importance of a certain animal sensibility, here supposed to be sometimes mistaken for the other, is another subject, and will be attended to in its proper place.

The objection has not spent its force. A young person, regenerated as above, is supposed to have fallen into sin. He is confessedly destitute of a sense of divine things; being lost to all the promises, and liable to all the threatenings of the gospel. Yet, according to the doctrine, he has been a subject of the regeneration spoken of in scripture, as taking place once only in any individual instance; and therefore cannot be again submitted to a process, without which, in reference to persons alien from the Christian character, we are assured by the lips of divine truth, not merely that they will not, but that they can not enter into the kingdom of heaven: implying an impossibility, the result of a frame of mind incompatible with the happiness of that kingdom. The objection has no weight, but on the supposition of the indefectibility of grace. The possibility of a total and of a final fall, has been urged in this work, as an argument striking at the root of Calvinism. Of what was said to that effect, no further advantage will be here taken, than to oppose it to the presumption of the truth of final perseverance; in order to prevent it from bearing down the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But, if in the objection stated, it be supposed

further, that the advocates of this doctrine make light of the duty of repentance; the answer is, that, far from this, they think they take the only ground, on which the duty can be urged to its extent, in regard to persons who have possessed the advantages of a Christian education. In the first preaching of the gospel, although repentance is sometimes mentioned, and may be considered as always implied to be an accompaniment of faith; yet the former is evidently not held out to invite strangers to the Christian covenant, with the same degree of rigor as to those who are within its bounds. These are contemplated as “crucifying the Son of God afresh;” and it is presumed a very difficult thing to “renew them to repentance.” For, although the severity thus manifested against apostacy seems to presume a preceding holy influence of religion over minds, if not mature at least intelligent; yet, in proportion as any have received religious instruction in infancy, or have even been put into the way of incidentally hearing it, in consequence of their incorporation into the visible church of Christ; there evidently results a responsibility, of a different nature from that which rests on those, to whom Christianity has been unknown. And accordingly, in regard to the former description of persons, the reasons for repentance must be the more alarming.

There ought to be here made the acknowledgment, that if human nature be indeed, as described by some, averse to all good, and prone to all evil; for instance, if as intimated by bishop Beveridge, in the quotation from him in the second part of this work, we have a natural hatred of the Divine Being; if, as implied by president Edwards, quoted in the appendix to that part, infants, whatever may be their present harmlessness,

have the venomous disposition of the viper, only waiting for a state of maturity for a manifestation of its deadly properties in act; and if, as affirmed by Calvin himself, in a passage cited in the same preceding part, there be no wild beast so wild and mischievous as man, any further than as restrained either by sordid motives, or at best, by such as look to the maintainance of appearances before the world, or to the rising in its estimation; there is an incongruity in supposing, that there can be any application of the promises of God—any assurance of his favour—any sealing of a covenanted right to life, to such a compound of all the different species of wickedness. But, if the awful doctrine of hereditary sinfulness be taken in the sense exhibited by scripture; if it be considered as a law in the members, warring against the law in the mind, agreeably to Rom. vii. 23; as the flesh lusting against the spirit, according to the ninth article; and in the words of the same, the being “very far gone”—the furthest possible, if the expression be preferred—“from all righteousness;” indicating privation of holiness, and not malice against it; if the endowments of our nature, whether pertaining to our souls or to our bodies, have all their appointed purposes, to which no moral evil is attached; while every thing of this sort is the consequence of their running wide of those purposes, or of going beyond them in degree; this being an abuse which will assuredly happen, except so far as the agent may be governed or at least restrained by an higher principle, not inherited from Adam; under such a view of the subject, the securing of this principle by a covenanted title, which cannot fail, if improved, to keep nature in subjection to divine grace, is sufficient to bring up the doctrine to

the height of the idea of a regeneration; being the putting of the person baptized into a new state, to which there are attached new relations, new duties and new hopes.

It has been the more necessary to guard against these misapprehensions of the doctrine; as the opponents of it are much disposed to load the maintainers of it with the imputation of opinions which they abhor. An instance shall be given from the treatise of Mr. Overton,* remarked on in the conclusion of the fourth part of this work. After representing the church, of which he is a minister, as only meaning in the strong language applied by her to the state of baptized infants, that they are "in some sense called to a state of salvation," he goes on thus—"are we then hence to conclude, that our church knows of no distinction but that between *professed* Christians, and *professed* Heathens, Jews, &c. and that she really considers *all* who are her nominal members, in such a sense in a state of salvation, as that they will escape future punishment and obtain everlasting happiness, *whatever be their characters?*" Although this erroneous conclusion is evidently designed to be fastened on the class of writers, whom he and his associates were reviewing, not one of them is quoted to the effect. It is not probable, that any of them had so expressed themselves. But it is a specimen of the address too often practised, in order to cast odium on what cannot be disproved. Mr. Overton, to manifest the more clearly his design of being in this matter, an accuser of his brethren, has been careful to put his emphatic words in italics, as given above.

These preliminary remarks having been made, it is proposed to consider the subject in four sections: first,

* Page 102.

as it is in scripture; secondly, as it has been professed by the Christian church generally; thirdly, as exhibiting a contrariety between the Episcopal church, and the churches embracing Calvinism; and fourthly, in the effect of the sentiment here sustained, operating to the exclusion of many bad consequences of the theory in opposition.

SECTION I.

Of the subject, as it is in Scripture.

Question stated—evidence from scripture—1st. Texts applying baptism to admission to the Christian covenant—2. Texts which apply regeneration to it—3. Texts, which apply both baptism and regeneration to it.

IT will be proper to have a distinct idea of the question; and not to confound it with a theory which will be disavowed.

Some, in opposing the doctrine to be sustained, represent it as a reverting to the Roman catholic doctrine, of a sacrament's operating by an efficiency inherent to itself—commonly known under the expression—“opus operatum.” This is an unfair way of discrediting a position: the more so, because of some strange notions tacked to it in the debates of the council of Trent, in which the doctrine was at last established. Some made it a quality (and here were four different opinions, according to four different kinds of quality) some, an habit or disposition; others, a spiritual figure; and the opinion, that it was a sensible metaphorical quality (says father Paul,* from whom this is taken,) did not

* Page 224.

want abettors. Doubtless, it was in the end determined, that sacraments confer grace by their own strength, and imprint a character, or a certain spiritual and indelible mark on the soul: as may be seen in Dupin.* If any protestants have a theory which wears the same appearance, let not the object of the present undertaking be confounded with it.

The representation of the subject at the greatest distance from the above, is that the ordinance in question is an external, relative, or ecclesiastical sanctification; which is nothing else but the devoting of a thing or of a person to God, by those who have power to do so.

The opinion now stated, is understood to be avowed by some bodies of professing Christians. It has been expressed, even by some divines of the church of England. Others of that church, while they deny baptismal regeneration, have been shy to take the same stand, but labour to bring their sense of the subject into agreement with the baptismal services, the catechism, and other institutions of their church. As regeneration is a term seldom found in the scriptures, it would be agreeable to indulge the hope, that, in collision with the latter, it is a question of words; were they not, so far as is here known, cautious of acknowledging concerning infants, that, by the act of baptism, they are put into what is known under the familiar expression of a state of grace. That they remain the subjects of future conversion, enters essentially into the theory.

The point to be maintained is, that without any mysterious operation on the mind of the party, baptism, duly administered and received, is a putting into a state of grace or covenant with God. Here arises what some

* Vol. 3, page 450.

imagine to be a pinching difficulty. Supposing it to be not duly received—which may certainly happen—why is the party reckoned to be regenerate in baptism?

In answer, let there be a reference to the type of baptism, in circumcision. That the father of the faithful possessed faith, before his submission to that rite, is evident in its being said* “he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised.” In analogy with this, a repentant and believing subject of the new covenant, may be approved of by the common Father of Jews and Gentiles; as in the case of Cornelius, before the application of water, accompanied by prayer, and the recital of the words of the baptismal institution. But as this is enjoined with reference to membership of a social body, corresponding with inward character, he is not in the eye of the church regenerate, nor can be known as such by her.

How does this apply to infants? Let the analogy be extended, and it will hold. When they brought young children to Christ, that he should lay his hands on them and pray, these little ones were already fit subjects of his kingdom, as he declared in the passage read in the service for infant baptism. But they were not externally such—they were not such in the estimation of his disciples, until he gave a visible sign of his acknowledging of them. When baptism became instituted as of general obligation, by the command in Matthew xxviii. 19. that ordinance became the only visible sign. And since it was instituted as a mean of grace, the source of grace must be taken into view; and there-

* Rom. 4. 11.

fore; the effect of the institution is said to be the being born again of water, and of the Holy Ghost.

But let it be supposed of an adult, that having submitted to baptism in hypocrisy, or at least without a sense of religion inviting to such an act of duty, he is afterwards regardless of its obligations. Certainly, he did not cease, during the transaction or after it, to be abominable in the sight of God. In the case of an infant, there was an engrafting into Christ, not only externally, but spiritually. If he be afterwards an evil liver, he has fallen from grace. But in each of the cases, the party is regenerate in the view of the church, and continues to possess the rights of that character, unless cut off for delinquency. This is a distinction which must be taken along with us, in reading what St. Paul says—"so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." It must be presumed of some persons, even in the day of the apostle, that their state of mind was not Christian: as appears in other places, in which such censures are passed, as imply the subjects of them to be nominal Christians only. Still, the true properties of baptism are predicated of it generally.

The distinction may be perceived, in the case of St. Paul himself. Before the washing away of his sins under the baptizing hands of Ananias, he must have exercised repentance and faith, as circumstances show: and yet, it was in the ordinance of baptism, that he began to be reckoned of the family of the faithful. There must have been analogy to this under the law. In the case of a proselyte from Heathenism, he was recognised as such, no otherwise than through the instrumentality of the rite of circumcision. But who can imagine, that

in the event of his decease, between the time of his conversion and the administration of the rite, he lost the benefit of his holy purpose? Such a thought would presume the same, of every infant dying before the eighth day after his birth.

The matter to be proved is, that baptism and regeneration are there contemplated as concomitant. It is a maxim, that there must be an agreement between any two subjects, with which a third subject is found to agree. Accordingly, there may be a use in ascertaining, whether the maxim admit of an application in the present instance.

The third subject with which the other two subjects are here supposed to agree, is an admission to the christian covenant; involving not merely an entrance into a social body, but an investing with all the privileges of the covenant of grace; the principal of which are, pardon of sin, the aids of the Holy Spirit, and a title to everlasting life.

The order in which passages of scripture shall be produced to the above effect, is as follows: first, such as apply baptism to the third subject mentioned; secondly, such as apply regeneration to the same; and thirdly, such as unite baptism and regeneration in the application.

First, of the application of baptism to the said subject. In Rom. vi. 7.—Gal. iii. 27. and Col. ii. 12. we meet with the strong figures of being “buried with Christ,” and of “putting on Christ,” as accompanying baptism: which would seem very incongruous, if it were only a sign of the spiritual incorporation, implied in the terms; putting indeed in the way of this, but not going hand in hand with it. If baptism, in relation to

any of the subjects of it, be merely with a view to future benefit; while they remain in a spiritual sense branches of the olive tree wild by nature, not yet grafted into the true olive tree, nor deriving nourishment from its root; there would have been no propriety in the strong terms used by the apostle, and no pertinency to the point to which his argument directs them. And indeed, in the case supposed, his treating of the subject in such a manner, was eminently calculated to mislead. For instance, if there be taken the passage in the epistle to the Romans, written many years after the planting of the gospel among them, it may be presumed, that some for whom the epistle was designed had been baptized in infancy. How delusive must it have been to have informed such, that, by the very act of their baptism, they had been initiated to all the privileges, which it was the design of Christianity to bestow!

It is worth while to remark the bearing of this part of the subject, as to those who die in infancy. The churches in the opposite theory, are explicit in declaring baptism to be the sign of regeneration; and that the seed of believers have a right to it. Now in regard to deceased infants, there is the sign, without the thing signified: except indeed in the cases of supposed elect infants, who are represented as regenerated before their deaths; no one knows when or how. Relatively to all others, there is held to be a divine institution, so adjusted as to be emblematical of a benefit, which they are never to receive, even in that sense, in which it is supposed to be received by non-elect adults who have salvation offered to them. As to the privilege of the seed of believ-

ers, in this matter, it seems a mere nullity, according to the principles here rejected. It might be made an interesting subject of inquiry—how far such apparent inconsistency may have the effect of increasing the number of those professing Christians, who deny the authority of infant baptism. It is to little purpose as to the present point, to extol the advantage of being put in the way of Christian instruction. This may be attended to, without subjecting the subjects of it to the ordinance in question.

Many more passages might be cited, but one only shall suffice. It is Heb. vi. 2. Where, in an enumeration of sundry evangelical subjects, the doctrine of baptism stands next to repentance and faith; the arrangement supposing an intimate connexion of it with them both. A mere ceremony, would have been unfitly put before the doctrines of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. But it being admitted, that the outward part is the sign of an inward benefit, of which repentance and faith are accompaniments; baptism, or regeneration, occupies the very place which the order of the subjects requires.

The next step, is the citing of texts which may be considered as identifying regeneration with the admission to all the benefits of Christ's spiritual kingdom. The stress is here laid on the admission, in order to distinguish the subject from that continual progress, which is called "a renewing day by day."*

There is no text, in which the word "regeneration," and but one in which the expression the nearest akin to it, "born again" are expressive of a Christian state, without an undeniable connexion of them with baptism.

* 2 Cor. iv. 16.

And this ought to operate in favour of the object of the present appendix; because it shows most strongly, how inseparably the language is allied, in scripture, with the ordinance which is carried into effect through the medium of the element of water. The word regeneration, in the text referred to,* refers to a future renewal of the material universe. It is well explained by Dr. Doddridge, on the place. The single place in which the word "born again" is made use of, without an especial naming of baptism, is 1 Pet. i. 23.—"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Here, the very comparing of the word to a seed, small in itself, yet comprehending the stamina of a plant or of a tree, may show, that the matter designated is a mere entrance on the Christian state: a real entrance, however, on the substantial benefits of it, and not a mere profession with a view to them. Baptism, although not mentioned, may have been alluded to.

Strictly speaking, this is the only text which can be produced to the effect the last stated: Yet, as some other terms may be thought nearly similar, they shall be here considered.

First, there is that in 1 Pet. i. 3. which speaks of the being "begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The being buried with Christ in baptism, is in other passages connected with an immediate interest in his resurrection: And accordingly, where this is spoken of as opening new prospects to the hopes of men, the figure of being begotten, as to a new state of existence, must designate

* Matth. xix. 28.

an initiatory act; and this can be no other, than the first investiture with Christian privilege.

Similar to the last text, is that in St. James i. 18.—“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth.” The word of truth, must be the preached gospel: the time of its being received, in order to be obeyed and followed, must have been the moment of the begetting spoken of: And of course, this is not the same with that “going on unto perfection,” which is the object of the unceasing labour of the regenerate Christian.

In the first epistle of St. John, the expression “born of God” is often used. The purpose of using it is to affirm, that the consequence of being so born—a continuance of the life thus begun being presumed—is the “not committing of sin,” and the “overcoming of the world.” The life evidencing the new birth, is certainly a matter of habit, but must be dependent on its seed or principle; which is more precisely expressed in the first verse of the fifth chapter—“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” Here, faith and the new birth are coincident.

Were no stronger authorities produced; the author would consider his position as established by those already given. For it appears, that baptism was ordained for the express purpose of an ingrafting into Christ—not merely into a visible body professing his name, but into his invisible kingdom, with whatever it possesses of benefit for the present, or of prospect for the future. It appears further, that expressions like those in question are applied to denote the beginning of such a state, and of its relations. Accordingly, on the maxim referred to, of an agreement subsisting between any two subjects

with which a third agrees, in baptism there is a regeneration or a being born again.

But, as was intimated, in the only places in which “regeneration,” and the “being born again” are used as applicable to the subject, they are accompanied by circumstances, which distinctly mark their association with the ordinance. These passages shall be now produced; and the first of them, shall be that prominent one in the third chapter of the gospel of St. John, beginning at the first verse.

Before proceeding to the several parts of this important passage, there may be propriety in making a few remarks, grounded on the general tenor of it.

The first is, that whatever may have been the character of Nicodemus, at any succeeding period of his life; the evangelist, in relating the present transaction, considered himself as recording something faulty. As there is nothing of the kind in the address of Nicodemus, it must have been in his being ashamed—because, it may seem, of his being one of the sanhedrim—to approach the Messiah openly and in the face of the world. This is gently intimated by its being said—“The same came to Jesus by night.” But there could have been no use in recording this circumstance, except with the view here supposed: And there is further evidence to the point, in what we find afterwards recorded of the same Nicodemus, in the 7th chapter and the 50 and 51 verses. In that place, he thus defends the cause of Jesus openly in the sanhedrim—“Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?” For, although his conduct in this instance is far from being in agreement with his nocturnal visit; yet the evangelist does not record the former, without a retrospect to the latter; at-

taching to the name of Nicodemus the circumstance, that he was “the same that came to Jesus by night being one of them.” And the same fault is repeated, in nearly the same words, in the 19th chapter at the 39th verse. The probable reason in both these places, is, to show how much the character of Nicodemus had become changed, in the point so often held out to view.

The second remark is, that our Saviour’s address to him was an intimation of censure; not indeed naming the fault, but striking at the root of it in a faulty state of mind. This is in harmony with the general tenor of Christ’s religion, which aims at the influencing of the conduct, through the medium of the affections.

The third remark is, that there seems to have been some well known matter referred to by our Saviour; which, however, Nicodemus did not apprehend. Now as, in the interpreting of scripture, it is lawful to avail ourselves of whatever knowledge has come down to us of the customs and the opinions of the gospel age, we ought not to overlook what the Talmuds and the Talmudical writers, Maimonides and others, have related to the present purpose. They say, that persons who were Heathen by birth, but desirous of admission to the Israelitish covenant, were not only circumcised as the law of God required; but baptized also, agreeably to institutions confessedly human, and here appealed to for the purpose of explanation merely. And the writers alluded to say further, that the persons thus baptized were said to be “born again,” on account of the new relations on which they entered.

There is still this other remark—that the kingdom spoken of is the church of Christ on earth; not indeed as unconnected with a better kingdom in the heavens—

for to this the other is preparatory—but the object especially to be kept in view, to give consistency to the passage.

With the aid of these remarks, let there be now a transition to the passage. “There was a man of the Pharisees;” a sect to whom our Saviour was obnoxious: “named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;” and therefore one, who must have found it the more difficult to acknowledge the prophet of Nazareth, without endangering his own standing in society. “The same came to Jesus by night;” with a view, no doubt, to the secrecy of the season. “And said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” Here is an ample acknowledgment of the divine commission of the person addressed; and it shows, what a struggle there must have been in the breast of the applicant, between conviction and a false shame. The blessed Jesus, in the same spirit in which he said on another occasion—“I receive not honour from men,”* takes no notice of the respect intended to be shown to his divine mission, but passes to a subject which might be edifying to the applicant; and was loudly called for by the faulty state of mind laid open by his speech—“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:” as if it had been said—“Nicodemus, you mistake the nature of the testimony, which is demanded of you. Unless you have a readiness of mind to enter into the new relations to which I call men, you cannot perceive† or have a relish for the dispensation, now tak-

* John, v. 41.

† *Idem*.

ing place under an heavenly designation, in my person.” Nicodemus, not apprehending the sense of the declaration of our Lord, and annexing to it gross ideas, “saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” Then Jesus, repeating his information, but with more explicitness, “answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Here are disclosed the mode of the enjoined profession, and the state of mind answerable to it. The mode, was by the rite of baptism; a transaction visible to the world; and very unlike to the nocturnal visit that had been reproved. The state of mind, very unlike to false shame, was such as can only come from the source of all good. Without these united—thus the Saviour may be supposed to say—a man cannot enter my church—cannot be a subject of the evangelical economy, under any reasonable expectation that it will avail him.*

Our Lord adds to his position an explanation—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again:” that is, do not think it so remote, as it now appears, from ordinary apprehension and belief. “The wind bloweth where it listeth:” under the influence of laws which you can neither explain nor govern, “and

* There exists a difference of opinion on the question, whether the text should be expounded of the kingdom of grace on earth, or of the kingdom of glory in heaven. Mr. Wall reasons (p. 356) very ably in favour of the latter, and faults bishop Burnet’s exposition of the thirty-nine articles, because it explains the passage of the other. The interpretation given, is that which is the most consistent with the tenor of our Lord’s discourse: but the difference makes nothing to the question here discussed.

thou hearest the sound thereof:" its effects are evident to sense, although you cannot trace them to their cause, or tell "whence it cometh and whither it goeth." There is subjoined—"So is every one that is born of the spirit:" that is, a correct disposition is a matter of sensibility, which cannot be unknown to the person of whom it is descriptive; while the divine inspirer of it can be known no otherwise, than by this his holy influence, sufficiently declaring the high agent from whom it comes.

Nicodemus, having his mind still possessed by conceptions accommodated to sense, "said unto him, how can these things be?" Jesus, apparently surprised at such dulness in one of his standing in the state, "said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" intimating, that the doctrine laid down was not new, although now applied to the new subject of the Redeemer's kingdom. It had been familiar in the case of the proselytes of righteousness; and therefore, might have been supposed familiar to the mind of Nicodemus.

Our Lord continues his discourse as follows—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." This seems said with a prospect of some high truths which he was going on to deliver, and which are not applicable to the present subject. But he does not proceed to them, without looking back and remarking—"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" Words, which still help to explain what had gone before; and show, that the matter contemplated was a fit membership of the church of Christ

on earth; and that the circumstances attached to it were analogous to others, which had been instituted and practised among the Jews themselves; in order to the giving of the greater solemnity to the introducing of Gentiles within their pale.

That this was done by baptism, is attested by documents, both Heathen and Jewish: the former being a passage in Terence, the Roman historian, and another in notes on Epictetus by the Greek moralist Arrian; and the latter, the Talmudic writers. It is the only ground, on which we can account for the demand on the baptist, as to his authority to make use of baptism, for the initiating to a discipleship under him, as we find in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John. They who deny that there was such an institution among the Jews, until some centuries after the beginning of the Christian era, are driven to the utterly untenable supposition, that they borrowed the ordinance from the Christian dispensation. But the earlier introduction being admitted, it accounts for what our Lord adds---“If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”

Mr. Wall* affirms, that Calvin was the first, who denied this passage to be meant of baptism. And he notices that Mr. Stennett, an eminent Antipædobaptist, had availed himself of this concession of the reformer.

Of the review made, the following may be stated as the result. The fault of Nicodemus consisted in his supposing, that the demands of the gospel might be satisfied, by a clandestine acknowledgment of the miraculous works of Christ, and their evidence of his

* Page 354.

divine mission. Our Lord, on the contrary, intended to teach, that his name must be openly professed in an ordinance made initiatory into the body of his disciples. The sentiment in Nicodemus, opposed to this, was indicative of a wrong state of mind, which required correction. Hence the necessity of a different cast of inward character; the excellency of which, proclaims its source to be in the divine agency. And finally; the change, inward and outward, thus held out as demanding the care of Nicodemus, was an entering on a state entirely new, in all its relations, and in all the duties attached to them: a change which, however more exalted in its nature, was fitly represented by that accompanying the baptismal initiation of proselytes among the Jews.

The writer of this, cannot conceive of any measure of gracious disposition of the heart, or of any degree of strictness of holy conduct, or of any ardour of devotion, with which the interpretation given is not consistent. But if the passage be conceived of as teaching, first, what is called a law-work, under which the awakened conscience must remain, notwithstanding all the offers of the gospel, until relieved by an inward communication of pardon; and then, an alliance of this with an animal sensibility, which tests the time when the subject of it passes from the state of nature to that of grace; the author is free to confess, that if he could discern this in the instruction given to Nicodemus, all connexion of baptism with such a regeneration should be here abandoned; although it would be a mystery to him, how there happened to be a reference to the ordinance of baptism, for the explaining of a matter that runs so far wide of it. But under the hope, that the

passage gives no countenance to the interpretation alluded to, he goes on to other texts: first however remarking, that, if he have misunderstood this passage, so likewise has the church of England; as must be evident to every one who attends to the use made of it by her, in her service for adult baptism.

The next which he produces is Tit. iii. 5.—“According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” The word translated “washing”* signifies rather the place where, than the materials by which the washing is performed. Dr. Doddridge, in his note on the place, thinks he has proved, in another work of his, that the signification of this Greek word is different from that of another, † which is the vessel used for washing. It makes but little difference. Whether there be reference to the element or to the receptacle, either bath or vessel, the word in question must have been used in a lax sense; because regeneration could no otherwise have been predicated of the washing, than as this was attached to an ordinance, comprehending the outward sign, and made the medium of the other. Even the associating of so sacred an operation with a process which, in a moral point of view, was nothing in itself, is demonstrative of the near connexion between the subjects, as they are contemplated in the Christian institutions. Further, the text is illustrative of the difference several times referred to in this Appendix, between the beginning and the progress of the work of grace; to the former of which there applies the subject of regeneration; and to the latter, “the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

* λυτρων.

† λυτης.

St. Peter, in the twenty-first verse of the third chapter of his first Epistle, speaking of the saving of Noah and his family by (or in) water, perceives an analogy between this and baptismal salvation, or regeneration—"The like figure"—the words in the original are much stronger—"the antitype of which* doth also now save us:" words which nothing can satisfy, but an alliance of the spiritual grace with the visible sign—"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh"---by which is meant mere defilement of the person, and not sensuality, as some grossly misconceive---"but the answer of a good conscience toward God." A good conscience implies purgation from guilt; and therefore if it makes, in baptism, the answer here ascribed to it; this must be, because baptism and regeneration go hand in hand. The answer of a good conscience, having been much insisted on by those opposed to infant baptism; there may be propriety in not dismissing the passage without the remark, that, if this make against the baptism of infants; what St. Paul says in Rom. ii. 29, of "the circumcision of the heart," might by a parity of reasoning be brought to prove, that there had been an error in the practice of infantile circumcision.

When Ananias, under the command given to him in a vision, went to confer with the future apostle of the Gentiles, part of the address to him was---"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."† That regeneration is concomitant with the washing away of sins, will not be denied. How then can it consistently be denied, that they are alike concomitant with the idea of baptism? Very close indeed must have been their alli-

* *ἡ ἀντίτυπον.*

† Acts, xxii. 16.

ance, in the mind of Ananias; when, notwithstanding his knowledge of the divine determination concerning the future employment of the party, he did not think himself excused by this circumstance, from the use of the instituted mean. Could Ananias have doubted, whether, in the counsels of God, who is not restricted to his own institutions, there were the pardon of the sins of the chosen vessel? Could the latter doubt of this fact, after having been selected by Christ himself, to “bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel?”* Certainly, neither of these could have been the case. But man is tied to the instituted mean, although God is not. And therefore, so connected were the two in the mind of faithful Ananias, that he could not separate them in his discourse, however distinct he knew them to be in the divine mind.

Congenial with the above passage, is that in Acts ii. 38. where St. Peter exhorts his Jewish audience—“Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” How very unlike are all expressions of this sort, to the idea of a mere outward ordinance; significative indeed of inward purification, but without a connexion of there being a beginning of this, accompanying the sign!

It is because of there being very few texts of scripture, using the terms “regeneration” and “born again;” that there have been comprehended two texts, not using the same language, but to be understood as speaking the same sense. And indeed it will not be unsuitable to go beyond those texts, to other places; which speak, although not expressly of remission of sins, yet of an

* Acts, ix. 15.

admission into the church of Christ by baptism; in a manner which implies the possession of all its benefits. Instances of this, may be seen in St. Philip's baptising of the eunuch; in St. Peter's ordering of the baptising of Cornelius and his household; and in the baptising of the jailor and his family by St. Paul and Silas. In all these instances, if baptism were not, as the twentyfifth article declares, "a certain sure witness and effectual token of grace, and God's good will;" they are recorded under circumstances of extreme danger, of being abused by men to their destruction.

There is indeed a case of baptism, and it is the only one, which has been brought against the theory here sustained. The case is that of Simon the sorcerer, in the eighth chapter of the Acts. But in order to its being put in contrast with the other cases, it is necessary to suppose, that from the beginning to the ending of the transaction, Simon was not possessed of a particle of sincerity: Whereas this cannot be made to appear of either; or rather, the contrary is the most probable of both. After the recording of the faith and baptism of many, it is said—"Then Simon himself believed also." Yes, say some—not with a true, but with an historic and temporary faith. This is one of the distinctions, invented to accommodate to theory: And it is here conceived to be impossible to show a place in the New Testament, in which the word "believed" is used in the manner supposed. Simon, for any thing appearing to the contrary, presented himself for baptism with a pure intention. Being baptised, "he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." No intimation is here given of its being all a premeditated plan, for a corrupt purpose.

How long his continuance with Philip lasted, is not said: But neither is it said, that, during the term, he manifested any token of duplicity. Even his wonder at the miracles, does not seem to have excited in him an ambition to do the like; probably, because he may have considered it as a privilege confined to the apostolic character. But on the arrival of St. Peter and St. John, when Simon saw that the power of working miracles was communicable; and “that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given;” empowering others to do the works, which, done by them, had excited his surprise; “he offered them money, saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost:” enabling me, and others through me, to perform such works. Thus, his former sordid avarice took possession of him; as, in very many instances within our observation, we may remark the recurrence of sinful habits, erasing temporary good impressions. And that this was the case with Simon, appears from St. Peter’s indignant reproof to him. For although the apostle treats as an high crime, the expectation “that the gift of God may be purchased with money;” and although he tells Simon—“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter;” that is, in the apostolic office; and further—“Thy heart is not right in the sight of God;” as had appeared from his corrupt proposal; yet he exhorts him—“Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” The apostle does not exhort the offender, to repent of a series of dissimulation; but of this wickedness, and this thought of his heart. And the putting of a “perhaps” to the prospect of forgiveness, may reasonably be considered as design-

ed to show the greatness of the crime; and not to imply an apprehended impossibility of recovery, from a crime so great. And even if the apostle apprehended this, it would have been consistent with what we elsewhere read in scripture, concerning hackneyed practitioners in iniquity; that there may be, at last, an utter abandonment of such persons by the grace of God. The apostle adds—"I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity:" that is, still under the dominion of thy ancient habits of avarice; whatever appearances to the contrary there may have been in thy beginning of a new course, under the influence of temporary good impressions. The whole tenor of the interpretation, is favoured by the reply of Simon—"Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me:" which is not the natural language of a detected hypocrite; although such he is supposed to have been by some; but a temporary return of the convictions of his better moments. Many a drunkard, and many a sensualist in other ways, after a real conversion, and much oftener after a conversion, which is the mere effect of animal sensibility, has returned "like a dog to his vomit." And it has been not uncommon to hear such persons utter sentiments, similar to that of Simon; without incurring the suspicion, of their being otherwise than for a time sincere. There is nothing in the passage, which describes his case as dissimilar to their's. Perhaps, the idea of its being so would not have occurred, had it not been for his succeeding conduct. For although we read no more of this man in the Bible, yet ecclesiastical history has much evil report concerning him. So it has of other apostates from Christianity; who were generally the worse for having

experienced its convictions, without having been led on to its edification.

The author is aware, that he may be considered as deficient, in not having noticed the texts which speak of conversion: a word which, in some ears, sounds the same as regeneration. The truth is, he considers the two words as not the same in meaning. There is but one place in the New Testament, in which the word "conversion" expresses a change to Christianity, from being in a state alien to it. It is in Acts xv. 3—"declaring the conversion of the Gentiles." Doubtless, if there were not this single place to the purpose, it would be a fit word to denote the same thing at any time. But the taking of advantage of this, to apply it to persons born and bred under the Christian covenant; holding out the necessity of their being brought within it, at subsequent periods of their lives; is one of the most manifest of the abuses of language, which have been contrived for the shielding of error from detection. The words "convert," "converted," and "converting," are used, altogether, four times in the New Testament,* and never to express any other sentiments, than the retrieving or the being retrieved from sin fallen into, in violation of the dispensation under which the parties were. Our Saviour tells his disciples†—"except ye be converted"—meaning from the projects of ambition just before manifested—"ye shall not enter into

* Isaiah vi. 10, which has the word "convert," is quoted in three of the Evangelists and in the Acts; but this is not properly a passage of the New Testament, although there recited. The Hebrew word **שב** expresses a changing from sin.

† Matthew xviii. 3.

the kingdom of heaven." He also enjoins St. Peter † "when thou art converted,"—that is, from the apostacy just before predicted—"strengthen thy brethren." This apostle exhorts the Jews †—"repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out:" But he had just before reproached them with having "denied the holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them." And St. James, twice, although in the same passage of his fifth chapter, applies the word to the change of "the sinner from the error of his way." And it is a sinner who has "erred from the truth," supposed to have been previously professed. There would be unreasonable strictness, in forbidding to the discussion of sacred subjects the use of a word, merely because not found in precisely the same sense in scripture; especially if it be used for no other purpose, than the avoiding of circumlocution. But, when words and phrases of scripture are applied in senses not there attached to them; and when, in addition, the subjects which thus borrow them are so permanently parts of an ecclesiastical system, as that this cannot subsist without the language thus borrowed and misapplied; it is a proof of some error, pervading the whole scheme. The error here supposed, is the notion of there being, in the divine institutions, the sign of grace without the grace itself. This error must needs represent conversion and regeneration, as substantially the same. But according to the use of scripture, the former word cannot be fitly applied to any other subject, than either the bringing of infidels within the pale of the Christian profession, or the reclaiming of persons

† Luke xxii. 32.

† Acts iii. 19.

within that pale from any evil courses, into which they may have fallen. The abuse of the word "conversion," has been more particularly treated of in the second part of the present work: but there appeared a use in repeating in this place, a few of the remarks there made.

It can hardly be supposed, that the author has travelled thus far, in the road laid before him by his subject; without recollecting, that as yet, nothing has been said of the relation, which the cited texts bear to the state of infancy. Even now that this view of it opens to him, he does not propose to say much concerning it. To enter on the discussion of the subject of infant baptism, will hardly be expected of him, since controversy has rendered it a very extensive subject of itself. On that question, doubts do not commonly occur, among those who are the most likely to read the present disquisition. But it is more to his purpose to ask—where is the passage of scripture, which makes a difference between adults and infants, as to the point in hand? which cautions us, that, although the baptism of the former is currently spoken of as their regeneration, it is otherwise as to the latter? No such passage will be alleged; and therefore, no such difference exists. The episcopal church quotes Mark x. 13, and following, as a warrant for infant baptism: for—as she implies—since infants are to be brought to Christ, and since baptism is the appointed mode of bringing, they must be brought in this way. But there is here no argument, that does not go to the length of the participation of all Christian privileges. If this be set aside, in regard to infants; and if it be said, that they are only put in the way of instruction, with a view to conversion at some future time; there can hardly be a passage of

scripture, more evidently irrelevant to the point, which it has been so long brought to prove. That the whole subject should be applied in scripture, more immediately to adults, but in terms comprehending infants, is natural: because the mass of baptisms, in the beginning, was of the former; and besides, there were not likely to be peculiar circumstances, inviting attention to the latter. It is enough, that these are never introduced, as needing any other regeneration, than that extended to them in baptism. Thus, where St. Paul* instructs parents to “bring up their children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord;” it would have been natural for him to have reminded them, if there had been any ground for it, of a point which their baptism signified, but did not accomplish. The case of Timothy is remarkable. His grandmother and his mother had been Christians, when he was an infant. And when, by their care, he had been instructed in the holy scriptures (as appears 2 Tim. iii. 15.) it is utterly improbable that they had been inattentive to the duty, of bringing him to Christ in baptism. Of his subsequent regeneration, we read nothing; although, according to some, without this, all his knowledge of the holy scriptures could have been of no avail to him. And yet, without any reference to a regeneration in his riper years, the apostle supposes the scriptures “able to make him wise unto salvation.” The same sentiment is confirmed by another text produced in a former part of this work, and which may properly be repeated here—it is that in 1 Cor. vii. 14.—“else were your children unclean but now are they holy”—or “saints” which is the

* Eph. vi. 4.

usual translation of the original word. Independently on considerations of this sort, infantile regeneration depends on infantile baptism. If this be scriptural, the other is so of course: and it seems a desperate attempt in favour of infants, to assert their right to an ordinance, at the risk of sacrificing the highest privileges attached to it.

SECTION II.

Of the sense of the whole church until the time of Calvin.

Dr. Doddridge's interpretation of Tit. iii. 5.—Apostolic fathers—Justin—Irenaeus, and others of the third century—Fathers of the fourth—Waldenses and Wickliffe—Lutherans—Church of England—Calvin and Calvinistick churches.

DR. DODDRIDGE, in a note to his interpretation of Tit. iii. 5. remarks as follows—"the sense here given of this much controverted passage is what I verily believe to be the justest and safest; though I am well aware, that the Christian church soon began to lay a disproportionate stress on forms, and to ascribe too great efficacy to the ritual of baptism." Concerning so good a man as Dr. Doddridge, there ought to be no doubt of his verily believing as above stated by him; although it may be worth any man's while to inquire, before he believe like him, what connexion there was between the laver, or, if the expression be better liked, the washing spoken of by the apostle, and the interpretation given by Dr. Doddridge. But the reason of the

above quotation from this respectable author, is in reference to citations from early writers, to be here made; in order to draw attention to the circumstance—how far from fact is the suggestion, that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was coincident with the laying of an undue stress on forms. The allegation comes with a peculiarly ill grace, from the minister of any communion, in which it is denied, that the Christian church had forms of prayer, even from the age of the apostles; because in the very times from which some expressions are taken and construed (erroneously, as is here conceived) to discountenance forms of prayer, baptismal regeneration was the current doctrine of the church. Now although it may easily be believed of any institution, that an undue attachment to the forms must prove at last hostile to the spirit of it; yet there is a difficulty in supposing, that so grievous a departure from the faith, as this according to the opposite theory must be, was attendant on the very beginnings of formality; or rather, before it is admitted to have begun.

