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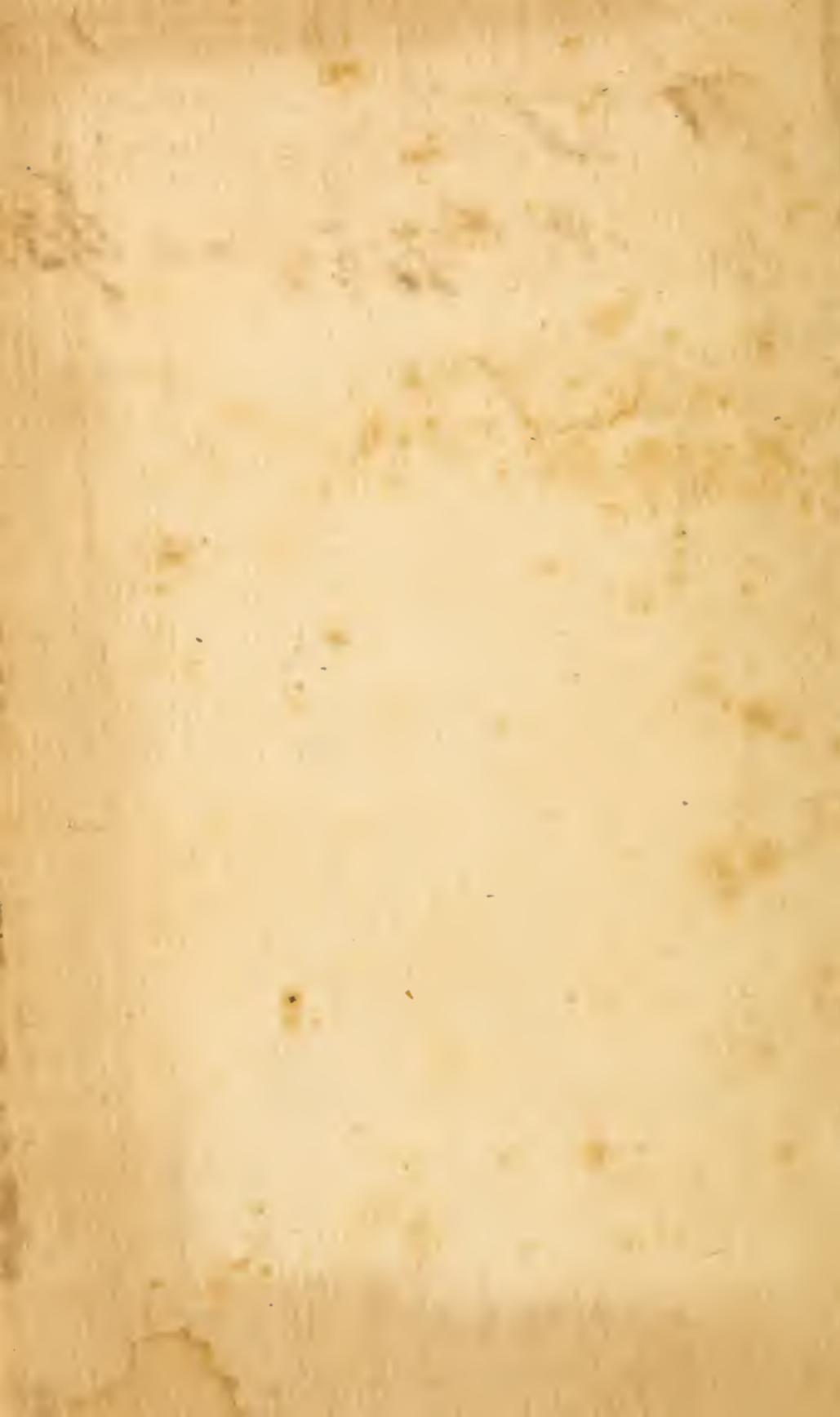
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A  
C O M P E N D I U M  
O F  
C H R I S T I A N  
T H E O L O G Y.

BY JOHN FREDERICK ✓ OSTERWALD,  
A CELEBRATED DIVINE OF SWITZERLAND.

Newly Translated into ENGLISH, from the Original LATIN.

BY THE REV. JOHN M'MAINS.

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H A R T F O R D :  
PRINTED BY NATHANIEL PATTEN. M.DCC.LXXXVIII.



## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**T**HE following letter, addressed to a Clergyman of character in the country, with whom the Author of this Version had cultivated a friendly correspondence for a considerable time, perhaps, may not be improper to be communicated to the public, as it may partly serve to shew his intention in falling about the work, and partly apologize for whatever inaccuracies may occur to the judicious and learned reader.

REV. SIR,

HAVING resided for some time in the country, without business of any importance, I at length began to expostulate with myself, how I might employ the leisure hours on my hands, so as to accomplish some valuable end. The result of my most serious, and intense reflections on this subject, is the exhibition of an English version of a small, but very comprehensive System of sound Divinity. The Author of it is the celebrated Osterwald of Switzerland, a very learned Divine, and most agreeable Preacher. This Author, with whose character, I suppose, you are well acquainted, together with all his performances, have been much extolled, and applauded wherever they appeared.

SUCH a design as this, I think, if prosecuted, and with a tolerable degree of accuracy executed,

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might

might be deemed a kind office, both by the learned and unlearned. It might be of use to young men candidates for the Ministry, if any such are to be found, who have not attained to a thorough knowledge of the Latin Language. In particular, it might improve my own mind, as it tends to inspire the most elevated conceptions of Religion and Virtue. Now though I look on such an undertaking as truly laudible, yet a certain self-diffidence intervenes, which does not indeed proceed so much from any consciousness I entertain of my ignorance of either the Author's language, or meaning, but rather from a jealousy of my not being so much master of English, as might enable me to do justice to so glorious an Author; an Author, the sublimity of whose sentiments, merit the most masterly strokes of the finest pen, put into the hands of the most enlarged, and refined genius. Being thus embarrassed by this obstacle, I thought proper, Sir, to apply unto you, whose situation in life must, in an eminent degree, render you acquainted with literature, for your candid advice. Now, in order that you may be the better judge, and determine in this case, I have sent you a specimen of the intended translation, with the original, which I hope you will peruse, and compare together, and after perusal, and comparison, frankly tell your mind. If your judgment is in my favour, I shall with the greater ardor proceed, if otherwise, I shall bear matters, with a philosophical patience, I had almost said a stoical apathy.

## INTRODUCTION.

v

BEING encouraged by the Gentleman alluded to, the Editor proceeded, and thinks that he cannot afford the world a better character of both the Author and original work, than what was drawn by Mr. Robert Foulis, Printer for the Academy of Glasgow, in the year, One thousand, seven hundred and thirty-nine. Which I have translated, and is as follows.

To

To the Benevolent READER, the Bookseller  
wifheth all Health.

**A**T length I deliver to you, described with my own types, John Frederick Osterwald, an incomparable Divine and Preacher, and a very venerable Deacon of the Church of Neucomium, his Compendium of Christian Theology. This small volume, if you only regard its size, will appear to be of little value, but after looking into its contents, will be deemed greater than any price. It is a notorious fact, that for the most part, such compends of sciences as have been made public to the world, have not been attended with that degree of success which might be wished for, which can be attributed to no other cause, but that their authors frequent weighing the moment of things in unjust balances, without a discriminating judgment, omitting matters of the greatest moment, dwell upon the surface and inutilities; and thus, instead of compends, rather obtrude upon their disciples, the loss of leisure and time. The case here is quite the reverse, where this very great man of the most penetrating judgment, propounds the capital topics of universal Theology, with that perspicuity, that force of argumentation, that simplicity, and which is the principal recommendation of a Divine, that desire of promoting peace, that I must ingeniously assert, no book equal to it, hath hitherto been extant, and would not scruple to apply

ply to it that Epithet of the Jews concerning the Sacred Writings themselves, viz. that it contains the most momentous doctrines, every where pending on pregnant expressions. Nor, certainly, Reader, is there any cause why you should entertain the smallest doubtfulness concerning these assertions, or imagine that they proceed from any fordid views of making gain. For, long since, hath the illustrious Osterwald, by other writings which he has published, of the greatest utility to the Christian world, proved, that only things of such importance could proceed from him, being born for the good of the Church. The greatest Divines have acknowledged the signal weight, and moment of his writing, who, during the space of thirty years since, have judged it advantageous, nay even necessary, both in their private and public schools, to instill into their auditors, the pure and sacred streams of salutary doctrine, Osterwald being their guide. In a word, the judgment formed by all, concerning this Compendium, who have ever been acquainted with it, appears even from this, that there was not one single person among them, who, seeing that at that time the precious treasure could not be otherwise obtained, did not transcribe it with his own hand, or take care that it should be done for him, all being of opinion, that neither pains nor cost should be spared in the acquisition. It had indeed been long since desired, that either the celebrated Author himself had been the Editor, or that he had given permission to others to be so, but previously, applications of such sort have been fruitless. Now

at length having obtained leave from the venerable old man himself, to be the publisher, this I have certainly done with the greatest care and attention, in order that I might deliver it unto you, Reader, as correct as possible, and free from the errors of transcribers. The principal passages in Sacred Scriptures, which are only cited, I have every where set down in full. Therefore, friendly Reader, with gladness of heart enjoy this gift, and let your fervent prayers be united with mine to Almighty God, that he may keep its venerable Author in safety until he arrives at the age of Nestor : moreover, that he may abundantly supply him with strength, to edify the Church of Christ, not only as a preacher, but likewise by the addition of various writings, with which we are well assured his desks are replete. Farewell.

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T H E O L O G Y.



THE PREFACE.

**W**HOSOEVER aspires after the sacred office of a Minister of the Gospel, previous to all other considerations, ought maturely to consider what is the scope of his studies, or wherein the method and nature of that most sacred function consists; this is necessary, in order that he might turn his attention towards himself, and be well assured, whether his vocation to it be from God, as likewise, that he might fully comprehend what he has to undergo, in order that he might become a fit pastor of Christ's flock.

In our preface, therefore, we shall endeavour to explain the three following particulars. First, Wherein the nature of the ministry of the Gospel  
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consists. Second. What qualifications are requisite in a Minister of the word of God. Third. What preparation is necessary, in order to the undertaking this office in a proper manner.

## I.

**T**HE duty and office of a minister of the Church consists of four parts. First. To teach or announce the doctrine of the Gospel. Second. To celebrate divine worship, and be employed about sacred things. Third. To preside over the Church, and rule the flock. Fourth. To be entirely devoted to piety.