The author, in citing opinions of early writers of the church, finds them to his hand, in the books of note on the more ordinary questions concerning baptism. For the writers on such questions could hardly bring authorities, without their being such, as involve the leading sentiment of this appendix; so familiar with the fathers was the language proper to it. For the same reason, it is here thought not necessary to have recourse to the original writers, for the authenticity of the passages; but that they may safely be taken from those of modern times; such as Mr. Wall's history of infant baptism, and Mr. Bingham's ecclesiastical antiquities. The edition of Mr. Wall to be here referred to, is the se-

cond—published in 1707. Of Mr. Bingham's work, there is here supposed to be but one edition.

In the remains of the fathers called apostolic; which, as is well known, are not more than enough to make a small octavo volume; there does not appear any thing to the present purpose, except in the works of a single writer. Had the apostolic fathers treated expressly on the nature of baptism; it would probably have appeared in terms, manifesting the influence of the sentiment here sustained, as it is seen in the scriptural writings before them; and in those of fathers of high character, not long after them. The single instance alluded to, is *Hermas*: the writer who, perhaps, in point of judgment, is the lowest on the scale of the writers of his age; but whose reputation for orthodoxy is sufficiently testified, in times not far below his own. And besides, whatever may be thought of the narrative of his visions, no one can withhold admiration from the Christian morality attached to them.

Unless *Hermas* had conceived, that all infants, admitted into the Christian church by baptism, were, by the same ordinance, engrafted into Christ, in every sense to which the expression can be applied; he would hardly have spoken of those who had been Christian infants, but had become Christian adults, as follows—“Whosoever therefore shall continue as infants without malice, shall be more honourable than all those of whom I have as yet spoken” (who were different degrees of Christians, including martyrs and confessors.) “For all infants are valued by the Lord, and esteemed first of all.” Doubtless, these were infants who had been brought to Christ, in the way appointed by him.

In another place, having before described a tower built on waters, he gives a reason for it thus—"Hear ye therefore the reason, why the tower is built on the waters: because your life is saved and shall be saved by water." But there is another passage, more explicit perhaps to the purpose, although connected with a fanciful suggestion of the writer's own mind. He entertained the notion, that, to the holy men who died before Christ, the apostles administered the rite of baptism in the invisible state, as the mean of their being admitted to the benefits of his coming in the flesh. Now although there is no scriptural warrant for this; yet it is a strong evidence, not only of the practice of the rite of baptism in his day, but also of the intimate connexion supposed between the spiritual grace and the visible sign of it. The work of *Hermas* is supposed to have been written while *St. John*, the last surviving apostle, was still living.

Doubtless, one of the reasons, why so little is to be gathered from the apostolic fathers, is, that not one of them wrote for the purpose of giving an account of the faith of Christians. But *Justin*, who wrote within half a century of the decease of *St. John*, had that object professedly in view, for the information of the Heathen. He thus speaks of baptism, in his first apology—"I shall now lay before you the manner of dedicating ourselves to God, through Christ, upon our conversion: for should I omit this, I might seem not to deal sincerely in this account of the Christian religion. As many therefore as are persuaded and believe, that the things taught and said by us are true, and moreover take upon them to live accordingly, are taught to pray and ask of God, with fasting, the forgiveness of their

former sins; we praying together and fasting for and with them. And then they are brought to a place of water, and there regenerated after the same manner with ourselves. For they are washed in the name of God the Father and Lord of all and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; for Christ has said—“unless you are born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” He goes on thus, in the next section—“The reason of this we have from the apostles; for having nothing to do in our first birth, but being begotten by necessity, or without our consent, and trained up also in vicious customs and company, to the end therefore we might continue no longer the children of necessity and ignorance, but of freedom and knowledge, and obtain remission of past sins by virtue of this water; the penitent, who now makes his second birth an act of his own choice, has called over him the name of God the Father and Lord of all things.” Justin afterwards declares, that baptism is called “illumination.”* This seems to have been a familiar name of it, in the early church; which of itself shows, that the principle of illumination—“the promise of the Father”—was considered as given in the ordinance. And indeed, the same follows from other names, familiarly bestowed, as “the gift,”† “the garment of immortality,”‡ “the seal,”§ and—what has the higher authority of scripture—the laver of regeneration.||

The same Justin, in his dialogue with Trypho, speaks as follows—“We also, who by him have had access to God, have not received this carnal

* Φωτισμον. † χαρισμα. ‡ ενδυμα αφθαρσιας. § σφραγιδα.

|| λαιπον παλιγγενησιας.

circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it by baptism, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners: and it is enjoined to all persons, to receive it in this way." Here is a spiritual circumcision spoken of; and it could not have been received in baptism, if this were a mere outward ordinance, unconnected with an inward renovation.

In the same spirit, the same author says in his first apology—"Several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were disciplined to Christ in their childhood, do continue uncorrupted." Now this discipling in childhood, must have been an engrafting into grace; since otherwise, their continuing uncorrupted would have been very unsuitably mentioned. And again he says in his second apology—"This washing is called illumination; because the minds of those who learn those things are enlightened." And in his first dialogue, he calls baptism "the water of life."*

Let it be remembered that Justin, in the ages succeeding him, has been honourably mentioned as a distinguished martyr of the Christian church; and competent to the work undertaken by him, of presenting to the Roman emperor and senate an account of the principles and practices of the Christians. But before this author is parted with, it may be worth while to look back to the allegation of a coincidence in point of time, between the introduction of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and an undue attachment to forms. When by those attached to prescribed forms of prayer, there

* *ὕδατος ζῶσης.*

is pleaded the practice of the early church; the principal document of those times brought forwards against the plea, consists in two words,* in the first apology of the same Justin. The idea of the minister's praying with his whole might, has been thought adverse to that of his praying by a set form. The advocates of the latter way, think that they satisfy the scruple, by showing that the same words are applied, on other occasions, to the joining in precomposed psalmody. There is no design of entering on the merits of the question in this place. But the inquiry occurs—If even forms of prayer, however unexceptionable in themselves, were unknown in the time of Justin; is it to be conceived, that there had taken place the most lamentable of all the bad effects of the supposed innovation—its introducing of a tenet, that strikes at the root of all Christian piety; as that now under consideration, is supposed to do by many?

Irenæus, the celebrated bishop of Lyons, wrote about half a century after Justin. Speaking of the Saviour, he says—"He came to save all persons, by himself: all, I mean, who by him are regenerated unto God; infants, and little ones and children, and youths, and elder persons." How infants could have been regenerated in any other way than by baptism, it is difficult to conceive. The same writer says in another place—"And again, when he (Christ) gave his disciples the commission of regenerating unto God, he said unto them"—Then follows the commission recorded in the latter end of St. Matthew's gospel. This venerable man testifies, that in his early years, he had often heard

* *οση δυναμις.*

Polycarp discourse of St. John and his preaching. Polycarp was made bishop of Smyrna by St. John; and is thought to have been the angel of that church, so honourably mentioned in the book of Revelation. Irenæus's day was too early to admit the suspicion, that the substance had then yielded to the ceremony.

Cotemporary with Irenæus, was Clement of Alexandria; who* affirms it to be the effect of the divine agency, "to form man out of the earth, to regenerate him by water, and to increase him by the spirit." Here are creation, regeneration and renovation; precisely in the relation to one another, in which they are affirmed by the advocates of the present doctrine. In another place, Clement gives as the reason of baptism being called illumination—"because it confers the first light, and is the introduction to all other divine illuminating mysteries; therefore, from what it accomplishes, we honour it with the proper name of illumination:" a very improper name, as would seem, unless the illuminating principle were attendant on the right administration of the ordinance.

Tertullian, who lived not long after both the former, is known to have written inconsistently on the subject of baptism; in one place advising to delay that of infants; although, in another, allowing it in cases of necessity; and, in several places, speaking as though he thought it essential to salvation: notwithstanding his having given the innocency of persons of early years as a reason, why their baptism should not be hastened. On that point, he has certainly delivered himself in a manner, in which he is not supported by any early wri-

* Pæd. B. 1. ch. 12.

ter. And yet, in relation to the matter now under consideration, he adopts the current language of his time. For having, in his book on baptism,* quoted our Lord's commission to baptize, he affirms it to be designed for all; and proves his position by the passage in St. John iii. 5—"except a man be born of water and of the spirit, &c." And in the same book,† he remarks an imitation of the Jewish and Christian institutions among the Heathen. For he says, that they baptized in the mysteries of Apollo and of Ceres: and adds—"they say, they do this for their regeneration, and the pardon of their former perjuries."

Whatever may be thought of Origen, in respect to orthodoxy; there will be no doubt of his fidelity, when his language is produced in evidence of what was customary in his day. He has the following passage—"Then again, we may inquire, when it is that the angels here spoken of (meaning in Matthew xviii. 10.) are set over those little ones showed by our Saviour? Whether they took the care and management of them, from the time when they, by the washing of regeneration, whereby they were new born, do, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word; and are no longer subject to any evil power."

Within half a century of Origen, lived St. Cyprian. It would require much transcribing of the passages, were they taken at full length, in which he connects baptism with regeneration. It was a familiar idea with him. Thus, in the name of himself and a council of sixty-six bishops, he tells Fidus, a bishop who had adopted the fancy of not baptizing infants before the

* Chap. 12. 13.

† Chap. 5.

eighth day, that he was mistaken in this matter: “unless (says he) the grace itself, which is given to baptized persons, is greater or less, according to the age of those who receive it; whereas the holy spirit is given, not by different measures, but with a fatherly affection and kindness equal to all.” Here is a grace, actually bestowed on infants: and it is called in this very epistle “the spiritual circumcision.” Further, the father puts together the epithets “baptized” and “sanctified,” in such a manner as shows, that he accounted them the same. He also says in his book “*De Lapsis*,” aggravating the wickedness of those who had fallen away during the persecution—“That nothing might be wanting to the measure of their wickedness, their little infants also, being led or brought in their parents’ arms, lost that which they obtained presently after they were born.”

After St. Cyprian, there have not come down to the present times any writers of note, in the first three centuries; unless Arnobius and Lactantius be reckoned in the third century, rather than in the fourth. Neither of these, seems to have said any thing to the present point.

It has been far from the wish of the author, to swell his pages with large quotations; or, much more might have been given: but it seemed to him of importance, to present an unbroken chain of sentiment, from the apostolic age through the ages of martyrdom. For it is very improbable, that, during the times in which Christians were so familiar as we find them with the baptism in blood, as martyrdom was sometimes called; the most eminent and most venerated of the bishops and pastors of the church, should have egregiously mistaken the true meaning of the baptism by water.

And it is remarkable, that, while other subjects are occasionally spoken of in such a manner, as not to determine questions since arisen on them; and while this is true of baptism, relatively to all questions besides the present; the ordinance is seldom mentioned, without some name or some circumstance attached to it, evidently demonstrative, that it was considered as a regeneration, in every sense in which the word can apply to the being brought within the Christian covenant.

On descending to the fourth century, as writers abound, so of course there abound the testimonies, applying to the purpose of this appendix. It would be superfluous to introduce many of them; but there shall be given a few, to serve for a specimen of all.

Gregory, bishop of Nazianzen, extolling baptism in his oration on the subject, and describing its importance, under the names usually attributed to it, says---“ We call it the gift, the grace, the washing, the anointing, the enlightening, the garment of incorruption, the laver of regeneration, the seal and whatever else is honourable.” In the same oration, having spoken of man’s natural state, and having remarked—God has not left his creature without a remedy; but, as he first made us, so he renews us by the divine formation of baptism—he adds—“ Which, as it is a seal to such persons as newly enter into life, so, to those that are adult, it is a grace and a restoring of the image which they had left.” Here is an especial recognising of the doctrine, as applying to infants. Afterwards, the same eloquent bishop, having spoken of baptism as the entering into a covenant with God, makes the consideration a caution against a lapse; because, as he tells his audience, there is no regeneration afterwards. That

there may be repentance, although attended with difficulty, he admits.

Chrysostom, another Greek bishop, celebrated for the popularity of his preaching, says, in one of his homilies—"As a mark is set upon soldiers, so the spirit is put upon true believers." And this marking by the spirit he considered as done in baptism; because he makes it the distinctive character of Christians, as circumcision had been the distinctive character of the Jews. Still further, contrasting the two subjects, he says—"But our circumcision, I mean the grace of baptism, gives cure without pain; and procures to us a thousand benefits, and fills us with the grace of the spirit." And immediately afterwards, he calls it by the name evidently used by St. Paul, as going to the extent of spiritual benefit—"the circumcision made without hands."

Although there would be injustice done to the memories of these celebrated men, in supposing that such sayings are the mere embellishments of eloquence; yet, the same sentiment may be exhibited in the greater simplicity of historic language. For Eusebius, in his life of Constantine, represents the emperor as saying, in reference to his contemplated baptism—"Now is the time for me to enjoy the seal of immortality; now is the time for me to obtain the seal of salvation."

To these citations, there might be additions from the same and from other writers, and from the language held by councils; and not in any instance in the shape of argument, but as using ordinary language, to express uncontradicted doctrine. But there shall suffice one instance more—that of Austin; of the same Austin who laid the foundation of Calvinism; without advert-

ing to the circumstance, so far as appears, that he was putting force into other hands in future, for the taking away of an ancient landmark, by him held sacred; and which perhaps, in his own day, all his popularity would not have enabled him to remove from its place, had he been so inclined.

There being no question concerning the sense of this eminent man, one passage from his voluminous writings may be sufficient. After stating, that the universal practice of the church would be sufficient to warrant infant baptism to have been from the apostles, even if there were no scriptural authority for it; he goes on thus—“ Yet we may besides take a true estimate, how much the sacrament of baptism does avail infants, by the circumcision which God’s former people received. For Abraham was justified before he received that, as Cornelius was endued with the Holy Spirit, before he was baptized. And yet the apostle says of Abraham, that he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, by which he had in heart believed; and it had been counted to him for righteousness. Why then was he commanded, thenceforward to circumcise all his male infants on the eighth day, when they could not yet believe with the heart, that it might be counted to them for righteousness; but for this reason, because the sacrament is of itself of great import? Therefore, as, in Abraham, the righteousness of faith went before; and circumcision, the seal of the righteousness of faith, came after; so, in Cornelius, the spiritual sanctification by the gift of the Holy Spirit went before; and the sacrament of regeneration, by the laver of baptism, came after. And as in Isaac, who was circumcised the eighth day, the

seal of the righteousness of faith went before, and, as he was a follower of his father's faith, the righteousness itself, the seal whereof had gone before in his infancy, came after; so, in infants, the sacrament of regeneration goes before; and, if they put in practice the Christian religion, conversion of the heart, the mystery whereof went before in their body, comes after."

The author is not inattentive to the force of the last words of the quotation from St. Austin. And it is here recollected, that they may be thought to favour sentiments very different from those now sustained; especially when taken in connexion with what the father goes on to say, in a passage which will be introduced in a subsequent part of this appendix. The author takes the liberty of believing, that Austin felt the pressure of a difficulty on this point; the result of a struggle between the opinions introduced by him into the Christian church, and the orthodox doctrine of baptismal regeneration; which, however, he does not seem to have ever questioned. Indeed he held it up so high, as to make it the line of distinction between the salvation of some infants, and the damnation of others; as was shown in a former part of the present work.

This notion concerning infants, having its rise about the beginning of the fifth century, continued in its original form, until the eleventh; when there was introduced the distinction between positive and privative punishment,* which received the papal sanction. From this time, infants were supposed to be deprived of the beatific vision, but not to be subjected to the torments of hell. Calvinism has rested the subject on a ground,

* "Poena sensus" and "poena damni."

which was as new in the seventeenth century, as the other had been in the beginning of the fifth; making election the line of distinction between the saved and damned in a state of infancy. These are inventions of the wit of men, concerning a portion of the human race, of whom the Lord of life hath said—"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Besides Austin, there are other writers near his time, who express the sentiment, that unbaptized children are under some degree of punishment in another world. But no authorities are to be produced from the first three centuries. When at last there was introduced the idea of the necessity of baptism to salvation in all cases, without an allowance for unavoidable omission, the Christian clergy found themselves constrained to adopt the unauthorized opinion of a baptism in blood. That a person converted to the faith, and called to suffer death for it before baptism could be obtained, was a fit subject of the promises of God, may reasonably be believed. How it can come under the name of baptism, does not appear. But thus it is, that one error calls for another, to counterbalance consequences not intended. From the same source there arose in the Christian church the unauthorized notion of a middle state.

To return to St. Austin. If there be any doubt that his sense on the subject of baptismal regeneration was as here stated, there may be referred to a decisive evidence of it in his discourse on the third chapter of St. John's gospel, published in the ninth volume of the Paris edition of his works. His interpretation of that chapter is much the same, as the view of it given in this appendix. The discourse alluded to, is said by Dupin to have been written about the year 422. If any

favourer of the doctrines of the father, should think it charitable to believe, that after writing against the Pelagians he changed his opinion concerning what passed in the interview between our Lord and Nicodemus; let the proposer of the supposition be aware, in the first place, that there is no evidence of such a change; and then, that it will be a poor compliment to the memory of the father, and not consonant with his high reputation, to believe, that of the thirty-five years of his episcopacy, all but the last eight of them were disfigured by material—perhaps it will be said—fundamental error.

That from the time of St. Austin, all the churches in communion with the church of Rome continued, and to this day continue, to profess the doctrine in question, is a matter which will not be disputed: and it is here mentioned, not as of authority to prove the truth of the doctrine, but merely in aid of the present object; which is to show, that the contrary opinion had its origin in Calvinism, and cannot be traced to any other source.

For the same reason, there is here mentioned the Greek church; which, after the times of the authorities above given, divided from the Latin, chiefly owing to contests for pre-eminence between their respective patriarchs. Although they have been severed for many centuries, yet they agree in this matter; for which, as the fact is not likely to be disputed, there shall be given this single authority from Smith's Account of the Greek Church, a book of acknowledged reputation. After mentioning* that immersion is the usual mode of baptism, but that affusion is sometimes practised, he

* Page 112.

says—“ But whether the sacramental rite be either by immersion or affusion, the effect of the sacrament is the same; that is, the washing away of original sin, derived from the first parent of mankind, (which they call the ancestral sin*) and an undoubted seal of eternal life; the baptized persons being regenerated, and made members of the body of Christ.”

It is natural enough to inquire, whether during the dark ages which intervened between the fifth century and the reformation, and under the little insight enjoyed in some places of the errors of the prevalent superstition, there took place an unveiling of the supposed error, lying hid under the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. And it might be expected, that if this detection were to be found any where, it would be among the Waldenses. They thought, they spoke, and they suffered boldly, in whatever pertained to the ministry, and other subjects which human inventions had obscured. But in the testimony which they bore to the truth, they do not appear, in regard to the present particular, to have departed from what was held by the Christian world in general. Their enemies, charged them with holding many things, which they denied. They would certainly have been loaded with a charge, had there been room for it, on the present subject. But no such was made; and it is therefore reasonable to believe, that there was no occasion given.

Wickliffe was also a fore-runner of the reformation. Of the controversies to which he gave occasion, and of their results, there remain sufficient documents. Of

* το αμαρτημα προπατρικου.

his being faulted by the papal establishment, as to the present particular, there is nothing to show.

To the great change which took place in the Christian world under the name of the reformation, Luther confessedly gave a beginning, and therefore, the next inquiry presenting itself is for the present subject, as it stands in the confessions of the churches which acknowledge him for their reformer. The result of the inquiry must be, that there is not a single truth affirmed by them, more explicitly declared than that which it is the object of this appendix to establish.

The confession of Augsburg, in the thirteenth article, entitled, “of the sacraments,” says—“They” (the Lutheran churches) “teach that the sacraments were instituted, not merely as signs of a Christian profession among men, but as signs and testimonies of God’s good will and pleasure towards them.” And the same confession, in the ninth article, entitled “of baptism,” says—“They” (the same churches) “teach the utility and necessity of baptism for salvation, that the grace of God is therein offered unto us; and that children, being baptized, are received into the grace of God.”

Of the church of England, there is no necessity to speak in this place. In the fourth part of the work, it has been shown, how clearly the subject is declared in her articles, her catechism, her baptismal services and her homilies. If the doctrine be an error, it is one which taints her whole system; because it has a relation to all its parts.

Before the saying of any thing concerning Calvinistick churches, there may be use in taking a view of the shape in which the subject appears in Calvin’s own work. For the present writer, fearing indeed the ap-

pearance of arrogance, yet exercising the freedom of sentiment essential to sincere inquiry, takes the liberty of believing, that, relatively to the matter in hand, there is in Calvin's Institutions an assemblage of opposing truth and error, on the present point: of error recently invented; and of ancient truth, reluctantly retiring from the intrusions of the other.

In the fourth book, ch. xv. sect. 1, Calvin treats of baptism; which he defines—"the sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the church, in order that being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God." If words have any determinate meaning, this goes to the extent of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as held by the church of England. But he is afterwards, if possible, more express. For in the 16th ch. sect. 4, after speaking of circumcision as a sign of remission of sins and mortification of the flesh, he goes on, as already quoted in the first part of this work, to remark, "the promise, in which we have stated the virtue of the signs to consist, is the same in both; including the paternal favour of God, remission of sins, and eternal life." He adds, "the thing signified also, is one and the same, namely, regeneration. The foundation, on which the accomplishment of these things rests, is the same in both." But, after this strong passage he has the sentiment, that, in infants dying after they are baptized, it is to be believed, that the grace of God makes up the defect; because by reason not of a wicked will, but of want of age, they can neither believe with the heart to righteousness, nor confess with their mouth to salvation. He says the sacrament of baptism is one thing,

and conversion of the heart another: but God Almighty makes up what was not wilfully wanting.

The above is said, as especially pertinent to infant baptism; concerning which, Calvin is there discoursing. In the 7th section, he quotes, against the Anabaptists, the passage in St. Mark, x. 13, which records the bringing of the young children to Christ; and the like application is made of it, as in the church of England. And care is taken to explain what was understood by children*—“Two words,” (says Calvin) “used by the Greeks to signify little infants hanging on the breast.” But Turretine, however great with him the name of the reformer, not liking the idea of such early discipleship to Christ, would give greater latitude to the Greek words,† and even seems willing to reconcile himself to the interpreting of the passage of innocency of mind and humility. This is the more remarkable, as, in a subsequent part of his work,‡ in treating of the controversy whether the children of believers are to be baptized, he explains the two Greek words as Calvin had done before him.

In the like spirit, Calvin says, sect. 9, after a display of the advantage to the parent from his having of his child baptized,—“The children also receive some advantage from their baptism; their ingraftment into the body of the church, being a more peculiar recommendation of them to the other members; and afterwards, when they grow to years of maturity, it operates upon them as a powerful stimulus to a serious attention to the worship of God, by whom they were accepted as his children by the solemn symbol of adop-

* *παιδια* and *βρεφια*.

† Locus 13, sec. 30.

‡ Locus 17.

tion, before they were capable of knowing him as their Father.”

Again, in section 17, there is read—“They” (the Anabaptists,) consider themselves as advancing a most powerful argument for excluding infants from baptism, of whom they allege, that by reason of their age, they are not yet capable of understanding the mystery signified in it: that is spiritual regeneration, which cannot take place in early infancy. Therefore they conclude, they are to be considered in no other view than as children of Adam, till they have attained an age which admits of a second birth. But all these things are uniformly contradicted by the truth of God.” He mentions the cases of the baptist and of Christ, sect. 18, in evidence of his position.

Although it is of essential importance to exhibit the explicitness of Calvin, in the present particular; yet there shall be but one more authority given, and that for the purpose of noting a point, on which this able man seems to have been driven from his ground; by the circumstance, that his adversaries availed themselves of reasonings arising out of his proper system. The passage, which is in the twenty-first section of the same chapter, is as follows; and is in support of the distinction between regeneration and renovation, which are certainly distinct in scripture. “The charge of absurdity, with which they” (the Anabaptists) “endeavour to stigmatize it, we thus refute: if any of those who are the objects of divine election, after having received the sign of regeneration, depart out of this life before they have attained years of discretion, the Lord renovates them by the power of his spirit, incomprehensible to us, in such a manner as he alone foresees will be ne-

cessary. If they happen to live to an age, at which they are capable of being instructed in the true signification of baptism, they will hence be the more inflamed to the pursuit of that renovation, with the token of which they find themselves to have been favoured in their earliest infancy, that it might be the object of their constant attention all their life time.”

There was quoted from St. Austin a passage, which was noticed as somewhat singular. Although that father was accustomed to discourse of baptism and of regeneration, as the same; and although, under the latter, he included the favour of God in a plenary sense; yet he speaks of a subsequent conversion of the hearts of children. Probably he meant, by this, no more than a proper direction of their powers, under the renovating influence of grace bestowed. And what makes it the more supposable, is his belief, that all baptized infants are saved; without any such idea as that in the last passage cited from Calvin, of a conversion of the infant's mind. Yet it is not here denied, that there may have been a misgiving on the mind of Austin, relative to the inconsistency since generally confessed, between baptismal regeneration, and the opinion which he had adopted, until then new to the Christian church.

So far as is known to the present writer, who however is aware, that there are very many documents beyond his reach; if, before Calvin, there was any person of name who rejected the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, it must have been Zuinglius. At least, there are more appearances of it in relation to him, than to any other; although there is here far from being a conviction, that this was the fact. And besides, if Zuinglius rejected the doctrine, it must have been on princi-

ples very different from those of Calvin; because the former, without exacting conversion, avowed the opinion that all infants are saved. In all the accounts given by Moshem and others, of Zuinglius's controversy with the Lutherans; there is no appearance of their charging him with contradicting the doctrine, now the subject; which made a conspicuous figure in their system. But father Paul, in his account of the proceedings preparatory to the seventh session of the council of Trent, mentions Zuinglius as the author of the false opinion—"the taking of the sacraments to be but signs, by which the faithful are discerned from infidels; or acts and exercises of the profession of Christian faith; having no other relation to grace, but as signs that one hath received it." This is the very opinion, which the first sentence of the twenty-fifth article of the church of England was intended to controvert. But the sentence to that effect, was not in the article in the time of Edward. It was inserted, at the review in the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth; and may be mentioned as one reason to show, that the leading divines of that church were not yet Calvinistic; since they thus inserted a censure on a sentiment, not indeed found in Calvin, but soon observed to grow out of his system.

In the aforesaid discussions, preparatory to the seventh session of the council of Trent; father Paul, among the errors concerning baptism, names as the fifth, that "baptism is an external sign, as the red mark in the lambs; and hath no part in justification." This, was doubtless an express contradiction of the doctrine in question; but it is not said by whom. The historian, in relating the discussions, does not mention any thing as passing concerning this. And when the anathemas

are recorded, there is no censure of the said fifth error, given out for consideration. There seems no way of accounting for this, but on the supposition, that the notion of baptism's being a mere outward and visible sign, without an inward and spiritual grace, had not, at that day, come from a quarter sufficiently respectable, to make it the ground of an ecclesiastical council's contradiction. The author is sensible, that he has got into the field of conjecture, and would not wish to be considered as affirming, what he states as only probable.

When Calvin took up the system of Austin, but pushed it to a greater extreme, although, like his predecessor, he asserted baptismal regeneration, with all the effects ascribed to it by any person in any age; yet, like the same father, he must have perceived the awkwardness of its alliance with his representations of the natural state of man. For there seems no other way of accounting, in the case of the death of "elect infants," nor of "all baptized infants" as in Austin's scheme, for their being saved; but "by the power of God's spirit incomprehensible to us:" and "in such a manner, as he alone foresees will be necessary."

But neither the father nor the reformer gives any authority of scripture, for what they say. In truth, it is all hypothesis, occurring for the obviating of the difficulties of the system. Both of them saw, that, according to their theories, notwithstanding the regeneration which they had claimed to baptism, there was required some other change, in case of an infant's death. This change, Austin was willing to indulge to all baptized infants; although Calvin and Calvinistick churches have since narrowed it to the elect. But what sort of a conversion is that, in which the understanding does not

apprehend; the will is not conscious; and, in short, the whole man is like matter acted upon, but not acting? In the whole of the controversy concerning free will and grace, however some hold up in the highest point of view the asserted irresistibility of the latter, yet they reject the imputation of making man a mere machine. According to their theory, the agent is conscious of the operation. But in the other case, there is no consciousness, and it is as much a mechanical operation, as that of any artist in his trade. That there is any express sanction for it in scripture, will hardly be alleged. And that there is such in any author before the system now called Calvinism, is what the present writer must disbelieve, until he shall be more successful than heretofore in the search of it. The sentiment, however, seems entitled to the commendation, of an hope charitable in a degree; being designed to rescue some of the early subjects of the grave from that second death, to which they would otherwise seem consigned necessarily by the system. But while the gloomy side of the question is, with them, a matter of certainty; the favourable side, must be hope only. This indeed is one reason, for suspecting the sufficiency of the groundwork of the system. And if it should be found insufficient; there will be no call for the charity, designed to moderate its rigour.

How long, after Calvin, the doctrine here in question continued to be professed by any of his followers, there is no need minutely to inquire. It had probably become discarded, when Turretine wrote. For he says* concerning the Lutherans—"Who, that they may oppose

* Locus 13. sect. 29.

themselves to the Anabaptists, are fallen into another extreme; determining that infants are regenerate in baptism, and endowed with actual faith." Turretine, it is here supposed, can hardly be correct in saying, that the Lutherans think infants capable of actual faith: but they affirm them to be subjects of regeneration; and, as the professor thought otherwise, he must have departed in this instance from the opinion of his predecessor. The same appears in another part of his work;† where, giving his reasons why infants should be baptized, he mentions, as Calvin had done, the similarity between circumcision and baptism; but does not apply to either of them the language, which Calvin had applied to both. According to Turretine, they are mere marks; and have no necessary connexion with the thing signified.

When the synod of Dort brought Calvinism to a determined standard; there can be no doubt, that baptismal regeneration had become entirely discarded by the professors of that system.

SECTION III.

Of the Contrariety between the Episcopal Church and the Calvinistick Churches.

Church of England—Westminster Confession—Synod of Dort—
Turretine—Witsius—Dr. Doddridge.

It is with great pain, that the author records the contrariety in this respect, or in any other: And he would be resigned to be found in the extreme of representing the differences of churches rather as less than as greater,

* Locus 17.

than in reality they are. Further, contemplating existing differences, he holds it to be a sacred duty, to promote every mean of mutual tolerance and good will, and of abstaining from all hostility and provocation; believing also that the time will come, when, by the discharge of all human inventions, many at least of the present severed communions will be brought to worship with one heart and with one mouth. But the seeds of this blessed fruit must be laid, as he conceives, in personal charity; just as its opposite was produced by personal hostility. No advance to the blessed object—but indeed the contrary—will be made by any society's requiring of another, that it give up any thing considered by itself as entering into the essence of divine truth. At the same time, there is this peculiar difficulty in the way on the present subject; that a considerable proportion of the ministers, and the other members of Calvinistick churches, look on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as striking at the foundation of all vital religion: Although it is known to those of them who are well informed, that the profession of the doctrine was made in former times, by men whom they hold in the highest honour; and was even universally made in the ages, when the church was the most prodigal of the blood of martyrdom.

To begin with the church of England: In her twenty-fifth article, she defines the sacraments to be “sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us; by which he doth work invisibly in us; and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.” In the statement to be made of the opposite belief, it will be perceived, that although there are recognised as well an inward grace as an out-

ward sign, yet they are not considered as concomitant, agreeably to the language used above. The twenty-seventh article defines baptism “a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church: the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.” Here, all right baptism and its effects, are affirmed to be co-existent: So that if infants are rightly baptized, the matter is predicable of them, no less than of those who exercise repentance and faith in their highest grades.

It would be tedious to repeat at large, what has been said in the fourth part. It was shown, that in the catechism, there was declared to be attached to infant baptism “an inward and spiritual grace given”—not what may perhaps be given at some future time. The sentiment, was shown to be introduced into many of the prayers and into the homilies. And what is perhaps stronger to the purpose than any thing else, it was shown, that if regeneration be severed from baptism, the church has not noticed the former at all; there being an utter silence as to the subject, in the places where it might have been expected to appear conspicuously—especially in the office for the visitation of the sick.*

* It is surprising, that so intelligent a man as Robert Barclay, in his arguments against the two sacraments, although he states different opinions on the subject, should overlook the definition of a sacrament as given by the established church of the country in which he lived and wrote. This oversight seems to have arisen, from his considering of “sacramentum” as designed to express “an oath.” In its general sense, it is applicable to any material object dedicated to a sacred purpose, and therefore, fitly applied to what was “an outward and visible sign of an inward and

There will still be the charge of ascribing an incredible effect, to what will be called no more than the washing with water. This is denied. The baptism is affirmed to be “by water and the Holy Ghost;” the aids of which, are pledged in the transaction; so that even in the case of an infant, there is an entering on a new state, with all its peculiar relations, without an investment with new properties of the soul.

With this belief of the church of England, let there be contrasted that of the assembly of divines at Westminster. They define sacraments,* “holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him; as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the church and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.” Here is an avoiding of any such words as those of the church of England, which must have been familiar to the composers. Not only so, lest they should be considered as countenancing the opinion of the church from which they were seceding, in the sixth section of spiritual grace.” It answered in the western parts of the Roman empire, to what in the eastern had been previously signified by (*μυστηριον*) mystery: the ancient use of which was different from the modern; denoting any symbol of a sense intended to be conveyed. Thus, in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew, the seed sown, the soils on which it fell, and the difference of result, are called “mysteries of the kingdom of God:” that is, the concerns of this kingdom denoted by sensible emblems. Other instances might be given. Accordingly, there is no other unscriptural use in the word sacrament, than what is the result of difference of language. It did not come into the church, as Robert Barclay supposes, from the more restricted use of it, to bind a soldier to his general.

* Chap. xviii. sect. 1.

the twenty-eighth chapter—of baptism—they limit the exhibition of the grace “to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God’s own will, in his appointed time.” By this, they not only sever between the time of the sign and that of the grace; but declare, that the latter is not for all, whether infants or adults, on whom the former is bestowed.

The departure from the ancient system may be seen very conspicuous, in what the confession says in chapter 10, section 3. The church of England had affirmed concerning all baptized infants, that, dying such, they are undoubtedly saved. Concerning other infants, it was foreign to the gospel economy to speak. But the salvation of the baptized, she thought sure, because of their regeneration in baptism. On the contrary, the confession speaks thus—“Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth.” Concerning the regeneration here spoken of, and taking the word in the evident sense of the composers; if the writer of this had entertained a doubt of its being a process unknown in scripture, as applied to a being, destitute of the knowledge of any of its truths, and of the difference between moral good and evil; the doubt would be removed by the texts of scripture brought in proof; and inserted in notes in the approved and apparently authorized editions of the confession in the church of Scotland. The texts are, St. Luke xviii. 15, 16. Acts ii. 38, 39. and St. John iii. 3. and the following: Such are the texts, which are thought to describe—impliedly, for it will hardly be said expressly—a moral change on the minds of infants. But it is more

to the present purpose to remark, that the article of the confession evidently discards every idea of a spiritual benefit from baptism, to any other infants than the elect.

On the subject of the regeneration of infants, there is a point of difference between the confession of Westminster and the decisions of the synod of Dort. The former applies the benefit of regeneration to some favoured infants, under the denomination of the elect: But the latter, under predestination, article seventeenth, speaks thus—"Since we are to judge of the will of God from his word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in virtue of the covenant of grace; in which they, together with the parents, are contemplated godly persons, these have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children, whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy." If the decrees of Dort are taken as the standard of Calvinism, the confession of Westminster seems to have gone beyond it, in this particular.

In the fourth part of this work, in order to avoid the danger of misrepresenting Calvinistick churches, there were presented passages from three of their most distinguished writers—Calvin, Turretine, and Witsius. As to Calvin, it has been already shewn, that he held the usual language of the Christian church, on the present subject. It has appeared of Turretine, that he censured the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as a Lutheran error. His renunciation of it, appears in other places of his book. And if it did not appear, it would have been implied in his account of regeneration: which*

* Locus 13. sect. 10.

he makes to be—"a change of the whole man, that is, of intellect, of will, of affections, of powers, and from thence of all outward acts; from whence it is called the new man." All this is here allowed to be inapplicable to infants, without the exception of any supposed to be elected. Perhaps, it may be worth while to select another passage from this professor; in which he censures the Lutherans on the subject of the sacraments generally; because they make them "channels of grace and physical means, or real and instrumental causes, by which the benefits obtained by Christ's death are exhibited and conferred."* It must be evident, that this censure, intended against the Lutherans, applied to the church of England also, which had made a pointed use of some of the very language here stigmatised by this Calvinistick divine. He is dissatisfied with the expression—"instrumental causes:" while the said church defines of baptism, that by it, "as by an instrument," there is an ingrafting into the church. Such is the contrariety between two systems, which are yet often affirmed to coincide.

Witsius, in his chapter on regeneration, says—"The reprobate are never regenerate:" And yet, he would doubtless have allowed many of them to have been baptized. He also speaks of elect infants, with more enlargement than the Westminster confession. For he says of them—"If they also ought to be thought to be regenerate of the seed of the word, it is to be understood, not of the word externally propounded, which they understand not; but of the truths contained in the word, the efficacy of which is imprinted by the Holy Spirit upon their minds; which they will come to the

* Locus 17. sect. 22.

actual knowledge of, when they grow up." The writer of this cannot form an idea of the efficacy of truths, imprinted on the mind; and of those truths—or the efficacy of them if it be the right expression—being unknown to it, until a subsequent period. And yet Dr. Witsius was a divine of too much understanding and learning, to be here impeached of writing without ideas.

But there is a further motive, in introducing Witsius in this place. It is designed to exhibit five sections—from the sixteenth to the twentieth—of his chapter on regeneration, with remarks on them. The object is, to show the more precisely, wherein the two theories differ: Which may have the use in regard to each of them, of guarding against its being extended to what its advocates disclaim.

"Now," says this author, "after a principle of spiritual life is infused into the elect soul by regeneration, divine grace does not always proceed therein, in the same method and order. It is possible, that for some time, the spirit of the life of Christ may lie, as it were, dormant in some (almost in the same manner as vegetative life in the seed of a plant, or sensitive life in the seed of an animal, or a poetical genius in one born a poet) so as that no vital operations can yet proceed therefrom, though they be savingly united to Christ, the fountain of true life, by the Spirit. This is the case with respect to elect and regenerate infants, whose is the kingdom of God, and who therefore are reckoned among believers and saints, though unqualified through age actually to believe and practise godliness." In what is thus said concerning the beginning of the spiritual life, there is here a concurrence: But when

the passage speaks of elect and regenerate infants, the advocates of the doctrine now treated of would call all infants regenerated, who are brought to God in his appointed ordinance. There may be propriety in remarking, that for a distinction, which, in Witsius's day was recent, he gives not a single authority from scripture. But to proceed with the same author:

“ Moreover, it sometimes happens, that this spirit of a new life will even exert itself in its vital actions, as soon as those who have received it in their infancy, upon gradually advancing in years, are qualified to raise their thoughts above the objects of sense. Accordingly, it has often been observed, that, in children of five or six years of age, some small sparks of piety and devotion have broken forth, displaying themselves in holy longings, ardent little prayers, and in a certain extraordinary tenderness of conscience, not daring to do any thing with respect to God, themselves, or their neighbour, which they have been taught to be displeasing to God: as also in their discourses concerning God and Christ, which have been full of an holy and unfeigned love, and breathing something heavenly, which I have not words to express: as God is sometimes pleased out of the mouth of babes and sucklings to perfect praise. Psalm viii. 2. This has been especially observed in some dying children, to the great astonishment of all by-standers.”—The professor might have added—but it would not have suited his theory, and yet it is a fact—that the like piety has been observed in some children, who have afterwards lived and died without God in the world. And there is attached to the subject another fact, which the professor would have found it equally difficult to account for. He de-

scribes, as the effect of the supernatural change of the powers of the infant's mind, that, in its first openings, there would be manifested the sensibilities of devotion and a tenderness of conscience. It will hardly be denied, that many persons, whose infant years bore no traces of such early piety, have at some subsequent period become good Christians, and afterwards lived and died such. These, according to the theory, must have been elect infants, in the beginning; and therefore, their piety ought to have manifested itself with the first dawnings of intelligence; however it may have afterwards sunk for a while, under the temptations of the world. But setting aside considerations of this sort, there would be entire consent in what is said above by Dr. Witsius; provided it were understood, that the matter there affirmed of some children, might have happened to any—that the benefits of the Christian covenant being stipulated in baptism, although the good results might be much forwarded by the pious care of parents and of others, yet, if the party, as he advances to maturity, will aim at the keeping of “the law in the members” in subjection to “the law in the mind,” all grace necessary to that end has been made sure to him, by the original act. In the mean time, and as a caution against the charge of evident absurdity thrown on the doctrine of the regeneration of infants—a charge here conceived to arise out of a mistake of the meaning of the language used—let it be remarked that this eminent divine, although he does not extend it to all infants, yet challenges it to some; doubtless understanding it to be by a mysterious operation, which is here supposed not possible in regard to any.

The next section is—"But when the foundation is laid, divine grace does not always grow up in the same manner. It often happens, that this principle of spiritual life, which had discovered its activity in the most tender childhood, according to and sometimes above the age of the person, God, by his singular grace preventing the full maturity of the natural faculties, grows up by degrees with the person, after the example of our Lord, who increased in 'wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man;' and of John the baptist, 'who grew and waxed strong in spirit.' Such persons make continual progress in the way of sanctification, and grow insensibly 'unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' We have an illustrious example of this in Timothy, who from a child had known the holy scriptures, and who, in his tender youth, to Paul's exceeding joy, had given evident signs of an unfeigned faith, with tears of the most tender piety bursting out at times." There could hardly have been a more decisive dissent from what is unquestionably the opinion of at least a considerable portion of the professors of Calvinism, that there can be no regeneration, without the time and the manner of it being known. And to this, Witsius's cases are pertinently opposed.

"On the other hand" (he thus proceeds) "it sometimes happens, that these sparks of piety, especially which more sparingly shone forth in childhood, when in a manner covered with the ashes of I know not what worldly vanities, and carnal pleasures of youth, will appear to be almost turned into dead coals. The allurements of the deceitful flesh, and the sorceries of a tempting world, assaulting the unadvised, unwary heart

with its fallacious pleasures, almost stifle those small beginnings of piety; and for months, sometimes for years together, so violently overpower them, that all their attempts against them seem to be vain. Yet there are still, in such persons, remorse of conscience, awakening in them at times languishing resolutions and vanishing purposes of reforming their lives, till, by the infinite efficacy of divine grace, insinuating into the languid and decaying breast, they awake as from a deep sleep, and, with the greatest sorrow for their past life, and utmost seriousness, apply to the careful practice of piety; the warmth of their zeal then breaks forth, being exceedingly desirous to show, by brighter flames, its having been unwillingly kept smothered under the ashes. Augustine has given us, in his own person, a representation of this state, in the excellent book of his confessions." Great reason indeed is there for the penitence spoken of; and much the greater, because of the party's having been previously incorporated into Christ's body. But while the Calvinist sees such sin, as happening to the regenerate elect; let not its happening to any, be considered as an argument against their early regeneration. It is painful to remark, that in another point of view, this passage must be contemplated by Anticalvinists, as big with the most unhappy consequences. It encourages persons who can look back to early impressions and emotions of piety, to consider these as proving them the elect of God; and to presume on an irresistible grace, that must bring them back, sooner or later, from the good path departed from.

"But the elect" (thus Witsius proceeds) "are not all favoured with regenerating grace in their infancy. There are some persons, whom God regenerates when

grown up, and at once effectually calls and converts in the second act, from a worldly and hypocritical condition, or even from a state of profligate wickedness. Such are those, who being born and brought up without God's covenant, or even living where this covenant is dispensed, have sold themselves wholly to sin, satan, and the world. The regeneration of these is usually followed with great consternation of soul, and sorrow for sin, and a dread of God's fiery indignation, and an incredible desire after grace, together with an inexpressible joy upon finding salvation in Jesus, and a wonderful alacrity in the service of the Lord, which they can scarcely contain. All this may be observed in the jailor, of whom we read, Acts xvi." Until now, there had been some shades of agreement between Dr. Witsius and the favourers of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But here they part. They see no reason for distinguishing, in this respect, between the subjects of the former section, and those of this. If the latter persons, owing to parental negligence or to any other cause, have been utterly destitute of pious impressions; although, strictly speaking, this is not likely to be true of any; yet, why may not there have been the beginning of a spiritual life, in the mean of it stipulated to and conferred on them, although afterwards neglected?

In the succeeding section, Witsius goes on to argue against the necessity of being able to specify time and manner. And here he makes a rational distinction between adults reformed from sin, who cannot but know the beginnings and the progress of their change; and those who, to use his own words, being regenerate in their infancy, have grown up all along with the quickening spirit.

When the preceding passages from Dr. Witsius are considered, with the annexed approximations to them, there may arise the question—whether the whole controversy do not turn on different senses annexed to words. The truth is, as the present writer conceives, that this would be indeed the case, if there were no subjects concerned, besides that of the present appendix. For although in such a case, the advocates of the doctrine might claim the highest antiquity to the language used by them; yet it might be thought by some worthy of consideration, whether it were not better exchanged for other terms, by which differences might be extinguished. But on the contrary, the matter is connected with every branch of Calvinistick theory; which loudly calls for the language, to stand in opposition to it. And this is intended to be shown, in the next section.

But before the transition to the next section, it is here thought to be of some use to notice a few matters relative to the subject, in Dr. Doddridge's Sermons on Regeneration: a work much and deservedly esteemed, as containing an exhibition of the state, which forms the Christian character; while yet, the term in the title may be thought drawn from its scriptural interpretation.

His definition of regeneration, given in the preface, is—"A prevailing disposition of the soul to universal holiness, produced and cherished by the influences of God's spirit on our hearts, operating in a manner suitable to the constitution of our nature, as rational and accountable creatures." God forbid it should be here denied, either that holiness of heart and life is the great end to which religion points, or that every advance to it is obtained by the influence of the holy spirit of God. The matter denied is, that this, in the aggregate, is ever

called regeneration in the scriptures. The word has always there a reference to an initiatory act, by which the beginning of the Christian character is to be denominated. And it is remarkable, that so eminent a divine should begin, go on with, and finish a course of sermons on this subject, digested with especial care; without the appearance of there having occurred to him the propriety of supporting by evidence a definition, to which the whole course was to be accommodated. Had the same explanation been given of Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24—"That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"—the account of the matter would be exactly answerable.

But what Dr. Doddridge had omitted in the sermons, is undertaken by him in a postscript; so far as consists in arguing against the interfering doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The postscript, although so called, is prefixed to the work; and that very properly; because its contents are to supply what might naturally have been expected in the beginning.

The author begins with the candid acknowledgment, that "many learned and pious divines have taught and contended, that regeneration does, in the strictest propriety of speech, signify baptism:" and he correctly states their reasons to be the sense of antiquity and the authority of scripture. Under the first head he acknowledges, that the asserted use of the word obtained generally, although he thinks not universally, from about the middle of the second century. It seems then, that

as at this inauspicious period, episcopacy, forms of prayer, and, according to the Socinians, the doctrine of Christ's divinity intruded into the church; so, that of baptismal regeneration found a like favourable opportunity of entrance. Surely, to justify such hypotheses, there need be some documents to show, how such important changes were accomplished. The monuments of the preceding times are indeed very few; yet enough to exhibit the contrariety of sentiment, which must necessarily, according to the common course of human affairs, have been attendant on the revolution, in any one of the instances which have been mentioned. Indeed, it is here supposed, that nothing besides the barrenness of the time, as to literary productions, can account for its having been selected.

But there is a circumstance worthy of notice in Dr. Doddridge's acknowledgment above alluded to, of the general sense of antiquity, with some exceptions. The only exception given by him, is as follows—"Clemens Alexandrinus, so often, and to be sure, reasonably, quoted on the other side, plainly uses the word" (regeneration) "for a change of character by true repentance; where, speaking of a penitent harlot, he says, 'that being born again by conversion, or a change in her temper and behaviour, she has the regeneration of life.'"^{*} Had this been predicated of a recovery from apostacy, it would be to the purpose. But it is not so. Clemens had been speaking of the sentence of the Jewish law on an adultress: and it is of the regeneration of this Jewish harlot, that the father speaks. There is here a persuasion, that no instance can be brought from anti-

* Strom. lib. 2, page 425.

quity, of the application of the term to a recovery from sin in a professing Christian. And that Dr. Doddridge, when the contrary was so important to his whole book, should produce a solitary instance in his favour, and that found, on examination, to be utterly inapplicable, seems no small confirmation of the sentiment here sustained.

Under the second head, he discusses the prominent texts of scripture: concerning which, there is nothing to be here added to the interpretations already given; except in relation to the especial stress afterwards laid, in the first sermon, on 1 John, v. 4. It is remarked, that the being “born of God” means the same with the being “regenerated;” that all baptized persons do not overcome the world; and that therefore all such are not regenerated. The Greek word* refers to time past; and may therefore reasonably be construed of an initiation not coincident with the victory. The text cannot be reasonably construed to mean more, than that betwixt such a past initiation and present victory, there is a natural and suitable alliance. If all initiated by baptism are not always found in the enjoyment of their victory; neither can this be affirmed, of all who have been in the actual exercise of faith: since it is confessed, that many live, for a while at least, in a slavery to the corruptions of the world. And if they should become finally disentangled from its snares; still there was a time, during which the matter was not predicable of them. Accordingly, in the text in question, the apostle merely points out a connexion between two subjects. He considers Christians as born of God in

* γεννηθενος.

baptism: after that birth, as after the natural, there may have been an early death; but if the again-born person still live—if the grace stipulated in the ordinance be faithfully improved; this is a state of things, which must be seen in a victory over the world.

In the conclusion of the first sermon, it is intimated, that, after all, the dispute is about a word. It certainly is, when the subject is simply taken in connexion with holiness of heart and life; but not, when it respects the plea of a sensible conversion of all persons; from what, until that event, is to them a state of damnation. It might have been expected, that this worthy divine would have the more readily admitted what is here thought the scriptural sense of regeneration, from his teaching his hearers, in his eighth sermon, thus—“we have encouragement to believe, there are a considerable number, who are as it were sanctified from the womb; and in whom the seeds of grace are sown, before they grow up to a capacity of understanding the public preaching of the word:” and he quotes Mr. Baxter expressing his belief, that,—“if the duties of religious education were conscientiously discharged, preaching would not be God’s ordinary method of converting souls; but the greater part would be wrought upon, before they were capable of entering into the design of a sermon.” Further, the preacher addresses his audience thus—“Be not surprised, and be not dejected, that you cannot assign the place, the time, the manner, in which your conversion began.” And after an allusion to some operations of nature, he says—“thus gentle, silent and regular are the influences of the spirit upon men’s souls; and it is often impossible exactly to distinguish them from the teachings of parents and

ministers, and from those reflections, which seem to spring from our own minds." If so, why may not the beginning be dated from an initiation, in which, if it be not a mere ceremony, the holy spirit must be considered as pledged, with a view to a future improvement of his influences? And where they are unimproved, and thus actual sinfulness is incurred; if a recovery ensue, why may not this be considered as a renewal, instead of a regeneration; in opposition to its original and so long established meaning? Dr. Doddridge is far, in substance, from those who place religion in animal sensibility: And therefore, it is to be lamented, that he should resemble them in the language, by which such delusion is often excited and continued.

SECTION IV.

Of the consequences of the doctrine.

Its consequences on each of the five points—on the question of infant baptism—on that of subsequent conversion---on that of assurance---The question of assurance stated---as the subject stands in the Episcopal church---and in Calvinistick churches---Calvin, Turretine and Witsius---scripture---passages on the other side---homily of salvation---bad consequences of the contrary doctrine---animal sensibility---rash confidence and groundless fears---outrageous crimes---erroneous rule of ordinary conduct---false security---infidelity.

1. THE first consequence, and which has been intimated already, is the inconsistency of the doctrine with Calvinism, in all its branches. How it happened, that after St. Austin had brought into the church his sense

of predestination, yet holding it with baptismal regeneration, and, after his great influence had made the other current, the two subjects went on peaceably together in the succeeding ages; the author cannot ascertain, nor is it necessary that he should do so. The schoolmen wrote much concerning conversion, and attached to the subject their doctrines of congruity and condignity. But conversion, in their conceptions, applied to a recovery from a sinful life, and was not considered as peculiarly belonging to the entrance into the evangelical relation. This was regeneration; and was supposed by all to take place in baptism.

While Calvin was so carefully treading in the steps of Austin; he felt no hesitation at taking from him, or rather from the uninterrupted tradition of the church, the doctrine in question; and with it, the language by which all the precious benefits of the evangelical dispensation are expressed. The idea has been suggested, that probably he must have sometimes perceived it to cross the other tendencies of his system. But if so, it was an interference which he was reluctant to contemplate. It has been seen, how materially different the subject appears since his time, in the confessions of Calvinistick churches, and in the discussions of their writers. Now the matter to be here made out, is their consistency in this respect; or, in other words, that, under each of the five points, the contrary to baptismal regeneration is the most suitable to the Calvinistick theory.

On the ground of sublapsarian predestination, and keeping out of view the still more awful representations of the supralapsarian hypothesis; there seems a manifest incongruity, between the subject and that under con-

sideration. God, it is said, contemplating man as in future fallen, appointed some to life and others to damnation, without reference to difference of character. Under such an economy, it were not natural to expect, that God would bring the wretched off-casts within the visible limits of his covenant of grace. Far be it from the writer of this, to call in question the wisdom of the divine procedure, where any procedure is demonstrated to be divine: and he knows that in this, as in other ways, there may be reasons of the highest wisdom, not ascertainable by the worm which thus inquires into the ways of its Creator, but aims to do it with humility. Under the influence of these sentiments, then, the author presumes to say, that the plan here supposed and objected to, might be considered as a mockery of the miserable; and as a dishonouring of others by an unsuitable association with them. The remark applies especially to the condition of infancy. Of adults it might be said, that, whatever were the source of wickedness in the non-elect, they have obtruded themselves on the marriage supper of the Lamb. But it is quite otherwise in the case of infants; who, in a state of innocence and unconsciousness, receive the sign of a grace never to be given, and the seal of a promise never to be performed to them. Still let the sentiment be repeated, that if this be so, there should be profound submission to the dispensation. All here maintained is, that if baptismal regeneration be acknowledged, this difficulty must be submitted to, or Calvinistick predestination be renounced.

Concerning the second point—Universal redemption—Nothing need be said, since it is the affirmative side

of the question; which must be true, if the negative be false.

On the subject of free-will, let there be remembered the point in common between the contending parties—the impotency of man, unendowed with divine grace. Regeneration supposes a beginning of grace, in the aids of the holy spirit: a mere waste of benefit, it would seem; if, in the mind of the divine giver, there were no design of the future activity of the principle. But there is still more unsuitableness in the idea, that the seed of grace should subsist in a soil, so ungenial to it as human nature is described, and which is never to be renovated by it. “Though every kind of wickedness,” says Witsius* “like a certain hydra, lurks in the hearts of all; yet God suffers some to give loose reins to their vices, and to be hurried on by so many furies; while he moves others with a sense of shame, and a reverence for the laws, and some kind of love to honour and honesty.” This passage is so much, in expression, like one cited from Calvin; that, in the former, the latter seems to have been in view. There is however this difference, that whereas Calvin’s words exclude all but selfish motives, Witsius seems to admit of such as are commendable in themselves; although destitute of what must be confessed the root of all moral excellence, the love and the fear of God. Yet, on the ground of either of the representations, why should there be implanted a cleansing grace, under a load of moral filth, on which it is never to be operative? Here is another superfluity of divine energy, which could not fail to make the one or

* Book 3. chap. 6. sect. 13.

the other of the doctrines sink under the inconsistency in which it shows them.

On the subject of grace it cannot but appear, that the species of it affirmed, with the epithets of irresistible and efficacious, renders every other species of it unnecessary. The grace affirmed as given to infancy in baptism, is confessedly of a suasive operation; and, in many instances, fails of its effect. It is therefore a superfluous endowment, if it must so fail; and if the effect, when produced, be under a resistless energy.

But there is no point, on which the asserted inconsistency is more conspicuous, than on that of final perseverance. No one denies, that many—alas, an innumerable multitude—who have been baptized in infancy, have afterwards lived in sin and died impenitent. If these were once in grace, they have fallen from it finally. Accordingly, both of the doctrines cannot be true. It must be confessed, that many a Calvinistick minister of the church of England, while he has considered his Arminian brethren as guilty of the most abominable prevarication, in having given their signatures to the thirty-nine articles, which he deems to comprehend the essence of Calvinism, has not scrupled to be in the constant habit of acknowledging the regeneration of infants, in his repetition of the baptismal service; although he knows, that it is in irreconcilable variance with his favourite dogma of the final perseverance of the saints. But however these opposites may be reconciled in individual instances; the inconsistency has the insensible operation on the religious society in general, of leading to the abandonment of the one or of the other. Hence it has happened, that wherever the novel doctrine has gained ground, the ancient one has propor-

tionably declined. But whether the mere circumstance of novelty, ought not to operate as an unanswerable objection to the former, is a circumstance, in itself worthy of serious consideration.

Such then is the effect of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, on the whole range of Calvinistick theology; that they will never be found together, without an unsuitableness of appearance, which will offend, and which maturer reflection will correct. If Calvinism be agreeable to the gospel, the other cannot be abandoned too soon. But if the said commendation be predicable of this, there arises from it a demonstration of the untenable principles of the system, with which it can never harmonize.

2. Another consequence of the position of this appendix, is its relation to the question of infant baptism. The practice cannot be defended, on any other ground. If it be a mere initiation of the infant into the visible church of Christ, with no attendant benefit; and if the sign be only intended to signify to him a regeneration, which he should endeavour to undergo at a distant day; the opponent may well urge the fitness of delaying the sign, until the time when the thing signified can be accomplished. If he be pressed by scripture, he may turn to the very few passages which speak of regeneration: he may show, that they all bear allusion to an outward washing: and he may argue, that, since there is nothing in scripture of a change operated on the condition of the infant, whatever may be said, without proof, of a change sometimes wrought in a way justly remarked to be incomprehensible by us; there can be no pretence for hastening the washing, before provision can be made for the inward purity which it represents. He

will be reminded, indeed, of circumcision, the initiatory ordinance of the Jews; and an analogy to it will be claimed, in behalf of the initiatory ordinance enjoined on Christians. But he may reply, that to circumcision there was attached immediate benefit. He will not perhaps, although Calvin did, adorn it with the name of regeneration; but he will contend, that there were at least temporal promises comprehended in it. For the covenant made with Abraham expressed, that the great giver of it would be a God to him and to his seed after him: circumcision was the sign of this covenant: and therefore, when the sign was given to the seed, agreeably to the divine will; there followed, that, by the act, they were brought within the covenant. Even if the blessings of it had extended no further than, nationally, to the possession of the promised land; and, individually, to a share in the superintendance of that especial providence in temporal things, which all Christians acknowledge to have been vouchsafed under the legal dispensation; this itself makes a difference between the ordinances; dispensing with the baptism of infants, no less than with restricting it to the eighth day of their existence. Still, the Pædobaptist will claim, that there are great benefits, although short of regeneration, attached to the early administration of the ordinance. What are these benefits? Calvin thus recites them— That persons initiated in infancy, are on somewhat a more respectable footing in the church than others; and that they will be incited to piety, by learning that they had been received into the church by the outward sign of it. But there seems no great weight in either of the reasons given. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard, which was designed, not, as some imagine, of early and late piety under the gospel covenant,

but of early and late admission into visible communion; may show, that the estimation of membership in the church, although one may come to know Christ at the third hour, another at the ninth, and another at the eleventh, is precisely the same with all. Doubtless, a contemplated sign may be of use, in keeping before the mind the thing signified. But whether it be seen in retrospect or in prospect, so long as it remains a mere sign, must be much the same. When the instructions and the incitements of pious parents are taken into the account, it is another matter. But what difference there can be, whether this be with or without the sign, it being still considered as a sign only, is not easy to be perceived. What the Antipædobaptist seems to have a right to consider as the greatest incongruity of the theory, is the supposing, that God would ordain, in an institution designed especially for the faithful, the admission of persons, who, from the circumstances of their condition, and independently on any hypocrisy as the mean of sowing tares among the wheat, cannot be of the aforesaid number. In the parable of the gospel supper, confessedly representing Christ's church on earth consummated in heaven, the intruder without a marriage garment was bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness. But here, the greater number of the subjects of baptism are brought to it, without a marriage garment: and the commissioned servants of the master of the feast, acting agreeably to his direction, are made the introducers of these unsuitable guests.

The whole subject wears quite another appearance, under the light thrown on it by the doctrine, which it is the present object to establish. If the Christian

church be the continuation of the visible communion before existing in the Jewish; when the divine head of both appointed the mean of entrance into the former, addressing his command to persons familiarized to the other, and in the habitual practice of its initiatory rite; there was no more reason for his specifying of infants in the injunction, than for his particularizing of both the sexes and other varieties of condition. But under this view of the evangelical ordinance, the benefit accompanying the ordinance must be co-existent with a conformity to it. There will then be no more incongruity in Christian infants being a party to the covenant, than there had been formerly in the case of Jewish infants; in which, immediate benefit was confessedly comprehended. Then also, as our Saviour commanded children to be brought to him in person, there will be exhibited an harmony with this, in their being brought to him in baptism. And when he pronounced —“of such is the kingdom of heaven;” if there be understood the kingdom of a future state of being, it will be natural to conceive of them, as equally suitable members of the church: although, indeed, this is here thought precisely the sentiment of the passage.

In short, there is entertained full confidence, that the practice of infant baptism is evangelical: but it is conceived to be no otherwise so, than as taken in connexion with regeneration. For, as detached from this, there is no authority for the other; and it would be more congenial to the gospel economy, to delay the outward and visible sign, until there can be an obtaining of the inward and spiritual grace. And further, to the severing of what God has thus joined together, there may probably be imputed the abundant proselyting to the repe-

tition of baptism, in places where there most abounds the notion of a regeneration, subsequent to that performed in infancy. There are extensive districts in the United States, in which all the people are educated under the influence of such a persuasion; and in which, there do not occur any doubts of the correctness of it. Under such circumstances, there can be no cause of surprise, in finding, as often happens, the rapid circulation of the conviction, that an outward washing should accompany the inward change, which is held out as necessary to be undergone by all young persons, however innocent their lives; after the formal washing or aspersion which they underwent, while unconscious of the end of the operation.

It may at least be made a problem, whether there may not be traced to the same source the error of another description of people, who reject altogether the ordinance of baptism. The supposition of this connexion is much countenanced by the period of time, in which their society began. It was in the age, when, before their beginning, the separating between the sign and the grace had become popular in England. A great proportion of the society alluded to, were sincere persons; who were in opinion, and many of them in practice, with the party become dominant in England; but who, disgusted with the unequivocal evidences of the hypocrisy and the tyranny of the prominent characters among them, ran into many erroneous opinions; in connexion with some extravagances in conduct, which their successors respect, but do not imitate. The species of devotion cultivated by that people, naturally led to the laying of little or no stress on outward appointments of any sort. But is it to be supposed, that

the error of this was not rendered the easier, by their being considered as outward appointments only; and thus severed from the spiritual benefits, of which they were made the means by their great Ordainer; and which had always been confessed as connected with the other, until about the time in question? Doubtless, the separation of the grace rendered it the more easy, to get rid of all prepossession in favour of an outward sign or ceremony.

3. Another consequence of the doctrine, is the error of those, who instruct baptized persons leading virtuous lives, and not neglecting the exercises of devotion, that there remains for them the necessity of a regeneration; until which, they are the children of the devil, and liable to the judgments of God in another life. It is true, that the Calvinist may say, in any instance observed of early piety, that here is one of the elect number, favoured with regeneration in infancy. But let him remember, that if this distinction were as sure as it is here verily believed to be erroneous; he is not to account that there is any thing better than appearance, until there shall have been the party's preservation to the end; without which, he would not have been of that favoured body. As for those who, disclaiming Calvinism, sever regeneration from baptism, and exact a sensible experience of the former; they have not the privilege of the Calvinist, in taking the same comfort from the observation of early piety. They know of no such distinction, as that between elect and non-elect infants: and therefore, contemplating every subject of infant baptism, as left by it the heir of hell; they consistently exact of him an account of the time when,

the place where, and the mean whereby, he had become an heir of heaven.

In the educating of baptized infants, until of an age susceptible of conversion, it is difficult to perceive in what way they can consistently be trained to the worship of God. The only prayers suited to them, are those in harmony with—"God be merciful to me a sinner." It is otherwise, on the ground taken in this work. They are to be taught to consider themselves as possessing the benefits of the Christian covenant, and to be "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." As the benefits of the covenant belong to them; so the judgments for violating it lie on them, without any act of theirs; however strong the obligation of acknowledging it in the ordinance for confirmation and in the eucharist, where opportunity is enjoyed of either, or of both. In the case of deviation from the paths of rectitude, there is the louder call on the parent, to endeavour and to pray for the reformation of his offspring.

While the author explicitly avows his disapprobation of what he considers as being wide of the beneficent displays of divine grace in the scriptures, and while he does not shrink from any censure of his opinions, he wishes them to be distinctly apprehended. He sees, with sorrow, the extent of parental neglect and of youthful proneness to licentiousness. These however he contemplates, not as palliated, but indeed as greatly aggravated by his doctrine. Still, he knows there are some, and hopes there are very many, who, after infantile baptism, have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust:" which are remarkable expressions of St. Peter; and may be supposed principally

applied to persons, who were born and bred under the Christian covenant. For the epistle in which they appear, must have been written at least thirty years after the ascension; since the apostle says—“Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.” And ecclesiastical history testifies, that his martyrdom was at the earliest in the year sixty-five.

But, says an opponent—Have such persons incurred no sin? Doubtless they have. Most evidently of all, they must be chargeable with sins of omission, in not having attained to those heights of Christian perfection, to which their religion points. Relatively to sins of commission, it may be said of all—“Who can understand his errors?” so as to be sure that he has not deviated to the right hand or to the left, from what the strictness of the law of God required of him, in every circumstance of life? Even if his aberration have been greater; it is to be remembered, that, as the church articles speak—“The grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism.”* Let it be acknowledged, that all these things apply to the subjects of baptismal regeneration; the two former circumstances to them universally; and the last circumstance, as what is not only possible, but frequent. But do they not also apply to those, who have been the subjects of a regeneration described in such a manner, as passes with some for the mere workings of nature? This will not be denied. The fair way then of making the comparison, is to say, that what is sin and requires repentance in the one, is also sin and requires at least as much repentance in the other.

* Art. 16.

Concerning the Calvinist, and the Anti-calvinist of the particular description here alluded to, it seems to the author, that the latter has the advantage over the other, in regard to the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, which they in common advocate; that the former, in their distinction of elect infants, destroy all defined boundary between light and darkness, on the subject. For to say that the infant mind arrives gradually at assurance, as at a knowledge of its duties, would be to lose sight of the thing in question.

4. Here comes up to notice, what is designed to be the last consequence of the premises of this appendix, but to be treated of more fully than any of the others—the groundless pretensions of the species of assurance which has been referred to.

Before an entrance on this important part of the present subject, it becomes the author to state distinctly the sentiment, which he wishes to hold out to disapprobation. And to this end, there should first be noticed something else, with which it may be otherwise confounded.

Cheerless indeed would be the condition of the Christian; if he were condemned to such a perpetual solicitude, as that, while he is sincerely endeavouring to make his election sure, while he avoids deliberate and habitual sin in every shape, and while, if he fall into any act which he cannot reconcile with the holy law of God, it is the effect of surprise, and at the worst not characteristic of depraved passion; he is to live in perpetual apprehension, that, when life shall end, he may be consigned to the blackness of darkness for ever. Very inconsistent also would such a necessity be, with the very name of the gospel; which announces good

tidings to every sincere mind, and with the declarations which it so often makes of the forgiveness of sin: a property of it so pre-eminent, as to make a part of the short creed, handed down from the time of the apostles.

But, says a doubting person, this is a dealing in generals: And how is the subject to be brought home to the individual? Certainly thus. The promises of the gospel are on the conditions of repentance and faith; in which is involved the principle of future obedience. Let then the individual ask himself—Do I repent and do I believe? If he be uncertain of the meaning of the words—although for such uncertainty there would seem no reason—let him turn to some of the numerous instances in the Bible, of persons repenting and believing: and he may thence learn to disregard all the minute and mysterious distinctions, making a difficult task of that which seems the easiest in nature, a man's knowing what are the operations of his own mind. Still it will be replied, that however sincere the heart may have been in the act of giving itself up to God, temptations occur; resolutions give way; and there is a falling off to carelessness—perhaps to sin in conduct. And is it this, professing Christian, for which you desire a counterpoise, that may make you easy as to the issue? Verily, in proportion as your case may be above described, you have reason for doubt; and perhaps for the greatest degree of uneasiness, not bordering on despair. Not only so, whatever promises to relieve from the apprehension, while there is a continuance of the cause of it, must be a delusion and a snare. Still perhaps there occurs a misgiving, in relation to the pardon of sin in the first instance; the belief of which boon arose from an attendant sensibility. It arose, then, from

an insufficient cause. It is not here affirmed, that there was an error in regard to the fact. But if sin have been pardoned, it was on ground opened in the holy scriptures; and not rendered more or less applicable to the case, on account of the peculiar conceptions of the party. As to the means by which it should have been assured to him; they consisted in the declarations of scripture, the sacraments, and the ministry of the word. The party's looking for it in himself, was an error. It may have been innocently imbibed, and the fruit of erroneous instruction. If so, he will not fail finally of his object, on this account. But in the mean time, it may have been the cause of much needless anguish; and unless checked by watchfulness and prayer, will hereafter lead to much groundless confidence.

Let it be next supposed, that the repenting and believing party lives in the exercise of piety, and the practice of virtue—that he leads what all reasonable persons, making allowance for human imperfection, would call a Christian life. Is such a person—it may be asked—to go on in the Christian duties, without their attendant consolations? Certainly not. But let him look for them in the divine word, where he will find them plentifully strewed over the whole face of it. Let him at the same time remember, that the senses of them, as they stand there, are neither more nor less for his interpretation of them, which may be erroneous. The great author of our nature, has not made any change in its constituent properties, to accommodate to the present subject. A constitutional gloom, not checked by proper means, both moral and medical, may deprive him of satisfactions not denied to him; but, on the contrary, liberally held out to him in the word. The same

effect may be produced by religious enthusiasm; which soars above what are properly devout affections, and looks down, with disdain, on whatever does not rise to its own grade of temporary joy and rapture. And this is one of the ways—for that there are such is evident from scripture—of making the righteous sad, whom God hath not made sad.*

If all error and all constitutional infirmity be apart; inward and outward conformity to the divine will, must have the effect of producing that “joy in the Holy Ghost,” and that “peace of God passing understanding,” of which the scriptures speak. And this describing of the consolation as arising from what has been laid down, is far enough removed from any thing that savours of self-satisfaction or self-righteousness; since there may still be the conviction and sensibility, that we are nothing in or of ourselves. But if to the latter state of mind there must not even be the consciousness of conformity to the divine will; there seems no way of avoiding this, but to “continue in sin that grace may abound.”

There is no doubt here entertained, that a man, persevering in exercises of piety and in habits of virtue, may attain to a state of mind, which is heaven, as it were, begun on earth. This has often been testified in the conversation of holy men, on their death beds: and it must be supposed, that such men had the like sensibilities in health; although they may have been so correct in their apprehensions, as not to have made them the test of their religious state, much less to proclaim them to the world. An instance of such a frame of

* Ezek. xiii. 22.

mind has been already given in St. Ignatius, not long before his martyrdom; when there seemed to be a voice within him, saying—"Come to the Father." At that time, he must doubtless have had a like view of the blissful state to come, with a like ground for it, as must be supposed of St. Paul, when, after saying—"the time of my departure is at hand," he added—"henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Other instances might be given, from what is recorded; and others still, from personal observation. But in all the instances known to him who writes, the happy state arose from sources very different from what is so often contended for, under the name of assurance; here to be considered, as distinguished from the satisfaction discoursed of.

This assurance is the forgiveness of sin, supposed to be from the divine Being immediately; and not gathered, as above, from a comparing of the state with scripture. It is also conceived of as given, in each instance, to the individual party; and not generally, like the promises of scripture, to be applied by the individual, according to the circumstances of the case. That there is an influence of the holy spirit on the human mind, no one who believes the scriptures can doubt. But that there is any evidence of this holy agent's ever giving, internally, to any person, the assurance which has been defined, is here denied.

This is a matter of extraordinary magnitude, because of its influence on human hopes and fears: and therefore, as the author thinks the contemplated doctrine to be not only an error itself, but the parent of many errors, he proposes to consider it at the greater length. The order which he assigns to himself, is the viewing

of the subject as contemplated by the episcopal church, and as professed by Calvinistick churches. Then shall follow the comparing of them all with scripture; and finally, the bad effects of relinquishing the scriptural test of grace, in exchange for that which the other theory supplies.

1. When there is proposed to consider the subject as held by the episcopal church, the meaning is not that it appears in any shape in her institutions—for there is not any thing in them of the sort—but that, on this account, she must necessarily be understood to contemplate it as error. There is not a sentence to the effect, in her articles; nor in her catechism; nor in her homilies; nor in her offices; nor in the prayers of her liturgy, enjoined for common use.

But to carry the matter further: there are many things in the institutions of the episcopal church, absolutely inconsistent with an acknowledgment of the species of assurance here rejected. For wherever she points to another standard, by which a man is to ascertain his Christian state; a rival standard, passed over by her in silence, is impliedly rejected.

The first document to this effect coming into view, is the seventeenth article; so often appealed to in confirmation of doctrines, nearly allied to the one here objected to. The article affirms of election, that it is “full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things.” Here, according to the church, is the source of comfort and of satisfaction, con-

cerning the spiritual state. Of course, they who framed the article did not conceive of there being any other.