I. THE first duty is to teach. For since knowledge is the fountain from which all religion, faith and piety do spring, it was therefore the divine pleasure to constitute, or set apart a certain order of men in his Church, whose peculiar office should be to instruct others. Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. i. 9. Also, Eph. iv. 11. These Pastors are termed Doctors, or Teachers; but now it is the duty of such to teach, both what we are to believe, and what we ought to practise, in order that we may become partakers of salvation. This cannot otherwise be accomplished better, than by expounding the word of God in it's genuine purity and simplicity; especially by imbuing the minds of younger persons, or children, with the greatest care and solicitude, with the knowledge of religion; but this being granted by all, we should not spend time in proving it.

## II. MINISTERS

II. MINISTERS are appointed for this purpose, viz. to celebrate divine worship, and to be employed about things that are sacred, as prayer, praises, reading the Scripture, administration of the sacraments, and whatever other things appertain to the worship of God. See Acts vi. 4. xiii. 1. 2. 3. 4. &c. To this refers that ancient institution, observed in the Jewish, as well as in the Christian Church, by which the Priests, Levites, likewise Bishops, and the whole body of the Clergy, were officially bound to attend sacred conventions at certain hours, to read and recite certain portions of Scripture, prayers, and praises, which pious institution has fallen into disuse among us, not without a signal detriment to the Church.

III. THE office of Ministers consists in the government of the Church, and in the care of their flocks, as we shall demonstrate more fully in it's proper place. But this much we thought proper to observe at our entrance upon Theology, because an opinion hath almost universally prevailed in our churches, that the office of pastors is fully discharged by the preaching of the word, and administration of the sacraments. But scarcely did any opinion more dangerous ever infect the minds of mankind than this, which defines Ministers as being no more than preachers, or teachers, who at certain hours and appointed seasons, harangue the multitude, recite prayers, and celebrate certain external rites in the Church. There is something in the case no less necessary, but far more difficult, viz. the government of the Church, and the care  
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of souls. See 1 Tim. iii. 5. Heb. xiii. 17. Which duty, indeed, ought to be performed, not only in a public, but likewise in a private manner, and in every particular family. Acts xx. 20. Now, this may be accomplished by admonishing each private person, reprehending sinners, exciting the slothful and remiss, comforting the afflicted, announcing remission of sins to the penitent, and the wrath of God against such as are obstinate. Add to this, the exercise of discipline, expelling unworthy persons the communion of the sacraments, nay, the excommunication of such as are deeply immersed in vice, and obdurate, who with the greatest effrontery, dare to transgress in the most public manner. All these acts are essential to the office of a Minister, not by any modern institution of men, but the appointment of God, without the discharge of which, the Church can by no means be preserved in it's purity and safety.

IV. THE fourth duty of a Minister of the word of God, is a prevailing desire after godliness, and purity of life and manners. That remarkable passage in 1 Tim. iii. refers to this, where the Apostle professedly treats of the duties requisite in a Bishop, and in the first place mentions, that he should be blameless: This piety towards God, and purity of life, is requisite in Ministers, not merely as it conduceth to their own salvation, but chiefly as it is productive of influence and authority to their doctrine and office, nay even to their very persons; whereas, on the contrary, all the power and energy of their preaching  
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is entirely lost, the whole authority of pastors vanisheth, if they are defective in this single point. Besides, such is the nature of the duties belonging to this most sacred office, that they cannot be discharged by any person, not really pious, such as teaching, exhortation, consolation, reprehension, prayer, &c. Moreover, they are called for this very purpose, viz. that they might rule the Church by their example, and preside over others. 1 Pet. v. 3. There the Apostle teacheth us, that Presbyters ought to be men of such characters, as that they might be deemed proper examples to their flocks. This they may attain to, if they are but constantly intent upon prayer and meditation, not only to be seen of men, but which is the principal part of their duty, they ought always to consider themselves, as acting in the presence of God. We find the Apostle Paul, in all his Epistles, intent upon prayer and thanksgivings, in behalf of the Church, upon all occasions. So that to conclude, he is to be deemed a true Minister of God, who daily implores his aid, consults him upon every occurrence in life, has recourse unto him at all times, entertains the most grateful affections towards him, and earnestly recommends to his care and protection the flock committed to his charge, with every particular member thereof, according to what every one's state and necessity may require. To pray without ceasing, I say, is the primary, and most excellent part of the pastoral office, and this I do recommend with the greater earnestness, because even Ministers themselves, or such as are coadjutors in their office,

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are not sufficiently attentive to this important part of their duty and sacred function.

## II.

### *Of the Qualifications of a Minister of the Word of God.*

**T**HE first qualification requisite in a Minister of the word of God, is piety; this is evident from that passage in Tim. iii. quoted above, to which the greatest attention should be paid, by such as aspire after the office of the Holy Ministry. A Minister, indeed, ought to be furnished with a variety of endowments, but he ought especially to be sincere and blameless. A Bishop, says Paul, should be blameless. Which words denote, that this is a necessary and primary prerequisite, or, as it is expressed, a cause, without which, none can with propriety, discharge the ministerial office. This is the principal, and almost only thing, that Paul urges in the passage which we have quoted, but what we are to understand by being blameless, he declares more at large, when he enumerates the several virtues which should adorn the Episcopal character, as also, those vices which he ought to avoid; from whence it appears, that this piety, or sincerity of heart, consists of these three following degrees.

I. **T**HAT he be free from all those blemishes which might be injurious to his character, diminish his authority, or be detrimental to his conscience; These Paul makes mention of, viz. the  
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love of pleasure, intemperance in drinking, avarice, the love of gain, rage, pride.

2. THAT he should be possessed of all those virtues which ought to be conspicuous in all Christians, but in an eminent degree, should add lustre to the ministerial character, such as sobriety, chastity, charity, gentleness, humility.

3. REAL and unfeigned piety, which is seated in the heart, and is productive of this effect, viz. that he appears to be pious, not only in the estimation of mankind, which hypocrites may easily attain to, but he is really so in the judgment of God.

II. THE second requisite, is an ardent zeal for promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of mankind. If any one be animated with this, it will be always attended with it's inseparable concomitants, unremitting labour, assiduity, vigilance, prayer, constancy, and lastly, a wonderful power and energy of speech; on the other hand, if zeal be wanting, so will all other qualifications. So that here we may with propriety apply to zeal, what Paul speaks concerning charity. 1. Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing. Now, this zeal consists of two things. First. An ardent desire to promote the glory of God, and the restoration of piety,  
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above all other attainments, laying aside all sollicitude about riches, honours, and other earthly emoluments. Second. Cheerfulness and activity, in prosecuting such means, as may be most effectual to promote this glory and edification. Though dangers, hatred, contempt, nay, even death itself, await us,

III. THE third requisite is knowledge, in order that he might be capable of instructing others. He ought, says Paul, to hold fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers. Tit. i. 9. Here two things are to be observed. First. Caution should be used, lest this knowledge be too extensive. Second. That it should not be confined within too narrow bounds. In order to avoid which extremes, the following rule is to be observed, viz. that this knowledge is to be derived from the word of God. What Paul affirms, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17. merits the closest attention; here he expressly asserteth, that the Sacred Scripture can make the man of God, i. e. a Bishop, perfect, or furnished out for every good work, i. e. duely qualified for the discharge of every part of his office. Therefore, a Pastor ought to use his utmost efforts in order to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the word of God, so that he might be capable of expounding it to others; for which purpose, let him call to his assistance the know-  
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ledge of the languages, history, and some other branches of literature.

2. ANOTHER thing to be observed, with respect to this knowledge, and that of the greatest importance, is, that it is twofold, theoretical, and practical; the former respecting the understanding, the latter the heart and affections, the one rests in simple knowledge, the other consists in ardent breathings after piety. The former is attained by much reading, meditation, and a tenacious memory, the latter, by fervent prayers, a devote habit of mind, and an ardent desire after godliness, the one may be attained by the wicked, the other is only the portion of such as are truly pious. Now, this last kind of knowledge, or science, which we call practical, is that alone which merits the appellation of true, or real science, without which, whatever comes under the denomination of science, and erudition, is vain, trifling, nay, oftentimes hurtful,

IV. UNCOMMON prudence must be united to knowledge, for very much depends upon a teacher, or ruler of the Church, in conducting himself prudently in the discharge of every part of his office, in teaching, rebuking, administration of discipline, visitation of the sick, and the other branches of his duty, this may be done, by having a respect to time, place, persons, and a variety of other circumstances. But this prudence and skilfulness in conducting ecclesiastical affairs, which is rarely to be met with in younger persons, may

may be obtained two ways. First. By reading such authors, as treat of the discipline of the anti-ent Church, from these may be obtained, a true idea of Church government, rather than from any modern institutions or customs. Second. From usage and experience, younger persons ought to be cautious, lest the judgment they form, should proceed from levity, want of consideration, or passion; but from an habitual sedateness and tranquility of mind; they should likewise learn the nature of the Pastoral Office, by conversing and corresponding with such senior persons as excel in experimental knowledge.

V. IN the last place. There are various gifts necessary for a pastor, so that he might be rendered fit, both to instruct and rule over the Church: The former fitness is pointed out to us by Paul 1. Tim. iii. 2. where he says, That a Bishop ought to be apt, or fit to teach, but the latter, verse 5. where he says, That this is required, in order that he might become capable, of presiding over, and guarding the Church.

THESE endowments, or gifts, are peculiar to the mind, or to the body. Among the endowments of the mind, a firm and upright judgment, in conjunction with singular prudence, occupies the first, and principal room after piety, here we understand, that faculty, by which we form an accurate judgment upon propositions laid down, by which we can determine what ought to be  
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done in a variety of cases, and with what art and skill the consciencies of men are to be governed, paying a due regard to various circumstances. If any one is destitute of this faculty, it were better for him, to turn his attention to some other employment in life. Again, ingenuity, sagacity, and perspicuity, are requisite, in order to arrive at easy and distinct conceptions of things, and to be enabled to expound them with clearness to others, here we may likewise add, a retentive memory, which is requisite, particularly in such as have to deliver their sermons without book.

THE endowments of the body are well known of themselves, viz. such as appertain to the faculty of speech, and oratory, as a firm voice, proper pronunciation, the faculty of speaking with readiness and expedition, and others of the like nature, these are partly implanted in us by nature, and partly may be improved, or even acquired by labour and exercise, so much may suffice to be observed concerning gifts, or endowments.

### III.

#### *Of Preparation and Vocation to the Sacred Ministry.*

**F**IRST. We shall treat of the vocation. Second. The preparation necessary for the office of an Evangelical Pastor.

I. WHOEVER hath applied his mind to the study of Theology, with a view to discharge the office of  
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a pastor in the Church of Christ, ought to turn his attention towards himself, and be fully convinced, whether his call be from God, for as they offend who reject his call, so are they guilty of an atrocious crime, and sacrilegious temerity, who, without being called, do ambitiously sue for it, concerning whom, it may be justly said, as we read in the Prophets, They run, but I had not sent them. Jer. xxiii. 21. Therefore, I beseech you, in the most serious manner, and in the name of God, to give the closest attention to this, even at your very entrance upon theological studies.