The homilies being a larger explication of some of the doctrines of the articles, there might be expected in the former some intimations, or rather clear and frequent mention of this assurance, if it had made part of the religion of the English reformers. But there is nothing of the sort. And yet there are several of the homilies, in which it might have been pertinently introduced, had it been thought sound doctrine—as in that on faith—that on salvation (or justification) and that on repentance. These subjects are handled, as if no such matter had been ever heard of, and imply quite another test of the Christian state; which is more positively and distinctly announced, towards the end of the homily for Whitsunday, as given in the fourth part of this work. The exhortation in the visitation of the sick has been mentioned already, and may here be properly mentioned again. The minister is not bound to the precise words; but is to address the sick person in that or a like form. It first sets forth the high hand from which sickness comes, and the uses for which it is sent. Then follow the usual motives, to an improvement of the dispensation. After that, the minister inquires into the faith of the party, taking for his standard the apostle's creed. He follows this up, with an examination into his repentance; concluding with an exhortation to forgiveness or reparation, if there be a call to either; and with advice to the settlement of affairs. Of how much less importance is even the most important of all these, if there be any warrant in the gospel, for the minister to ask the patient, whether, at any particular moment of his life he had received an inward assurance of his

salvation! The unsuitableness of these things will manifestly appear, if there be supposed a minister of the episcopal church proposing such an inquiry to his parishioners—would it be to address him in the prescribed form, or a like? And would not the sick person have a right to infer, that it were high time, either to renounce his church, or to dispense with the services of his minister?

The exhortations preparatory to the communion, may also be perceived to afford suitable opportunities for the sentiment, had it been thought admissible. One of them was drawn up, principally with the view of guarding against the coming in a state of sin, and without due consideration. The other, was principally designed as an incitement to those who may be neglectful of the duty of communicating. Both these descriptions of persons, are contemplated as faulty. But are they directed to seek for an assurance of an interest in Christ? Not at all: they are presumed to have been brought within the Christian covenant; however their interest in it may have been forfeited, or have become uncertain. And for a remedy of this, they are exhorted to repentance and amendment.

On the ground of the opposite theory, the address to sponsors in the service for infant baptism must be thought materially defective. There is a more censurable omission, in the provision made for the bringing of young persons to take on themselves their baptismal vows, in the ordinance of confirmation. And the most glaring omission of all, would have been the overlooking of the circumstance, in the prayers composed to be used at the baptism of an adult, accompanied by a previous address, and a subsequent charge; in all which,

there is not the least hint, of what must be supposed to concern him more than all the other matters brought before him.

If, in contrariety to all here said, any person should think, that he perceives in some detached expressions a favouring of his theory, it will not be to his purpose. The author verily believes, that there is not a sentence which, by any fair construction, and indeed without manifest perversion, can be made to speak such a sense. But this is of little moment. The opinion, had it been designed, would have appeared with the unblushing front, worn by every other doctrine, held up to the faith, and expected to govern the practice, of the people.

2. But let it be inquired, how this matter stands in the confessions of Calvinistick churches, and in the works of their celebrated writers. Of the former, it may be sufficient to take the Westminster confession. In doing this, let it be noticed, that the introduction of this formulary is not, in any part of the present work, connected with the investigating of the truth of the doctrine in question. If, indeed, the author had proposed to himself the directly questioning of the grounds of the doctrine of any church, he holds it to be no cause of offence; unless this should attach to the manner, by its not being in the way of fair argument, nor marked by Christian moderation. At present, however, this is not the object. The matter in hand, is to ascertain the sense of the episcopal church: and to this there is some help, in remarking in what shape a doctrine, denied to exist at all in her system, may be distinctly traced in another: because there arises the presumption, that she would have taken the same or some like way of declaring it, had it entered into her belief.

In what has been said, there have been suggested two different ways, which have been contended for by two different descriptions of persons, relative to satisfaction of mind as to the final issue with all persons. One of these means, is a direct communication from the Fountain of Light, accommodated to each individual instance; giving assurance to the party, that salvation is sealed to him at the precise time. The other is, that, the terms of salvation being declared in scripture, the party has no other way of knowing whether its promises apply to him, than by comparing himself with scriptural requisitions. Now it is far from being here affirmed, that the latter is left unregarded by the Westminster assembly, when they lay down the ground of an assured state. It is only contended, that both the particulars stated are comprehended in the account given; whereas the present argument is directed to the point, that the latter mean only is correctly introduced.

The eighteenth chapter of the confession, entitled "Of assurance of grace and salvation" is as follows: there being combined with it a few remarks, noticing passages to the present purpose, and such as there is nothing similar to, in the system of the church of England.

Sect. 1. "Although hypocrites, and other unregenerate men, may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and

may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed."

Sect. 2. "This certainly is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption."

So far as the foregoing clauses found the satisfaction in question on the divine truth of the promises in scripture, and the inward evidence of those graces to which the promises are made; it is here supposed, that the true source is kept in view. But the present writer conceives, that the testimony of the spirit of adoption, with the circumstances attending it, was meant to direct the attention to a revelation in the mind, suited to the peculiar case of the party.

Sect. 3. "This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper

fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness."

In the above section, there is a departure from Calvin's position of certainty's being an essential accompaniment of the least drop of faith. In contrariety to this, it is affirmed, that a true believer may wait long before he be a partaker of it. In the mean time, "being enabled by the spirit to know the things freely given to him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto." All which seems consistent with what is here supposed the correct line, to be marked out on the present subject.

Sect. 4. "True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair"

In the last section, there seem some clauses which favour the one, and some which favour the other of the means stated. If God has made promises in the gospel; there would seem inconsistency in supposing, that the full satisfaction which should result from them to true Christians, should be narrowed by the want of di-

vine grace in the application of them, according to the case of every person. And therefore the circumstance of the satisfaction's being withheld or given, without a reference to such promises as the means, seems grounded on the idea of an assurance, that is immediate and independent on them.

It would afflict the author to find, that he has ascribed a meaning to the chapter, wide of what is understood to be its meaning, by those interested in its contents. But he thinks he is not likely to be mistaken in supposing, that the doctrine controverted is intended; because it would have been otherwise useless to have introduced a chapter, with the title annexed to the eighteenth. No council or synod, before Calvin's time, considered assurance as one of the subjects of its decisions. Nor is it probable it would have been so considered, by any since his time; if there had not been contemplated positions, having an aspect to the particular point, to which the present article of the Westminster confession has been in part applied.

Perhaps it may have seemed incumbent on the author, to notice the passages of scripture, on which, in the article, the matter objected to is sustained. The reason of the omission is, what there may still be a propriety in specifying—that he is simply investigating facts, which may help to the interpretation of the sense of a certain church. As to the passages of scripture alluded to, they will come under consideration, where truth, and not fact, will be the object of inquiry.

A comparing of the sense of the Westminster confession with that of the episcopal church, is rendered the more pertinent by the circumstance, that the former

was confessedly designed as an improvement on the latter. On many subjects, they have doubtless expressed the same truths, in different language: but when there appears, in the later formulary, a tenet utterly unknown in the earlier, there arises the presumption, that there must have been a designed extension of the system.

From a confession common to many Calvinistick churches, there is now a passing to the sentiments of Calvin himself. In his work, if the writer of this mistakes not, there may clearly be perceived a warrant of the doctrine, here considered as erroneous, in an extent in which even Calvinistick churches do not seem to have adopted it; and naturally leading to all the extravagances which have been acted under the cover of the doctrine; although the writer of this is far from supposing, that they were contemplated by Calvin, or, that they would have been approved of by him.

The following references, are from the second chapter of his third book; the subject of which is faith.

In the definition of faith, given by this celebrated person, there may be perceived the affirming of the source of assurance here objected to. It is in a passage already quoted in the fourth part (page 35. vol. ii.) in which he defines faith to consist in a firm and certain knowledge of God's good will; founded on the truth of the gratuitous promise in Christ, revealed to men's minds and sealed to their hearts. That there is not here given too strong a construction to the words, may appear from the fifteenth section, in which he enlarges on the faith of certainty; considered by him as

expressed by the Greek word* in Heb. x. 22—from the sixteenth section, in which he affirms the faith of certainty to belong to all believers; applying to this point Rom. viii. 38, 39; having before distinguished between the faith of apprehension and the faith of certainty—and from the twenty-eighth section; in which it is affirmed, that faith assures of eternal life, and as much of this present life as is useful. And what seems more positive than all the rest, is the nineteenth section; in which he writes, as quoted in the fourth part, “as soon as the smallest particle of grace is infused into our minds, we begin to contemplate the divine countenance as now placid, serene, and propitious to us: it is indeed a very distant prospect, but so clear, that we know we are not deceived.”

So much stress having been laid on the word assurance, it may be well to refer to Dr. Campbell’s translation of the gospels, for the meaning of the original word so translated. In his note on the first verse of the first chapter of St. Luke, he insists, that it always means either accomplishment, as in that place, which he considers as erroneously translated; or confidence, founded on conviction as in Rom. xiv. 5: which he would translate—“let every man be convinced in his own mind.”

As Calvinistick churches, so likewise Calvinistick writers seem to have thought this matter carried too far by Calvin, in his making of assurance essential to faith; although they nevertheless uphold it as an evangelical mean of satisfaction. Thus Turretine† “we affirm a divine and infallible certainty, which ordinarily is or may be in every believer, not from his own disposition,

* πληροφορία.

† Locus 13, sect. 28. Cont. vi.

or from natural light, but from the grace of the spirit through the energy of faith; resting on the outward promises of the word, and the inward testimony of the spirit; which fixes itself in all more or less, but as much as suffices to true consolation.”

Witsius takes the same distinctions. He treats of the assurance of believers—although, as quoted already, he does not seem to think it the privilege of all—as it arises from the testimony first, of their own spirit, and then of that of the spirit of God. Under the latter, he writes as follows: * “ That testimony is given principally in this manner. *First*, The spirit of God makes those holy habits, which, we said, were the distinguishing marks of the children of God, and which at times are often involved in much darkness, and covered with much rubbish and filth, to shine with clearness in their soul, and, as it were, readily present themselves to the contemplation of the mind, when examining itself. And then it excites our spirit, otherwise languid, to the diligent observation of the things in our mind, both transacted in and by it, enlightens the eyes of the understanding with supernatural light, to prevent our being deceived by what is specious rather than solid, or our overlooking those things, on the observation of which our consolation depends. There is, moreover, a certain internal instinct, which no human language can explain, immediately assuring God’s beloved people of their adoption, no less than if, being carried up to the third heavens, they had heard it audibly from God’s own mouth: as the apostles formerly heard on the holy mount *a voice from the excellent glory*. Lastly, seeing no testimony is stronger than that which is proved by facts, the spirit of God does not leave himself *without*

* Book III. chap. xi. sect. 37.

witness in that respect; exciting generous motions and the sweetest raptures in believers, and delighting them with consolations so ravishing and ecstasical, and even exceeding all conception, that they cannot consider them in any other light, but as so many testimonies of their adoption.”

This quotation from Witsius, shows the sources from which assurance, according to his estimation, must arise. It is not a little extraordinary, that this divine should lay down so important a position as that concerning an assuring instinct, without referring to a single passage of scripture in proof of it; accustomed as he is to scriptural references throughout his work. Further, his account of the occasional raptures of believers, must be perceived to be much marked by the traits of that animal sensibility, which depends so much on bodily constitution, and is often experienced without any conquest of passion, or any of the fruits of the spirit, as they are described in scripture. But it is more to the present purpose to remark, that Witsius, like to Turretine and unlike to Calvin, does not seem to consider assurance as essential to the least drop of faith; since, after affirming in the next section, the distinctness of the testimony spoken of before, he continues, in the thirty-ninth section, thus—“but the spirit of God does not usually comfort the elect with such glad tidings, unless their hearts are first broken by a long continued acknowledgment of their sins, and a deep sense of their misery. Generally, a boisterous wind goes before, rending the mountains, and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord, and an earthquake, and a fire, before the still small voice is heard. This balm is poured only into the broken heart.”

What induces the more to interpret this, as making the testimony of the spirit not of the essence of the Christian state, is that Witsius, after having spoken, in the fifteenth section, of the hope and assurance of the future inheritance, like that expressed by St. Paul at the close of the 8th chap. of the Epistle to the Romans, and elsewhere, goes on in the sixteenth section thus—
“ Indeed, if any one shall compare these magnificent expressions with what is observed among believers at this day, he will be obliged to own, that they come far short of that eminence and excellence; they are so mean, poor, and fading, in comparison of these unparalleled expressions; which, with astonishment, we admire in the apostle. But doubtless the spirit bloweth when, how, and where it listeth: it does not become us to set bounds to him. In the beginning of the gospel God showed, what he can do, and what again he will do, when he shall restore life, as it were, from the dead.”

From the premises, there seems to be warranted the conclusion, that Calvinistick churches and writers refer, on the question so important to all persons—whether they be in grace, to a source of satisfaction of which the episcopal church knows absolutely nothing: her only test being the individual's consciousness of his conformity to the holy requisitions held out to all; to which, faithful examination is doubtless necessary. And if the result of this be doubt; she judges it safer to leave him under it, than to rescue him in a way for which she finds no authority in the gospel.

3. Accordingly the present inquiry, proceeding from a question of fact to a question of truth, now looks at the subject, as it stands in the revealed will of God.

In what has been already stated, there must have been observed a difference among Calvinists themselves, concerning the assurance here treated of; some, as Calvin, making it of the essence of faith; while others merely describe it, as what may be obtained by all the faithful. It is well known, that preachers who have adopted the former idea, make it the prominent sentiment in their usual addresses to the people; and that very naturally; because, whatever be the subject, there results the point of view in which it should affect every one, simply from the proposal of the question—have you or have you not received assurance of your salvation? Even in regard to preachers who do not hold it to be essential; yet it may be supposed, that they habitually describe it as the highest privilege vouchsafed to man on earth; exhorting to the attainment of it, both as an incitement to Christian duty, and as the reward of it. Accordingly, there not being the least vestige of it in those places of scripture, which were evidently designed as a very considerable delineation of Christian truth and duty; this is a proof, that the sentiment makes no part of the Christian revelation. To this purpose, there may be mentioned our Lord's sermon on the mount; and his other continued discourses in the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of St. John; from no one of which are there brought any texts, to establish this doctrine of assurance. Neither is there any thing like it, in St. Peter's address to the Jews in Acts ii.; nor in that in Acts iii.; nor in St. Paul's speech at Athens, recorded in the 17th chapter of the same book; each of which may be called a sermon to the people. Not only on such occasions, but on those which were less public or even private, as when St. Peter taught and caused

to be baptized Cornelius and his household; when Philip converted and baptized the Ethiopian eunuch; and when St. Paul and Silas baptized the jailor and his family; there were opportunities especially calling for some regard to the point, which most of all concerned the parties respectively. And in like manner, when St. Paul and Barnabas passed through Phœnice and Samaria in their way to Jerusalem, “declaring the conversion of the Gentiles;” what an opportunity was then given for the reciting of the experiences of assurance received; if these apostles had possessed the same apprehensions of the subject, with others who detail to the world their marvellous accounts of what indeed, on their principles, is so important.

It would be easy to point out a variety of ways, in which there is wanting a Specification of Assurance; where, if the thing itself have any foundation, it ought to be. But this is not all. Another, and a very different standard is referred to. “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:”* and, “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven:”† These are the words of our Saviour; and in the same spirit St. Paul, defining what is the true learning of Christ, and what it is to be taught the truth in Jesus, makes it‡—to “put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;” and to “be renewed in the spirit of our mind;” and to “put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness

* John xv. 14.

† Matt. vii. 21.

‡ Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

and true holiness." Then follow other precepts of Christian morals; all which can at best be no more, on the opposite theory, than a mere external evidence, combining with the affirmed inward testimony to the mind; not taught in the passage, yet supposed the most important of all; and what therefore might be expected, on that principle, to have been taught as the true learning of Christ. The same apostle,* defining the being "led of the Spirit," makes it to consist in bringing forth "the fruits of the Spirit;" which are declared to be "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." The whole passage shows, that the apostle intended to draw a line, according to which, a man's being on the one side or the other of it, was decisive of his good or his evil state. The testimony of the Spirit, or the absence of it, would have answered every purpose. A like test to that above quoted, is given in the 19th verse of the 2d chapter of the 2d Epistle to Timothy—"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his: and, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Some persons had endeavoured to unsettle this foundation; but it remained sure, under the notoriety of a seal. This had two sides. On one of them, is recorded God's knowledge of them that are his: on the other side is engraven the corresponding character of the persons known—"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

If we pass from St. Paul to St. James, there are in his epistle several places, in which tests are introduced. Thus it is in chapter i. 22, and the following verses,

* Gal. v. 18, 22, 23.

according as men are “doers of the word,” or else “hearers only;” and in chapter iii. 11, according as the heart like “a fountain, sends forth sweet water,” or “bitter.” It is indeed very strange, on the contrary system, that in the whole of this only remaining work of one of the apostles, there should not be a single sentiment, deemed to the purpose of sustaining a doctrine held to be the very marrow of religion.

St. Peter, throughout his epistles, holds up the same test of Christian morals; not as a mere regulating of the conduct, but as an holy state of mind. One of the strongest instances of it, is in that text so often misconstrued to the support of the error here in question—2 Pet. i. 10. “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” It was remarked in the second part of this work, that “sure”* means “steadfast;” being predicated of the election itself, and not of the appearance of it to the mind. But what are the means of this steadfastness? The apostle had exhorted, v. 5—“Add to your 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.” Afterwards, he distinguishes between persons in whom these things abound, and other persons to whom they are wanting. And then comes the standard of discrimination—“Make your calling and election sure;” meaning by the certainty resulting from the exercise of the graces which had been described. And further, according to some manuscripts, the application to Christian morals is made still more pointed by its being added, after “sure,” by “good works.”

* βιβαιαν.

St. John is full of a like test of discrimination. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments:"* "Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him:"† "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous:"‡ and "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."§ It is said, indeed,—"Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."|| This however applies, not to the individual's knowledge of his Christian state, but to the knowledge of the church of her being confessed and favoured by her divine Head. It means a pouring out of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, for the propagating of the Faith, as appears from the verse immediately succeeding—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."

But there would seem little reason to refer to all these passages, when the principle in the mind, which carries it forwards in expectation to future bliss, is usually termed in scripture, not Assurance, but Hope. It is the hope of the Christian, which "maketh not ashamed." If we are "born again," it is to "a lively hope." If we are to be "ready to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason"—it is "of the hope that is in" us. When the Christian graces are summed up under three heads, we read of "hope," in alliance with "faith" and "charity." And the same "hope," or rather the ground of it, for there is no word answering to hope in the original, is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast:" the epithet "sure" being applied, in metaphor, not to the ship, but to the anchor;

* 1 Ep. ii. 3.

† Chap. ii. 29.

‡ Chap. iii. 7.

§ Verse 14.

|| Verse 24.

and spiritually, not to the soul, but to the certainty of the matter which is the subject of the hope.* The places are very many, in which this more modest term is preferred to that other expression of assurance; the reception of which, is held up as co-existent with the earliest influence of saving grace.

After delineating a very few explicit evidences of the standard laid down in scripture, the occasion requires attention to those selected for the sustaining of the suggestion on the other side.

Rom. v. 5. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The author adheres, and will refer briefly to, the construction given in the first part of this work. It was shown, that the Greek word† is expressive of a miraculous pouring out of the Holy Ghost on the church; and that no other sense can make it pertinent to the argument of the apostle; which was levelled at prejudices, not likely to give way to declarations of personal experiences, however they might yield to the fact of a supernatural interposition.

Rom. viii. 15, 16. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." The former interpretation, is still adhered to. In explaining this passage, error frequently arises, not only from confounding the witnesses and their testimonies; but, what is especially important

* The strict meaning of "ασφαλής" translated "sure," is—"safe," or "firm," or "out of danger," which shows still more forcibly, that it has no reference to any assurance of the mind.

† εκκεχυται.

to be considered here, the conviction to which the testimony tends. This is the conviction, not of the party, but of those who were for divesting them of their Christian privileges. If the satisfaction of the party had been the matter within the meaning of the apostle, there would have been a superfluity of testimony; since each individual's being assured by the Spirit of God of his gracious state, might have been sufficient to have satisfied his own mind. But the Jewish Christians had prejudices against a common right with them, in favour of their Gentile brethren. Now, says the apostle, here are two witnesses: First, the Spirit of God evidencing his presence by his supernatural gifts; and then the spirits of the people in question, manifesting their being under the guidance of the same Holy Spirit, by his inclining of them to whatever could adorn the Christian character; and especially in that absence of servile fear, and that presence of affectionate affiance, which were eminently congenial with the spirit of the gospel dispensation.

Heb. vi. 11. "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end." The words are best explained by what follows verse 12. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." Here, the following of certain others—not a divine communication—was to serve to the purpose of the assurance spoken of. Among those others, Abraham alone is mentioned, to whom God confirmed his promise by an oath; "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Here, is an ample explanation of the full assurance spoken of.

God vouchsafed to Abraham a promise, confirmed by an oath; and Abraham believed. To Christians also there were given promises, with evidence as clear as that to Abraham. The Hebrews are exhorted to follow his example; and this, in their case, as in his, is to serve “to the full assurance of hope unto the end.”

Eph. i. 13, 14. “In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” This cannot be the assurance attached to the faith, of which it is said by Calvin—there cannot be a drop without it; because the Ephesians did not receive the sealing, until after they had believed. It could have been no other than the promise of the Father, in the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost.

2 Cor. i. 21, 22. “Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” This is still the language suited to miraculous endowments. But why should it be said—“the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts?” Doubtless, because the conviction and the confidence, resulting from the witnessing of the outward manifestation, incited the best sensibilities and the best affections. That St. Paul, writing to a church which he tells in the very next verse—“to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth,” alluding to a faulty matter, concerning which he was fearful that it might not have been done away, should explicitly tell them, that they had all received inward assurances of salvation, is too extravagant to be supposed. Had he so deemed, he could not have asked them in one place*—

* 1 Cor. iv. 21.

“ Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” Much less would he have told them in another place*—“ I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: and lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed.” The concluding part of the passage is probably intended of the party, who had supported the cause of the incestuous person, stated in the first epistle to the same church. The whole passage, is in utter contrariety to the idea, of St. Paul’s declaring to them, that they had, one and all, received the seal of the assurance of their salvation.

The remaining verse in the Westminster confession, 2 Pet. i. 10. has been explained above.

The word “ assurance,” is mentioned in the New Testament in four places, not yet considered. And there may be use in referring to them; because the connexion shows, in every instance, that the degree of rational conviction is the thing intended: Acts xvii. 31. “ Whereof (that is, Christ’s coming to judge the world) he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Col. ii. 2. “ That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding:” 1 Thess. i. 5. “ Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” Heb. x. 22. “ Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.” All these pas-

* 2 Cor. xii. 20.

sages refer to an assurance, consisting in the fulness of rational conviction. Yet Calvin understands, in the last of them, a certainty of salvation. But Witsius* has very well shown, that it means the fulness of assent. And indeed, this its meaning is established by Rom. xiv. 5.—“ Let every man be fully persuaded (marginal reading ‘assured’) in his own mind.” The Greek word†, being here applied to the opinion entertained by some of the sanctity of certain days, and to the opinion of others that the days were indifferent, it can mean nothing else than intellectual satisfaction.

The author, being satisfied that there is no where in the scriptures this doctrine of assurance; which, if true, might be expected in them almost every where; would proceed immediately to state what he conceives to be the evil effects resulting from the doctrine; were it not, that the specious show which it holds out of a substantial good may so dazzle the unwary mind, as to make it indisposed to listen to the apprehended evils. For what can be more inviting, especially to a person under those religious impressions, which, it is to be hoped, happen more or less to all, and which create the occasions most of all to be improved to the cultivating of an interest in a better state of being, than to be informed of there being accessible a certainty in this matter, dispelling all anxiety at present, and precluding all danger of forfeiture in future? This, as was remarked, is very specious; but before the acceptance of the splendid offer, let there be an examination into the meaning of it: Which shall be here taken as exhibited by Calvin, who must be supposed fully possessed of the sense in which the offer is to be understood.

* Book III. chap. vii. sect. 12.

† πληροφορησθαι.

First, then, let it be remarked, that, although in the estimation of this eminent man, faith involves certainty; yet this, according to a quotation already made, was the seeing of the divine face* afar off and from a distance. And in addition, it is said in the same place, that by a progress we come to have a nearer view; whereas, we perceive the mind enlightened by the knowledge of God to be enveloped in much ignorance in the beginning, which, by degrees, is wiped away.

In the above, there are evidently designated different degrees of certainty. But it is to be feared, that the lower degrees of it may be rendered somewhat uncertain, in consequence of the appearances occasionally experienced by the reprobate. For this appears possible, from what is acknowledged by the same writer, although he qualifies it thus†—“Not that they truly perceive the energy of spiritual grace and clear light of faith; but because the Lord, to render their guilt more manifest and inexcusable, insinuates himself into their minds, so far as his goodness may be enjoyed without the spirit of adoption.” Still he insists, that, “although there is a great similitude and affinity between the elect of God and those who are endued with a frail and transitory faith, yet the elect possess that confidence, which Paul celebrates, so as boldly to cry *Abba, Father.*” He goes on to state, that “God regenerates for ever the elect alone with incorruptible seed.” Of the others it is added—“The reprobate have only a confused perception of grace; so that they embrace the shadow, rather than the substance.”

No passages of scripture are alleged to sustain these minute distinctions: and there seems considerable diffi-

* *Procul et eminus.*

† *B. 3, ch. 2, sect. 11.*

culty in the individual's judging, whether he is on the one side or on the other, of the line dividing between the elect and the reprobate. Still, if he should judge both rightly and favourably concerning himself, it may seem, that he has now got over the ocean of doubt, and is safe at anchor in the harbour of certainty. But it is not so. For in the seventeenth section, Calvin introduces some one complaining, that believers experience very different things, and are tormented by doubts. And in the eighteenth section, he describes more particularly the struggle between faith and despondency, as follows—"But if, in the mind of a believer, assurance be mixed with doubts, do we not always come to this point, that faith consists not in a certain and clear, but only in an obscure and perplexed knowledge of the divine will respecting us? Not at all. For if we are distracted by various thoughts, we are not therefore entirely divested of faith; neither, though harassed by the agitations of diffidence, are we therefore immersed in its abyss; nor, if we are shaken, are we therefore overthrown. For the invariable issue of this contest is, that faith at length surmounts those difficulties, from which, while it is encompassed with them, it appears to be in danger."*

* It is justly remarked, that much controversy arises from the unsettled meanings of words. Some consider certainty as excluding all doubt.

The alternate succession of certainty and of doubt, noticed above by Calvin, is frequent in Calvinistick authors. For instance, Mr. Toplady (vol. 3, p. 47) pleads for assurance, but allows of occasional doubts; and would think little of the man who had them not. "Still" (says he) "there are golden seasons." On any other subject, it would be a strange species of certainty, that

There seems, in all this strong language, a description of something very different from what mankind in general understand to be certainty or assurance, on any subject. To the writer of this, there is something much more desirable in a state of mind resulting from faith, according to the account given of it by the episcopal church. Let there be a comparing of the two different views of the subject. In the eleventh article it is affirmed—"That we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." And it is added—"as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification" (or salvation). Accordingly, the said homily is a standard, and may be supposed to have been drawn up with special care. The substance of the homily is this. It distinguishes between what is done on the part of God, and what on the part of man. From the former comes justification; independent on any merit on the other part, whether of faith or of works, but only through the all sufficient sacrifice of Christ. The way by which we become interested in this, is faith; embracing the promises of God, and thus obtaining remission of sins. Now if we believe the promises of God, they are full of good-will towards us; and the declaration of his favour, is not contemplated as coming in any other way. It is true, as the homily states at large, this faith must be productive of the fruits of righteousness. Here, indeed, may be a source of difficulty to a doubting mind. The homily does not pro-

should suffer the mind to vacillate in such a manner. But the account agrees precisely with the different views which we take of some subjects, according to different states of mind; the results of bodily constitution, and causes operating mechanically.

ceed to point out the remedy; but it is evident, from the general tenor of scripture. If the doubts arise from such imperfections as are incident to the weakness of human nature, and consistent with habitual rectitude, the party should be directed to the contemplation of the goodness of God; and to his own unworthiness no further, than is necessary to his rising more and more above the body of death. If the doubt arise from the commission of sin; verily the former ought to remain, until the latter has been done away by repentance: and all propensity to sin, in proportion as it is experienced, should be esteemed a cause of doubt. If this scheme be not so full of an occasional confidence, it would seem to promise more durable consolation to a faithful mind.

But these things are said merely to show, that the delights of the other system, even as described by its most distinguished advocate, are more in appearance than in reality. And there is now a passing to the last department of this appendix—the evils resulting from the sentiment here discountenanced: evils of the doctrine, in practice.

The first bad effect to be mentioned, is its resting of satisfaction on the subject of salvation, too much and almost entirely on animal sensibility. It is well said by the psalmist—“ I am fearfully and wonderfully made:”* which is a remark, applying not only to the animal economy, but to its influence on the mind. Through the medium of the incomprehensible connexion of mind and body, not only do the ailments of the one have an important effect on the operations of the other,

* Ps. cxxxix. 14

but the same is produced by much slighter causes; even by a cause apparently so slight, as a change in the air daily breathed: and what is a slighter cause still, a mere creature of the imagination. How often has it been known, that a man, in contemplating the state of his worldly affairs, has been oppressed by a despondency, which the sun of the following day dispersed, as effectually as the mist by which its rising was obscured! And how often has it been known, that a man's estimation of the state of his health, has varied from varyings of the weather! It has even happened from a pretended change, produced by the nailing of the weather-cock of a neighbouring cupola. To bring the matter nearer to the subject; there is scarcely any one who may not recollect with grief, that there are persons, who show at times extraordinary sensibility on religious subjects, without any evidence of an influence over the heart and life. What is thus true of the connexion of inward piety, with morality of conduct, is also applicable to this, as connected with affections which may exist independently on religion. For a man, in his domestic relations, may have all his feelings agitated beyond ordinary bounds, and yet be habitually an inattentive and unfaithful husband; and a careless—perhaps an unkind father. On these subjects, and on many more which might be named, how great would be the mistake, of making feeling the test of inward character! And yet this is done by many, in the most important concern of all, by their judging of their religious state, according to feelings occasionally possessed; and not according to the standard of there being all evil carefully abstained from, and of there being all good diligently pursued, and of habitual affections going forwards to perfection.

In the former part of this work, there were given from president Edwards's *Treatise on Religious Affections*, some pertinent distinctions, applying to the point here stated; and showing, how much of what is often apparent piety depends on the mechanism of the body. The author is aware, that he uses different language from that of president Edwards, who applies the term "religious affection" to the whole of inward religion, or what may be mistaken for it. What he treats however, as extraneous attributes, is the same which is here called animal sensibility; in order to distinguish it from the steady direction of the mind, which that author advocates.

As to the error here objected to, although, in the treatise, assurance is considered as attainable, yet, concerning the mistaken ground of it, we find as follows*—
"Many have been the mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive notion of the witness of the spirit, that it is a kind of inward voice, suggestion, or declaration from God to a man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a text of scripture; and many have been the false, and vain, (though very high) affections that have arisen from hence. And it is to be feared, that multitudes of souls have been eternally undone by it."

Of the high rank of president Edwards in the scale of intellect, there can be no confirmation by the opinion of the present writer to the effect; who also respects his memory, as that of a religious and irreproachably moral man. Therefore, it is not to detract from him in

* 4th vol. Am. ed. of his works, p. 171.

these particulars, but to derive aid from them to a contemplated point, that attention is invited to some passages of his life, gathered partly from the narrative of it prefixed to his *Treatise on Religious Affections*, and partly from a letter of his to a Dr. Colman, of Boston, dated Nov. 6, 1736, which was sent by him to England, and there published by two dissenting ministers, well known in the religious and in the literary world—Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse, as an account of a wonderful work of God.

In the town of Northampton, Massachusetts, in which Mr. Edwards was minister, there appeared a great disposition to seriousness, in the spring of the year 1734. Towards the close of it, and in the spring and summer of the following year, the matter became general: so that the town—to take his description of it—“seemed to be full of the presence of God.”* He says soon after—“There were remarkable tokens of God’s presence in almost every house; it was a time of joy in families, on the account of salvation being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands.” This is but a specimen of the copious display of the universal prevalence of the spirit of piety; and that not confined to the seat of its origin, but spreading to other towns, and producing in them the like effects. The narrator hopes, that in the space of half a year, in the town of Northampton alone, consisting of about two hundred families, described as people of religious profession generally, there were more than three hundred souls savingly brought home to Christ.

* Page 16.

In the account of this matter, which is all along considered as the work of God and the out-pouring of his spirit, are some incidents evidencing a very high degree of what has been called in this work—animal sensibility; which led to various extravagances of rapture on the one hand, and melancholy on the other; and of vacillations between the two: among which, two instances are mentioned of persons led away by enthusiastic delusions; besides one man who cut his throat, and another who attempted it. During the year in which the fervour was at the height, it began to subside: but the narrator, when he wrote his letter in the following year, states, that there had been wrought an abiding change, in those who were thought converted. In the life of Mr. Edwards it is recorded, that in the years 1740 and 1741, there was another out-pouring of God's spirit, in which Northampton partook largely.

After all this, it is curious to remark what happened to Mr. Edwards, so soon as in the year 1744, as related in his life. Having discovered an extensive spread of gross licentiousness among the young people under his charge, he took measures for the suppressing of it. When the members of the congregation became informed of the extent of the bad practices of their children, they shrunk from the exposure of them, and set themselves in opposition to the wishes of their pastor. The author of the life says—“ This seemed in a great measure to put an end to Mr. Edward's usefulness at Northampton, and will help to account for the surprising events, which will by and by be related.”*

The substance of the events referred to, are as follow. Mr. Edwards adopted the expedient, already mentioned

* Life prefixed to his *Treatise on Religious Affections.*

in the second part, of an examination of experiences, as the condition of admitting to the communion. The result, was as already related—his dismissal by the votes of two hundred against those of twenty. This took place June 22d, 1750.

The motive of this review, is for the suggesting of two queries—1st, whether it may not be reasonably supposed, that when, in the year 1746, Mr. Edwards wrote his treatise on religious affections, the many pertinent remarks in it, pointing out the difference between real religion, and the excitement of animal feelings, may not have been the fruit of the then recent but evanescent conversions under his ministry? If this should have been the case; it is a strong recommendation of his cautionary remarks, to those who think they trace the operations of grace, in what he pronounces to be no evidence either of its existence or of the want of it: and 2dly, whether such seasons of highly excited sensibility are desirable; or rather, whether they are not to be deplored. Perhaps it will be said, that in some instances, the impressions have been durable. This is probable. But is not the christian character often induced under the faithful preaching of the word, without noise, but not without effect on the life and conversation? May not more be accomplished in this way, by a minister of Mr. Edwards's talents and assiduity, than by exciting a popular fervour, bordering on madness, in a great proportion of the subjects, and producing actual madness in some of them? And when this is followed, in some, by gross licentiousness; in others, by confirmed infidelity; and, in not a few, by a pharisæical profession, destitute of any thing that can be said to adorn the gospel in the temper and in the life; may it not be apprehended, that these things outweigh any good

that may have been accomplished, by an excitement beyond the words of truth and soberness?

It is not here forgotten, how much what has been said may be censured by some, as giving a low representation of those wonderful conversions, which produce at least temporary manifestations of sincere piety in many, and lasting effects of it in some. Far be the thought of a low estimation of piety and virtue, by whatever cause they may have been produced. A certain man, becoming religiously affected by reading the works of a writer, whom every Calvinist would pronounce heterodox to a very great extreme, came to a former creditor, and made reparation for a wrong done many years before; declaring his convictions of the obligations of moral honesty, to have been the result of his having read the visionary book here alluded to. If this man could not, from his former habits of reading the bible, and from his attendance on a regular religious worship, with both of which he had been familiar, gather the conviction that moral honesty was binding; it was well for his own conscience, and for his creditor's purse, that this truth should be discovered, even where it was associated with error. Similar instances might be given in various ways, of similar reparation made, under like circumstances of conversion. But, until such events shall be decided to sanctify the attendant errors, let not the present question be determined on, under the influence of such a mistaken maxim. Perhaps it may be thought to apply more immediately to remark, that persons who have been brought up in protestant congregations, without being affected by the truths proclaimed in them, have become devotees, under the firm belief that they were prostrating them-

selves before the actual body and blood of their crucified Redeemer. Supposing that instances of this are rare; yet it will not be denied, that in certain countries and under certain circumstances of society, multitudes are excited to exercises of devotion and retained in them, by that very sentiment; exceptionable as it may be to rational minds in general, not prejudiced by education. But, is the truth of transubstantiation to be judged of by this criterion? Certainly not.

Still there will be dwelt on the thought, that by the excitements here discountenanced as extravagances, numbers of people, and even whole neighbourhoods, at seasons of general awakening, are brought from darkness to light and from the power of satan unto God. This is often boasted; but the fact is not here considered, as having been established. On the contrary, it has been testified on good evidence, that a great proportion of the description of people contemplated, have been made the worse by their apparent conversions; animal sensibility subsiding from its excess, into carelessness and even licentiousness of living. In the mean time, many, judging of the tree by its fruits, but confounding truth with error, infer that there can be nothing divine in a religion, which evinces so little likeness to the wisdom manifested in all the works of the Creator.