Two things are requisite to a legitimate call, the first of which depends upon men, for in order that a call may be lawful, it is necessary that it should proceed from the pastors and governors of the Church, who are vested with the right of examining, admitting, and rejecting such as are candidates for the Ministry, as plainly appears from the Epistles of Paul. Such a vocation is altogether necessary, as it tends to good order, and decency in the Church. Therefore, Paul commands Bishops and Deacons, to try and examine, previous to admission. 1. Tim. iii. 10. The other call is internal, viz. That a person should dedicate himself to God with his whole heart, and most sincere affections, and be conscious, that he desires a bishoprick, for no other cause, but to serve God, and the Church, such a person is indeed called by God himself; and this may be easily understood by his piety, zeal, humility, devotion, fervent prayers, and purity of life and manners,

manners. If a Minister be destitute of this call, and yet be called and ordained of men, his call may indeed be lawful, as far as it respects the order of the Church, and may, in some measure, tend to edification, yet it must be pernicious to the Minister himself, of less advantage to the Church, and too audacious in the sight of God.

II. CONCERNING preparation, three things are to be considered, viz. piety, sedulity, and docility.

I. PIETY constitutes the primary, and principal part of preparation, and is of equal moment to all the rest, for if this be attained, the rest will not be wanting; sedulity will not, for piety banisheth slothfulness, and indolence, and excites to activity, and diligence. Neither will docility, for he who is truly pious, is at the greatest distance from pride and arrogance, which are its greatest adversaries, he who is pious, is also humble, entertains the most humiliating sentiments, with respect to himself, is enflamed with a desire to find out truth, and chearfully embraceth it, when proposed. Christ teacheth the necessity of this piety, John vii. 17. If any one will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine. But piety consists of two parts, viz. First. External-devotion, and daily prayer. Second. Purity of heart, and innocence of life, but especially young men, who are preparing to undertake the sacred office of the Ministry, ought to avoid carnal lusts, according to  
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Paul's admonition. 2. Tim. ii. 22. especially slothfulness, pride, and pleasures.

II. SEDULITY, and diligence. In antient times, the men of God were frequently taught by revelations, and moved by inspirations, so that without much labour and study, at certain times, they could speak in his name, but in the present times, there is need for the closest application. 1. Tim. iv. 13. 14. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, neglect not the gift that is in thee.

THE necessity of this sedulity appears, as well from the dignity, and importance of this sacred office, as the variety, multiplicity, and amplitude of Theological studies. For various is the preparation, that the man of God may be duly furnished for the discharge of so important an office such as an extensive knowledge of the Scripture, daily meditation, a thorough acquaintance with the languages, and ecclesiastical discipline, that divine art, necessary for the government of souls, and innumerable other things, any one of which, taken separately, requires great labour and pains, but complexly, ingross all the faculties of the human soul.

THERE are two faults commonly to be met with in young men, which oppose sedulity; the first is indolence, or slothfulness, which may be justly termed, the pest of youth, and fountain  
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both of ignorance and vice, for this reason it is that so few worthy Ministers are to be found.

THE latter is levity, and inconstancy, so natural to youth, this is the cause, why the greatest part of young men, upon the very commencement of their studies, turn slothful, fly from one kind of study to another, do nothing accurately, and mostly abhor such as require long time, and close application.

III. **DOCILITY** comprehends the four following particulars. First. A consciousness of ignorance; he who imagines he has already attained to knowledge, will never tamely submit to instruction, this sense of ignorance is especially requisite in young men, because, the age of youth is an age of ignorance. And yet it frequently happens, that young men will by no means acknowledge their ignorance, but when they have just saluted the first principles of erudition, imagine themselves considerable proficient in knowledge, the truth is, the more learned any person is, the more humiliating sentiments will he entertain respecting himself, whereas, nothing is more swelled with pride than a person illiterate. Second. A mind disposed for learning, ardor, and zeal for attaining this sacred discipline. Whoever is void of this desire, must necessarily abide in ignorance. Third. Attention, without which there is no docility, he who does not attend to propositions laid before him, must either reject them totally, or otherwise admit them, by a certain blind assent, or impulse, both  
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of which are noxious to docility. So that he is a teachable scholar, who makes it his duty to give due attention to whatever instructions he either hears, or reads, and ponders them in his mind, so as to attain clear and distinct ideas of things. Fourth. Lastly, he is docile, who tamely submits to instruction and guidance, yields to the truth when known, and admits it. On the other hand, he is incapable of instruction, who will not yield to it, who is pertinaciously addicted to his own opinion; has always new scruples, and new difficulties to move, new questions to start, and something to retort. If any young man is so unhappy, as to labour under this single disadvantage, though he has all other gifts, of the most excellent kind, and hath obtained the most celebrated masters; adieu to him, he will be pertinacious through the whole of his life, morose, hated by all, a disturber of the peace of the Church; and will easily fall into error: Students usually transfer this malignant turn of mind from the study of Philosophy, erroneously instituted, and academical disputations, to the study of Theology.

To conclude, there are two things very injurious to docility, viz. prejudices, and a propensity to vice; the one precludes access to truth, the other precludes access to virtue, the former casts a darkness on the understanding, the latter depraves the will, both alienate from the love and knowledge of salutary doctrine.

## IV.

*Of the Method of Theological Study.*

A GREAT deal depends upon the order and method of studies : Many causes might be assigned, why young men, who have devoted themselves to the study of Theology, have made so slow a progress in it : But this, I think, may be ranked among the first. For the most part, they attempt it without order : Neither is this a matter of wonder, for the greatest part of them are left to themselves, without any director, or guide, or otherwise, put under the tuition of masters, who are far from being qualified for the purpose ; some adopting a preposterous method, others applying no method at all. What ought to be done first, they overlook, and treat of subjects, not suitable for beginners ; they take up the first book that is offered by chance, and the whole of their proceedings are attended with confusion, which want of method, retards the progress of studies, and is the parent of ignorance and confusion.

IN order, therefore, to discover my own sentiments, relative to the method of Theological study, in the first place, I would observe, before I treat of Theology itself, that there are some kinds of study, which ought to precede, or even be annexed to it.

1. THE first is the study of the languages, especially Latin, the utility of which, extends itself to almost all sciences, but especially Theology: Likewise, Greek and Hebrew, which, it is plain, are necessary, in order to attain an accurate knowledge of the Sacred Scripture. Now, the study of the languages is peculiarly adapted to youth, because, in that age they are attained with greater ease. With respect to the languages, this rule is to be observed, much practice, and but few precepts. The knowledge of them may be attained with little trouble, by frequent reading, daily exercise, and repeated interpretation.

2. SOME knowledge of Philosophy is also requisite, viz. so much as is necessary for the investigation of truth, and to direct the mind, in a proper method of reasoning. Logic is of service to this purpose. The other branches of Philosophy, though not contemptible, yet are not of such utility. But here caution should be used, lest vain curiosity, too much subtilty, a spirit, of contradiction, or an itching desire for disputation, be extracted from it, these are the common foibles of Philosophers.

THESE things being premised, we come to Theology itself, and here it is to be observed, that at their very entrance upon Theological study, they ought to begin with the reading of the Sacred Scripture, and persevere in it, through their whole life-time, according to that of Paul, 2 Tim. iii. where he says, that the Sacred Scripture can  
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make the man of God perfect; and here again, method should be used, the historical books ought to be first read, again, such are the dogmatical, and moral, and then the Prophets, concerning this, see Zaufinus's Dissertation on the Nature of Theological Study.

2. To the reading of the Scripture ought to be annexed, Sacred History, extracted from a short compend of History and Chronology, which ought indeed, to be carefully perused, and understood by beginners, so that they might have an accurate knowledge of the principal epochas, most memorable events, illustrious men, and other things of similar importance, according to the order of the different periods of time.

3. BEFORE they come to a more tedious study of the several topicks of Theology, they ought to have their minds furnished with a more general idea of it. Beginners ought to avoid all prolix authors, and lay them entirely aside, until a more proper season; let it suffice them for the present, to have some short and simple compend of Christian Theology, nay, even a Catechism. For the capital points of Theology are treated in Catechisms. Formerly, in the Primitive Church, no such persons were to be found, as we at present call Professors, but only Catechists. Such a compend ought to be seriously, and frequently read, until it be firmly riveted in the memory. After-  
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wards let them proceed to the study of more prolix, and special systems.

4. THE Scholastick method ought to be avoided, which may justly be termed the pest of Theology and Religion, that method, viz. which by various distinctions, scholastick terms, and insignificant questions, spreads a veil over the doctrine of the Gospel, which is plain and perspicuous in itself, and reduces it to a hard science. Indeed, if the Apostles were again sent into the world, and examined according to the Scholastick method, they could scarcely answer their questions, but would plainly tell them, that they never heard any such things from Christ, nor were taught them by the Holy Ghost.

SUCH things are to be met with in many systems, and in what they term common heads, where every argument is explained by matter, form, efficient, instrumental, and final causes, &c.

## V.

### *A general idea of Theology.*

IN order to perform what we but just now promised, let us here exhibit a general idea of Theology. It is a doctrine, which teacheth the knowledge and worship of God, in order that we might obtain eternal life, or, according to Paul, Tit. i. it is the knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness. There are two things to be observed,

observed, therefore, in Theology, viz. the knowledge and worship of God, or, truth and piety. It teacheth us what we ought to believe, and what we ought to practise, in order that we may become partakers of eternal life; hence it is clear, that Theology is not a science, which consists totally in theory, but likewise, and principally, in practice.

1. IT is a theoretical science, for it is quite necessary to begin with knowledge, and the doctrine of faith must have the precedency, since without faith, no worship can be pleasing to God. Heb. xi. 6. This we observe, in opposition to such as are heedless, with respect to any knowledge concerning the several articles of the Christian Faith, and look upon it as a matter of indifference, what set of principles they espouse, providing that they urge the practice and study of virtue. Which opinion is, indeed, false, and contradictory, and totally overthrows piety, which cannot exist, unless it be founded upon the knowledge of the truth.

2. BUT it is no less certain, that Theology is a science totally practical, which does not consist in bare contemplation, but wholly tends to practice, this is proved from the word of God. 1 Tim. i. 4. 5. Godly edifying is by faith, moreover, the end of the commandment is charity. And Mat. vii. 21. Not every one that sayeth unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven, and John ii. 4. If ye know  
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these things, happy are ye if ye do them. 1 John ii. 4. He that sayeth, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar. This also appears, from the nature and spirit of the Christian religion. For if we take a view of the several parts of the Christian doctrine, it will appear, that they have such reference to piety and practice, as, that this point being given up, the whole of religion may be dismissed, and will be of no utility. The several articles of the Christian religion, are such as tend to produce piety, this may be said of what it delivers, concerning the attributes of God, his power, knowledge, and mercy, and concerning his Providence, as likewise, the person, and office of our Saviour. The precepts are given for practice only, and would not be precepts, if they were given only in order that they might be known, but not put into practice. The promises entirely presuppose piety, as they are made to those only, who are truly pious. 1. Tim. iv. 8. And they would cease to be promises, if, let us live as we list, we were made partakers of the happiness proposed.

THE threatenings would be attended with no force or energy, and would only merit the appellation of bugbears, if the necessity of obedience were excluded. Bare knowledge, destitute of piety, would be so far from being available, that it would rather be an augmentation, to the degree of punishment. Luke xii. 4. 7. The servant that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, &c. Let us attend to what Paul says of empty knowledge,

ledge, which is not accompanied with piety and charity. 1. Cor. viii. and xiii.

HERE two things ought particularly to be attended to, by such as embrace the study of Theology, viz. that this practice consists of two parts, the one respecting themselves, viz. that they would unite the desire of piety with the knowledge of Theology; the other refers to the Pastoral Office, and edification of the Church, viz. that they should always have in view, to proceed in such a manner in their studies, as might be most effectual in promoting the salvation of others, and imbuing the minds of mankind, not only with the knowledge of God, and of the truth, but likewise with an affectionate sense of piety.

FROM what has been observed, concerning the nature of Theology in general, appears the transcendant dignity, and excellency of this science, and consequently of Theological study, and the sacred office of the Ministry. This appears both from the object of Theology, and it's end. It's object is God himself, his nature, attributes and works, than which, nothing can be conceived more excellent. It's end again recommends it most highly, for it teacheth by what methods men may attain real, perfect, and endless felicity; and here there is still something more excellent and sublime, viz. that the end of Theology, with respect to Ministers themselves, is the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. Which ought to inflame candidates for his holy office,  
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with the greatest ardor, when undertaking their Theological studies.

BUT, that the nature of Theology may be more fully understood, the following particulars are to be observed.

1. TRUE Theology, is that which is derived from the word of God. For, since the word of God is the method by which he hath determined to lead mankind to the knowledge of himself, it must consequently be the only fountain of true Theology. Therefore the principal duty and study of a Divine, will be to read and meditate upon the Sacred Scriptures. 1 Tim. iii. 17.

2. THEOLOGY is a doctrine very simple and perspicuous. For it consists in nothing else, but the knowledge of religion. But religion must be very simple and plain, since it was revealed, that all men, not only the learned, and such as excell in parts, but all men indiscriminately, the rude, and plebeians, who from the greatest part of mankind, might obtain salvation. Therefore, Theology and religion ought to be of such a nature, as that it might be understood by all.

3. SINCE the scope of Theology is the edification and salvation of mankind, it follows, that in every doctrine, attention should be paid to it's utility, and that such doctrines ought principally to be insisted on, as have the greatest tendency to promote the glory of God, the edification of the Church,

Church, and piety. Necessary doctrines should be distinguished from such as are profitable, and those again which are profitable, from such as are useless.

THE doctrines are necessary, without which, God cannot be worshipped, nor salvation obtained, such as the existence of God, that Christ hath redeemed us, &c.

THESE are profitable, which have indeed their own usefulness, but are not of absolute necessity, such as the understanding certain prophecies, and some doubtful passages in Scripture.

BUT they are deemed useless, which do not in any measure conduce to edification and piety. The Sacred Scripture contains none that can be termed useless; but here I call them useless, which have been blended with necessary and useful ones, such are the various controversies which have been tossed about in schools. As for instance, concerning the manner of the divine omnipresence, the manner of the eternal generation of the Son of God, or of the procession of the Holy Ghost: And besides, it ought to be observed, that these unnecessary doctrines, most commonly turn out to be noxious, as when they are proposed as necessary, or rashly defined, or, when upon their account, the peace and tranquility of the Church are violated, &c. And on the other hand, there are errors, which may be termed either deadly, hurtful, or indifferent. These are deadly which  
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overthrow religion from it's foundation, and are destructive to faith and piety. Those again are noxious, or hurtful, which though not necessarily, nor at all times, yet, very frequently, and easily are injurious to salvation, and detrimental to piety. Those errors, again, are indifferent, on account of which, none are excluded from salvation, providing they still retain such doctrines, as are fundamental. 1 Cor. iii. 11-15. Likewise, Rom. xiv. &c. No person is free from errors of this kind.

THIS distinction is of signal use in Theology, especially in treating of controversies, with which our modern Theology abounds, and upon it very much depends the peace of the Church, and harmony in sentiments.

BUT here it may be enquired, how we are to distinguish between necessary and fundamental articles of faith, as also betwixt fundamental, and deadly errors.

WITH respect to which question, I think that the four following safe, and simple rules may be observed.

1. WHATEVER doctrine is expressly, and frequently inculcated in Scripture, with the promise of salvation, or the threatening of damnation annexed to it, that doctrine may be termed fundamental; such as that Christ is the Son of God, that  
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he died for the sins of mankind, that good works are necessary, the resurrection, judgment, &c.

2. THAT doctrine, which is so closely connected with a fundamental article, as that laying it aside, the other cannot be retained, is fundamental. But that doctrine which overthrows any fundamental article, is necessarily, and of itself a deadly, or destructive error.

3. THE doctrine which banisheth piety and the fear of God, is destructive, that which doth not banish it totally, but diminisheth it, is dangerous, but that which doth not promote it, is useless.

4. ANY doctrine necessary to salvation, cannot long and always be concealed from a person well disposed, capable of instruction, and who employs himself sincerely in quest of truth. I only speak here of doctrines that are necessary, otherwise such a man might spend his time in ignorance, nay, even in error, with respect to other points of religion. But it is impossible that he should err to his utter ruin, as might be easily demonstrated from Scripture, and invincible arguments, drawn from reason. Therefore, as often as after prayer, diligence, and serious examination, any point seems obscure, or doubtful, so that it does not clearly appear what opinion we ought to embrace, or what we ought to believe, then we ought to be assuredly convinced, that this doctrine, as far as it surpasseth our comprehension, is not necessary to salvation; I expressly mention, as far as it surpasseth

passeth our comprehension, for it may be, and it often happens, that a doctrine in other respects fundamental, may be attended with some obscurity and not clearly revealed in the word of God.

IT is of the greatest moment in Theology always to have an attentive eye towards these rules.

## VI.

### *Of the particular Divisions of Theology.*

**A**FTER treating of Theology in general, and before we attempt a particular treatise on the several parts of it, I think it necessary, in a few words, to explain it's method and order. And here, indeed, we may observe, that method is a thing entirely arbitrary. Hence it is, that Divines have adopted various modes, some applying one method, and others another; but that appears to be best and most excellent, which is most simple and perspicuous, and approacheth nearest to the method of Sacred Scrip, that, viz. which is instituted according to the series and order of divine revelation, and commencing with creation terminates in life eternal. This is the method observed in the Apostle's Creed, and who would doubt of that order being preferable, which God himself points out in his word. Again, this method is very simple and perspicuous, and assisting to the memory. In a word, it lays open to our view the various degrees of divine revelation, and consequently the consummate wisdom of God, and excellency of the

the Christian religion. This, therefore, shall be the order of our system.

THE doctrine concerning the Sacred Scripture, and concerning God, shall be premised, since these two are the foundation of universal religion, and are diffused through all the capital points of Theology. These being premised, as the Sacred Scripture is divided into two parts, viz. the Old and New Testament, so, likewise, shall our Theology consist of two parts. The first, concerning the time that preceded Christ's advent. The latter, concerning the time consequent, viz. from his advent until the end of ages.

IN the former part, the creation of the world immediately offers itself. The doctrine of Providence shall succeed creation; then we shall treat of sin. For sin is the occasion of the whole of the divine dispensation towards men. Again, of the decrees of God, respecting the salvation of mankind. Afterwards, according to the series of times, we shall, First. Treat of the period which preceded the Flood. Second. The Abrahamick Covenant. Third. The Law of Moses. Fourth. The Prophets. Fifth. The various state of the Jews. Sixth. The state of the other nations.

IN the latter part, we shall treat, First. Of the Ministry of John the Baptist. Second. Jesus Christ, his person, threefold office, prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal, and his twofold state of humiliation and exaltation. Third. The events  
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which happened after his exaltation and ascension; the mission of the Holy Ghost, the preaching of the Apostles, the destruction of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the constitution of the Christian Church. Then we shall proceed to the doctrine which is preached in the Christian Church, which consists of two parts, First. Duties, viz. Faith and Repentance. Second. Benefits, or Promises, viz. Justification, and Sanctification, and Threatnings.

WE shall next treat of the Church itself; of its nature, state, and government. Afterwards of the assistances to salvation, whether internal, viz. the grace of the Holy Spirit, or external, as divine worship, the Ministry, the Sacraments.

LASTLY, we shall proceed to such things as respect a future world; such are the state of souls after death, the end of the world, resurrection, judgment, life, and death eternal.

WHAT we have already delivered, exhibits a general synopsis of the different parts of Theology; we come now to a more particular one, of its several capital topicks.

O F

# C H R I S T I A N T H E O L O G Y .

## SECTION I.

### UPON THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.

CONCERNING the Sacred Scripture, there are three particulars, which offer themselves to our consideration. First. Wherein it consists, or, of what books it is composed. Second. What are it's attributes. Third. How it is to be used.

### C H A P. I.

*Concerning the Books which compose the Sacred Scripture.*

**T**HE Sacred Scripture is composed of the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, which we need not here enumerate singularly, as they are well known. They are called canonical, because they only were antiently reposit in the Canon, that is the catalogue of sacred writings, and are a rule of faith and manners. The Apocriphal, or as they may be termed, hidden, or concealed books, are excluded from the canon, because they were not acknowledged as divine, nor produced to establish any doctrine by  
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the antient Church. The Roman Church has received them, the third and fourth book of Esdra being excepted, which are manifestly supposititious, and replete with fables. Among other things, consult C. VII. as also, the third of the Maccabees, and the prayer of Manasses. We exclude the Apocryphal Writings from the Holy Canon, not because they would contribute much to support the cause of the Romish Church, if they were admitted, but because, in all things truth ought to be inquired after, and we think it criminal to admit human compositions as divine. But the reasons why we reject these Apocryphal Books, are as follow.