An interesting exhibition might be made, by taking the histories of such awakenings, in connexion with the terms of duration of the sensibilities produced by them; and a comparing of these accounts with those of the early propagation of Christianity, in different countries; with its effects, less lively, but more permanent. In any of the journals, conspicuous for the multitude and the extraordinary nature of its conversions, what a poor

appearance would be produced, by a narrative that should be bottomed on a resemblance to the history of St. Peter's address to the Jews, or on that of any one of St. Paul's addresses to the gentiles! Not an instance is recorded, of the agitation of the bodily frame; although in very many, the strong holds of sin were shaken to their centres. The wide spreading effect is too well known, to need a recital. After the apostolic age, the like means were used, and with the like success. And it ought to be noted, as especially pertinent to the present point, that the great good achieved, is not seen in a counterbalance with the mischiefs wrought, in a vast proportion of the converts. For among all the slanders raised on the early christians, there is not a vestige of that of their being rendered by their religion worse men in civil life. They were accused of being atheists, because they kept themselves at a distance from the national worship; and of unsocial manners, because they declined a joining in the idolatrous festivity of the temples. But never—no never was there the accusation against them, of an artificial stiffness adapted to the covering of dishonest artifice; or, against the religion itself, of its being of a nature to produce extravagance at first, and dissoluteness afterwards. In short, the whole history of the early propagation of christianity, agrees with what was said by its divine author, when he compared his doctrine to "leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."* Whatever is alien from this silent but progressive property of the gospel, may make a noise for a while, but it will not be lasting, as to any good effect.

* Matt. xiii. 33.

It would be a perversion of all that has been remarked, to apply it as countenancing security and sloth; or as if designed to discourage endeavors in gospel ministers or others, to revive a sense of religion, where there has been a popular decline of it. This has been often achieved, by means very different from those here discountenanced, under the character of mere animal sensibility. Perhaps there will not be rashness in affirming, that wherever the said blessed object is aimed at by a minister of the gospel, it is productive of effect in a degree: and if it be not in proportion to his wishes, he is not justified by this, in having resort to expedients, which may indeed enhance his personal consequence, but will not serve any substantial uses for which his ministry was ordained.

The second evil consequence to be named, is, that the error gives dangerous encouragement to persons, whose constitutional character disposes them to animal sensibility; while it is full of discouragement and gloom, to those less susceptible in this way.

A melancholy detail might here be given of persons, who, in the city in which this is written, and within the memory of many now living, after great agitations of mind during some of the marvellous seasons of conversion, have become as sure of their salvation as of their existence; but who have afterwards lived and died, some in gross sin, and others in indifference to all religion. Is it to be supposed, that natural character gave no aid to the producing of this effect? And if it did, who shall calculate the share it has had in the assurances of others, whose piety has been lasting?

On the other hand, how many, with equal sincerity to that of the latter, have for years lamented their sor-

rowful situation, in a continual seeking of an assurance, by them not to be obtained. Let there be supposed a person seriously and sincerely, under a sense of the evil of sin, and the misery of unassisted nature, beginning to attend to the concerns of his salvation. If words have meaning, surely such a person may find himself included in the invitation—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;"* and not in this only, but in a multitude of invitations to the same effect. But he is told by the advocate for assurance—these things are nothing to you, without an inward communication, which shall ascertain, that the promises belong to you individually. Accordingly, for such a communication he weeps, and prays, and strives in vain. The advocate of the doctrine will account for this by saying, that it is of the mercy of God, and in order to bring the party to be sufficiently humble-minded. If this be so, how happens it, that no such provision is made for another, who receives so soon, and perhaps loses as soon, the enjoyment sought by both? Calvin would have replied, that in the latter instance, it was the mere semblance; presented to his imagination, in order to render him inexcusable. But it is not rash to say even of so able a writer, that he must have been hard pressed, when he argued from what he supposed to be in the minds of other men, while their own declarations and all visible appearances are opposed to him. There are other advocates of the doctrine, who cannot avail themselves even of Calvin's way of accounting for the fact.

Not only in the beginning of a religious profession,

* Matt. xi. 28.

but in the progress of it, the pressure of the opinion is heavily felt. The writer of this has known instances of the case, which he is proceeding to suppose. A person has been long living in the observance of religious ordinances, in the diligent discharge of domestic duties, and in the exercise of benevolence generally; and all this, not disfigured by any visible sinfulness of character. But he is waiting for an inward light, of which he has been informed; but which, though daily invited, seems still distant. He complains, that he wants faith. He is asked—do you believe all the articles of the apostle's creed? He answers, that he has not the least doubt of the truth of any of them: but he adds, that he is a sinner. All mankind are sinners, replies the other party in the dialogue: but are you sincerely sorry for any errors of your former life, and for whereinsoever you fell short of the perfection of the holy law of God? This the other declares confidently to be the case. Are you conscious then—thus the discourse continues—of living at this time in any practice, of which you know from scripture, that it is sinful? My conscience, says the other, is clear of any thing of this sort: still, I want the feeling, which assures others, that their names are written in the Book of Life. Is it a sewing of pillows to arm-holes* to declare to such a person—If you are clear in the facts you certify, and if you persevere in the course stated, you are safe? Practise your devotions, and your other duties; and leave the consideration of the comfort, by which you think they should be attended; and which is perhaps delayed by no other cause, than by its being sought in a way not sanctioned by the Word of Truth.

* Ezek. xiii. 18.

It is here trusted, that the advice is safe. For if the terrors of the Lord are addressed to such persons as the one described, the gospel is improperly defined "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men."

Of the sad effects of the contrary persuasion, perhaps the most distressing instances are those sometimes seen in persons condemned to capital punishment by the law. Unhappy people of this sort, being all flagrant offenders, are here supposed to receive the offer of gospel grace. But persons undertaking the office of making it, have been known to exert all their efforts to excite in them, in addition to compunction, the assurance here the subject. Nothing is omitted, that can be done by addresses to the sympathetic feeling, enforced by the aids of loud vociferation and violent gesture. Some of the unhappy men, being more susceptible than the rest, catch the flame, and feel a glow like that of their exhorters. Then, so far as these are concerned, all is joy; their salvation being considered as sealed. The others are wept and shouted over, in vain; although, on their part, all in their power is done for the exciting of the requisite sensibility. The awful suspense is continued, until the culprits are launched into their eternal state: and they die, at least under the human sentence of damnation.

The author is sensible of his stating extravagances, of which any intelligent Calvinist would be ashamed. No such person is here charged with them. But he is requested to consider seriously, how far they are the result, of the carrying of the principles of his system into their natural and obvious consequences.

In the case supposed above, the inquiry may occur—If there is to be no such assurance as that supposed,

what other can there be; since opportunities will be wanting, of demonstrating present repentance by future obedience? In answer, the opinion is here explicitly avowed, that, as to any thing like assurance, it cannot be. Full assurance, indeed, may be declared of the divine benignity and promises. But when there are considered the many cases, in which, to the circumstances stated, there have succeeded unexpected opportunities, and those prostituted to sin; and sometimes, after clear assurances of salvation supposed to have been received; there seems great rashness, in encouraging in the spectators more than hope, according to appearances; and, in the parties concerned, an hope approaching to confidence, in proportion as there are felt holy resolution and desire.

Another evil, naturally induced by determining spiritual things in the mind according to such a standard, is the extending of it to judge, of the morality of conduct, and even to the regulating of the ordinary concerns of life. When there are read the narratives of the mischiefs done by such men as Munster in Germany, and Venner in England, with their respective associates; there would be a mistake in presuming, that they acted their outrages otherwise than under the full persuasion of a divine impulse. To take the latter in particular: what could have induced an handful of men, in a populous city, and under the curb of a veteran army, to display themselves in armour in the streets, proclaiming the beginning of the kingdom of Christ on earth; unless they had verily believed the suggestions of what they thought a divine assurance in their minds, that the moment of so extraordinary a revolution had arrived? There have been very orderly bodies of pro-

fessing Christians, who have avowed in morals, the very principle of conduct here discountenanced? How then have they been secured from occasional inroads of disorder, originating in the wicked or in the indiscreet zeal of visionary individuals? Verily it has been by subjecting the movements of the spirit of the individual, to the spirits of the more intelligent and sober members of the body. Whether this be consistent, is nothing to the purpose. The error of the system in theory, is balanced by a contrary energy of it in action.

As was intimated, not in religion and morals only, is the influence of the mistake perceivable. It is felt in those ordinary actions of life, for which discretion should lay down the rule. While other animals have propensities impelling directly to their ends, it is only by observation, by information, and by experience, that man learns what he should avoid and what pursue. But some persons have taken up the strange fancy, that a very strong impression on the mind may be safely trusted to, as a directory in the affairs of life very interesting to the party; but in which duty does not determine, whether an action under contemplation is to be omitted or done. Some have carried this matter so far, as to rest the result on what they may read on the opening of the bible, without any choice of place. This is all delusion; and yet no one can question, that the other delusion disposes to it. There is a striking instance of this, in the accounts given of Oliver Cromwell. He was unquestionably, at a certain time of life, disposed to enthusiasm; however this may be supposed to have settled down afterwards into hy-

pocrisy.* Now of this man it is said, on such evidence as was sufficient for Daniel Neal to adopt the story, that “if any thing was strongly impressed upon his mind, he apprehended that it came immediately from God and was a rule of action.” In the same character there is a proof, that persons who gather this notion from their enthusiasm at one time, can make it the instrument of their temporal policy at another: of which there are instances told of this same Cromwell, in his management of men. The subject is further instanced, in the certainty of Cromwell and of his preachers, of his recovery from the disease which put an end to him. The preachers are said to have reproached God, for having deceived them.† Without going to matters of such magnitude, it may be affirmed, that persons have condescended to the prevarication, of resting their conduct on such an issue; when a determination in one way or in another must be disagreeable to some, whom they

* Perhaps it would be more correct to say—however he may have vacillated between the two. It agrees with observation to suppose, that these two properties may combine in the same mind; so that each of them shall have its seasons of influence.

The poet Waller, who was related to Cromwell, is said to have communicated the following anecdote: that visiting him on a certain day, when he was on the point of parting with some notoriously enthusiastic persons who had waited on him for some purpose of their own, there were dropped expressions which showed to Waller, that the protector was happy in the skill of accommodating his phrasology to his retiring visitants. Aware, however, how little suitable the discourse must have been to his relative and old acquaintance, he made the apology of the necessity of some compliance with such people as those parted with.

† Bishop Burnet records this fact, on the authority of Tillotson, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, who was present.

were unwilling to offend. In short, there is always either folly or wickedness, in every thing of this sort; while the error, although not the same with, is nearly related to that other, which is here principally discoursed of.

The above is not to be understood as if, even in temporal concerns, religion were to have no direction. In that line, men will be aided by a principle, which governs their passions, and prevents the misleading of the intellectual faculty. But this is a quite different matter from especial revelation, or immediate communication from the Deity.

The fourth evil to be stated, is brought about through the medium of the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. It is painful to cherish the sentiment, that the doctrine under this name, held as it undoubtedly is by many godly and virtuous persons, has a natural tendency to relax the vigour of endeavour and constant watchfulness; and thus to bring about the awful event of apostacy, which it pronounces to be impossible. If there be the danger of such an issue, how greatly is that danger enhanced by the doctrine of assurance! If the test of grace be the party's consciousness of a conformity to the divine mind; there is still room for him to be aware, that he may not have been sufficiently honest in the duty of self-examination: and a tendency in him to sin, at any time, may serve as a reason for such distrust. But let the test be a supposed divine communication to the mind; and immediately, distrust is itself sinful. From that moment, sin cannot sever the soul from God; and the worst passions of the heart, are merely like the remnant of the Canaanites in the promised land; left to exercise the chosen people, but with

no possibility of overcoming them. Under such circumstances, there would seem an impossibility of feeling the full force intended to attach to such precepts, as—“let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall”—and—“watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” And yet, as the experience of all times and places shows, the most powerful incitements are no more than are found necessary, to constitute that “whole armour of God,” with which we are exhorted to be arrayed continually.

Since the case of Cromwell has been introduced in another point of view, it naturally recurs in relation to the present. The anecdote seems well authenticated, of Dr. Godwin’s being questioned by the protector on his death bed, concerning the certainty of the doctrine of perseverance; and his receiving of a satisfactory answer, from the same spiritual guide. It is a chance, if, amidst Cromwell’s many cares and projects, he had thought of it for years. But, it came in good season for present comfort. And if it would serve to this end for Cromwell, in his last moments; for whom, may it not do the like? Without instances so high and so remote, it would be easy to recite known and recent facts, in ordinary life; in which persons, after living for years in carelessness and even in gross sin, have looked back to the feelings which possessed them in days when they felt assurances of salvation; with an entire persuasion, that the root of the matter was still in them, and that they were safe. There is in professor Turretine a sentiment, which shall be here noticed, as being thought peculiarly dangerous. It is where he speaks* of assur-

* Locus 6. chap. 19. cont. 5.

ance, not in the terms of his predecessor Calvin, requiring it universally; but as “what at some time comes into act; so that there is no one of the faithful, who is not embued with this persuasion some time before his death, to his comfort.” Without ascribing any other than the best intentions to the professor, may there not be apprehended in this sentiment much disquiet to a sincere man, in the most awful crisis of his temporary existence? What is here supposed has happened to persons who, from education or some other cause, have been impressed with this very sentiment; but not having found their minds elated by the desired assurance, although attending the ordinances, and living, outwardly at least, what would be called good lives; have expected that the boon, however long delayed, would be at last bestowed; and, being not sensible of it when needed most, have manifested evident disappointment and distress. Oh! what satisfaction has been displayed in the countenances of witnessing spectators in the same theory; if a person of the description stated, have discovered even a faint ground of hope, that pardon has beamed on the patient’s mind! It is all foreign to gospel grace. If, according to scripture, the tree is to lie as it falls, there is no determining in the aforesaid way, on which side it will be.

Of late years—for it probably began in the present age—there are very many, who zealously advocate the assurance here spoken of, but carefully sever it from the doctrine of perseverance, and from Calvinism generally. But the author supposes, that most persons who consider the subjects systematically, will perceive an incongruity in separating them. At any rate, on the latter plan, there is a loss of the most signal of the texts

of scripture, with which the Calvinist arms himself; however mistaken he may be in the interpretation of them. Besides, under the new system, there is so vast a proportion of the assurances, which notoriously come to nothing; as very much tends of itself to induce the opinion, of there being some essential weakness in the scheme, in the shape in which it thus appears. Some Calvinists endeavour to guard against this, by the theory of a law work: and there are those of them, who carry it so far as to affirm, that no man is a subject of salvation, until he have felt a willingness to be damned, for the greater illustration of the glory of God. The author has not a word to say, for this same law work; but on the contrary, supposes that the gospel is never duly preached, when its promises are not visible on the very face of it, agreeably to its name. Neither is this inconsistent with the sense of the evil of sin, and with true repentance. Still, the sentiment here referred to has a powerful influence, in preventing such alternate conversion and relapse.

The last evil to be mentioned, is the promoting of infidelity, by exhibiting excesses of animal sensibility, beyond any known to former times, and disgusting to all sober minded Christians. If there were not still a considerable proportion of this description, the infidel might reasonably triumph in the surrendry of all the armour, by which the Christian fortress has been heretofore defended; in its being now made entirely dependent on an inward testimony in the mind, to be known in every case only by a man's self. The testimony, in the form in which it is usually exhibited, will be ascribed by the philosopher to the amazing power of sympathy; and to the readiness of transition from one

species of animal sensibility to another—for instance, from dejection to joy, and from this again to the other. Whoever has read the history of the origin, the progress and the decline of animal magnetism, may perceive an entire agreement between the subjects, in the phenomena and in the causes of them. The conclusion of the report of the committee, appointed by the French court to investigate the evidences of the pretended agent, is here copied as equally applying to the matter in hand—“It is not entirely useless to philosophy” (for which word might be substituted “religion”) “as it is one fact more, to be consigned to the history of the errors and illusions of the human mind, and a signal instance of the power of imagination.”

How vainly will the philosopher endeavour to account, on the like principles, for the influence of religion in general, or for that of Christianity in particular! On the general scale, her hopes and her fears, her sorrows and her consolations are felt in society, under every one of its forms; and while the derider of her authority will affect to educe her origin from the policy of the magistrate, facts will always show, that the effect is substituted for the cause; by exhibiting the impotency of the magistrate, without her more powerful influence, extending to concerns which otherwise he could not have reached. And then, as to the Christian religion in particular, it is well known to have been opposed for ages, alike by philosophy and by power; and to have arisen triumphantly over them both: and that on the ground of evidences, which the most intelligent philosophers, in every succeeding age, have held to be tenable, against all the arts of sophistry.

But the wide spreading of this religion has never been, in any known instances, attended by the extravagances here alluded to. What records of them are there in ecclesiastical history, in the abundant conversions which took place during the ages of martyrdom? And it is still more to the purpose to ask—What records of them are there in the signal instances of conversion, occurring in the New Testament?—Of those attendant on St. Peter's preaching,* when “there were added unto them about three thousand souls?” Or on the same apostle's preaching in the next chapter; when it was evidently owing to the great success, that “the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,† being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead?”‡ . Further, what evidence is there of the same, as the effect of St. Paul's preaching at Athens; the result of which was,§ “That certain men clave unto him and believed?” Or of his discourse to a mixed assembly of Jews and Gentiles,|| many of the latter of whom “were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord?” Or of still another, recorded in the last chapter of the Acts, to a select but large company of Jews; when “some believed the things which were spoken,” although “some believed not?” No doubt, in the discourses of this apostle before king Agrippa and the Roman governors, there must have been lasting instances of effect among the by-standers, although not recorded. There are other occasions, not so public as the above; yet not so private, as that there should be

* Acts, ii.

‡ Acts iv. 1, 2.

|| Acts, xiii.

† The apostles.

§ Acts, xvii. 34.

no notice of any extraordinary circumstances attending them; especially such as are conceived to be produced by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost: for so high as this is the character attributed to the mental and bodily agitations here in view. Were there none such, or were they too unimportant to be recorded, in the case of Cornelius and his assembled friends? Or in the intercourse of St. Paul with the twelve disciples at Ephesus? Or in the case of the jailer and his family? The last instance, indeed, has been brought forward; the circumstance of the jailer's trembling, and that of his exclaiming—"What shall I do to be saved?" being caught at, to make them applicable to the point. When the terrible miracle attending the transaction shall again happen, or the like to it, the case may be admitted as to the purpose. It was not religious conviction, but the apprehension of being made responsible for the escape of the prisoners, which first seized on his mind, when he was about to commit the act of suicide. In the issue, he was converted and baptized; which is irrelevant to the subject. But something like the address of the jailer, is found in the second chapter of the Acts; in which the hearers of St. Peter say to the apostles—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Many a time has a like serious inquiry been made by persons of convicted consciences, to ministers of the gospel, and to other religious persons, without the least sign of turbulent emotion. And even if something of this sort had attended the question put to St. Peter—although nothing of the kind appears—it would not have been surprising; at a moment when heaven and earth were combining (as it were) to reprove the world for the recent crucifying of the Messiah; and when, among

the multitude addressed, there were probably some, who, a few days before, had cried—"Crucify him, crucify him," to the governor, manifesting a disposition to his release. The producing of such passages as authorities, is one of the strongest evidences, that the subject is barren of authorities altogether. There can be no doubt, that if, in the age of the gospel, there had been any such noisy conversions as at the present day; some evidence of them would have appeared, in the writings of the apostles. And further, if they had been passed by in silence in the scriptures; they would have been trumpeted by the enemies of the system, both Jewish and Heathen. They omitted no charge, which could expose the early Christians either to hatred or to derision: but of a charge of such extravagance as that in question, there is none.

After all, in the estimation of some, there will be a sufficient answer to this in existing cases of persons, who, from having been great sinners, have become pious and moral, after the extravagances referred to. But this is not correct reasoning; any more than would be the ascribing of a recovery from disease to a nostrum, taken at the same time with a judicious medicine, and in a peculiarly favourable state of body. What is here compared to the true medicine, is some mixture of truth with error; and the favourable state of body, represents sincerity of desire and holy endeavour after goodness: which come from the preventing grace of God, not resisted on the part of man. That there are instances of this sort, growing out of an alliance between grace and much animal sensibility, is known to the author of the present work: but that in number they are

at all proportional to the boast of the power affirmed to be illustrated in this way, is not agreeable to facts within the sphere of his observation. He distinguishes between talkative accounts of experiences, and the living evidences of these in the fruits of the Spirit, as described in scripture. Let those who have witnessed more of such fruits than himself in the quarter in question, give proportionable credit, wherever it may be found. But while they ascribe it to the Spirit of grace, and give the glory of it to God; let them remember, that, according to the condition of man, however there may be subdued the power of sin within him, yet his weaknesses may manifest themselves in the best of his performances. Further, the consideration of this should be sufficient to impose restraints on the propensity visible in some, of pouring contempt on the mixture here alluded to; in such a manner, as not to discriminate between piety and its attendant weakness. This ought to excite, not ridicule, but compassion; affecting different sorts of persons in different ways. They of a more sober and rational piety ought to be cautious, how they so censure the extravagance, as to endanger the seriousness combined with it. People of levity; or of indifference to religion, should be aware, that, if they have escaped the delusions which they despise, it may be owing, not to their steadiness or strength of mind, but to their having as yet known nothing of the powerful efficacy of religion over the conscience. And infidels should learn, how vain are all their expectations, and how desperate are all their attempts, to rescue the human mind from that sense of religion, to which it has been subjected by its all-wise Creator; since this potent principle, if not cul-

tivated to the uses of a rational devotion, will often assert its rights in irregular sallies, marked by passion and by folly: which proves, that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” as well in the science of human life, as in a preparation for a better state of being.

In the opening of this discussion, there were anticipated some difficulties, not entering essentially into the question of scriptural truth, yet predisposing against the doctrine to be maintained. Let there be a conclusion, with the statement of difficulties of the like kind, supposed to hang on the rejection of the doctrine.

1st, There is involved the presumption, that the whole Christian world, after the apostolic age to the period of the reformation, were under an error in this matter.

2dly, It fixes the same error not only on all the churches in communion with the bishop of Rome, and on the widely extended Greek church; but on all, which adhere to the reformation as accomplished by Luther, on the church of England, and on the episcopal church in these states.

3dly, In the case of the decease of infants, no reason can be given for believing in their being saved, except in consequence of a species of conversion of which we have no idea, and of which we have no instance in the scriptures.

4thly, If, to avoid the gloomy consequence of the damnation of infants, the hypothesis be admitted of an entire change of their affections before their decease, how far may this prove unfavourable to gospel morals, by encouraging the same expectation, in regard to those

who may have lived and died in the commission of sin, after having felt the force of religious impressions in former life? This is not an imaginary case, but has been witnessed by the present writer, and by others. Certainly, the cases are alike in the circumstance, that the omnipotence of God, into which the notion is resolved, is as applicable to the one as to the other. Preachers of the gospel, reasonably lay stress on the point, that persons possessed of sinful propensities would not relish the happiness of heaven, were they admitted within its mansions. The consideration has great weight, in counteracting presumptuous dependence on divine benevolence. But on the other ground, who knows, that the dying man may not be operated on, like matter under the hand of the mechanic?

5thly, There will be a difficulty in accounting for the paucity of the places, in which regeneration is mentioned in scripture, and especially, in its being wanting, in the addresses of the apostles to sinners. If, as is here supposed, in the case of there being no specific reference to baptism, there could not have been thereby an addition to the more general sense attached to the words repentance and conversion, all is consistent. Otherwise, there seems an unaccountable deficiency. It may be extended to the confessions of churches, and to the determinations of councils and synods. The first body of this description, who introduced the subject by name, as a doctrine of revelation, is here supposed to have been the Westminster assembly. It is not in the articles of the church of England; which were framed, before the exhibiting of it as a distinct and independent doctrine.

These are considerations, which should be adverted to. Ingenious men may endeavour to guard against them, by nice distinctions and circuitous reasonings: which, in ordinary minds, only rivet the difficulty intended to be solved by them.

GENERAL APPENDIX.

No. II.

*Concerning the Treatise of Monsieur Daillé, entitled,
“Concerning the right use of the Fathers.”*

INTRODUCTION.

Monsieur Daillé's motive—Another course would have been preferable—The cause which prevented the pursuing of it—A correct principle of this Author more extensively applied.

THE author, however impressed with the weight of evidence arising, as he thinks, from the concurrent testimony of the early ages of the church, and having made considerable use of it in this work, is aware of the insignificancy to which that testimony is reduced in the estimation of many. Accordingly, he is desirous of guarding more fully than has been done in the preceding pages, against a prejudice arising from this cause; and affecting all that has been advanced in the present department of the work. For there is often heard the remark—We have the scriptures in common with the fathers; and the same helps to the interpreting of them. Then the demand is made—What occasion is there to look further than to the writings, which were designed to be a standard, as well to the early Christians, as to the modern? And on such occasions, there never fails to be much use made of whatever can be discovered of

imperfections in the characters, and of either absurdities or contradictions in the writings of those who are thus brought forward—unnecessarily, as it is said—into the controversy.

Perhaps there is not any book, which has had so much weight in invalidating the testimony of the fathers, as the work of Monsieur Daillé, which was written professedly with that intent. It has obtained much celebrity; being written with great acuteness, and an evidence of the very extensive learning of its author. In England, although received more coldly by the clergy and other learned men of the established church, than by those of dissenting denominations, yet it has been commended by some of high reputation among the former. And that it must be thought generally faithful and correct in its quotations, is rendered probable by the circumstance, that it has not received an answer. At least, the present writer supposes this, as he has not heard of any; except in the remarks of the Rev. Mr. Reeves, in his preface to his translation of the Apologies of Justin, Tertullian, and Minutius Felix: which are neither extensive, nor directed to the present purpose.

In proportion as the subject concerns the end in the view of Mons. Daillé; on the ground of the writings of the fathers generally, and without distinguishing the ages in which they respectively lived; it is here supposed impossible to guard against the full force of what he has written; so far as it goes to the unqualified rejection of traditionary doctrine, as the rule of faith. For the author of the treatise has given such glaring evidences, in some instances of the forgery, and in other instances of the mutilating of books or parts of books; that, if the handing down of a revelation in such a man-

ner be possible, it has not been done. In many cases, he proves what he affirms by the testimonies of authors of the church, which such forgeries were designed to serve; who are represented as referring, in their editions, to the asserted redundancies and deficiencies. And these are found of great importance, as to some of the principal subjects in question between protestants and the church of Rome.

It was doubtless expressly against this church, that M. Daillé's treatise was composed. This appears in the dedication; which states, that the design was suggested by an application from a young nobleman, who found the protestant principles in which he had been educated often assailed at court. And this was done by persons, who dwelt principally on the argument from antiquity, and the general consent of the fathers of the early ages of Christianity.

With the greatest deference to the profound learning of Mons. Daillé; but with the independence on human authority, which forbids the following of him implicitly, as much as it forbad him to follow the fathers; it is here asked—whether it would not have been better in him to have joined issue with the Roman catholics, on a distinction of the ages in which the different fathers lived; and to have contended, that those of the first ages of Christianity were against the Roman catholics on all the points of moment, on which they differ from the protestants? How pre-eminent would the talents of Mons. Daillé have shone, in demonstrating, that in the accounts of the first three centuries, there is not a single document, which proves an authority exercised or even claimed by the bishop of Rome over the other bishops

of Christendom.* Transubstantiation, a purgatory, the worship of images, and whatever else the Roman catholic church has grafted on the stock of the early faith, would have been proved unknown at the time referred to. And then, what luminous evidence would have arisen from this fact to demonstrate, that there could not have been delivered by the apostles' doctrines, which became so soon lost to the church founded by them; until recovered at so remote a period from their decease!

This path seems to have been pointed out to Mons. Daillé, by his noticing of the very distinction here taken, under his first head; and by his reasonings under it. The passage is as follows—"Seeing that one of the principal reasons that moveth the church of Rome to allege the writings of the fathers, is to show the truth of their tenets, by the antiquity, which they reckon as a mark of it; it is most evident, that the most ancient ought to be the most taken notice of. And indeed, there is no question to be made, but that the Christian religion was more pure, and without mixture, in its beginnings and infancy, than it was afterwards in its growth and progress: it being the ordinary course of

* There is no evidence of such a claim, in any transaction like that of Victor, when he excommunicated the Asiatic churches. It happened often, that one bishop refused to hold communion with another, because of some real or supposed heterodoxy, or irregularity of election; but without setting up any other than a common right, on the ground of maintaining Christian integrity. The single fact, that for three centuries, the eastern and western churches pleaded each its traditionary practice against that of the other, is evidence, not only against tradition as a rule of faith, but of their being equally independent in regard to authority of decision.

things, to contract corruptions, more or less, according as they are more or less removed from their first institution: as we see by experience in states, laws, arts and languages; the natural propriety of all which is continually declining, after they have once passed the point of their vigour, and, as it were, the flower and prime of their strength and perfection. Now I cannot believe that any faithful Christian will deny, but that Christianity was in its height and perfection in the time of the blessed apostles: and indeed it would be the greatest injury that could be offered them, to say, that any of their successors have either had a greater desire, or more abilities, to advance Christianity, than they had. It will hence follow then, that those times which were nearest to the apostles, were necessarily the purest, and less subject to suspicion of corruptions, either in doctrine, or in manners, and Christian discipline: it being but reasonable to believe, that if there be any corruptions crept into the church, they came in by little and little, and by degrees; as it happens in all other things.”*

The principle here laid down by Mons. Daillé, seems very reasonable; since it does not consist either with what is known of the human mind, or with observation of what passes in the world, to imagine that religious institutions, delivered with so much solemnity to the world, and believed in and professed at so much hazard, and under so many sufferings, through a succession of sundry generations, should have undergone not merely innovation, but radical corruption, as soon as the founders of such a community were removed from them. The present writer is confident, that what is

* Page 2, London edition of 1651.

here affirmed concerning the first three centuries, might be extended to a term somewhat later. But he wishes to adhere to the line drawn by Mons. Daillé; which, surely, gives a range wide enough for the occasion. To show this, let it be supposed, that, some centuries hence, there should intrude into the church of England doctrines not known, and not then alleged to be known in the present day. There must also be supposed to be remaining works of the intervening term, with circumstances of credibility equal to those attached to the writings of the early fathers. The doctrines are affirmed to be comprehended within the ecclesiastical institutions, framed in the reign of Edward VI: a period of about the same distance from the present day, as was the apostolic age from the third century. Doubtless, there being no traces of them in the intermediate time, would be esteemed a sufficient refutation of the matter affirmed.

There was, however, a great impediment to Mons. Daillé's taking of what is here supposed to be the true ground on the present subject. He was of a church, which held a parity in the ministry; and was himself a writer in favour of the principle; which, as is here conceived, is much at variance with primitive economy. Not only so, and what is more pertinent to the present purpose, his church professed the doctrines of Calvin: which are not to be found within the limits of time spoken of, any more than are those of the Roman catholic persuasion. And indeed the latter have claimed a place within those limits; while no such thing is even contended for in favour of the other points, by authors of any considerable name. Of Mons. Daillé himself, indeed, it is affirmed, that he was an advocate

for universal grace:* but as the contrary was the faith of his communion, here is a circumstance, which may reasonably be supposed to have aided in drawing him into his track; and to have hindered him from sufficiently keeping in view the comparative weight of his remarks, as they had bearings on fathers of different descriptions in point of time. He indeed lays down the principle, that the faith of the apostles was more likely to have been inherited in its purity, by the Christians immediately succeeding them, than by those at any more distant period; and so on by others, in proportion to their nearness in point of time. And in the conclusion he acknowledges, that, on points held necessary to salvation, he deems the silence of the fathers an unanswerable proof of their nullity: yet, in the opening of his argument under its general heads, there is little, if any development of the aforesaid remarks. On the contrary, there are laid down positions, applicable generally to those to whom custom has given the name of fathers; yet inapplicable, if they had been predicated of those of the first three centuries only.

Although some instances of the above will be pointed out in the course of the present appendix; yet it is the author's design to confine himself, generally, to what belongs to the first three centuries; touching on what is applicable to any other, no further than as this

* This, and some other matters connected with it, may be seen in Bayle's Dictionary. The author of the treatise lived at the time of the synod of Dort, but gave his work to the public before that assembly was held. Until afterwards, in the protestant churches in France, as in those of the Netherlands, there was a considerable latitude and variety of opinion, on what are called the five points.

may have a reference to the former. And he hopes to show, so far as that space of time is concerned, that, even allowing the full force of Mons. Daillé's positions concerning the fathers, it does not invalidate the testimonies of those of the aforesaid centuries, as to the purpose to which they are now applied.

Mons. Daillé evidently considered the principle above cited from him, as applying to sundry errors of the Roman catholic church, particularly mentioning the supremacy of the pope, transubstantiation, purgatory, and sundry other matters. And although he notices these subjects cursorily, without availing himself of the evidences arising from the reading of the fathers, of the nullity of those doctrines; evidences which some of his reasonings have a tendency rather to weaken than to establish; yet it would seem impossible to pay much attention to the early documents of the church, without perceiving the void which they discover in this department of theology.

But there is no design of entering on discussions of this sort; or even of making any reference to the subject, on its own account: for the above has been stated, in order to make way for the remark, that if Monsieur Daillé's position be correct, it does not apply more against the rejected opinion of the Pope's supremacy, and other matters of the like nature, than against the doctrines properly Calvinistick: which, if true, must have lain dormant from the apostolic age to that of Austin. It will not be going too far to say, that there is not the same degree of specious plea for them, as in the case of the papal supremacy. For in regard to this, its advocates make the most of some passages, which speak of the unity of the church; while the most judi-

cious advocates of Calvinism make it begin with Austin, so far as uninspired antiquity is in question. Thus did Calvin himself, who began his authorities from that father, and indeed rested on him almost wholly; acknowledging, at the same time, that the contrary doctrine had been taught for many ages; meaning, in all the tract of time intervening after the age of the apostles. The doctrine of an election independent on pre-science—that of a covenant of works—that of a fœderal headship—that of the imputation of Adam's sin—that of a grace not resistible by the human will, and that of its being indefectible, cannot be said, with any show of reason, to have been held by any of the fathers before the fifth century; and many of them were utterly unknown, for many centuries succeeding.

It is further worthy of remark, and ought not to be esteemed irreverence towards an eminent character to mention, that, even in the bringing of quotations, Mons. Daillé's free spirit seems to have been held in trammels, by the institutions of the church of which he was a distinguished minister. Learned as his work unquestionably is, there was room for a further display of learning, on the point of contradictions in the writings of the fathers; by pointing out the glaring instances of this, in what was said by Justin, by Irenæus, by Clemens Alex., by Chrysostom, by Nazianzen on the one hand; and by Austin and those who followed him on the other. The author of the treatise would have hardly hesitated to acknowledge, that very few of the contradictions produced by him are of equal importance with those, which might have been drawn from the mass of contrariety here referred to. But he has passed them by in silence: which, to all appearance, can no

otherwise be accounted for, than from the ecclesiastical relations in which he stood. It is true, his book was written against Roman catholic, and not against protestant pretensions. Yet all errors of the fathers were to the purpose of it; and he has been free in dragging them to light, in very many instances in which they are unconnected with the controversies between protestants and those of the church of Rome.

Although the author of the present work has never met with any full answer to Mons. Daillé's treatise; he has seen the short notice of his reasonings by the Rev. Mr. Reeves, in the preface to his translation of some of the fathers. The remarks of this writer, give very little guidance on the present occasion; because he seems to have written, with a view somewhat different from the present; and to have held up the testimonies of the fathers generally, and without regard to the distinction of time here contemplated, more highly than is thought reasonable. This has led him to fault Mons. Daillé in a greater extent, and more severely, than is here intended. The errors and the inconsistencies which this author has exhibited from some of the fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, were too evident to be denied by Mr. Reeves, and too important to be excused; however he may have given vent to his indignation, at what he thought irreverent treatment in the mention of them.

It would not be to the purpose, to object to the notice now to be taken of Mons. Daillé's book, that the argument of it was not constructed, relatively to the subject of the present work. He has laid down principles, which, if correct, apply in that way: and accordingly, they are often so used in controversy; and con-

tended to be sufficient to do away all reference to the fathers.

But, the writer of this proceeds to the intended review of the treatise in hand. The author of it has considered his subject in two points of view; as it respects, first, the difficulty of ascertaining what is really the testimony of the fathers; and secondly, the question of the effect of their testimony, when known. And to these two points, the two books composing his volume are directed. There will be here the same number of sections, adapted to the parts respectively: after which, there will be a third section, intended to show the evil tendency of some of Mons. Daillé's reasonings, on certain important controversies.

SECTION I.

Concerning the first book of Mons. Daillé's Treatise.

Mons. Daillé's eleven reasons concerning the difficulty of knowing the sense of the fathers—limited extent of their writings---they treat of matters different from those of modern controversy---forgeries under their names---legitimate writings have been corrupted---hard to be understood---they sometimes conceal, and sometimes speak what they do not believe---not uniform---uncertainty of the degree of importance. attached to their opinions---we ought to know the opinions of the whole church---difficulty of knowing what was received by the whole church, and what by a part only---impossibility of knowing the sense of the church, on subjects of modern controversy---two objections anticipated by Mons. Daillé---the subject applied by him to episcopacy.

IN order to set forth the insurmountable difficulties which, in the opinion of Mons. Daillé, impede an in-

quiry into the sense of the fathers, be it what it may, he offers eleven reasons, which shall be here considered in their order.

“Reason 1. Touching the difficulty of knowing the sense of the fathers, in reference to the present controversies in religion; drawn from hence: namely, because there is very little extant of their writings, for the three first centuries.”

It is here, that he introduces his already recited notice of a distinction between the earlier and later fathers. But when he proceeds to apply the principle to his subject, he seems to undervalue the books of the fathers, in respect to bulk and number. They fill many folio volumes: they are written on very different occasions: they comprehend a great variety of subjects: and indeed, they may be supposed to embrace the whole circle of what was then considered as Christian verity; since, in many instances, the respective authors would not have been faithful to their engagements, if any thing essential had been omitted. But where have they opened to the world the points, understood by Calvinists under the name of the doctrines of grace? Mons. Daillé would hardly have affirmed, that they have done so any where.