1. BECAUSE they have never been received, either by the Jewish, or antient Christian Church. With respect to the Jewish Church, as the most of these books were not written in Hebrew, the matter is abundantly evident; it is also evident from Josephus against Appion, and the testimony of the modern Jews. But we may learn the sentiments of the antient Christian Church on this head, from the Synod of Laodicea, celebrated at the beginning of the fourth century, as also from Origen, Athenasius, Hyeronimus, and others.

2. BECAUSE they are not comprehended in that celebrated division, into which the Jews divided the whole Scripture, viz. the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, or holy writing which distinction Christ himself makes use of, and approves. Luke xxiv. 44.

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3. BECAUSE there are no exprefs testimonies produced out of these books in the New Testament, as out of others, though the Apostles sometimes have a respect, and allude to their histories, and phrases.

4. BECAUSE they contain many things which prove their writers to be liable to error and human infirmity, and cannot possibly consist with divine inspiration, which might be easily demonstrated, from a particular examination of each of these books.

YET we do not totally reject them, as neither did the antient Church. They were read as books useful, and as others of human compofure, in their sacred assemblies, nay, they were sometimes quoted by the Fathers, viz. there were some books, which were of divine inspiration, which were termed Protocanonical, viz. such as were canonical in the highest sense, and others were called Deutorocanonical, or ecclesiastical, viz. such as approached nearest unto the canon.

THE reading of these books is useful, and the most of men are culpable for neglecting it: For they contain in them, First. A series of Ecclesiastical history, especially in the writings of the Maccabees. Second. Excellent moral precepts in the books of Ecclesiasticus, and in the book of Wisdom. Third. By them we are made acquainted with the opinions which the Jews entertained, respecting several capital points of religion, before

the coming of Christ, viz. the resurrection, and the state of souls, &c. Fourth. There are extant, signal examples of piety and constancy. Fifth. Their reading is of great utility, on account of the Greek style, which approaches nearest to the style of the New Testament. Sixth. Lastly it is certain; that by reading them, much light is reflected on many passages in the New Testament, e. g. on such as are related in the Gospel, concerning Hell and Paradise, and the resurrection, which ought to be explained according to the opinion and usage of the Jews, who wrote after the captivity. Now, the Apocryphal books fully elucidate the opinion of these Jews, and shew us, to what sense they applied these different terms and phrases.

LET US NOW return to the Canonical books, which are divided into those of the Old and New Testament. The Hebrews divided them into the Law, the Prophets, and Hagesographa, or Holy Writings, which distinction is still observed in the Hebrew Bibles, as the order of the Seventy Interpreters is at present observed in ours. The Law consists of the Penteteuch, or Five Books of Moses. The Prophets are divided into former, viz. those who wrote after Moses, until the division of the Israelitish Empire; and latter, who wrote in subsequent times, viz. from that division, until Malachi. The Hagiographa, or Holy Writings, are the Psalms, Solomon's writings, Job, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemia, and the Books of Chronicles. The books of the New Testament are partly historical, as the Four Gospels, the

the Acts of the Apostles ; partly dogmatical, as the Epistles of Paul, Peter, James, John, and Jude ; one is prophetic, viz. the Revelation.

C H A P. II.

*Of the Attributes of Sacred Scripture.*

**T**HE attributes of Sacred Scripture are it's necessity, integrity, truth, divinity, authority, perfection, and perspicuity.

I. WE suppose, that a divine revelation was necessary to mankind, which might be proved without any trouble ; this being granted, it was necessary, that this revelation should be consigned to writing, lest that through the negligence, instability, or lastly, the malice of men, true religion might be corrupted or be totally lost. In the primitive ages, indeed, it was not so necessary that the word of God should be committed to writing, on account of the longevity of the Patriarchs, frequency of revelations, and other reasons. But in subsequent times, it was indispensibly necessary that it should be so, in order that it might be preserved unfullied, and, as it were, in a pure fountain, and the Church saved from error. Therefore, we read, that it was the divine pleasure and command, that revelations, laws, memorable events, &c. should be consigned to writing.

II. Now, we are to enquire, whether we have the word of God entire, and this is what we denominate

minate the Integrity of Scripture, which is twofold. First. Of the Canon. Second. Of every particular book. First. We assert, the integrity of the Canon, or, that we have at present, all those books which were admitted formerly, either by the Jews or primitive Christians. This is sufficiently evident, with respect to the books of the Old Testament. The Jews were at the greatest imaginable pains in preserving those books; and it appears, from their own testimony, that they accounted the very same books as divine, which at present constitute the Old Testament: This is proved from that passage, Luke xxiv. 44: where our Saviour, according to the Jewish custom, divides the Sacred Writings into three classes, and thus informs us, that those books do constitute the whole body, or canon of Sacred Scripture. Likewise, as to the books of the New Testament, the matter is clear, from the Synod of Laodicea, as likewise from the catalogues of books which the ancient Christians received as divine, which were compiled by Hieronymus, and others. But we have those very books at present, so that not one of them has been lost, which were received by the ancient Church. There is no reason, therefore, why any one should object, that some writings have been lost, which are mentioned in Sacred Scripture, as the book of the Words of the Lord. Num. xxi. 14. The book of Jesse. Josh. x. 13. The books of Nathan and Gad. 1 Chro. xxix. 29. Likewise, the Third Epistle to the Corinthians. 2 Cor. xiii. 1. The Epistle to the Laodiceans. Col. iv. 16. For besides, that it cannot be made  
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appear that these are different books, from what are extant under different titles; it is not at all requisite to the integrity of the canon of Scripture, that we should have all the writings of holy men, and all histories which are quoted in our Bibles. This is invincibly proved, from this consideration, that the ancient Jews and Christians had not these books in the Canon, and yet they never entertained the least doubt, of their having the entire canon of Sacred Scripture.

2. WITH respect to the particular books, we maintain their integrity. For it is certain that they were handed down to us, pure and genuine. It is true, indeed, that some faults and errors have crept in, either through the misapprehension, negligence, or ignorance of transcribers. And indeed it is impossible, that the case should be otherwise, unless all these transcribers had been divinely inspired. Hence some variation and difference, is to be found in some books and copies, which is the case with all writings, and yet their truth and genuineness, are still acknowledged: But this does not detract, from the integrity of the Sacred Books: For the various readings are but few in number, and of little moment, all of them almost consisting about accents, distinctions, commas, particles, and words, which do not change the sense. Or if any occur which are of greater moment, it is most commonly easy to find out where the error lies, and what is the genuine reading. Besides all these books agree, in things which pertain to the essence of doctrine, in

articles of faith, precepts, and histories : But an invincible argument, in support of this integrity, is deduced from various passages of Scripture, to be met with in the writings of the ancients, as also from it's various versions, into different languages, which versions indeed, do agree almost in all things, with our modern books.

III. THE third attribute of Sacred Scripture, is it's verity, or truth, which is proved principally by two arguments, the one taken from the characters of it's authors, the other from it's contents.

I. As to the first argument, we suppose that these books, have the same persons for their authors, whose names they bear, and that they were written at the particular times, in which they are commonly believed to have been written. Both of which are proved, by constant universal tradition, as also from the testimony of ancient profane authors. It can no other way be proved, that the books which are ascribed to Cicero or Virgil, were written by them, yet this was never controverted. This being laid down, we have to see, whether the authors of these sacred writings have written truth. But this is proved, because it was in their power to do so, as it is granted, that they lived in the very places, and times in which the things which we relate, happened. Again, they had a willingness to write the truth, as being men of integrity, who merited credit, if ever any such were to be found ; this is evident, since nothing could ever be produced, to make their testimony deserv-

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edly suspected. For they could obtain no emolument by lying; nay, had they a greater regard to personal utility than the truth, they never would have published a doctrine, which brought upon them the odium of the world. Lastly, they would have obtained no credit with men, had they not told truth, since their doctrine was of such a nature, that instead of alluring tended rather to deter all men from embracing it. In a word, no witnesses will ever merit credit, if it be denied to the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets.

2. To come to the latter argument; the matter contained in Scripture, consists of history and doctrine. The truth of its histories, is invincibly demonstrated, from the testimony of profane historians, who relate the principal events recorded in sacred history, so that credit can be given to no history, if the truth of sacred history be called in question: These testimonies are collected by \* Grotus, in his excellent book, upon the truth of the Christian Religion, and others.

BUT the truth of it's doctrines, which consist in articles of faith, precepts, promises and threatnings, is proved by the light of nature, right reason, and the power of conscience, as will appear to any attentive person at the first sight.

IV. But it is not sufficient, to believe that the Scripture is true, unless we likewise believe it to be  
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\* Grot. B. I. Chap. XIV. and every where in the third.

be divine, that is, inspired of God. 2 Tim. iii. 16. In order to a right understanding of this, we are to consider wherein that inspiration consists, and how it may be proved.

1. THIS inspiration may be thus conceived. Sometimes God so affected the sacred authors, that he inspired into them the knowledge of the things themselves, and words, viz. when they discovered, or wrote things which before had been hid from them, as in prophecies. But when they discoursed of matters which they had known before, or consigned them to writing, in that case, they stood in no need of such inspiration, as would reveal to them every particular thing. Thus, the Apostles stood in no need of inspiration, when they wrote the history of the Lord Jesus, as then they wrote only such things, as they had been eye and ear witnesses to. 1 John i. 1. Yet the Spirit of God, so directed and influenced them, that nothing proceeded from them, but what was true. But at the same time, each of them spoke and wrote according to his natural genius and manner, as we find from the diversity of style and speech, used in the writings of the Apostles and Prophets.

2. THE principal arguments in support of the divinity of Scripture, are as follow. The very truth of the Scripture proves it's divinity. For if whatever it contains be true, it is divine, because it testifies of itself, that it is divine. Second. It may be proved from the internal characters of divinity,

vinity, which are obvious in the doctrine contained in the Sacred Books, especially it's consummate perfection, and singular efficacy, which could not proceed from men.

3. FROM the miracles of the Prophets, the Lord Jesus and his Apostles, which they wrought in confirmation of their doctrine. But the truth of these miracles is proved, not only from what we have said, when demonstrating the truth of Scripture, but likewise from the confession of our adversaries. The Jews, the most invective adversaries to the Christian Religion, could not deny that Christ wrought miracles, they only urged their not being wrought by a divine power. Likewise from the testimony of foreign historians, who relate some of the miracles recorded in Scripture. Thus, Menande relates the miracle which is mentioned, 1 Kings xvii. of the drought which lasted during the space of three years. The fourth argument, which is invincible, is drawn from prophecies. Here we suppose, that these prophecies, were delivered before their events, than which, nothing is more certain. Who would doubt of Moses living in very remote times, or that the Prophecies of the Old Testament, which were written many ages before the coming of Christ, were known by the Jews. 2. We suppose that these prophecies exactly correspond with their events, which will be sufficiently proved, by a comparison of the prophecies themselves, with the events: These things being laid down, we conclude that God was their author, since no man could

could ever foresee, or predict future events, consequently their authors must have been inspired of God.

To these arguments, advanced in support of the divinity of Scripture, some add the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which indeed may be taken in a twofold sense. First, As the Holy Spirit himself testifies, and speaks in Scripture; in which sense, this does not differ much from the arguments taken from those characters of divinity, which we have already mentioned. Second, As it denotes the operation of the Holy Spirit, which acts upon man, and disposes him to acknowledge, and yield his assent to these characters. Which operation is indeed necessary; yet many are of opinion, that accurately speaking, it cannot be adduced as an argument, in support of the divinity of Scripture. See Annot. of Trochin. upon Wendelinus. Pref. C. 3. Th. 4.

V. THE fifth attribute of Scripture, is it's authority. Now if the Scripture be divine, it must be of the highest authority, both as to faith and manners. Concerning this authority, after what has been already observed, it would be unnecessary to treat professedly, were it not that we have to combat here with the teachers of the Roman Church. For when they see that their errors, and tenets cannot be defended, but on the contrary are defeated by Scripture, not daring to deny it's authority, totally, they diminish it as much as possible, lest they should be obliged to acknowledge

ledge that the Church errs, and that they might maintain the authority of their own Church. This has been the source of almost all the controversies, which have happened between them and us, viz. concerning the authority of Scripture, it's perfection, and perspicuity, also the Church itself, &c.

THEY acknowledge, indeed, that the Scripture of itself, is of divine authority, but that it's authority, as to us, depends upon the testimony of the Church. But if the Scripture be of the highest authority of itself, it must be of the highest as to us, so that this distinction is frivolous. They indeed object, that we without the testimony of the Church could not know that the Scripture is divine, and that it is handed down, and made known to us by the Church. But the answer to this is plain; for we do not deny that the divine origin of Scripture is made known to us by the Church, or by human testimony, as for instance, when it is questioned, whether the Sacred Books, have for their authors, the very same persons, whose names are affixed to them, whether they were written at the particular times, in which we maintain their being written, and whether they have long since, and always been esteemed as canonical. In these, and questions of the like nature, which properly belong to history, we must have recourse to tradition, or the testimony of men. But this testimony confers no power or authority upon the Church. The Church testifies after the same manner, as the universal consent, and

and constant tradition of the ancients testify, that the works of Cicero, were wrote by Cicero himself: Or that the laws which are to be found in their code of institutions, were compiled by Justinian, and other emperors, yet it does not follow, that these laws derive their authority from such testimony. Again, it is erroneously asserted, that we by no other means can be assured of the truth, and divinity of the Scripture, but by the testimony of the Church; as without that testimony, it's truth and divinity may be demonstrated, from the characters of both being stamped upon it, as also from the very nature of it's doctrine, precepts, promises, and threatnings. But the opinion of the Romans is refuted, as it would be absurd to prove the divinity and authority of Scripture, from the Church. For here they move in a manifest absurd circle. They found the authority of the Scripture, upon the authority of the Church, but if any one should ask them how they prove the authority of the Church, they endeavour to prove it from Scripture; but how shall the Church's authority be proved from Scripture, the authority of Scripture not being previously established. Besides such is the nature of faith, that it depends on divine and not on human testimony. Therefore we conclude, that the Sacred Scripture is of divine authority, and that it is the only rule of faith and manners, in which we ought entirely to acquiesce.

VI. WE are now to consider it's perfection. When we call the Scripture perfect, our meaning is,

is, that it contains, in a perfect manner, all things necessary, either to be believed or practised, in order that we might obtain salvation. Here two things are observable. First. That this perfection is attributed to Scripture, only with respect to things necessary to salvation. The Romans therefore object to no purpose, that there are some articles of faith, which are not contained in Scripture, such as the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin, and others of the like nature. For these do not affect the essence of faith, nor are they necessary to salvation. Second. We may observe that these necessities are contained in Scripture, under a double form, either expressly, and in so many words, or by necessary and evident consequence. Thus, from Scripture asserting, that Christ was a man like to us in all things, we justly conclude, that he had the members of a human body. This doctrine concerning consequences, is manifestly and invincibly confirmed from that passage, Matt. xxii. 31. 32. Where the Lord Jesus proves the resurrection, from these words of Scripture, I am the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. Which words do not expressly treat of the resurrection, yet they prove it by evident and necessary consequence.

2. WE prove the sufficiency and perfection of Scripture, in the sense we have already mentioned. First. From very many passages in Scripture. Deut. iv. 2. Ye shall neither add nor diminish, &c. Ps. xix. 8. The law of the Lord is perfect. 2. Tim. iii. 16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

God. Which text is of great force. Second. From the scope of Scripture. Now, the scope, or design of it, was, through faith, to lead us unto life eternal. John v. 39. Rom. xv. 4. 2 Tim. iii. 15. But if the Scripture be not perfect, God must be frustrated in his design, since without this perfection, it will not be sufficient to salvation.

3. BECAUSE no article of faith necessary to salvation, can be produced, which is not to be found in Scripture.

HERE the Romish Clergy enter into a controversy with us, as likewise do the Enthusiasts. The former, in order to defend their traditions, which they prescribe as necessary, though there be the deepest silence concerning them in the word of God, do argue the imperfection of Scripture; and explain their opinion in the following manner. They acknowledge, indeed, the perfection of the word of God, but assert, that it is twofold, viz. written, and unwritten, or tradition; and tell us, that the Apostles spoke many things which were not consigned to writing, but handed down by tradition. These traditions we do not totally reject, nor do we deny that tradition ought frequently to be consulted. Thus, in questions which relate to the discipline and order of the Church, external worship, rites, things sacred, &c. much regard should be paid to the institutions, and customs of the Universal Church. Which we have reason to believe, proceeded from the Apostles, or Apostolick men. But that any articles of faith, necessary

necessary to salvation, or precepts, not mentioned in Scripture, should be founded on tradition, is what we deny.

Now, the opinion of the Romish Church may be confuted. First, From what has been already offered, concerning the perfection of scripture; for if tradition be of equal value with the written word, or even annexed to it, the perfection and sufficiency of the Sacred Scripture must be given up. Second, Because tradition is often obscure, ambiguous and uncertain. Third, Because, under the pretence of tradition, a door will be opened for error and superstition, as evidently appears, from experience. The texts of scripture, usually quoted in support of tradition, scarcely merit a particular answer. As, 1 Cor. xi. 2. Now I praise you brethren, that ye keep my traditions, as I delivered them unto you. 2 Thess. ii. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast by the traditions, which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Also, John xvi. 12. xxi. 25. With respect to which, it may be sufficient to observe in general, that these passages do not refer to any necessary articles of doctrine, which had not elsewhere been delivered, and consigned to writing.

ENTHUSIASTS and Libertines speak in a very scornful strain, concerning the sacred scripture, as they do of every thing else of an external nature. There are some to be found among them, who maintain, that only the first principles of religion are contained in scripture; that it is a dead letter,

letter, and that, there is no need of the written word, or of preaching, if they have the internal word, i. e. the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Which opinion is reproachful to the Sacred Scripture, and consequently to God himself, and is inconsistent with what we read, concerning it's extensive utility, absolute necessity, and it's admirable and divine energy. Second. It is absurd, and contrary to right reason, and the nature of man, who, being endowed with reason, is not impelled by internal inspirations, but by instruction and motives. Third. It is in the highest degree dangerous, since by it, a wide open is made for the introduction of insignificant fopperies, nay, even of vice itself, as appears from the history of the Anabaptists, and Enthusiasts; the order of the Church is subverted, and confusion introduced. For where there is no rule, nor standard, by which the doctrines, or tents of men were to be examined, in that case, no method would remain, by which raving Enthusiasts, or abandoned persons, might be confuted. Every one will readily tell us, that this, or the other thing proceeded from the inspiration of God, which might be easily proved by innumerable examples.

VII. WHAT now remains, is the perspicuity of Scripture, concerning which, let us see. First. Wherein this perspicuity consists. Second. By what arguments it may be confirmed.

I. WE assert, that the Scripture is perspicuous, in this sense, viz. that in it the doctrine of salvation

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tion is so perspicuously and clearly revealed, that it may be understood in things necessary to salvation, nay, in many other things of utility, by any person who enjoys the use of his understanding, gives attention, and searches after the truth with sincerity. We ascribe this perspicuity to Scripture, First. With respect to things necessary to salvation. We do not deny, that many things obscure are contained in Scripture; but either these are not necessary to salvation, thus, we might be ignorant of the meaning of that portion of Scrip. 1 Cor. xv. 29. concerning the baptism for the dead, without any hazard of salvation. Or, if necessary, they are explained more clearly elsewhere. Thus, the words of Christ, John vii. 53. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, &c. at first sight appear to be obscure, and have afforded matter of controversy in the Church. But elsewhere, even in this very chapter, Christ himself expresseth his meaning, in terms no way ambiguous. Second. We suppose, that such as read the Scripture, do yield attention, are sincere in their researches after truth, and make a proper use of such means as are necessary, in order to the obtaining it. For if these be wanting, no writing, though ever so perspicuous, could be rightly understood.

BESIDES, it is to be observed, that the Scripture is perspicuous, both with respect to it's matter, and the method, according to which, the various subjects are treated. The subjects are clear and simple (we always speak of such as are necessary to salvation) consisting of history, doctrine,  
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precepts, and promises ; for these, as soon as heard, or read, are understood, as far as the understanding of them is necessary to salvation. As to method and style, it is simple, perspicuous, and accommodated to the capacity of the vulgar, in such points as affect the essence of religion, as has been just now observed ; this is evident to every one who reads the Scripture.

2. THIS perspicuity of Scripture is evinced by the following arguments. First, By Scripture itself, Deut. xxx. 11. For this commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, it is not far off. Psal. xix. 8. 9. The law of the Lord is perfect, &c. And, cxix. 105. Thy word is a light unto my feet, and a lamp unto my paths. Second, From the scope and intention of God, which was the manifestation of his will, and the way of salvation to us. John xx. 31. and elsewhere. But in order to this, perspicuity in the word of God is necessary. Now, if his word be not perspicuous, we must either say, that he could not speak perspicuously, or otherwise, that he would not ; neither of which could be spoken without blasphemy. Third, It might be proved, by taking a particular view of the several articles of faith, which are necessary to salvation, as no article can be produced, which is not fully elucidated in Scripture. Fourth, We are obliged, under pain of damnation, to believe, and do the will of God ; so that it must be in our power to understand the true meaning of Scripture, since a law, which is not promulged, or involved in obscurity,

curity is not obligatory. Hence we conclude, that the Scripture is perspicuous.