Still, there is truth in what he remarks, that within the tract of time in question, many authors wrote, whose names are handed down, while their works have perished. But are there any vestiges of difference of opinion on the matter referred to, between these and the works which have survived? And is it not reasonable to expect, that something of this sort would have appeared, if such difference had existed, on subjects so important as those at issue? On some of less import-

ance, for instance that of the Millenarian hypothesis, evidences of a considerable variety of opinion are notorious: but of those in question, no such evidences are discernible. Nor yet are there any of fault found with early fathers, for alleged variation from the faith handed down to them by the apostles: but on the contrary, the honourable notices of them in the fourth century, especially in the history of Eusebius, are lasting monuments of their having left behind them the reputation of an orthodoxy, that had never been impeached. There does not appear a single exception to this, of those who are usually quoted in evidence of the very early faith, except in the instance of Tertullian; and this in the latter part of his life, when he fell away to Montanism. And except where this subject is concerned, his testimony also has been held valid, in all succeeding ages.

These circumstances make it evident, that, however comparatively few the productions of the first three centuries, there is abundant matter in them to prove, negatively, that the authors of them could not have professed the tenets now called Calvinism; and positively, that they professed doctrines directly in opposition to that system. As to what Mons. Daillé slightly glances at, of the difficulty of knowing that the works under the respective names were theirs; he seems to have designed this, only as opposed to the prejudices of his adversaries; who alleged the same concerning the books of the New Testament, in order to make way for the necessity of the decisive authority of the church. The authenticity of the books of the New Testament, that of the fathers, and that of the Greek and the Latin poets and historians, rest on the same species of evidence; which seems such, as is sufficient to carry conviction to every mind, not prejudiced against the truth.

It is here confessed, however, that there is higher evidence of this sort in favour of the first description of books, than of either of the other; for reasons which Mons. Daillé has very pertinently given.

“Reason 2. That those writings which we have of the fathers of the first centuries, treat of matters very far different from the present controversies in religion.”

This must be granted: and considering that the object of the author here in hand, under the idea of modern controversy, had an especial view to the leading tenets of the Roman catholics; there was room for him, to have directed his argument beyond the mark at which it aimed. He particularly notices the errors of transubstantiation, the adoration of the eucharist, the monarchy of the pope, and auricular confession. The silence of the fathers, does not merely afford us no light in favour of these doctrines: it goes so far as to show, that they cannot be subjects of the Christian revelation. But the argument extends, with equal force, against the peculiarities of the Calvinistick system. It must be allowed, that they were not topics of discussion, in the first three centuries. From this the inference is drawn—the great importance of them, if true, being taken into the account—that they can no more be comprehended in Christianity, than the Roman catholic doctrines which were enumerated.

“Reason 3d. That those writings which go under the names of the ancient fathers, are not all truly such; but a great part of them supposititious, and forged either long since, or of later times.”

Certainly, there have been forgeries under the names of the fathers. There have also been the same, of pretended books of scripture. If the argument of the great

care taken of the sacred writings avails in regard to them, the like plea may be made, in favour of a great portion of the works of the early fathers. And although the care has not been equal to that bestowed in the more important department of inspired scripture; yet it has been sufficient to convince the most scrupulous critics, however much it may make against their systems, that the works of the fathers have come down in a state of integrity, entitling them to be appealed to, in theological argument.

It must be confessed, that sundry of the forgeries were fast bound on the back of Christendom, for many ages: such as the pretended decretal epistles of the early popes; the books said to have been written by Dionysius the Areopagite; the Passion, as it is called of St. Andrew; the pretended Apostolical Constitutions; and what go under the name of the Recognitions of St. Clement. But is it not evident, that this is an appendage of the declension which so long held all Christendom, and which continues to hold a very great proportion of it in thralldom? And, was not an exposure of those forgeries, one of the earliest effects of the reformation? Certainly, this has been so conspicuously the fact, that the Roman catholic critics, at all eminent for fidelity to historic truth, scout those compositions as disdainfully as any writers among the protestants.*

The same force of criticism is still more conspicuous, in what Mons. Daillé records concerning the canons of

* Even at this day, books citing these forgeries, in proof of doctrine, are put into the hands of uninformed people. The writer of this has no reason to suppose, that the printing and the selling of such books are under any ecclesiastical sanction. Doubtless, however, they contribute to delusion.

the council of Sardica, held in the year 347, in their being obtruded on the western church, under the pretence of their being of the number of the canons of the first Nicene council. He states, that this imposition was all being protested against by the eastern church; and was not even countenanced in the western, by the best editions of the councils.

Mons. Fleury and Mons. Dupin, exhibit the canons here spoken of as those of Sardica. Even in regard to their meaning as such, the latter remarks,* that they gave the bishop of Rome authority in case of an appeal, not to call the cause before his tribunal, but to order a new trial, in the place where the controversy existed, which was to be there judged of by the neighbouring bishops: although he might send legates of his own, if he found it convenient. Much to the same purpose, is the other historians' account of the matter. Be the purport of the canons more or less, the provision was a grant, and such as it was, the council of Nice knew nothing of it. There was, indeed, in one of the canons of this council† a provision, recognising the authority of the bishop of Rome over the churches of the neighbouring districts; and enacting, that the bishop of Alexandria should have a similar jurisdiction over a certain extent of territory, and the same in favour of the bishop of Antioch. This would seem unequivocal evidence, that all those bishops were considered as co-ordinate; and that the pre-eminences attributed to them, were human provisions merely. Yet the candid Dupin had not so far got over prejudice in favour of a foreign jurisdiction, as to make an acknowledgment of such extent: for he says of the

* Page 606.

† The sixth.

said canon—"It does not oppose the primacy of the church of Rome, but neither does it establish it." And Fleury has something to the same effect.

The above may be remarked, on what the treatise says of the mutilating of canons of the council of Laodicea, in order to introduce the reading of the apocryphal books. Under all this artifice, contrived to push up the papacy, the truth was not entirely hid; and at this day shines unclouded, under the eye of the papacy itself.

Mons. Daillé acknowledges, that there are considerable helps to the guarding against forgeries, in the lists which have been given, in different ages, of the books existing in them respectively; making mention particularly of the catalogue of Jerome and that of Photius. But there might have been mentioned also, that the same purpose is answered by the earlier and the more important mention, in the history of Eusebius, of the books written by persons of any note in the church before him, setting down their subjects in a form somewhat dilated; which has proved a considerable check to the forgeries of succeeding times. This is conspicuously the case, in the instance of the epistles of St. Ignatius; a clue being hereby given, that assists much in distinguishing the genuine epistles from the interpolated.

But it is a serious assertion of Mons. Daille, that some of the fathers even gave encouragement to forgeries: especially as, under this charge, he brings in the venerable name of Justin. The instance given, is his urging of the authority of the sybilline verses, as oracles; "which are notwithstanding," says Mons. Daillé, the greatest part of them forged."* Is it not

* Page 31.

evident, that, in the limitation of the remark to the greater part of them, the very purpose of bringing forth the fact is defeated? If there were books under the names of certain persons called Sibyls, held sacred by the Romans; that these were mixed with forgeries by professing Christians, does not make the quoting of them a known sanction of a forgery. And be the pagan Romans right or wrong, in their veneration of the books; and be their own poets right or wrong, in conceiving of them to be descriptive of an illustrious personage who should arise; Justin's quoting of them to that effect, was an arguing with opponents on their own principles, which is confessedly fair. And if he believed them to have been dictated by the spirit of inspiration, indulged in a measure to the heathen in old time; it was at the most a species of credulity, that had very respectable authority to countenance it: but is as remote as possible from intended patronage of forgery; especially such a forgery, as was for the serving of a turn, which is the motive ascribed to Justin. The same motive is charged on Clemens Alexandrinus; of whom the present writer believes, that he was equally a stranger to it, and that when he cited forgeries under the names of Barnabas and Hermas, it was because criticism had not yet winnowed the chaff from the wheat, in respect to these performances.

The late Bishop Horsley, in an admirable dissertation on the prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the heathen, conjectures, that the expectation was* "effected by a collection of very early prophecies, which were committed to writing in a very early age,

* Page 14, American edit.

and were actually existing in many parts of the world, though little known till the extirpation of paganism, by the propagation of the gospel." This is expressed in the modest form of a conjecture: but it would not be easy to disprove the reasons given by the bishop, in his Application of the subject to the Sibylline books. The subsequent corruption of them, is irrelative to the Appeal to them by Justin. Even in his day, they may have been, as the bishop believed, a remnant of divine revelation, among people extraneous to the patriarchal economy of the Old Testament, vouchsafed before the general degeneracy to idolatry.

All these considerations, seem here to deduct from the weight of the positions, which have been made under the present head. But, if there were to be allowed to what has been said its whole intended force, it would make nothing against the purpose, for which the fathers have been introduced into the present work; provided it be allowed, as will be done by every scholar, that there is a considerable list of persons answering to that name, whose works have been handed down without any such variations of reading or supposed interpolations, as render their leading senses doubtful. To deny this, would be to take a ground, which will not sustain the authenticity of any ancient writings; the Holy Scriptures not excepted. But if the fact be acknowledged, their silence on the doctrines delivered in this work, and their testimonies to the doctrines in opposition, give all the aid expected from them in the present undertaking.

“ Reason 4. That those of the writings of the Fathers which are legitimate, have been in many places cor-

rupted, by time, ignorance, and fraud, both pious and malicious, both in the former and later ages.”

Under this head, Mons. Daillé could not but perceive, that he was in danger of putting a weapon into the hands of infidelity, to be wielded against the Christian fortress itself. He takes notice, that possibly the same argument may be brought against the Holy Scriptures: and accordingly, to guard against this, he has again recourse to the great care, with which those writings have been preserved. Granted; but let the same argument be extended to the writings of the Fathers; if not in the same degree, yet in a degree competent to the use to which they are here applied. Tertullian and Epiphanius are introduced, complaining of the wicked artifices of Marcion and other heretics, in clipping and altering the gospel of St. Luke and the epistles of St. Paul, for the bending of them to their purposes: and there are detailed the pertinent reasonings opposed to such practices, by the two fathers who made the charge.

Let the same reasonable rules of criticism be applied to the fathers; and they will be in no danger of sinking under the trial. Indeed, there will be little occasion to bring the very early of them to the same test; because, when it was thought necessary to establish a monarchy in the christian church, and expedient to torture both fathers and the acts of councils for the sustaining of it; the causes which put the sacred writings beyond the reach of the design, did the same service for the works of the early fathers. The books of each description were too well known in the church, to admit the hazarding of so dangerous an experiment. And hence it is, that, however diligent Mons. Daillé in his researches,

none of his discoveries, relative to interpolation and corruption, apply to the space of time here noted; except in the instances mentioned of Origen and Cyprian. Concerning the former it must be conceded to Mons. Daillé, that no reliance is to be placed on such of his works as are in Latin, because of the liberties taken by Ruffinus, the translator. This, however, is a fact well known; so as that there needs be no deception. In Cyprian, there are noticed the interpolation of two or three sentences in different places, designed to favour the supremacy of the Roman see. These were doubtless bare-faced forgeries: but the adducing of them only proves, how difficult it has been found in later times, to tamper without detection with the authors of so early and so general celebrity; and whose works were in so many hands before the rise of the same spiritual supremacy, that even the expurgatory Indexes have not invaded them; however great their havoc in other ways, as described by Mons. Daillé.

Doubtless, on descending to a lower period, the work here adverted to furnishes unequivocal instances of the corruption of acts of councils. This fact was to the purpose of the controversy with the Roman catholics, but is nothing to that of the present argument; which rests on writings well known in the world, before the holding of any general council. As to the corruption of liturgies, it may still more easily be accounted for. Although, as is here conceived, there never was a time when the churches generally were destitute of compositions of this sort; yet there is not contended to have been any liturgy in early times, obligatory over any considerable extent of Christendom. Since then every church—meaning, not every congregation, but every

body of christians in a city and a convenient district round it—was left to itself in this particular; it is no cause of wonder, that a liturgy, sanctioned by one or by another great name, should undergo modifications, differing according to the different tastes of churches. And therefore, when new opinions crept in, they found admission the easier, from the circumstance here stated. Mons. Daillé has heaped together a mass of palpable forgeries, of works of later times; showing indeed how busy the spirit which produced them has been, wherever it could lay its hands with any prospect of success; but at the same time, how partially successful it has been, even in that department; and still more its utter inefficiency in another, which time and familiar use had placed beyond its reach.

“Reason 5th. That the writings of the fathers are hard to be understood, by reason of the languages, and idioms they wrote in, the manner of their writing, which is for the most part incumbered with figures, and rhetorical flourishes, and nice logical subtleties, and the like; and also by reason of the terms, which they for the most part used in a far different sense, from what they now bear.”

With the exception of the two particulars of rhetorical flourishes and logical subtleties, there is nothing here, which does not apply to the scriptures also. And further, the two particulars excepted cannot be said to apply to the writings of the first three centuries; during which the church was a stranger to the artificial eloquence, which came into vogue, in the capital cities at least, in the course of the fourth century. And as to logic, with its kindred branches of metaphysical philosophy; although it cannot be denied, that some of the

proselytes from the schools manifested an influence of their former theories, in their delineation of the doctrines of the gospel; yet it will be allowed, that this was done sparingly during the term, important to the present investigation. That the fathers wrote, not in French or in English, but in Greek and in Latin, is not more true of them than of the Apostles, in regard to Greek. That a peculiarity of idiom must be regarded, for the ascertaining of the sense, is not more applicable to one of them, than to the other. The same may be said of the different senses of terms: it being impossible, in some instances, to find out words in a modern language, which shall exactly answer to the Greek or the Latin with which they correspond. It should be sufficient, that in both the lines referred to, no doctrine is lost and no heresy is favoured, by the imperfection attendant on the subject.

Concerning the terms which came into use, under the growing hierarchy of the church of Rome; such as pope, mass, and the like; Mons. Daillé is certainly right in affirming that, in the comparatively early writers, they bore senses quite different from those, in which they are used in the controversies between the protestants and the Roman catholics. But, the argument of the present work, relates to times in which the most of the terms recited were unknown.

In the very instances given by Mons. Daillé, of cardinal Perron's attempts to pervert a passage in Theodoret, and another in Eusebius; there may be seen how difficult it is to pass barefaced alterations on the literary world, even of later fathers than those here relied on chiefly. The cardinal, it seems, in order to divert the force of a passage of Theodoret which unequivocally

cally speaks of the elements in the Eucharist continuing in their first substance, would needs change the word* which signifies “to remain,” into another Greek word†; contending for a sense which even the latter will not bear: for it signifies “to defile” or “to stain,” and not “to smoke” or “to evaporate,” as the scheme of the cardinal required. And in the passage of Eusebius, whereas the emperor Constantius addressed an epistle “to Miltiades bishop of Rome and to Mark;” this seemed to the cardinal a sinking of the dignity of the primacy; and therefore he altered what is literally—“and to Mark,”‡ into two words§ which changed the passage into a complimentary wish of long health to the bishop. But is not this mere evidence of address and misrepresentation, where downright forgery of an instrument, if supposed to be wished for, is perceived to be impracticable?

In what Mons. Daillé here urges concerning contradictory passages, brought by opposite sides on the subject of the Eucharist; the writer of this cannot help thinking, that the author of the treatise has not done justice to the protestant cause; which must have been owing to his zeal for the undertaking, to which his present book is devoted. After quoting a passage from St. Austin—“the Lord stuck not to say” this is my body, when he delivered “only the sign of his body;” and after remarking the utter inconsistency of this with transubstantiation; he goes on to take notice, that, for each opinion, passages are quoted from the fathers; challenging the advocates of each, to deny the obscurity of

* μένειν.

† μαινειν.

‡ και μαρκω.

§ καιρον μακρον.

the testimonies thus adduced. Now in regard to the first three centuries, there are not usually produced above three or four passages, thought to make to the point at all: and as to these few, Mons. Daillé ought not to have been backward to acknowledge, that the familiar distinction between Christ's body carnally understood, and the same in virtue and effect, renders them perfectly consistent with the opinions of all protestants, who esteem the sacraments to be channels of divine grace. Even in the fathers of the fourth century, there are testimonies against transubstantiation: and if there are testimonies which seem opposed to these, they are rhetorical, agreeably to the high wrought eloquence adopted in that age, by Christian preachers; and therefore to be explained into an agreement with declarations more sedate, and with less ornament of figure.

But the author of the treatise, in his zeal for his favourite point, is not afraid to hazard an advantage, not to transubstantiation only, but to Arianism also; quoting Justin and Tertullian, as uttering expressions which countenance this heresy. It appears to the writer of this, that although the sentiments intended are loosely expressed, the words quoted do not go to the question between the catholics and the Arians; of whom the former denied the position of the latter, that there was a time when the Son of God was not. There is something more specious, in what is said of the rejection of the term consubstantial* by the council of Antioch. The opinion of this council, that the Son is without beginning, was too unequivocally expressed to admit the supposition of the difference between them and the

* *ομολογιος.*

subsequent council of Nice, that it was any thing more than concerning the meaning of a word, confessedly not found in scripture. The determinations of the two councils, were consistent with one another. Writers before the council of Nice, may have been less guarded in the use of words, than those who followed; but, their testimonies agree in the doctrine of the divine nature of the Redeemer. The author of the treatise, indeed, has some pertinent remarks to show, that favourable interpretations should in reason be given to sayings dropt incidentally, and without a reference to disputations not raised until afterwards. Although this may reconcile a few unguarded sayings of the early fathers; yet it seems not correct to make the ground of the apology wider, than is visible in their works: and further, it was hardly considerate, to enlist the jesuit Petavius in this part of the dispute; who is well known to have endeavoured to weaken as much as possible the testimonies of the fathers in favour of Christ's divinity, with the view of demonstrating the necessity of the decisive authority of the church.

In this part of Mons. Daillé's work, he has brought against the fathers an allegation, which, without distinguishing between the first three centuries and the following, would be a very serious impeachment of the Christian church in general. It is that of occasionally studying to be obscure. Even Clement of Alexandria, however, of the former period, is produced making the acknowledgment, that he had expressed some things clearly and some obscurely: the latter, lest error should be the result of their being misunderstood. Now this relates to his "*Stromata*;" which contains, without order as himself remarks, a mass of matter of very dif-

ferent kinds, comprehending an intermixture of religion and of philosophy. To what he has given of the latter, his saying should in reason be confined; especially as it cannot be pretended to have been the practice of the early church, in imitation of the heathen priesthood, to throw the veil of secrecy over any of their religious institutions. If the sacraments were called mysteries; it was according to the then customary use of the word; denoting a sensible representation of a meaning thus symbolically expressed: exactly agreeing with the definition in the catechism,—“an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.” And if they celebrated such mysteries in antelucan assemblies; it was not from any other cause, than to elude the eye of persecution. That in the fourth century, there began to prevail other ideas, is here believed: of which some instances are produced by Mons. Daillé; to his purpose indeed, but not affecting the opinion here maintained.

This writer has also discovered a cause of obscurity, in exotic words, customs, and discourses: and it is a fault, which he expressly charges on Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. But he had before said of Tertullian, that, although he was the most obscure of all the fathers, he has delivered himself so clearly in his debates with Marcion and others, that there is no place of doubt left, as to his opinions on the points debated. If this be so, what occasion was there to bring the subsequent objection? especially, as it applied to two writers only; there being none other within the term spoken of, to whom it is applicable further than to all human compositions.

On this subject, indeed, Mons. Daillé has confuted himself, in the eloquent passage which he has produced

from Gregory Nazianzen, who lived in the fourth century; and who evidently intended what he affirmed, to be understood of the ages which had gone before. The passage tends so powerfully to do justice to those early times, that it is here transcribed—"There was a time when our affairs flourished, and we were in a happy estate; when this vain and wanton kind of divinity, which is every where now in fashion, together with all its artifices and delicacies of language, was not at all admitted into the sheepfolds of the Lord. In those days, to hearken after or to vent any novelties or curiosities in divinity, was reckoned all one as to play the juggler, and to show tricks of legerdemain, with cunning and nimble shiftings of balls under a cup, deceiving the eyes of the spectators; or else, by delighting them with the various and effeminate motions, and windings of a lascivious dance. On the contrary, rather, a plain, masculine, and free way of discourse was then accounted the most pious." And soon afterwards, in continuing to speak on the same subject—"Oh for some Jeremy, to bewail the confusion and darkness we labour under; who might furnish us, as that prophet was only able to do, with lamentations suitable to our calamities!"

The writer of this has not a word to say for St. Jerome, as to the old story brought against him by Mons. Daillé, of his being whipped by the angels, for studying profane authors: which gave occasion to some person's witticism mentioned by Dr. Jortin in his remarks on ecclesiastical history,* that if Jerome suffered for writing in the stile and manner of Cicero—this being a favourite author with him—he suffered what he did not

* Vol. 1. page 375.

deserve, and might have pleaded “not guilty.” What follows under the present head, has nothing to do with the object here in contemplation; although pertinent to that which engaged the pen of Mons. Daillé.

Indeed, it may be thought, that, on the same account, there might have been spared all that the present writer has given under this head. But he was desirous of noticing some particulars, in which Mons. Daillé is supposed by him to have pushed his argument too far; so as rather to injure, than to serve the general cause which he wished to favour. As for the points of the Calvinistick controversy, this ingenious man would hardly have contended, that had they been delivered by the early fathers, their works are so much covered with obscurity, as to conceal from a reader their minds on subjects held so important in recent times; but which, according to such an hypothesis, must have been as low in the estimation of the writers, as if they had not been concerned about them. It is here supposed, that such matters never entered into their minds.

“Reason 6. That the fathers oftentimes conceal their own private opinions, and speak those things which themselves believed not; whether it be, when they report the opinion of some others, without naming the persons, as they frequently do in their commentaries; or in disputing against an adversary, where they make use of whatsoever they can; or else whether they have done so in compliance to their auditory, as may be observed in their homilies.”

Were there truth in all the facts alleged under this head, to the extent intended; it applies to no father before the fourth century; and not to any of this, in regard

to the points of Calvinism: concerning which, it is here contended, that they have not written at all.

In regard to later fathers, Mons. Daillé has charged on Jerome, that he avowed his mixing together, in his work, of different interpretations of scripture, as he found them in different authors, without regard to their agreement with one another, or with truth. Mr. Reeves says, that this is "false in fact;" and that "the false accuser of his brethren could not but know it, for he has played the slippery part here himself, which he charges upon the fathers, leaving out a passage which puts quite another face upon the matter. For St. Jerome tells us, that it was the way in commentaries to lay down the opinions of others as well as their own, but withal, openly to declare which were heretical and which catholic."*

There must be acknowledged, however, too much evidence of the charge of versatility as ascribed to Jerome, leading him to speak otherwise than as he thought, for what he supposed a good end to be answered by it: And Mons. Daillé seems to have a great advantage over cardinal Perron. The cardinal had noted the fault in the father; and had argued from it, against the plain and obvious senses of passages hostile to the Roman catholic doctrines: on which Mons. Daillé remarks the inconsistency of laying such an heavy stress in some instances, on documents which must undergo such abatements in others. According to the opinion of the present writer, the cardinal had not the like ground to bring the same accusation against St. Austin; and therefore, in regard to him, the critic had not the same

* Vol. I. Preface, p. xxxv.

advantage over the cardinal as before. The remark applies to Nazianzen and Theodoret; mentioned also in this business, as perverted by cardinal Perron. When the question of the pertinency of the quotations is brought in another shape, as designed to aid Christian argument in controversy with the Pagans; the fault, as stated by Mons. Daillé, still falls on the head of Jerome only. For although this father makes mention of former writers of great name, as countenancing him in his practice; it may be questioned, whether what he affirms of them be correct. As Austin's name has been introduced in the business; it is but justice to this father to remark, that he manifested how abhorrent his mind was from the dangerous doctrine referred to; in venturing to provoke so angry a man as Jerome, by faulting his ascribing of the same temporizing policy to St. Peter and St. Paul in their dispute at Antioch: which the latter father had represented as fictitious, for the easier gaining of the Jewish Christians.

The treatise notices a lower degree of the same fault, as applicable to some very respectable writers; into which, as is here conceived, a man may fall, without the least intention of expressing any sentiment foreign to the dictates of his deliberate judgment. It is, when, in an argument against any error, he says something which may give countenance to the error in the opposite extreme. It is probable, that St. Basil meant no more than this, when, explaining a certain passage of Gregory of Neocæsaria, he says—"He spake not this dogmatically, but only by way of economy or dispensation." Mons. Daillé gives an harsher interpretation to this distinction. But be these things as they may, they are irrelevant to the question concerning the first three centuries.

“ Reason 7. That the fathers have not always held one and the same belief; but have sometimes changed some of their opinions, according as their judgment hath grown riper, through study, or age.”

That St. Austin changed his belief, as stated by Mons. Daillé, is beyond a doubt. This author proves what he affirms, in the instance of election founded on prescience, according to the first opinion of the father; and the contrary, according to his later sentiment: and this is a fact, on which stress has been laid in this work, as demonstrative of the late origin of the theory, since called Calvinism. It is very rare, that virtuous and pious men, who have devoted their labours to the defence of what they think religious truth, undergo such a change of sentiment as that of Austin, without making a public acknowledgment of it, suited to the circumstances of the case. The most that can be made of this consideration, relatively to the argument from the fathers, is, that possibly, and for ought known to the world, some of them may have thought of particular election, irresistible grace, and final perseverance, and the like; and have carried such sentiments with them unmentioned, to their graves. From such possibilities, no injury is apprehended to the argument of the present work.

“ Reason 8. That it is necessary, and withal very hard, to discover how the fathers have held all their several opinions, whether as necessary, or as probable only, and in what degree of necessity or probability.”

Relatively to the purpose for which the fathers are introduced, on the subject of Calvinism, there can be no objection to them on the ground stated. They are produced merely to show the correctness of one of two

opposite senses, educed by two opposing parties from the scriptures: and therefore, the importance of what they testify, is to be measured by the importance of the subjects to which it is appendant. Accordingly, the present argument is not affected by the instances which the treatise adduces from the scriptures, from the fathers, and from philosophy; in order to show, that some propositions, although true, may safely be misapprehended or unknown; while others are highly important in themselves, and, so far as scripture is concerned, involve truths necessary to salvation. If the fathers had taught the doctrines known under the name of Calvinism, they have so near a relation to the questions of the sovereignty of God and the freedom of his grace, in the estimation of all who hold them; that they conceive of these truths as no otherwise to be sustained, than in alliance with the other. In the creeds which establish such doctrines, it is not common to find a determination of their relative importance; which, however, cannot be overlooked.

Mr. Reeves taxes Mons. Daillé with a very improper sentiment in this place; as if belief were to be regulated, by the degree of importance of a truth contained in scripture. To the writer of this, such does not seem to be the meaning of the treatise. But it rather appears to be, that the danger of error or of misconception is dependent on this circumstance.

While under the present head, many things are passed over, as irrelative to the object; there seems an obligation to notice one particular, out of justice to the memory of the venerable Ignatius; who is quoted by Mons. Daillé as saying, in one of his epistles—"Who-soever fasteth upon the Lord's Day, or upon any Satur-

day except that one Saturday” (he meaneth Easter Eve) “he is a murtherer of Christ.” This sentence is not either in the genuine epistles of that martyr, nor in the interpolated; but is taken from a spurious epistle to the Philippians, to whom the father does not appear ever to have written. The list of his epistles is in Eusebius, but there is not the mention of any epistle to the Philippians. When the treatise now under review was written, archbishop Usher and Isaac Vossius had not published to the world the copies of the genuine epistles, found in Cambridge and in Florence. They however made their appearance, long before the end of the life of Mons. Daillé. He wrote against the epistles generally; purged as they were by the aforesaid editions, from their former impurities. Bishop Pearson, in his defence of these remains of antiquity, goes largely into a refutation of Mons. Daillé; whom however he calls* “a most learned man, diligently exercised in the writings of the sacred fathers; and very discerning in the detection of spurious works.” Yet the bishop complains of the same learned man,† that in his objections he continually confounds the genuine epistles with the interpolated and the spurious; which occasioned much trouble in the answering of him. Of such confounding of works of very different reputation, there must be perceived a remarkable instance, in the reason under review.

Much truth may exist in what is said in this chapter, that there are some instances in the fathers, of their

* Cotelierius, vol. 2; p. 263, Vir doctissimus, in S. S. patrum monumentis diligenter versatus: in discernendis operibus spuriis admodum acutus.

† Page 362.

stigmatizing what they write against in terms which exceed the bounds of moderation. And this is illustrated in the very strong case of Jerome's writing to a Roman lady, advising her against a second marriage, with a censure of such a step, as severe as if he had been cautioning her against murder. All this is human imperfection; not to be found, probably, in any other father, to the same extent as in Jerome. And it does not follow, from the reasonable degree of credit here challenged for the fathers, that subjects on which they testify are to be received altogether according to their ideas of relative importance, which depends on the importance of the same subjects, in the scale of divine truth as laid down in scripture. It will hardly be needful, to go here into the consideration of certain early opinions and practices, as they have stood in the estimation of modern councils. There may be weighty argument from this, against the receiving, as divine truth, of whatever is written in the fathers. This was to the purpose of the treatise; but not to that of the remarks on it, now made.

“Reason 9. We ought to know what hath been the opinion, not of one or more of the fathers, but of the whole ancient church: which is a very hard matter to be found out.”

Had a few eminent lawyers, either of England or of France, who lived in a remote age, delivered certain matters as the acknowledged law then prevailing; and had they been uncontradicted in this, either in their own time or in the times succeeding; their evidence would have been received as attestations of the fact, without the demand of the concurring evidence of all the lawyers of the age in question. Yet it is not enough for

the author of the treatise, that certain fathers of an early age mention doctrines of great importance, and which, if true, have a relation to the very essence of the Christian system; and that such fathers were uncontradicted either at the time or afterwards—much more, that they were held in the highest honour; unless the like profession come from every corner of the Christian world. Now it is here conceived, that when Justin, or when Irenæus, or when Cyprian, or when Nazianzen and Chrysostom, or when others, noticed or unnoticed in this tract, declared the universality of the plan of Christ's redemption; if the contrary sentiment of a partial redemption had been not only generally entertained, but conceived of as essential to the sustaining of the sovereignty of God, and the dependence of man as well on his will as on his grace; the Christian world would have lifted up its voice against such an inroad on evangelical verity. Its silence, then, is ample testimony; and the remark applies to every branch of the controversy, between the Calvinists and their opponents.

Nevertheless, what the treatise has said under this head is to its purpose, as to the church against which it was written. For since the learned of that church are obliged to apologise for many things in the fathers, directly in opposition to some of the most important of its decisions; on the principle, that, when such fathers lived, the matters in question had not been decided by the general authority; this gave the author a claim for the opinion universally prevailing, in the ages in which the fathers lived respectively: especially as it follows, at least in regard to those of them whose testimony is in such sort evaded, that the stream of tradition had passed over their heads, as to the mat-

ters subsequently determined in contrariety to their opinions.

“ Reason 10. That it is a very hard matter to know, whether the opinions of the fathers, touching the controversies of those times, were received by the church universal, or but by some part of it only: which yet is necessarily to be known, before we can make use of any allegations out of them.”

If there be any weight in this objection to the citing of the authority of the fathers, it renders all the other reasons unnecessary; since there would be no possibility of obtaining positive evidence of the sense of every particular church; any more than, in writing the history of England, of ascertaining the transactions of every county. But as the maxims which prevailed in any particular age or country, in the department of politics, or in that of philosophy, are determined from those documents of the time which bear the stamp of traditional authenticity; the like is as good a guide, in reaching the sense of the ancient church. There will always be a sufficient standard of it, in the uncontradicted testimonies of her most eminent writers. But if this reason were as well founded, as it is here supposed to be the contrary; it would not account, on the supposition of the truth of the Calvinistick doctrines, for the utter silence of the fathers in regard to them; or prevent their silence from being a demonstration of a more recent origin.

In this part of the treatise, there are brought together numerous instances of diversity, on points concerning which it is consistent with the possession of all necessary truth by the opposite parties; whatever undue weight they may have arrogated to their respective

opinions, or however angry they may have been in the support of them. This makes nothing, as to the merits of the several cases. But had the like litigation taken place on the more important subjects connected with the sovereignty and with the grace of God; there would have been thrown the veil of uncertainty over the sense of the early church, as to such matters; so as to prevent its being easily discoverable at the present day. The anti-Calvinistick unanimity in this respect, until the time of Austin, is acknowledged as follows by Mons. Daillé, although the minister of a Calvinistic communion—"Who doth not also know, that the opinions, and the expressions of the Greek church, touching free-will and predestination, are extremely different from what the church believed and taught in St. Augustine's time and so downward?" Although in the beginning of the sentence, the sense of the Greek church only is specified; yet it is evident, that the author considered Austin's day as the period, in which there was drawn a line between the ancient and the modern doctrine. If Mons. Daillé, instead of stating the opposition between the earlier writers and the later, could have exhibited a like opposition of one to another, among the former; it would probably have gone further than any thing he has advanced, towards the demonstrating of the imperfection of primitive tradition.

"Reason 11. That it is impossible to know exactly, what the belief of the ancient church, either universal, or particular, hath been, touching any of those points, which are this day controverted amongst us."

As all the former reasons seemed superseded by the last, it is in like manner rendered unnecessary by the present, if correct. But the contrary is here supposed; and

is also thought much to the purpose of what protestants have to contend against the Romanists. But it does not more apply against their dogmas, than against those of Calvinism: the not noticing of which, is here conceived to amount to the evidence of the church to the contrary. Mons. Daillé himself, indeed, makes a distinction between things necessary and those of less importance: and although he abounds with considerations touching the latter, rendering it difficult, in his opinion, to ascertain what was the general sense of any people, or even of their clergy; yet he implies, that the former description of subjects is beyond the reach of his remark. But what can be more necessary, according to the estimation of their advocates, than the doctrines to which this work is adverse?

The author of the treatise under review, having stated the eleven reasons of his first book, foresees two objections which would be made to them.

The first is—and the sentiment has been expressed several times in the course of this argument—that if there had been opinions opposed to those met with in the fathers, they would have noticed the opposition and have refuted it. But this is thought by Mons. Daillé to have been prevented by moderation and prudence; which prompted the apprehension, that they might thus rather increase the difference, than appease it. Was Mons. Daillé, then, willing to concede, that such doctrines as the papal supremacy, transubstantiation, purgatory, and the like, might have been held and professed; while persons of station in the church took no notice of the same; and even writers, promising to favour the world with an account of the state of the Christian church, were too tender to touch such ex-

crecences on its faith? He would hardly have yielded this, although it seems an inference from his position. But it is here mentioned as leading to the point, that the supposition of such a reserve is as inadmissible in regard to the doctrines of grace, as in regard to what were the subsequent novelties of popery.

The other foreseen objection, is from the non-publication of opinions, in opposition to those published by the fathers; while yet it is thought of the former, that they may have been held. The answer applying to this objection, is so similar to the answer under the last, that there seems no necessity of stating it. But as the author of the treatise, sustaining his position, introduces an allusion to the so often cited authority of Jerome on the subject of episcopacy, some notice shall be here taken of the use made of it.

Mons. Daillé records, that Epiphanius brands Aeri-us as an arch heretic, for affirming that a bishop is no more than a priest, according to St. Paul and the original constitution of the thing itself: while St. Jerome, the familiar friend of the same Epiphanius, says expressly, that among the ancients, bishops and priests were the same. Now, says the argument of Mons. Daillé, had not Jerome written this, it might have passed, that the opinion of Epiphanius was the sense of the whole Christian church.

It must be conceded, that to find the plausible appearance of an exception to the sense of the early church in this particular, it is necessary to fasten on that authority of Jerome. But at the same time it is conceived, that even this is done under a mistake; which may be corrected, by taking Jerome in a consistency with himself. When all he has said on the present subject

is put together; what he applies to the community of names, will appear in connexion with the circumstance, that, to prevent such schisms as those noticed in the church of Corinth, and in consequence of their happening, the episcopal superintendency was appointed; and by apostolical authority, as the time of the event demonstrates. This being taken along, the opinion of Jerome and that of Epiphanius will be found alike true; and the apparent contradiction lies in the term “original constitution,” in the French and the English of Mons. Daillé’s treatise—for there are no corresponding words in the Latin—which term may be interpreted differently. That in the sacred writings, the words* translated bishop and elder, denote the same order, is common to both opinions. This is what is meant by Jerome, when he affirms that the two characters were the same at first; or before that (*antequam*) another arrangement took place, in consequence of a propensity to schism. But after that (*postquam*) different presbyters considered themselves as having an especial property in those baptized by them respectively—the very evil referred to by the apostle—episcopacy was brought in. The two Latin words have a mutual relation: and it shows, that when the last Latin word is translated “afterwards when,” in order to represent the new order as subsequent to the apostolic age, it is neither a correct version, nor agreeable to the general scope of the passage. On the contrary, when Epiphanius was indignant at the position, that bishop and priest were the same, he meant—subsequently to the aforesaid ar-

* *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος*.

rangement; which was doubtless in the intention of his antagonist Aerius.