THESE things are so plain, as to make it unnecessary to dwell longer upon refuting the doctrine of our adversaries. They in vain object that passage in 2 Pet. iii. 16. where it is said, that some things hard to be understood, are to be found in the Epistles of Paul, &c. We do not deny that there are passages in the writings of Paul, as likewise in those of the other sacred writers, which are difficult and obscure; but these places, if they do not treat of things necessary, do not affect this controversy; but if in them doctrines necessary to salvation are delivered, they are expressed in a manner very intelligible elsewhere. Besides, Peter does not tell us here, that those things which were written by Paul, were hard to be understood in themselves, by all, but only by such as are unlearned, unteachable, contumacious, and unstable, who did not rightly expound them, but perverted and depraved them to their own destruction. To persons of such dispositions, nothing will ever be sufficiently perspicuous.

Now, if the scripture be not perspicuous, how shall the universal body of Christians be instructed in the knowledge of the doctrine of salvation. If the Papists tell us, from the definitions and interpretations of the Church, truly this would be vastly more difficult, obscure, and the knowledge of them attended with more labour and pains. For, how shall it appear to plebeans, and the more

illiterate part of mankind, what is the sense of the Church. Truly there is much obscurity in the writings of the Fathers, Councils and Traditions, so that they can neither be read, nor understood, without great and daily labour, whereas, one or two passages in scripture, one dictate of Christ, is sufficient to establish any doctrine.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Of the Use of Sacred Scripture.*

**T**HE use of Scripture is twofold, viz. it's reading, and interpretation.

OUR Church maintains, that the reading of Scripture is not only lawful, but necessary in opposition to the Romans, who, especially in the time of the reformation, denied the reading of it to the common people. At present, indeed, there are many in the Roman Church, especially in France, who are ashamed to defend this infamous doctrine, but in the most of places, the vulgar are laid under this prohibition, unless with certain restrictions and cautions, hence the degrees of Pope, Alexander VII. in his inventory of prohibited books at the beginning R. IV.

Now, that all have a right to peruse the Scripture, we prove, First. From Scripture, Deut. vi. 6. 7 And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt diligently teach them unto thy children, &c. John v.

39. Search

§9. Search the Scripture, &c. Acts viii. 28. and xvii. 11. &c. Second. From the practice and custom of the ancient Church, whether Jewish or Christian. Acts xv. 21. Neh. viii. 2. 3. Because, without reading the Scripture, we could not obtain the end for which it was given, this end is plainly pointed out to us. John xx. 31. These things are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life in his name. 2 Tim. iii. 15. 4. if the Scripture was not read by the vulgar, they could not understand, whether the doctrines which they heard from their teachers were true. For they must either repose in them a blind implicit faith, or otherwise, they must be infallible, so that they might be duly credited : Both of which being absurd, it follows, that their doctrine must be examined according to the word of God. Acts xvii. 11. where we read, that the doctrine of the Apostles themselves, was tried by this rule.

2. BUT, in order that the scripture might be read, it is necessary that it should be translated into the language of every particular country, which practice we find prevailed in the Primitive Church ; hence the production of so many various versions, Greek, Latin, Syriack, Arabick, Gothick, &c.

OF the ancient versions, the Septuagent, and the vulgate Latin version, are the principal. The Septuagent, is the translation of the books of the Old Testament into the Greek tongue, about 280

years before Christ, which was completed at the request of Ptolemeus Adelpus, King of Egypt, or as others would have it, Lagus. The Church of Rome are of opinion, that this version was accomplished by divine inspiration, which was also maintained by some men of learning, particularly Isaac, Vossius, who is editor of a treatise, upon the authority of this translation. However, this opinion is opposed by various arguments. Yet it is certain, it was valued highly by the ancient Church, and it is of signal use in explaining the Sacred Scripture, as light may be derived from it, upon various passages. The Latin, commonly termed the vulgate translation, was compiled out of an ancient vulgate version, and a translation of Hieronimus. The Council of Trent hath declared this to be authentic, but, erroneously, as it has been corrected, and amended in innumerable places, by Pope Sextus V. Besides, it may be observed that this translation differs in many places from the Septuagint, so that the one of them must be erroneous. Yet the reading of this vulgate translation, may be of use. We shall say nothing of the other translations of scripture,

BUT what ought principally to be attended to here, is, that none of those translations, ought to be put in balance with the original text, as none of them can be said, to be absolutely perfect in every respect.

“ FOR which reason, such as are desirous of  
 “ knowing the true sense of scripture, ought to  
 “ read

“ read it in its fountain, and original languages :  
“ The knowledge of which is particularly necessary,  
“ for such as expound the word of God, or teach  
“ it to others.”

II. INTERPRETATION should always accompany the reading of scripture. For it ought to be read, in order that the true sense, or meaning of it might appear. But, in order to discover this, there are requisite, First. An accurate knowledge of the languages and history, especially, in such as discharge the office of teachers in the church. Second. Close attention to the scope of the sacred authors, as also, to what goes before, and follows after. Third. A comparison with other portions of scripture. The best exposition of scripture, is by scripture, and the Holy Spirit is the best interpreted of itself. Fourth. An attentive mind, free from prejudices, “ For, we ought not to read  
“ the scripture, in order to receive a confirmation from it, of such doctrines as we have already embraced, but rather from a view of  
“ learning what we ought to believe.” Fifth. A pious and humble mind, which desireth to know the will of God only, acquiesceth in it when known, and is willing to obey it, both in faith and manners.

BESIDES, Divines distinguish the sense of scripture, into literal and mystical. The former is the real sense, that viz. which the very words of scripture, whether taken properly or figuratively, and the scope and series of the discourse, do indicate.

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But the mystical sense, is that which is latent under the former, and is usually distinguished, First. Into allegorical, an example of which we have in Gal. iv. 24, where what is related of Abraham's two wives, is referred to the two covenants. Second. Tropological, by which certain passages of scripture, though they do not directly speak of manners, or duties, yet refer unto them, as 1 Cor. ix. 9. Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn, and Third. Anagogical, when things that are terrestrial, are applied to things spiritual and celestial, as Psal. xcv. 11. To whom I have sworn in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest. Which is quoted by Paul, Heb. iii. and iv.

HERE two things ought to be observed. First. That the mystical sense may indeed illustrate the oration, but cannot be adduced as an argument, which carries along with it the force of a proof; hence that trite axiom. Symbolical Theology, is not argumentative. Second. This mystical sense, is by no means to be searched for in every portion of Scripture, nor ought it to be devised arbitrarily, or as every one's fancy may direct, especially, when arguments are drawn from it to establish any doctrine; which, yet has been the practice of some teachers, and interpreters of Scripture, in the preceding age, who departed from the simple method of their ancestors, to the signal detriment of the Christian doctrine, and religion. Moreover, the mystical sense ought not to be confounded with the

the prophetical, which is the true and genuine sense.

THERE are indeed some prophecies, which admit of a twofold sense, the one literal, or typical, the other prophetical. As for instance, there are prophecies in the Psalms, which in a certain sense may be understood of David, but were properly and completely fulfilled in Christ, as Ps. ii. and cx. But this latter sense, is the proper and the real sense of these prophecies, which can by no means be said of the mystical we have just now mentioned. But there are other prophecies, which admit only one sense, such are many predictions of the Prophets, which have a respect unto Christ only, as Isa. liii. Hag. ii. 9. Malach. iii. 1.

A QUESTION is here moved, in whom is lodged the right of interpreting Scripture, or who is the chief judge of controversies, respecting the sense and doctrine of Scripture?

To this we answer, That the right of interpreting Scripture, belongs to every one who has a right to read it, i. e. every one of the faithful: But that there is no infallible judge, constituted of God, in the Church, who is vested with the right of judging, and prescribing what we are to believe.

THE former is evident of itself; for in things which appertain to faith, conscience, and salvation, every one must live by his own faith, and not another's,

another's. Faith is not produced by any insolent authority, but by persuasion and arguments. And therefore, the right of judging concerning the sense of Scripture, and religious controversies belongs to every one of the faithful. But this private judgment is not at all authoritative, so as to bind others, it is only of discretion, and personal edification. As to an infallible judge of controversies, the dispute lies between us, and the Church of Rome. The teachers of this Church affirm, that such a judge is to be found, but who he is, whether the Pope alone, or Universal Council, or Pope and Council combined, they have not as yet defined; neither are they agreed among themselves, as to this point; be this as it will, the following arguments overthrow this opinion.

1. If such a judge were granted, it was necessary that he should have been openly constituted, and appointed of God; for the first thing requisite in a judge, is, that it should be notified to all that he is judge. Now, there is no mention made of any such judge, in Scripture. That passage in Deut. xvii. 8. does not relate to controversies, concerning faith, but litigations about matters of a civil and criminal nature, and ceremonies, nor has it any respect at all to the Christian Church: But the passage in 1 Tim. iii. 15. makes nothing at all for the purpose.

2. THE Scripture teacheth the contrary. It commands. First. That we should beware of false teachers. Matt. vii. 15. Believe not every spirit,

spirit, i. e. every doctrine, or teacher. 1 John, iv. 3. But if any one should enquire how could it be made appear to us, what teachers ought to be heard, or what doctrine should be embraced. Then, Second. The Scripture commands, that every person should examine and judge: There are express passages in Scripture to this purpose. 1 John, iv. 5. Try the Spirits, i. e. the teachers, whether they be of God. 1 Thes. v. 21. Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. 1 Cor. x. 51. I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say. Acts, xvii. 11. Now, if there were any supreme judge, in whose determination we ought to acquiesce, such a private examination as this, would be unprofitable, superfluous, and precipitate,

HERE, the advocates for the contrary opinion object, with great effrontary. Who, therefore, shall be found to compose, or determine controversies, or put a stop to the progress of heresies? Or what shall be the end of disputes? We answer briefly, no person. But say they, by those means, God hath not sufficiently provided for the truth, and safety of his Church. We answer, that he has sufficiently provided for it, by his word. If they go on to urge, that even in this manner, heresies cannot be guarded against: For the sense of God's Word, is often controverted, and many will not submit to arguments, or the truth. This indeed is true, but what if these erroneous, and pertinacious men, would not submit to the sentence of the supreme judge? There will certainly be

be errors, and offences among men, till the end of the world. Matt. xviii. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 19. But it is not in our power to prevent these things, and those who err, do err to themselves, and by their own folly, having afterwards to give an account unto God, the only supreme judge.

LASTLY, and what ought principally to be attained to, upon this argument, is, that it is not necessary for the peace, and safety of the Church, that men should be of the same sentiments in every point, it is sufficient that they agree in fundamentals, and as to the rest, bear with each other; this is the doctrine of Paul, Rom. xiv. And it is the way, and method which God himself has prescribed, for promoting the peace of the Church, and which the Apostles every where recommended; but not that commanding authoritative way, which usurps the sovereignty of God.