It has been a practice with writers in the same sentiment with Mons. Daillé, to produce from Jerome another passage—that in which he lays stress on a custom in Alexandria, peculiar to the church in that city; where the presbyters, on a vacancy of the episcopacy, chose one of their own number; who accordingly became the bishop. Some insist, that the elected bishop received no other commission, than what was the result of the clerical choice. But to say so, is to be regardless of Jerome's purpose; which was to reprove the pride of certain Roman deacons, who were for the setting of themselves above the presbyters. It was a pertinent argument against those aspiring persons, that whereas generally the deacons and the people joined in the choice of a bishop; who was also taken from any order lay or clerical; in the church of Alexandria, the presbyters only were the electors; and the range of choice was not beyond their body: a custom which could never have prevailed in so populous and respectable a see, had it not been understood, that the presbytery was superior to the deaconship. Had the matter at issue been the same as that now litigated, between the favourers and the deniers of episcopacy; the passage would be much in favour of the latter: but being in relation to the pretensions of the deacons, the question of the subsequent ordination of the bishop had no place on the occasion. What though the subject is compared to an army's chusing of an emperor, and the deacons chusing of an archdeacon: the point of comparison lay in the circumstances of election; which were similar, in each of the three cases.

It is not peculiar to Jerome, that the words of a writer may bear a sense wide of that designed, unless taken in connexion with the object especially in view. But as this father is the only one concerning whom the charge is brought in the treatise, of writing contrary to his sentiments in the heat of disputation; and as the charge is proved in two instances, that of the dream and that of the advice to the Roman lady; the father having contradicted himself on both these subjects; it seems a making of too much of him, to set him up as the only writer, contradicting what has been affirmed by so many, that episcopacy was from the beginning. This is said on the supposition, that Jerome witnesses to the contrary; although the same is here conceived to be not the fact.

SECTION II.

Concerning the second book of Mons. Daillé's treatise.

His six reasons, to invalidate the sense of the fathers, when known—their testimonies, not always true and certain—they testify against themselves—they had no intention of judging for us—they have erred in divers points of religion—and have contradicted one another—both Roman catholics and protestants reject them, when contrary to received tenets.

THE preceding book of Mons. Daillé respected the difficulty of ascertaining what is the sense of the fathers: the present book was intended to impeach the authority of that sense, when ascertained. The design is sustained by six reasons.

“ Reason 1. That the testimonies given by the fathers, touching the belief of the church, are not always true and certain.”

Could this be demonstrated, even in matters of an higher nature than those instanced in the treatise, it would not essentially interfere with the present purpose; which establishes itself more on the silence, than on the express declarations of the church. In truth, however, there does not seem to have been any use in Mons. Daillé's detecting of mistakes, on some points evidently unimportant to the essence of Christian faith. The instances mentioned, are the testimony of Irenæus to the belief of the creation of the human soul at the moment of its entrance into the body, instead of a traduction from the parent—the reported testimony of a bishop of Thessalonica, to a refined materiality of the bodies of the angels—and the reputed belief affirmed by Bede, of the whole church, concerning the age of Jesus, and his suffering on the fifteenth day of the moon. Setting aside, that all brought on this subject has no relation to the church properly primitive; if these things were predicable of the whole church at any time, and if they were errors, it might all be consistent with integrity of judgment, in matters of higher moment.

Mons. Daillé distinguishes between divisions on questions of fact, although in some measure having opinion mixed with them; and the opinions of fathers dogmatically given, and designed to be decisive on their mere authority. The latter are beyond the limits of the present undertaking. The distinction is unquestionably correct, but will be found to light on ques-

tions of small account—such as those cited under the present head.

“ Reason 2. That the fathers themselves testify against themselves, that they are not to be believed absolutely, and upon their own bare word, in what they deliver in matters of religion.”

The author of the treatise means, that they hold their discourses subject to be determined on by scripture; and, independently on that standard, as of no authority. He has made his position good, by numerous quotations; so that it is astonishing to find an higher authority attributed to them, than what they claim for themselves, and even in contrariety to their renunciations. The declarations to this effect from Austin, from Jerome, from Ambrose and from others, can never be got over by those who make tradition the rule of faith. Pertinent however to this purpose as are the testimonies in the treatise, they cannot be thought pertinent to the present argument.

“ Reason 3. That the fathers have written after such a manner, as that it is clear, that when they wrote, they had no intention of being our judges in matters of religion. Some few examples of their mistakes, and oversights.”

It is supposed, that Mons. Daillé, did not mean to say here, that the fathers did not think themselves competent to judge on the subjects concerning which they wrote—the sense in which he seems to have been apprehended by Mr. Reeves, who taxes him heavily for the sentiment—but as not giving judgments which should be submitted to, independently on the being grounded on the higher authority of scripture. The contrary of this is a prerogative, which Mr. Reeves

could hardly have intended to challenge for them; as it would have been inconsistent with the known doctrines of his church.

Under the present reason, there are instances of great hurry and mistake; but not an instance from the fathers of the first three centuries, unless some passages from Justin are to be so considered. One of them represents the mission from Ptolemy Philadelphus for a copy of the Jewish scriptures, to have been to Herod king of Judea, instead of to Eleazar the high priest, who lived many ages before. Mr. Reeves quotes a criticism of Dr. Grabe, who supposes that some transcriber changed the word translated priest*, into the word translated Herod†. Dr. Thirlby, the editor of Justin, notices the same emendation of Dr. Grabe; applying to him the opprobrious saying‡—“For such aid and for such defenders, there is no occasion.” Concerning the criticism, different judgments will probably form different opinions: but it is here supposed, that there can be but one opinion on the question—how far it became such a man as Thirlby, to speak thus concerning such a man as Grabe. This is said in reference, not to erudition, for both were very learned; but to respectability of character, in regard to which Grabe was pre-eminent, and the other lamentably deficient. Another supposed error, is the misunderstanding of the inscription of a Roman statue: which Justin supposes to have been designed in honour of Simon Magus; but more properly belonged, it is said, to a Pagan deity very near to him in the letters of their names. Here, on the other hand, Justin is

* *εἰς*.† *Ἡρώδης*.

‡ Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis, tempus eget.

said to be supported by other respectable writers: and it is argued, that neither he nor they would have referred to, as a known matter among the Romans, what might have been contradicted by every inhabitant of Rome. Mons. Daillé also thinks it worth his while to record, that Justin made a mistake, as to the remoteness of the time of David from that of Christ; also the opinion of the same father, that the heavens are an arch, built on the waters as their base. And besides, in quoting two passages of scripture, he names Zephaniah and Jeremiah, instead of Zechariah and Daniel.

“Reason 4. That the fathers have erred, in divers points of religion; not only singly, but also many of them together.”

If the question, now under consideration, were either with the Roman catholics, who make a test of tradition of what is found in the succession of Christian authors; or if it were with those among the protestants—for such there are—who occasionally quote one or another father, in a manner that implies his authority to be decisive; the present writer, far from contradicting the opposite use designed by Mons. Daillé, would earnestly recommend the mass of evidence which he has here brought together, to refute their respective prejudices. But when the subject is within the limits of the question—whether the ante-nicene fathers have given any such instances of material error, as should invalidate their testimony on points comprehended in the high and leading sense of revealed truth; it must be here contended, that even the ingenuity and the diligence of that author have not drawn from their writings any thing to this effect.

From desire of brevity; and with the aim of merely giving such general hints, as may conduct an impartial reader of the treatise spoken of, to the conclusion here intended; an opinion shall be given of the reviewed authorities of the present chapter, under the following general heads.

With the exception of two matters to be noticed hereafter; the quotations given from the fathers of the first three centuries, are either such fancies of their own, as are indifferent to divine truth, although evidences of human imperfection and infirmity; or of matters, which are also not essential, but have at least some apparent sanction in the scriptures.

Of the first description is the notion, that the angels, in the antediluvian ages, had fallen in love with women: expressed by Justin and by Tertullian; the latter of whom is also cited as believing, that the divine Being is invested with a corporeal substance. But the difficulty of ascertaining the precise sense in which Tertullian used the words, and besides, the very qualified sense in which, however faithful as to facts, he can be ranked among the number of the fathers, renders it a matter of little moment. Again, there are the opinions of some of the fathers concerning the term of the Redeemer's life, extending it to fifty years; an error doubtless, but not pregnant with any evil consequences. Even a diversity of sentiment as to the duration of his ministry, has been thought worthy of notice: and yet the less prevalent opinion on the subject has been entertained by critics of no mean fame. The necessity of administering the eucharist to infants, must be considered as an extravagance: but it grew out of mistaken inference from the strong metaphor of scripture—"Except ye eat the

flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”* The opinion of Irenæus, that the soul, after death, retains the shape of its former body, which certainly that venerable bishop could not have known, is also brought into the account. Concerning the most important of these matters, that of infant communion; while the Roman catholics, to evade the force of the objection, must have recourse to the plea of there not having been determinations of the church concerning the point; plainly acknowledging a temporary interruption of tradition in this instance; the protestant may perceive the error of the notion in the following circumstance—that the eucharist could not have been designed for any who were incapable of joining in the commemoration, which is the most conspicuous property of the institution. And the same protestant, may lament the general although temporary error of the Christian church in this respect, without conceiving of it as a wilful or as a material dereliction of the truth.

Of the other description stated, was the rebaptizing of persons already baptized by heretics; which, however erroneous, according to the maturer judgment of the church in after times, must be acknowledged to have had a specious plea, in the circumstance of that utter excision of heretics, which seemed implied in the act of excommunication. Much more, in the opinion of Christ’s preaching to the dead, might there have been supposed a warrant in the passage of St. Peter, which has been applied in the same way by very many Christians in every age; and which, in the first establishment of the articles of the church of England, made one of

* John, vi. 53.

them: they being at that time forty in number; and afterward reduced to thirty-nine, by an omission of the opinion here referred to.

As for favourable sentiments concerning the virtuous heathen, cited in this treatise as entertained by Justin, and by Clemens Alexandrinus, they are here supposed substantially correct; although singularly expressed by these fathers, when the former of them ranked such heathen under the denomination of Christians, instead of conceding, that, without being of the number, they might receive the benefit of the same dispensation; and when the latter made a comparison for which there is no warrant, between the light of nature, under which they lived, and the legal dispensation of the Jews: as if the two subjects were alike of the nature of a covenant.

There are, however, two citations from Justin, taken from the second part of his dialogue, which cannot be brought under either of the descriptions stated. One of them, is where he is reported to represent, that the nature of God the Father is finite. So says Mons. Daillé; although the Greek, inserted in his margin, says no such thing, but the contrary; which is further evident from the context, as the passage stands in Justin. In this part of the dialogue, the father speaks of sundry instances, in which the divinity had manifested himself under the old dispensation; contending—on a plan of interpretation far from being peculiar to him, and which sundry places in scripture are thought to favour—that those manifestations were through the medium of the afterwards incarnate Saviour. Immediately before the passage in question, Justin refers to certain places of scripture, concerning which he speaks

in the following language; very remote, it would seem, from a limiting of the divine essence*—“ I think it to have been sufficiently explained by me, that when my God says—God went up from Abraham, or the Lord spake to Moses, and God went down to see the tower which the children of men had built, or when God shut the ark of Noah from without; you ought not to think, that the unbegotten God either ascends or descends to any one. For the unspeakable Father and Lord of this universe does not come into any place; neither does he walk, nor sleep, nor rise, but in his own region, wherever it may be, he continues, acutely seeing and acutely hearing; certainly not with eyes and ears, but by an indescribable energy, he inspects and knows all things; neither does any one of us lie hid from him. Neither is he moveable, nor to be contained in any place, nor in the whole world, as existing before the world was founded.” After such sentiments as these; it would seem surprising, should the author of them be found limiting the divine essence, but a few lines below, in the passage cited by the treatise. It is as follows,† after an explicit reference to the plan of interpretation above stated—“ Unless you will thus understand the sacred scriptures, the matter will come to this pass,‡ that it was not the Father who rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom, because that he could not have been at that time in Heaven.” The theory of Justin appears to have been, that the seat of the divine glory being in the highest sense in the heavens, he did not visibly manifest

* Page 410, Thirlby's Justin.

† Book 2, p. 63.

‡ This is omitted by Mons. Daillé, although the Greek is inserted in his margin.

himself, but through the intermediate ministry of his Son. Whether Justin reasoned well or otherwise, when he contended for this as the only way in which the Father of all sensibly displayed himself to his creatures, is a question having nothing to do with the charge, against which he is here defended. The father may have reasoned incorrectly, without circumscribing the divine presence; the contrary of which, is here contended to have been his design in the recited passage.

Another from the same father, is where he declares his belief in the millennium: an innocent error, surely, if it be one; and what might have arisen simply from too literal an understanding of what the prophets had foretold of the concluding glories of the Messiah's kingdom. But there is here conceived to be a mistaking of what is said on the subject; when the treatise states, that he considered it as held by all catholics; since he says expressly, that there were many of a pure and pious belief, who did not embrace the opinion. And when, in another part of the passage, he opposes the orthodox belief, to that of persons who ought no more to be called Christians than the Samaritans should be called Jews; reckoning as a part of the censured error, that souls immediately after death are transported up into heaven; he considered this, as in contrast with the doctrine of the resurrection. That he might reasonably place these sentiments in contrast, appears from the two following circumstances; that the latter was denied by the gnostics, against whom Justin here declares his mind; and that the former, however customary in modern speech, was unknown in the ancient church: the blessedness of the intermediate state being not conceived of as a translation to heaven; which, agreeably

to scripture, was thought delayed to the consummation of bliss in body and in soul.

The very passage thus produced by Mons. Daillé, in order to prove that Justin considered the doctrine of the millennium essential to catholicism, and that all the learned were of the opinion, is introduced by Dr. Priestley, in his evidences of christianity,* to prove that the same father held the doctrine of an human soul to be an heresy. With every degree of respect for the learning of those writers, not amounting to a blind submission to their authorities; the present writer denies, that the opinion of either of them is to be found in the passage: And as the questions concerning it are here conceived to be important, the passage is set down as follows—It is in the dialogue with Trypho:† who asks Justin, whether he will deny that the Christians look for an happy condition of Jews and people of other nations in Jerusalem; describing this, in terms exactly answering to the millennium. Justin's answer is—“ I am not reduced, Trypho, to such straits, as that I should speak otherwise than as I think. I have confessed to you before, that I and that many who think with me, expect that this will be, as you clearly know; but I signified to you, that many even of the Christians who are of pure and pious sentiment, do not acknowledge this. I said moreover, that there are some who are called Christians, but are worshippers of no divinity, and impious heretics; since they teach things that are altogether blasphemous, and impious, and foolish. Accordingly, to assure you that I do not say these things to you only, I will compose, according to my ability, a

* Discourse 8.

† Thirlby's ed. p. 311.

work of all these our disputations; where I will record, that I profess what I now acknowledge before you. For I resolve, that not men or human doctrines, but God and the discipline delivered by him, are to be followed by me. For although you have conversed with some who are called Christians and do not assent to this article, but even dare to speak evil of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob; and who say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls are received into heaven as soon as they die; you are not to esteem these to be Christians, any more than if any one would examine correctly, he would say that the Sadducees or like sects* are Jews; but that they are called Jews and the sons of Abraham, and those who confess God with their lips, as God himself complains, while their heart is far from him. But I and those Christians who are in all things of a right opinion, know both that there will be a resurrection of the flesh, and that there will be a thousand years in Jerusalem, restored, and adorned, and enlarged, as Ezekiel and Isaiah and others prophesy.”

Concerning the foregoing passage, the appeal is here made, 1st, in regard to Mons. Daillé, whether it do not say directly the contrary of what he states it to say, by means of a variation from the literal sense of the original? For he translates the words of the original† as for me, and the rest of us that are true Christians.‡

* Here he names sundry sects.

† *ορθογλωμονες κατα παντα χριστιανι.*

‡ Dr. Priestley was of opinion, that Justin pronounced a harsh sentence on the gnostics, when he denied that they were Christians. It seems no harsher, than the sentences passed on them by St. Paul and by St. John, if the construction commonly given by

Whereas his whole comment will be done away, if there be taken the more exact version—"Those who are Christians of a right opinion in all things." A writer may be so far partial to his own opinions, as to conceive them to be exacted by entire rectitude of sentiment; and yet not contend for them, as a necessary part of Christian verity.

What is here thought the mistake of Dr. Priestley will be obviated, if Justin is conceived of as levelling his remark—which was undoubtedly the fact—at the gnostics; who denied the resurrection, and who held, that the world was created, not by the supreme Deity, but by a being of an evil, or at least of an imperfect nature: and this is what is meant by speaking evil of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Had there attached to the censure of these things a censure of the belief of there being such an agent as the human soul, the passage would have been to Dr. Priestley's purpose. But it is of the soul's going immediately to heaven. Now the intermediate blessedness of the righteous, is expressed in scripture by the being in Abraham's bosom—in paradise—with the Lord—and the like: and

commentators to the following texts (besides others) be correct—1 Tim. vi. 20.—2 Tim. ii. 18.—1 John ii. 18—and iv. 2, 3.—Eusebius gives a very bad account, as well of the practices, as of the principles of those gnostics. From Dr. Priestley's remark on the quotation it would seem—although this could hardly have been intended by him—as if the severity of Justin's censure fell altogether on the position of the soul's going to heaven immediately on death: whereas it belongs to three connected dogmas in the aggregate—the blaspheming of the divine giver of the old dispensation—the denial of the resurrection—and the said position concerning the soul.

the mention of the invisible world* is connected with the condition both of the righteous and of the wicked. Accordingly, there seems required some very express text—and the present writer knows of none—in favour of the expression of an immediate translation to heaven; in order to justify that manner of speech, on the part of those who believe in the existence of the human soul; and of course, to justify the inferring unfavourably to the belief of there being such an agent, from this part of Justin's censure of the gnostics.

It is the more surprising, that such a sense should be adduced from Justin, when he is found repeatedly recognizing the soul, as an agent distinct from all properties of body. A few places shall be given from his first apology.† After mention of the pagan belief of a judgment by Rhadamanthus and Minos—"This very thing we say, will be done, but by Christ, and in the same bodies with their souls united to them."‡ "Again when we assert, that souls, after death, are endued with sense; and that those of the wicked indeed are tormented, but that those of the good, exempt from punishment, are happy; we seem to assert these things, with the poets and the philosophers."§ "In that which was said to Moses in the bush—I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and the God of your fathers, it is signified that these dead persons remain, and belong to Christ." These passages—it is here conceived—are not at all in harmony with the uncomfortable doctrine of the sleep of the soul; much less with that of there being in nature no such

* *αδης.*

† Thirlby, page 12.

‡ Page 31.

§ Apology, page 94.

agent, the latter of which was the belief of Dr. Priestley.

The following passages from the same author, are especially in point. As the others were from the Apology, these are from the Dialogue. He says* “ But I affirm that all souls do not die: for that would be truly a gain to bad men. What then? The pious remain in some better place; but the unjust and wicked, in a worse place; waiting the time of judgment.” Also,† improving certain petitions in the psalms, he advises to make the same requests of God at the end of life; that he may drive off every malignant spirit, lest he take our souls; adding—“ For that souls remain, I have proved to you by the fact, that the witch of Endor” (his name for her is Ventriloqua Pythonissa) “ called up the soul of Samuel.”

The writer of this, conceiving the subject to be important, and trusting that it will be scarcely possible to attend to the passage as it stands in Justin, without perceiving the mistake of Dr. Priestley, takes occasion to mention another mistake of the same author, on the same subject, in quoting Josephus. This ancient historian, is cited in the “ History of the corruptions of Christianity,” as rejecting the doctrine of the human soul; on the ground of his speaking contemptuously of some notion of the Greek philosophers on the subject. Without going into the inquiry of what is the real meaning of the passage quoted from Josephus, it may be presumed, that the construction given to it cannot be correct; because of the many places in which he affirms the very matter, supposed in that single place

* Page 148, Thirlby.

† Page 364.

to be denied by him. As where* he mentions with approbation concerning the pharisees—"They believe the immortality of the soul, and a future state of reward and punishment in another world." As where† speaking of the general expectation of the Jews concerning a reward of well-doing, he says—"They look upon death itself, only as the blessed means of transporting them from this life to a better:" and as where, in his discourse on the Maccabees, speaking of the death of Eleazar the high priest, and of the mother and her seven sons, by the order of the tyrant Antiochus, he adds—"The encounter was truly divine; virtue was in this case the judge of the combat, and disposer of the prize; and patience was the proof and exercise. To this the victory was to be adjudged; and immortality and bliss were the rewards of him that conquered."

The passage here supposed to be misapprehended, is in the Second Book of the Wars of the Jews: and the point there stated as the belief of the Essenes, which Josephus compared to the fancies of the Greek philosophers; was the soul's being of the same substance with the subtilest air; in consequence of which, immediately on its being freed from corporeal bonds, it mounted upwards to the region of bliss. The fallacy is much the same, as in the instance of the quotation from Justin.

"Reason 5. That the fathers have strongly contradicted one another, and have maintained different opinions, in matters of very great importance."

If Mons. Daillé had introduced under this head only the difference of opinion between Justin and later wri-

* B. 18, chap. 2.

† Answer to Apion, b. 2.

ters—whether there had been a real or only a fictitious appearance of the ghost of Samuel to Saul, it might be thought hardly worth while to make any comment under this head. The same may be said of that other from Tertullian, of the derivation of souls from fathers to children; in which he is contradicted by Austin; who held the soul to be created immediately on its union with the body: although here, indeed, a painful sensibility must be produced on finding, that even in Tertullian's day, he at least began to speculate on such unmeaning subtleties. But there is something more important in the controversy concerning the millennium, and in the unhappy consequences which attended that concerning the time of keeping Easter. That there were contrary sides taken by Christians on both these subjects, within the term here treated of, must be acknowledged. That on the first question, the one or the other side may have been maintained without breach either of charity or of necessary truth, and that this was so conceived of within the term, will hardly be denied. That the latter subject should ever have been elevated into matter of very zealous debate, cannot but be considered as one of the many monuments of human frailty. And when the debate arose to the scale of wrath, which produced pope Victor's excommunication of the eastern churches, it was worse than frailty, being in opposition to the very spirit of the gospel. This however is a stain, which can hardly be considered as fixed on the character of the Christian church in general; the great body of whom disapproved of the violence of Victor; and one effect of this, was the very seasonable expostulation of Irenæus. What Mons. Daillé has stated concerning the fathers under the present head,

goes pointedly to the purpose for which it is brought—that a determinate test of truth ought not to be sought in a quarter, in which there obtains an opposition so palpable. But the author of the treatise seems to weaken his own cause, when he asks towards the conclusion—“ Why may they not have held the same diversity of opinion touching the point of the eucharist, the authority of the church, the power of the pope, free-will, or purgatory?” On every question between the protestants and the Roman catholics on these points, either the fathers held an unanimous opinion, in favour of what is now called protestantism; or the subjects were unknown among them: which proves the tenets of the latter to be of more recent origin, and therefore errors.

The distinction taken by the writer of this, between principal and subordinate differences, might have been traced by Mons. Daillé, in almost every controversy of importance. For an example, there shall be here taken that between the Calvinists and the Arminians. The differences on the several points, will be acknowledged to have been defined by the many very learned men, who have written on the respective sides. Now if any person should be disposed to assert, either that the Calvinist or that the Arminian writers contradict one another, and that therefore there is no ascertaining the opinions constituting either Calvinism or Arminianism, what abundant matter might he find to sustain his position, on the plan adopted in this treatise! It shall be here exemplified, in the Calvinistick writers only. There is, in the first place, the bitter dispute between the supralapsarians and the sublapsarians; which has much subsided, indeed, since the synod of Dort; but was not

determined by that body: the canons being so framed as not to be contrary to either side. As predestination affects infants, Calvin was of opinion, that an elect number of those of them who have been initiated into the church by baptism, dying before they become adult, are converted in some way not to be comprehended: whereas Beza, his immediate successor in the divinity chair of Geneva, appeals to it as a known truth, that many millions of infants, who are baptized, perish everlastingly. On free-will, the aforesaid reformer* declares not only against the thing itself; but against the name, as fruitful of arrogance: and yet Turretine, another of his successors, complains of it as a calumny, that he and those who think with him are said to reject both the name and the thing itself. On the subject of perseverance also, some Calvinists have held—for instance, bishop Overall, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth—that there may be a total, although not a final falling from grace; contrary to the sentiments, generally, of those who consent with them in the system. Here is a single example; but it might be supported by innumerable instances, showing, that contradiction concerning certain attributes of any subject, does not hinder there being an agreement, according to a known standard, as to the more material.

“ Reason 6. That neither those of the church of Rome, nor the protestants, do acknowledge the fathers for their judges in points of religion, but do both of them reject such of their opinions and practices, as are not for their gust. An answer to two objections that

* Calvin.

may be made against what has been here delivered in this discourse.”

That this is true concerning protestants, must be evident to all: it being the most prominent principle of all the churches of the reformation; there being understood, however, what Mons. Daillé himself insinuates, that the fathers may be of use in confirming what is alleged to be in scripture, or at least, in proving the nullity of opinions not found in these writings next in point of time.

That the Roman catholics entertain a like hesitation, to submit without reserve to the same tribunal, is not so generally understood; but is satisfactorily proved in the quotations given. In short, it seems impossible for them to disengage themselves from the imputation of a circular way of arguing; in proving the doctrine of the present church by the traditionary doctrine of the fathers; and in judging of the truth or the falsity of these, by the more modern decisions of the church. But, the writer of this has nothing further to suggest under the present head; since it must appear from the terms of the proposition, that it is foreign to the purpose for which he writes. Neither does he see occasion to remark, on what the author of the treatise foresees as two objections to his whole discourse; except of a concession, which he makes under the second objection; the notice of which is reserved for the conclusion of this appendix.

SECTION III.

Of the evil tendency of some of Mons. Daillé's reasonings, on certain important controversies.

Some of his reasons tend to lessen the certainty of the standard of scripture—injury to protestantism—in doctrine—in discipline—and in worship—advantage given to Socinians—and to Arians—the influence of Mons. Daillé's treatise, supposed to have been unfavourable to divine truth.

THE controversies here in view, are with the deists, with the Roman catholics, and with the Socinians and the Arians. Intimations in regard to the first two have been already given; but it is here wished to bring the remarks which have been made, more directly to the points on which they respectively seem to bear. And let it be noticed, that the writer of this does not think himself called on to accommodate his argument to the refutation of these classes of persons. He indeed conceives himself bound to speak of their opinions, no otherwise than as they are: but his object is, on the ground of these opinions, to argue with those who reject them equally with himself—how injurious to their common cause, is the very low estimation, to which Mons. Daillé and those who think with him would reduce the testimonies of the fathers, and especially when they make light of them in the Calvinistick controversy.

First; of the controversy with the deists: the reasons in the treatise, which seem to have a dangerous effect

on this, are the fourth, the fifth and the eighth of the first book.

If the few instances produced of interpolations in the fathers, create an uncertainty how many unknown interpolations there may be, and of course, what degree of credit is to be given to any thing passing under their name, it seems difficult to rescue the sacred scriptures from the same objection; since it is but to open Mills or Wetstein or Griesbach, or any such laborious searcher after the integrity of the sacred text, in order to perceive that, of the readings given by them, one only in each instance can be correct; and therefore, to a considerable proportion of the church, there must have been omissions in some instances and additions in others. Be it, that all such to be gathered, are unimportant as to essential truth. And this is a fact the more to be relied on, in consequence of recent labours; particularly those of the late Dr. Kennicott; which, after all the royal and national patronage received, and the faithful application of it, have not brought forth any such discoveries, as impeach the sufficiency of the common translation of the scriptures. They rather tend to confirm the credit of it; and therefore diminish the general supposition of the extent of the variations. But this does not meet the force of the argument pervading the treatise; which contends, that where alterations are known to have taken place, there is no knowing to what extent they may have gone. Besides the variations of inferior note, there is the very signal one of 1 John v. 7. It is given up, as is here supposed, by the best critics generally of the present day, and allowed by them to be no part of the sacred text, not excepting those who are fully in the belief of the doctrine, which it has a

tendency to support. Even supposing them to be mistaken; still, under so respectable an opposition of sentiment, an ordinary reader must at least be left in doubt, as to the authenticity of the text; and if this be doubtful, then, on the principle here in question, the same applies to every other.

That the fathers wrote in Latin and in Greek, and that these languages have their respective idioms, is one of the last objections which might have been expected, from an advocate for the sufficiency of scriptures, indited in Greek and Hebrew. There also applies equally to both classes of composition, that they occasionally give their senses in figurative language. When the Saviour of the world speaks of himself as a vine, or as a door; when he calls bread his body and wine his blood; and when he represents the difficulty of some duties, under the emblems of cutting off a right hand and plucking out a right eye; no one can deny, that these are figurative ways of speaking: and very many other instances might be given; to the utter ruin of the Christian cause, if figures are presumed to be impenetrable covers of a speaker's or of a writer's meaning—which is here supposed very far from being agreeable to fact.

The like remarks apply, to the difference between the ancient and the modern use of the same terms; especially, where this demands a reference to ancient customs. When the Messiah affirms, that new wine should be put into new bottles, and not into old ones lest they burst; who would understand this, without being told, that, contrary to modern management, the bottles were of leather? and when the same blessed person illustrates his instructive lessons, by the mention of one who took a far journey, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to

return a sovereign over those whom he had left his fellow citizens; who would not think this to be an extraordinary mean of elevation to the sovereignty in any country; unless informed, that the favour, under which alone the pre-eminence could have been obtained, was not within the country itself, but in the metropolis of the Roman empire? of the like to these, also, many instances might be produced.

When the treatise speaks of the distinction between things necessary and things probable; it is here supposed, that the former word is used as synonymous with certain: this being the proper opposite of the other. If so, it must be confessed, that this has no parallel in regard to scripture. But when the treatise further speaks, of what is either more or less necessary; that is, as is here supposed to be the meaning of the word, needful to be rightly apprehended or believed; it is very clear, that the scriptures have not precisely marked the degree of importance of every truth. This, indeed, may be ascertained by the nature of the subject. For instance, there may be made to follow from the Messiah's being about thirty years old when he began to preach, that, at his crucifixion, he could not have been many months more than thirty-three; and some think less by two whole years. Yet it seems, that there were those in ancient times, who imagined him to have been bordering on fifty; erroneously inferring this from what was said to him by the Jews—"thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Mons. Daillé has mentioned this, among his enumerated mistakes. No one, however, will put it on a footing with the overlooking of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice for sin, or his future judging of the world. And yet the exact extent

of the importance of these two subjects is not measured, any more than that of the revelation of his age. But without this relative standard, it would seem from the treatise, that the importance of any thing recorded is not to be ascertained.

The respectable author of the treatise, is not here charged with the consequences described. On the contrary, he is held to be entitled to an allowance not granted by him to the fathers—the supporting of a favourite position not contemplated in all its consequences, by arguments which have an unfavourable aspect on some other subjects, unregarded at the time.

Secondly, in regard to the controversy with the Roman catholics. In the beginning of this chapter, it was intimated, that their leading doctrines cannot stand before the test of orthodoxy, in the writings of the early fathers; and further, that Mons. Daillé, prevented as he was from taking this ground by the circumstances there stated, gave up a great advantage of the protestant cause. The same sentiment has been occasionally expressed, in the remarks on the reasonings of this author. In order the better to establish what has been held out to this effect, an instance shall be here given, under each of the heads of doctrine, of worship, and of discipline. And the three subjects contemplated are transubstantiation, image worship, and the papal supremacy.

On the subject of transubstantiation, the author of the treatise might have met the advocates of that doctrine, on the ground of sundry authorities from the fathers. There is that of Justin in his first apology; who, after describing the solemnity of the administration of the Eucharist, in which the president offers up prayer

and thanksgiving over the bread and wine,* says—"a distribution and communication is made to every one present, of the things for which thanks were given, but it is sent to the absent by the deacons." And again in his dialogue, in which he speaks of "the bread which our Christ delivered to us to make a remembrance of his body" and "the cup which he delivered in remembrance of his blood." There is that of Tertullian, who, in quoting the words of the institution says (against the Jews) "calling the bread his body;" and (against Marcion) adds to "this is my body," the explanatory comment—"that you may understand that he gave bread, as the figure of his body." And to name but one place more, among the many which might be given, there is that of St. Cyprian, who says—"Christ gave with his own hands bread and wine" (meaning in the Paschal supper) "but on the cross he gave his body."† And again (3d epistle) "wine by which Christ's blood is declared."

It is but fair, to represent what the advocates for the doctrine bring against such clear authorities as these. They tell of a place of Ignatius's epistle to the Smyrneans, in which he speaks of certain heretics, of whom he says—"they do not admit of Eucharists and oblations, because they do not admit the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour which suffered for us." But this is sufficiently explained by the fact, that these heretics did not admit the incarnation of Christ: of course,

* Page 98, Thirlby's Justin.

† The first of the two quotations here given from St. Cyprian is from the treatise de unctiōe, reckoned spurious by the best critics: and therefore the citation is here reckoned of no further authority, than in relation to those who defend the tract. It has been quoted by Roman catholic authors of great name.

the argument applied with full force, to the figurative sense of Christ's body and blood. They could not celebrate in figure, what they did not believe in reality. Again, Tertullian is introduced, saying (against Marcion, book 4. chap. 10.) "the bread taken and distributed to his disciples he made his body." Now even if Tertullian had not elsewhere explained these words by the addition—"that is the figure of my body," they would be resolveable into such a figure; as when the picture of a man is called the man himself.

These are the only authorities of any note, from the space of time here in contemplation, so far as is known to the writer of this, and without taking in known forgeries, such as the tract "de cœna domini," fathered on Cyprian. And let it be noticed, that the brevity with which the authorities are stated is owing to the consideration, that the object of them is not to prove the protestant doctrine, but to show from passages, the plain sense of which will be admitted by protestants, how unwisely they act, when they abandon such testimonies in controversy.

This is the more to be lamented, as in that case, and indeed by a stronger bearing of their argument, it applies even to silence within the times in question. Silence itself operates favourably to protestantism, in various ways. To give only two instances of this—as the subject respected pagans, and as it respected Christians. It would be natural, to expect to find the fathers making answers to objections of the pagans, against a tenet so much at variance with the testimony of the senses. Can it be thought that Celsus, or that Porphyry, and above all that Julian, who had been educated in the bosom of the Christian church, and had been

carefully instructed in its doctrines, would have declined such an opportunity of depreciating Christianity, as contrary to common sense? It can hardly be supposed possible, when they have dwelt so much on what their prejudices represented to them as improprieties. And then, as the subject respected Christians, where are the evidences of their adoration of the Eucharist? No such matter is alleged: and yet, nothing could have been more natural, or indeed more a duty; if, under the visible elements, or rather what are called their accidents, there were the real body of Christ given, and his blood shed for man's redemption.

Next, in regard to image worship; of which the writer of this could never find a single authority brought from early times; except where the fathers speak of the cross, and its antitype under the law in the brazen serpent. But how little this makes to the purpose, is hardly needful to be pointed out.

Such being the state of the case, it is judged sufficient barely to name Tertullian, Origen, and Clemens of Alexandria, as protesting against the adoration of images, under terms which do not confine the censure to heathen idols; although these were especially in view; as indeed none other could have been: Christians in their days, not having shown any tendency to such an innovation. But on going down to the later term of the fifth century, testimonies against it are more abundant; the abuse, having then showed its head, first in private usage, and at last by an intrusion into churches. But for this, it may be sufficient to refer to the homily of the church of England "against the peril of idolatry."

Considering the importance of the subject, and the awful injunctions both in the Old and in the New Testa-

ment against the adoration of any creature—which will not be denied by any protestant—is it wise—is it safe in such a person, to give up his ground in documents, which speak so powerfully in his favour; and which prove, that his interpretations of scripture are in this instance correct?

But to proceed to the third particular: the only author within the first three centuries, brought forward with any plausible appearance to prove the primacy of the Roman see, is Irenæus; who, in answer to an heretical sect, opposes the tradition of the Roman church to their modern innovations; telling them—“to this church it is necessary that every church round about should resort, because of its more powerful principality in which the apostolic doctrine has been always preserved.”* But some Roman catholic writers have construed “resort” (*convenire*) into “agree;” and have changed “round about” (*undique*) into “every where” (*ubique*.) Even the respectable Fleury has made this oversight. But it is remarkable that Dupin, in his sketch of the works of the fathers, says nothing of the passage: which, considering its notoriety and the use long made of it, may reasonably be imputed to the conviction, that it is not to the purpose for which it has been alleged. The plain meaning of the passage, is, that the doctrine of Christ and his apostles was more likely to be retained in its purity by the ancient and respectable church of the metropolis of the empire, than in the obscure places in which the heretics pretended to have gathered it. And Irenæus himself shows this to be his meaning, where he says in another place—

* Book 3. chap. 3. p. 101. Oxford edition of 1702.

“The Roman church is the greatest and most ancient, founded at Rome by St. Peter and St. Paul.” This opens his full meaning of the expression “round about” (undique) showing, that his discourse reached no further than to the churches in the West. Of these, the church in Rome seems to have been the most ancient: But she was junior to many churches in the East; particularly to those of Jerusalem, Antioch and Ephesus; which were founded long before either St. Peter or St. Paul preached in Rome. Such is the evidence so much boasted of from Irenæus; and that taken from a barbarous translation of a book which has long since perished.

Mons. Bossuet, the learned bishop of Meaux, in his compendious history of France, relates an anecdote of Francis I. which shows, not only how much the passage in Irenæus may be misapprehended, but how important may be the consequences of error. In the beginning of the reformation, there were endeavours, not without prospect of success, to incline the king to the cause of the reformation. “The cardinal de Tournen,” says Bossuet,* “disappointed that scheme. It is said, that he entered the king’s chamber, with a book under his arm. The king, who loved books, did not fail to ask him what book it was; and the cardinal answered, that it was an ancient bishop of the Gallican church. The king immediately opened it, and found the works of St. Irenæus, a bishop of Lyons and a martyr, who lived in the second century. He asked him, what was the saint’s opinion on the new doctrines; and the cardinal, who had foreseen that effect of the king’s curiosity,

* Vol. III. p. 272.

read to him some important passages on the point of the eucharist, and upon the authority of tradition, and upon the pre-eminence of the Roman church, reckoned from the earliest times as the centre of ecclesiastical communion. He enlarged afterwards, in showing that Luther and his followers had destroyed, together with the ancient maxims of the church, the foundations of Christianity; and made so strong an impression on the king's mind, that he never afterward heard of the novelties without horror."

The passage relative to tradition and the pre-eminence of the Roman church, must have been that above cited. Had the king examined the connexion, he was too intelligent not to have perceived, that the father had appealed to scripture; but that as the Valentinians, with whom he was at issue, set up a tradition of their own, he pointed to tradition in a more respectable quarter: which he does in terms equally applicable to Constantinople, or to Antioch, or to Alexandria, had his residence been as convenient to it, as to the capital of the west. Who can calculate, to what extent the burnings under that king, the sight of which he is said to have enjoyed, was the consequence of the interview related? The effect of which may be supposed not to have spent its force, when bishop Bossuet inserted the anecdote in his history, professedly composed for the dauphin of France, son of Louis XIV. Although the prince is said in the preface to have had a share in the work, it was from the materials which the bishop put into his hands.

When the above is spoken of as the only material passage, there is kept in view the distinction between the asserted primacy of St. Peter, and the establishing and perpetuating of it in Rome. These are different

subjects; the one being not consequent on the other, if true.

The father principally produced for the said personal supremacy, is St. Cyprian; who mentions in several places the address to St. Peter—"On this rock I will build my church;" as an intimation of its intended unity. But on an examination of the passage, as it stands in the treatise "Of the Unity of the Church;" it will be found that Cyprian, far from considering St. Peter as possessing authority over his fellow apostles, contradicts that notion. And as to the episcopal successors of the apostles, the father declares, that they are on a level; that they have indeed the charge of one flock; but that each had his proper portion of it, in the governing of which he was not accountable to any other. Both Fleury and Dupin, in giving the substance of the treatise, display in their extent the equality thus affirmed, first of the apostles, and afterwards of the bishops; although the latter, contrary to his usual fairness, has not correctly translated the original, which does not make that equal power, as is done by this historian, the gift of Christ after his resurrection.* It would indeed have been surprising, if St. Cyprian had been found recognizing a successorship to a primacy of St. Peter in the person of the Roman bishop, and on that account acknowledging a jurisdiction appurtenant to his see; when nothing could have more condemned the conduct of the same St. Cyprian, who always addressed that bishop as his equal; and on one occasion complained to him, complaisantly indeed, but resolutely,

* This is proved by the translator of Dupin. The Latin of "after his resurrection," is not in the original.

of some factious persons in his own diocese, who ran with their complaints to Rome. Besides the passage of Cyprian here noticed, writers of former days, and some even of great name, have cited a composition already noticed as ascribed to him, under the name of "De Coena Domini." But it is here hoped, that no such use is made of it, by any writer of the present day. Neither Fleury nor Dupin applies it. The latter indeed notices the tract; but it is only to call it ridiculous and impertinent. Mons. Daillé has been observed complaining of certain interpolations of St. Cyprian's works, by some Roman catholic editors; but of their being expunged by others. Mons. Dupin seems aware of this fact. For after mentioning the different editions, he names that of bishop Fell as the most exact: wishing, however, that there were another by a catholic divine; in order to guard against the effect of protestant annotations.*

Besides the silence of the fathers on the subject of papal supremacy, there are numerous evidences against its existence, in the first three centuries; discoverable in all those passages of their works, from which it appears, that the concerns of the respective sees were conducted without reference to a distant authority, in any instances. Were there no other monuments of this remaining, than what is found in Eusebius, they would be more than are necessary. But they might be enlarged

* A passage has been sometimes quoted from Origen, through the medium of the Latin of Ruffinus. But the liberties taken by this writer with the works of that more ancient author, after the papacy had made some advance, renders a production which was subjected to the alterations of such an hand, of very little authority on the question.

from every quarter of Christendom. Correspondence indeed was kept up among the most considerable and influential sees; but this was the utmost length gone to, for the maintaining of ecclesiastical unity. And in the efforts for this, made by the father here spoken of, it is evident that he considered himself as much a judge of the election of a Roman bishop (Cornelius) as this bishop could have supposed himself of his.*

* The same spirit of independence, shewed itself, in St. Cyprian's intercourse with Cornelius's successor Stephen: And there was much more call for it. With the Collection of Cyprian's Letters, there is one addressed to him by Firmilian, a respectable bishop of Cappadocia, criminating Stephen on the question of re-baptizing heretics. Firmilian charges him with arrogance and insolence: And the whole letter is an evidence how far they were from conceiving, in those days, of a supereminent authority in the Roman bishop.

Mons. Daillé states, that Manutius omitted this epistle, but that afterwards, Morellius, another Roman catholic editor, inserted it: and Pamelius is quoted, saying that the former is thought to have left it out by design; and that it would have been better, if the latter had never put it in. It is certainly a document very unfavourable to the Roman cause.

The following are the liberties stated by Mons. Daillé, as having been taken with Cyprian's works, to make them favourable to the see of Rome. Pamelius (Ep. 40. p. 7.) in the sentence—"In cathedra una supra Petram Domini voce fundata"—changes *Petram* into *Petrum*. But Gryphærius (p. 52.) and Morellius (p. 124.) have the former word. Pamelius (p. 254) inserts these words; which are wanting in Gryphærius and Morellius—"supra illum unum ædificavit ecclesiam suam et illi pascendas mandat oves suas." Pamelius (*ibid.*) has, what is wanting in the others—"unam cathedram constituit." Also the former has what the latter want—"primatus Petro datur, ut una ecclesia Christi, et cathedra una monstretur: Et pastores sunt omnes; sed unas grex ostenditur, qui ab apostolis omnibus unanimi consensu præstatur."

Every one who reads Dupin's abridgment of the discipline of the first three centuries, must perceive that he found an absolute dearth of evidences of a general jurisdiction attached to the Roman see, within that term. The remark may be extended, at least a considerable way into the fourth century. And especially there is the circumstance, that at the first general council,* no pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome was either acknowledged or claimed: not even the presidency; this having been conferred on Hosius, a Spanish bishop, who is said to have presided in all the councils of that age, at which he was present. This shows, that respectability of character then outweighed even the dignity supposed to be attached to the episcopacy of the metropolis of the empire. The bishop of Rome, indeed, because of his great age, was not present at the council; but he sent to represent him two priests; who would have presided as his legates, had there prevailed the same ideas of his supremacy, as in later times.† Mons. Dupin‡ rests the pre-eminence of the bishop of Rome,

* In 325.

† It is worth while to notice the difference between Fleury and Dupin on this point. The former supposes, that Hosius represented the bishop of Rome in the presidency of the council of Nice; but gives no better evidence of the truth of the supposition, than that of Gelasius, bishop of Cyzicum, who wrote in the fifth century. Dupin says of him, that he wrote whatever he found concerning the council of Nice, good or bad, and without examining, whether it were true or false; and that he is not to be depended on in any thing; except in what he took from Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. That there was any deputation from Rome in the presidency of the second general council, Fleury does not surmise.

‡ Vol. 1, p. 590.

on the circumstance of his presiding in the church of the first city in the world; but says, that he was not held to be infallible, and that every bishop imagined he had a right to judge in ecclesiastical matters. Mons. Fleury evidently shows himself of the same mind, in the course of his history. For the same reason as in the instance of the church of Rome, the church of Constantinople, a young see, but in a city become imperial, was elevated to the same rank with the other; much indeed to the dissatisfaction of Pope Leo; who, as also his successors, contended for superiority and maintained it.

The protestant ground being so strong on the present subject; the opinion is here entertained, that when the treatise was composed, because of a young protestant nobleman's being assailed at court on the point of antiquity, the learned author might have furnished him with better weapons against his assailants; by proving to them, that their mistress church, although indeed from the time of the apostles, was some hundreds of years after them, in the dominion which she claimed over other churches, however successful in subjecting them to her command.

3dly. Of the controversy with the Socinians and the Arians: and here, the writer of this again recalls to his recollection, that his business is not to combat their principles, but to reason from them.

To begin with the Socinians. It is conceded by them, that when Justin wrote, which was about half a century from the last of the apostles, and from that time downwards, the writings transmitted to the present day are in favour of the pre-existence and the divine nature of Jesus Christ. But they contend, that there is nothing to the same effect, in the writings which were before..

This is a matter, not yielded by those on the other side; who, notwithstanding the paucity of the earlier remains, bring passages from Clemens Romanus, from Hermas, from Ignatius, and from the narrative of the martyrdom of Polycarp; testifying, as they think, the divinity of Christ.*

* The following are the most prominent of the passages here referred to:

From Clement of Rome—"The sceptre of the majesty of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, did not come in the splendour of arrogancy and pride, although he had power to do so, but in humility." (ch. 16.) This is construed on the other side as applicable to his appearance in his public ministry: but that the words apply to his humiliation generally, is argued from his being characterized, before the mention of his coming, in expressions strongly supposing a pre-existence.

From Hermas—"The Son of God is more ancient than any creature, insomuch that he was of council to his father in making the creatures." (9th Simil.)

From Ignatius, with an allusion to an ancient heresy—"There is one God; who hath manifested himself through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his eternal word, who came not forth from silence." (Ep. ad Magnens, sect. 8.)

And the father had said just before of Christ (sect. 6) "who, begotten of the Father before all ages, was God the word, the only begotten son."

And in the account of the martyrdom of the same father (sect. 12) we read—"Having prayed to the Son of God for the churches, for the ceasing of the persecution, for the brethren's love of one another, he was led to the amphitheatre."

From the epistle of the church of Smyrna, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp. They say, that the Jews hindered the Christians from gathering the bones of their martyred bishop, lest they should be made an object of worship—"being ignorant (says the epistle) that we could neither ever leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who are saved in the whole world, the sinless for sinners, nor worship any other." (Ch. 17.)

Again,

But putting this out of the case; let there be remarked the importance of the preceding concession. The improbability, that in a system directed to the destroying of idolatry, it should so soon recur, as to change the professors of it generally into worshippers of a mere man, in the middle of the second century; or, if it be contended, that Christians generally were as yet free from the corruption, although their most eminent teachers—for this is alleged—had become infected by it; without any detriment to the reputation of those who have reported to the world their own principles, in such terms as imply that they were those of the universal church; and to add to such an unexpected association of circumstances, that there should be the silent influence of the supposed error, to such a degree, as that when in a little more than a century afterwards a bishop* propagated what on the same supposition must have been evangelical truth, the other leaven had so pervaded the church, that his conduct herein occasioned the calling of a council, by whom he was deposed with general consent; and to make the matter still more extraordinary, that in about half a century afterwards, the alleged original belief should have become so far forgotten, as to permit the respectable historian Eusebius

Again, there is something very much to the purpose in the conclusion of the martyr's prayer, sent up by him from the midst of the flames--"Wherefore, for all things, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ: with whom, to thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory both now and through all ages. Amen." This epistle is inserted in the history of Eusebius. And it is no small objection to the imputation of forgery, that it must have been, if at all, before the date of the works of that early and respectable historian.

* Paul of Samosata.

to record in the face of the world, that the first broacher of the doctrine of Christ's mere humanity was a certain Theodotus, who lived but about half a century before the said Paul of Samosata; all this is a progress of opinion, not justified by observation of men and manners: which shows, that under such a growing deterioration, there is always some resistance, although it may not always be successful. But if so, must not what is here supposed to be the correct opinion derive considerable aid from the testimonies of those fathers, who flourished in the first three centuries? From Justin's being found describing the Messiah thus—"Now his (God's) Son, who alone is properly called Son, the word, which was with him, and begotten before the creatures; when, in the beginning, he made and disposed all things by him, is called Christ; because anointed and because God created all things by him?" On finding Irenæus speaking of the same divine agent thus—"The Son, being always co-existent with the Father, now and from the beginning reveals the Father?"* On finding Clement of Alexandria celebrating the Son's existence before all worlds, in terms which bear the appearance of having been taken by him from the hymns of the ancient church.† "Eternal word, infinite age or æon, eternal light!" On learning from Origen‡—"As no one ought to be offended, since the Father is God, that the Son is God also; so no one ought to be offended, since God the Father is Almighty, that the Son is Almighty also!" Finally on reading in Tertullian—"He" (the Son) was "the most high, who walked in Paradise in the even-

* B. 2, ch. 55, p. 185, Oxford edition.

† End of Pædagogus.

‡ Commenting on Rev. i. 8.

ing, seeking Adam, and who shut the ark after Noah's entrance into it; and who ate with Abraham under the oak, and who called to Moses from the burning bush, and who appeared the fourth to the king in the fiery furnace." Origen speaks more fully to the point, in the beginning of the 8th book against Celsus. There is no occasion to cite more places, although there are many more; nor to go lower down in time, because they in opposition confess, that it confirmed and increased what they suppose to be an error. That they should act conformably with this opinion, and therefore lay no stress on the authors named or on others like them, is to be expected. But when the same track is trod in by such writers as Mons. Daillé, it seems to lead them into a danger of which they are not sufficiently aware; however biassed to it by the difficulty of reconciling to the sense of the same fathers some of their tenets; the questions on which are of far less consequence than that here referred to.

There is reason on the present subject, to exercise great caution in listening to what is occasionally quoted from the fathers. Dr. Priestley, who, it is here believed, would not have designedly misrepresented, but has given many evidences of haste in quotation, represents Athanasius, on the subject of the heresy of Paul of Samosata, delivering himself as follows—"It grieves those who stand up for the holy faith, that the multitude, and especially persons of low understanding, should be infected with these blasphemies." It is an incorrect translation of the original; which lays the stress on the propagating of the error among the common people; although not without an intimation of the resulting danger. What religious communion is it, wherein there

is not sometimes the complaint, that artful persons endeavour to corrupt the minds of the common people among them—*τοις πολλοις*, as they are called by Athanasius—or *Vulgus*, as the Latin translation has it? The work of Dr. Priestley alluded to, is his *Church History*, vol. 2, p. 351. And the work of Athanasius is “*De incarnatione Verbi, contra Paulum Samosatæ.*”

Concerning the controversy as it respects the Arians, there will be no need to say much. They who are of the sentiment here entertained relatively to it, will be satisfied that the antinicensian fathers are uniformly unfavorable to the position, from which the Arian creed derives its character; that there was a time when the Son of God was not. Now however groundless this doctrine in the holy scriptures, is there no satisfaction to be derived from finding, that, when the error was first broached, and when the bishops of the Christian church united in the condemnation of it, they treated it as a novelty; declaring that it was contrary to the truth handed down to them from their fathers? And is it not still more gratifying to know, that what they thus affirmed is agreeable to the documents, which, having been before them, have been transmitted to this distant period? Although these circumstances do not create truth; yet, they surely confirm in the belief of the correctness of the apprehensions entertained of it, and help to confute the opposing theory. Why then should there be a disposition to magnify any imperfections discoverable in these documents; much more, to diminish, as much as possible, the weight of their authority?

The writer of this is not backward to acknowledge his belief, that to the prejudice here noticed, there has been in a considerable degree owing the known fact.

of a vast accession of the dissenting interest in England to the profession of Socinianism and of Arianism, since the days of Mons. Daillé. The largest body of the English dissenters generally took the ground, relatively to the fathers, occupied by Mons. Daillé in the present treatise: and yet, both he and they were as remote as possible from the errors here in contemplation. That his ingenious work tended much to fix them in their sentiments concerning the fathers, is not only probable in itself, but appears from the frequent citing of it by writers of their description. Their approbation of the book, is noticed in the *Biographia Britannica*; which quotes a cotemporary writer remarking, that they esteemed it highly; while those of the established church made no great account of it. The truth was, that episcopacy and forms of prayer having been found very early in the church, without any information given of their beginnings, there was no plausible way of accounting for this, but by supposing them to have crept in just before the time when ecclesiastical monuments begin to multiply; and when Calvinism, if supposed to have been originally in the church, had confessedly abandoned it. This very period is fastened on by the advocates of Socinianism, as the most suitable to the supposition of the introduction of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. To those who are believers in this doctrine, the preceding fact is a fair argument, for the inducing of such a measure of respect for the authority of the early fathers, as it is the object of this part of the work to claim for them. For let it be still remembered, that there is far from being a wish to make their authority co-ordinate with that of scripture. But they are

considered as good witnesses of fact: and under this description, the existence of opinion is thought to come.

CONCLUSION.

M. Daillé's commendations of the fathers—these applied as a test to the present subject—extremes to be avoided.

In the progress of this section, it has not been forgotten, that the object was to comment on a work of a man of the first rank in the literary world. There has been, however, the greater freedom taken in the examining of it, from the consideration, that in drawing to a conclusion, there would be an opportunity of bringing the subject to a test to be found in Mons. Daillé's work itself. It is where, having gone through his reasons, he proposes and answers the question* —“How and in what cases the writings of the fathers may be useful?” He declares at some length the sentiment, that their contents are so valuable, as to render their books useful, independently on the high reputation of the authors, and even if their names were unknown. From this, he goes on to praise their admirable exhortations to holiness, and to the observance of the discipline of Jesus Christ. Further, the very strong and solid proofs found in them of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, are considered as rendering them important: and even their authority, in this particular, is confessed to be of use. In regard also to the Christian discipline itself, Mons. Daillé considers the exquisite wisdom and beauty of it, as a certain argument of its truth. After enlarging on these topics, he

* B. 2. page 179.

goes on as follows; and, as is here thought, most pertinent to the present purpose.*

“But now, † besides what has been hitherto said, we may, in my opinion, make another very considerable use of the fathers. For there sometimes arise such troublesome spirits, as will needs broach doctrines, devised of their own head, which are not at all grounded upon any principle of the Christian religion. I say therefore, that the authority of the ancients may very properly and seasonably be made use of, against the impudence of these men: by showing, that the fathers were utterly ignorant of any such fancies, as these men propose to the world. And if this can be proved, we ought then certainly to conclude, that no such doctrine was ever preached to mankind; either by our Saviour Christ, or by his apostles. For what probability is there, that those holy doctors of former ages, from whose hands Christianity hath been derived down unto us, should be ignorant of any of those things, which had been revealed, and recommended by our Saviour, as important and necessary to salvation?”

Here then is a test, to which it is wished to bring the doctrines of Calvinism, in this department of the work;

* Mons. Daillé, in different parts of his treatise, has similar remarks, commendatory of the wisdom and the piety discoverable in the writings of the fathers. In this, he is very different from Mr. Toplady; who thought the few golden grains in them not worth the looking for, in the mass of other matter. Still less fortunate was Dr. Hawies; who seems to have missed finding the few golden grains; and to have been obliged to suppose true religion among persons who have not written, and to look for it among the early heretics.

† Page 147.

although without applying to the maintainers of it the severity of expression, in the hypothetical censure of the quotation. It is contended, that the doctrines of irrelative election, partial redemption, the theories superadded to the doctrine of original sin, irresistible grace and final perseverance—all which are held to be essential ingredients of divine truth—are not to be found in the antinice fathers, nor for a considerable space of time below them. It is contended further—and the proof of the position is rested on authorities in the preceding chapter,—that the contrary of these doctrines was taught correctly and without opposition. If then the opinion above recited from Mons. Daillé be correct, the judgment of the fathers should be decisive; however common it may be to make light of them in this respect, and to quote what is often considered as the triumphant argument of Mons. Daillé, against the validity of their testimony.

The subject is conceived to be one of those, which call for opinions in a medium between extremes. That even some protestants have quoted the fathers in such a manner, as wears the appearance of their conceiving of them to be almost on a level with Holy Scripture, is certain. But if this is an extreme, it is also one to consider their opinion as not at all tending to ascertain that of the apostolic age, so recently before them. And the yielding to them of this, is no more than would be done to any civil community of men, in succession. A community, whether civil or religious, comprehending persons of both sexes and of all ages and characters, do not change their maxims and their habits suddenly, nor without some struggle between ancient custom and mo-

dern innovation. This is the only ground—taken, as is visible, in human nature and in experience of the ways of men—on which antiquity is brought in aid of scripture, for the determining of the controversy in the contemplation of this work.

APPLICATION

TO THE

CRISIS OF INQUIRY.

Design of the application—result of the work as it respects predestination---redemption---free will—grace—perseverance—test of interest---justification---conversion---question of practical effect---caution against uncharitableness---reference to St. Austin's catechism---caution against metaphysical subtilities.

WHILE the sense of religion is a principle which should govern in all the concerns of life, diffusing its precious influences, even when it is not the immediate subject of contemplation; there are some seasons, in which an extraordinary degree of seriousness may be induced, under the agency of the spirit of God, by some event brought about in the course of his providence; or by some cause, not distinctly to be traced to its beginning. It is here judged useful, to contemplate the bearings of the subjects of this work, on such a crisis. This is thought the more expedient, on account of the effects of the law of association, on the processes of the human

understanding. At such an interesting period as that intimated, in the event of receiving with Christian doctrine, any matter which incidentally accompanies, and is erroneously supposed to be in alliance with it; there is an exposure to the alternate danger, that either the two will be seen in such a combination, as that they shall be held alike important—which is a source of much uncharitableness; or, that on the discovery of the inconsistency with the obvious suggestions of reason, and with the nature and the condition of man, there will be an indiscriminate abandonment of the whole, and admission given to the imposing pretensions of infidelity.

The author of this work, aware of the importance of its results, and of his responsibility in declaring them, passes to his intended summary. In the progress, it will be proper to consider every individual as of the grade of the mass of mankind, in respect to talent and to acquirement; because the gospel was given as the means of salvation, to persons of all conditions. On some accounts, it is said to be preached especially to the poor: a circumstance, which is itself a disproof of every theory, involving metaphysical subtlety and many curious distinctions; for the entering into which, people of that description have neither leisure, nor the necessary apparatus of human literature.

First, on the subject of predestination; the counsel is here given to the sincere seeker of “the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”* to withhold his attention from the question of the decrees of God, in regard to individuals, and the conditions of them respectively in another life; not because there could ever have been a

* Matt. vi. 33.

point of time, in which there did not apply to the great Creator what is said—"known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world;" but because there is nothing in scripture concerning his decrees, as to the point stated. The contemplated person will indeed read there of predestination and election. But these terms are to be referred by him to the church, as a collective body. As under the legal covenant, the Jewish nation were called "a chosen"—"a peculiar"—and "an holy people;" under the evangelical economy, there is contemplated a people, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, who, in respect to the benefits covenanted to them, and the consequent obligations, are called—elect—saints—and by other terms of the same signification. There are some reasonings, especially applying to this election; which, like the reasonings applying to the distinctions of meats and drinks, are at present of less importance than they were in the apostolic age; because of the ceasing of the prejudices, which they were designed to contradict. Not that either of these descriptions of passages, are therefore un instructive. For while the principle of the one still gives a lesson of mutual forbearance, on points in which the essentials of Christianity are not concerned; the other, by directing the attention to counsels, which were in the divine mind before time began, embraces a succession of dispensations, reaching from the beginning of the world to its dissolution; not only thereby tending to confirm our faith in our holy religion, which is often rejected from its being contemplated in detached parts, and not as a consistent whole; but being also a motive to dependence on promises which are "yea and amen;" that is immutable and sure. In the sense here defined.

every communion in which the word of God is faithfully preached and the sacraments are duly administered, are the elect of God; as were churches which the apostles acknowledged under the same terms, although comprehending some persons, with traits of character not agreeable to their professions. And therefore, the being elect will not avail, without "making the election sure:" that is, firm or stable by inward holiness and virtuous conduct.

While the inquirer is thus released from perplexities of various sorts, let him be aware, that there should press on his conscience the obligation, consequent on the view of the subject now brought before him. For in proportion to the importance thus annexed to the church of God, as his elect, there may be inferred the guilt, and the danger, of a character alien from so holy a designation: which is the very matter described under the figure of the tares among the wheat, in the field of the Almighty husbandman.

Next, as to the point of *Redemption*. This is to be received as expressed in the general terms of scripture, without the supposition of a reserve rendering it vain, in regard to a great proportion of mankind; or rather, with a denial of there being any thing of this sort. When the passages of scripture, speaking to this point, are taken according to the obvious meaning of the words, they are level to every understanding. To bring them all into consistency with the doctrine of discriminate election, is the work of metaphysical refinement.

The devout mind, assailed by any such endeavour, to bring universality of offers into consistency with partiality of design, may reasonably consider, that no earthly potentate, not unjust and cruel beyond the ordinary

measure of human wickedness, would hold out conditions of peace to rebellious subjects; with the design of interposing circumstances, which should hinder a considerable number of them from accepting the proposals. Whether this were by severing ability from will, or by the contriving of causes which would assuredly influence the latter; the result, and the apparent impeachment of benevolence, is the same in both cases. A position so revolting to the understanding, has attained to its most forbidding aspect; when the damnation of the reprobate, in itself a subject of divine decree, is aggravated by offers and invitations to the contrary: this being said to be the purpose, for which they are given.

Thirdly, Free will has been considered, as having a reference to two subjects. So far as it belongs to the old controversy of liberty and necessity, which has exercised the wits and the pens of speculative men from very remote times to the present, it has been an object to prove, that the books of scripture know nothing of it. If so, both sides of the question are as uselessly brought into theology, as would be contending theories concerning the tides and the figure of the earth. Also, without reference to that subtilty. On the question, whether in doing good or in doing evil, we are so far free, as is requisite to responsibility; it is sufficient, that the sense of liberty is universal, so as to warrant the belief, that what denies it, must be educed from recondite speculations, which we are not bound to understand or to listen to. On no other ground, can conscience do its work: and on no other will sinners, in a future state, look back with self condemnation on a day of grace, mercifully bestowed on them, but suffered to pass away unimproved.

In the bearing of the subject on the question of man's inability to do good of himself, the truth of this is to be admitted, to the utmost extent. It is not necessary, that any one should acknowledge himself to be or ever to have been a willer of the commission of crimes, without the consciousness of a disposition to them. But he ought to know, and to feel himself under a deterioration of nature, which may well be said to have infected all the properties of his soul and of his body: since, however useful in his constitution every principle relatively to its end; all the principles of it, because of the imbecility of reason and the force of temptation, are liable to be perverted from their proper objects; of which the result is a state of sin, and its rendering of us liable to just punishment. This is a view of the subject, which not only scripture gives, but to which consciousness sets its seal. And the proper effect of it is self-abasement, under the misery of our natural condition; and a looking for the remedy of it, to divine grace: which accomplishes its work, only in proportion as natural imperfection is remedied by its sufficiency, and as natural corruption is subdued under its energy.

This leads to the fourth point; which may be considered as applying to two questions: that of divine aid, and that of the subject in comparison of merit.

In regard to the first of these, there cannot be held out, in terms too unequivocal and unlimited, the need of the influence of the holy spirit, without the distinction of before and after the first direction of the mind to God. The earliest motions to this effect, are preceded by an influence leading to it: and to the same, all succeeding proficiency is to be ascribed. But when questions are raised on the distinctions of resistible or irre-

sistible, ordinary or efficacious, and the like; the guide are the plain words of scripture: which suppose, that the spirit may be “resisted”—“grieved”—and “quenched.” It is indeed acknowledged, by those who carry their speculations to a supposed extreme, that these cautions are given, and that the sense of them is presumed, in the exhortations, the promises, and the threatenings of scripture. But they maintain, that these things refer to a grace given, not to save, but to render inexcusable; while there is another species of grace, not given in vain. Now this is a matter, contended to be extraneous to the sphere of revelation; and therefore, on which the believer is not bound to exercise his ingenuity, in order to reconcile it with the other. Were he persuaded of the truth of both, it would be natural for him to endeavour to solve the apparent inconsistency: and the curious distinctions which this calls for, are themselves evidence, that the need of them is not bound on us.

The practical tendency of what has been stated, should bring it home to the bosoms of all; with the intimation, that while every outward call, either to repentance or to a religious progress, is from the revelation of the will of God in scripture; every inward motion to them, is from that influence of his spirit, in which he is said to stand at the door of the heart and knock.

As grace is opposed to merit; the sense of the scriptures concerning the latter, are equally obvious and decisive. For there is no one point, at which their instructions are more directly aimed, than to the battering down of the conceit of merit on the part of man. Were there no revelation; self-knowledge, accompa-

nied by a correct apprehension of the divine perfections, might have led to the same conclusion. But besides, there are precepts going to the suppression of every sentiment of self-righteousness. Above all, to guard against it, there is exhibited another ground of merit, in the sacrifice of the death of Christ; which, being evidently a dispensation altogether independent on any act of man, and yet plainly held out to us as the only procuring cause of his salvation, and the only ground of the acceptance of his person and of his performances; there is not the shadow of excuse to any professor of Christianity, to arrogate merit: whether because of works imagined to be good, or because of a comparative freedom from such as are evil.

This is a simple truth, applying immediately to feeling and to practice; and needs not to be encumbered with any theory, remote from ordinary apprehension. For although there may seem some opening for this, in what is said concerning faith and concerning works; to each of which the virtue of justification is ascribed, to the former by St. Paul, and to the latter by St. James; yet it is easy to see—what we are obliged occasionally to see in every species of composition—that, owing to the imperfection of language, the words are differently used by those apostles. This circumstance points to the solution of the difficulty: and it appears, that, in the language of St. Paul, the obedience of Abraham was made such, by the faith which was its principle; while, in the language of St. James, what made the faith effectual, was its being such as is productive of obedience. They speak of the same requisite, but each of them takes notice of a different property of it. In the passage of the old testament to which they both refer, the

only merit recognised must have been that of the future sacrifice of Christ; to which there was a relation in the state of mind of Abraham, whether we call it, with one apostle, faith; or with another, work. To bring the matter home to ourselves, neither our faith nor our works can be meritorious in the sight of God: and therefore when we say, agreeably to the usual language of the New Testament, that faith, as laying hold on the merits of the Mediator, justifies; the faith spoken of is such as comprehends the germ or principle of obedience. It seems easy to apprehend this truth; and it is sufficient for all the demands of humility, in relation to ourselves; and for those of unbounded gratitude to God, “who gave his only-begotten son” for our redemption; and to this friend of sinners, who “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

Lastly; if the system here maintained be correct, the notion of the perseverance of the saints, or the impossibility of falling from grace once given, is to be abandoned, as an invention merely human. And in contrariety to any confidence, which might otherwise be built on a foundation so unsound; we are to contemplate habitually such passages of scripture, as where we are instructed—“Take to yourselves the whole armour of God”—and—“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall:” not however to the neglect of another description of passages, given to inspire confidence, in the stability, not of our own state, but of the divine aid, so long as it is cultivated. And of these, there is an instance where it is said—“No creature shall separate us from his love.”

In judging of the interest of the individual, in such precious promises as that the last referred to; it is a

result of the foregoing work, that the only test to be relied on, is the correct state of the affections, and the evidence of it in the life and conversation: and not joyful feeling, produced by what may be supposed a divine communication. The consequence of the latter estimate, is in many instances groundless comfort; and in many others, dejection equally groundless: and not only so, but sometimes, what reconciles to the sway of sinful passion, or to long intervals of extreme indifference, provided there be the occasional possession of better sensibilities; which may be ascribed to grace, when their source is in animal organization.

If, independently on a permanent test, the anxious mind should be solicitous as to the beginning point of its justification; either it was at an adult age, on the first exercise of evangelical faith, accompanied by repentance; in which case, it should have been sealed by the introductory ordinance of Christianity: or, if there have been subjection to this in infancy, it was then the party began to be recognized, in the eye not of man only, but of God, as a Christian. After a fall from that state, it can be recovered only by repentance. The question of the sincerity of this is addressed to consciousness, and the assurance of the acceptance of it, is in the declarations of the divine word.

Another point on which the enquirer may be embarrassed, is that of what is called conversion; affirmed by some to be universally obligatory, from a state in which the party has been hitherto under the wrath of God. This is a matter to be spoken of with especial caution, lest there should be nourished the security of those, who are living without God in the world; or lest, under occasional drawings to him, they should conceive of

themselves as acting up to the demands of duty, by a change to exterior regularity of conduct; or that a substantial reformation can be accomplished in them, without sensibility to the guilt of sin, and without repentance for the past. But if the party be conscious of past habits of living in the fear of God and of obedience to his laws; although accompanied by such imperfection and such failure, as is confessedly consistent with the Christian state; it may be humbly hoped by him, that he is not one of those who are to be awakened from the sleep of sin; but that he is rather of the number, who are to be incited to go on unto perfection. But this is not to lessen his sensibility, to his constant dependence on the holy Spirit of God; to whom alone he is indebted, for the grace in which he stands; and by which alone, he can in future be kept from falling.

After all, to the stopping short at the limits defined, there has been anticipated the objection, that the truths specified, not carried to the extent of Calvinism, have not the salutary virtue which brings them home to the affections. If this were true, the scheme given must be destitute of the property of the gospel, which renders it "the power of God unto salvation." But after the most serious and frequent investigation of the practical influence of opinion; there is not perceived any, which is not embraced by the theory disclosed. The doctrines emphatically called "evangelical" are rendered such, either in reference to God and his unmerited grace in Christ; or in reference to man, in his circumstances of sinfulness and weakness. It is trusted, that, in the present work, those truths have been exhibited with these their relations. Further, it is

trusted, that the fact may be appealed to, of their being so preached, under the divine blessing, with effect. And although it will not be denied, that they are also effectually preached, in alliance with the points of Calvinistick theory; yet, that with the superaddition, they are the more influential in practice, and especially in persuading to the species of devotion, and to the cast of character, to which the self-denying doctrines of the gospel have an immediate relation; is a matter, not allowed to be grounded on observation. But this is not said, with the view of charging special delinquency on any description of persons; comparisons in this way being always dangerous.

Accordingly, it is here wished, in regard to any reader who may consent in the premises, to give a caution against charging the maintainers of the opposite opinion, with consequences which may seem pernicious, but are disavowed. It is allowable in argument, to object to opinion because of apparent consequences: while, to fasten them on those by whom they are disavowed, is either railing or defamation. In one particular, an opponent of the Calvinistick theory, may often be in circumstances painful to his feelings. It is, when he finds himself, in the estimation of worthy persons—for this happens—a denier of the sovereignty and of the grace of God. However repulsive the sentiment, it should be submitted to with meekness; under the recollection, that it is the result of speculations independent on the consideration of the person, on whose case it has a bearing. He may be an object of the regard, and subject of the prayers, of those who hold up their hands against the supposed defect of his creed.

Under the charge, of not giving a sufficient view of the doctrines of grace, the principal consolation of the author, is his full persuasion of an agreement with the oracles of God. Yet he will not hesitate to avail himself of such human authority, as ought to be weighty with those, who are the most likely to pass the censure; and to which there is now a reference, for the satisfaction of those who can avail themselves of the contemplated document. The authority alluded to, is that of the great St. Austin, whose judgment has been so much dissented from, in the progress of this work; but who is celebrated on the other side, as the restorer of the doctrines of grace, after their having been lost, or nearly so, for some ages. The work of his in view, is his dissertation on catechizing, in the 4th volume of his works of the edition of 1571. In this excellent little tract, the father, after giving some very judicious precepts respecting difference of instruction suited to difference of character, concludes with an affectionately pious address, from the catechist to the catecumen. Such a tract as this, ought not to be without the doctrines of grace. Neither is it: but whoever shall look there for any doctrines purely Calvinistick, will be disappointed. It is probable, that he considered his newly introduced theory, as uninteresting to persons of an ordinary measure of information: if so, it is not deeply interesting to any.

The occasion calls for an especial application of the subject, to any readers who may be members of the church, whose principles this work is especially intended to sustain. Although with her institutions, and with the prayers in particular, the doctrines of grace are so embodied, as that they cannot be withdrawn

without divesting the forms as well of substance as of edification; yet there is no property of them more remarkable, than their being naked of such distinctions concerning election, original sin, grace, and the like important subjects, as it requires some acuteness of intellect to apprehend, and a considerable strength of memory to retain. While this should be an incitement, to the improvement of what is sufficient for the building of them up in their most holy faith, it should habituate them to the contemplating of extraneous speculations as perhaps useless, but certainly as not entering into the substance of revealed truth.

Of the view which has been given of the subject treated of, it seems a considerable recommendation, that all the uses of them may be obtained, without the aid of metaphysics, extraneous to scripture. But if any, with the necessary talents and information, are disposed to exercise themselves in that mazy field; let them not suppose, while thus engaged, that they are treading on the hallowed ground of revelation. Not only so, let them be aware of bringing within this inclosure any apparent treasures, discovered in the other: such a mixture of philosophy with divine truth having produced many innovations, to which there may be applied that fatherly saying of St. Paul to the Corinthians; where* after having told them—“I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy,” he adds—“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

* 3 Cor. xi. 2.

To guard against this danger; let all, and especially those who investigate such subjects, further than is exacted by the plain sense of scripture—and here the author of this work wishes to recollect always his own interest in the admonition—occasionally put up some such prayer as that of the psalmist—“ O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.”*

* Ps. xliii. 3.

THE END.

ERRATA FOR VOL. II.

- Page 14, line 8, for "Augustan," read "Augsburg."
17, 10, do. do.
27, 9, do. do.
28, and throughout the volume, for "Lawrence," read
"Laurence."
78, last line, after "applied," insert "to."
191, line 12, dele "or."
200, 8, for "and," read "or."
296, 8, for "Terence," read "Tacitus."