## SECTION II.

### CONCERNING GOD.

#### CHAP. I.

##### *Concerning the Existence of God.*

**A**S we are now to treat of the Supreme Being, we shall first prove his existence. Secondly, shew wherein the divine essence consists.

As the Being of God is the foundation of all religion, it ought therefore, to be proved and confirmed,

firmed, by the most solid arguments. Many, and almost innumerable are the arguments which might be adduced, to prove his existence. For all things discernable, either in ourselves or in the world, lead us as it were, by the hand unto God. The Deity who is the cause of all things, hath rendered himself, conspicuous in all his works, so that the ways and methods, by which his primary article of our faith might be established, are innumerable. Yet in such a multiplicity of arguments, and reasons, a certain choice should take place. But a Divine ought to apply only such as are most simple, and most accommodated, to the capacity of common people, laying aside such as are more subtile and Philosophical, from which, though attended with some force, and though they might be used by men of erudition, in private conversation, it were better to abstain, especially in sermons preached to the populace, or in writings, which are handled by all: For too much subtilty is the parent of obscurity, doubtfulness, and scrupulosity. Besides, this argument, might be handled very prudently, without mention being frequently made of Atheists, or such Deists, as make a mock of religion, or totally deny it, lest, perhaps the auditors, who never had heard of, or thought on the cavils and objections of Atheists, might fall into scepticism, and extract poison from the unseasonable disputations of preachers.

To come now to the arguments which prove the existence of God. Let it be observed in the first place, that he could not reveal himself to us,  
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any other way, than by his works and effects ; or, as the Scholasticks term it. God may be known a posteriore, but not a priori, i. e. he may be known by his effects, but not of himself. For it being granted, that God is a spirit (as we must really suppose, otherwise, he could not be God) it follows, that we cannot see him in himself, or in his essence, therefore he could not reveal himself otherwise, than by his works or effects : And those of such a nature, so splended, so admirable, and so stupendous, that they could be ascribed to none else, but a Being of infinite power, goodness, and all other perfections. The case is the same, with respect to God, as the human soul ; no one doubts of it's existence, though it be not visible : It is as clear from it's effects, that an intelligent principle exists within us, entirely distinct from the body, as it is evident, that we have a body. In the very same manner, God renders himself conspicuous unto mankind by his effects.

THE arguments in support of the existence of God, may be derived, either from nature and reason, or from Scripture, and revelation ; for God hath revealed himself to us, by both these ways.

I. To begin with the first class or arguments. The first argument, and which is most frequently used in Scripture, and is most clear, is taken from the contemplation of the word, and the works of God ; which argument, indeed, comprehends a variety of others. We shall afterwards prove, that

that this world was created, when treating of the creation. We justly observe here, that there are two things in the world, which evince it's being the work of God. First. The admirable and amazing order which is discernable in all things, which could not proceed from any but a wise and orderly cause. Second. We observe, that all things, whether within or without us, were made for some end ; but the creatures, being for the most part destitute of understanding, do not of themselves pursue this end. Therefore, they must be directed to it by some cause, which can be none else but the only intelligent one. I say, only, for though each of the creatures were formed for various, special, and subordinate ends, yet all of them conspire, and combine together, to promote a general one.

THUS, we see that all terrestrial creatures, and such as surround and affect this earth, were made for the use of man. The Sun, the clouds, the rain, &c. fructify it ; forage is useful to beasts, and beasts to men. This contemplation of the world, and works of God, proves to all his existence. Ps. xix. 1. 2. The Heavens declare the glory of God, &c. Rom. i. 20. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead, &c. &c. We omit here, what might be said in confirmation of this argument, concerning the number, and variety of creatures which is almost infinite,

infinite, and the amazing workmanship which is displayed in each of them, &c.

II. THE second argument, which follows a priori, is of this kind : Either man was formed for some end, and has some Being over him, more excellent than himself, on whom he depends, or not. If the former be granted, the existence of God is acknowledged ; if the latter be asserted then we must say, that man is the ultimate end of all things in this world, and that he is the most excellent of all beings, and independent, which is quite absurd. For who will allow, that all the creatures were made for some end, but that man was made for none ? Who will believe that man is the most excellent of all beings, and independent ? I say, man, who is obnoxious to so many evils, nay, even death itself.

III. THE third argument is taken from the universal consent of mankind, at least, such as have not divested themselves of humanity. Which consent, must either proceed from the evidence of the thing itself, and principles implanted in our nature, or from tradition, each of which supposes the being of a God.

IV. THE fourth argument is drawn from the natural light, and energy of conscience, as likewise, those certain, and indelible principles, with which every man is imbued, concerning the difference between virtue and vice, rewards and punishments. We think it safe to reason in this manner,

manner, because the Scripture makes use of the same argument. Rom. ii. 14. 15. For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law, written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and, &c. Also, from this, that upon these principles depend all laws, almost, by which human society, and the rights of mankind are maintained. Neither is there any ground for prophane persons objecting, that no solid arguments can be deduced from the fear or sense of conscience, because, it frequently happens, that men persuade themselves into the belief of things which are false, and destitute of any foundation, and thus are haunted with vain terrors. For those motions of conscience, which we here mention, this persuasion of the existence of God can no way be compared with these vain terrors, for they are not to be found in all persons, but only in a few, nor can any reason be assigned for them; whereas, this energy of conscience, this idea of Deity, is common to all men, and all times, and is founded upon the most valid arguments. Besides, it is impossible for any person to divest himself of it, which plainly indicates, that this sense is implanted in all, and that it derives its origin from the nature of man, in like manner as the love of their children is implanted in the hearts of parents.

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II. LET us now proceed to the arguments taken from revelation, this being the method by which God hath manifested himself more fully.

1. THE existence of God is proved, by what has been observed, concerning the truth and divinity of Scripture.

2. PROPHECIES do so fully prove the being of a God, that nothing can be retorted. For who could deny, that these prophecies were exhibited long before their events, or that they were express and real prophecies. Or, lastly, that they could not proceed from any but an omniscient, omnipotent Being. This argument, in it's kind, carries along with it a degree of evidence, equal to mathematical demonstration.

3. God hath made himself known, not only by the works of creation, and the ordinary course of nature and providence, but likewise, by extraordinary operations, visions, and revelations, which may be proved, not only from the testimony of Scripture, but likewise from the histories and testimony of various nations. But what principally merits our attention, is, that God hath discovered himself in a visible and conspicuous manner, by Christ, in whom he rendered himself visible; so that there ought not the least doubtfulness, concerning the being of a God, to remain, after the coming of our Saviour; and it is marvelous, that any one should be found, who would not acknowledge it. Many arguments might be advanced

vanced here, which might be taken from what we are to observe afterwards, concerning Providence, Jesus the Messia, and judgment to come.

As to the question, whether there have been Atheists? Divines have given different answers; but I think we ought not to answer positively, either by affirming, or denying; for this question turns upon matter of fact, to decide which, it is necessary that we should be thoroughly acquainted with the sentiments of all men, which no one can pretend to. This much we only affirm, that if ever there have been any such persons as Atheists, who did not believe that there is a God, they have been but few in number. Yet they are no less accounted Atheists, in the judgment of God, who are void of all reverence towards him; and these are the Atheists mentioned, Ps. xiv. and liii. Tit. i. 16.

FROM what has been advanced concerning the existence of God, appears, the true and real use of this doctrine, viz. That we should take care, lest this primary article of our faith, should not be firmly enough believed, or lest we should rest satisfied with meer contemplation. Faith in God is totally practical, and in vain do we know God, if we do not worship him as God. To this Supreme being, therefore, are justly due, praise, thanksgiving, obedience, and the other duties of religion.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the Attributes of God.*

**A**FTER treating of the existence of God, we proceed to his essence. And first, indeed, we have to enquire, wherein the Divine Nature, and Essence consist. Again, shew that it is in common, between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

WITH respect to the first of these, it ought, in the first place, to be received, as most certain, that the Divine Essence cannot be fully comprehended by us, both as it is spiritual, and as it is infinite: this is made plain to us, every where in Scripture. 1 Tim. vi. 16. God dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, &c. It is sufficient for us to know him, as far as is necessary, in order that he might be the object of our love and veneration, and so far hath he revealed himself, viz. what he is with respect to us. This ought to be carefully attend'd to in Theology, and this we are taught by the various names which are ascribed to him in Scripture. For they represent the perfections of God, or his essence, only, as they relate to the creatures, especially man.

THE Divine Essence is known by it's various attributes, which attributes, though essentially one,  
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yet ought not to be confounded. The principal ones are as follow.

I SPIRITUALITY, or that God is a spirit, this is the primary attribute of God, and the foundation of the rest, viz. that God is a Spiritual Being, endowed with understanding, will, and liberty. The very idea of God teacheth this, for he cannot be otherwise conceived, but as a Living, Spiritual, and Intelligent Being, who acts of himself. Second, The Scripture confirms this, John iv. 24. God is a spirit. And elsewhere.

3. THIS may be further proved, as there are other spirits in being, viz. human souls, and angels. God, therefore, must be a spirit, otherwise, he would be a being, of less perfection than men, and could not create spirits. From this spirituality of the Divine Nature, it follows, that he is invisible. Exod. xxxiii. 20. Thou canst not see my face and live, for there shall no man see me, and live. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

II. GOD exists of himself, and is independent, because no cause can be assigned, either of his existence, since he exists of himself, and hath not derived his being from any other; or of his essence, which may be proved by the same reasoning; nor of his actions, since he acts of himself, and is not moved, or determined to act by any one else.

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III. He is eternal. He is called **Eternal**, because he hath neither beginning nor end. This eternity is ascribed to God, Rom. xvi. 26. Rev. i. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. This is likewise denoted, when the Scripture saith that he is immortal, incorruptible, &c. 1 Tim. i. 17. and vi. 6. But though eternity cannot be comprehended by us, and though we cannot have adequate conceptions of a duration, without either beginning or end, yet it is most certain, that an **Eternal Being** must exist, which is invincibly demonstrated, by the following argument. If there were no **Eternal Being**, then all things must have had a beginning, and there must have been a time, when no beings existed. Now, if there was ever such a time as this, it would be impossible for any being ever to exist, since nothing could be produced out of nothing. Who could produce beings? Or what could be the cause of so many beings existing? Therefore, most certainly, an **Eternal Being** must exist. But this being cannot be the world, or matter; for it would be absurd to ascribe eternity to matter, a being destitute of life and sense. Besides, that matter is not the first, or **Supreme Being**, appears from this, viz. that there are spirits in the world. Neither could spirits derive their origin from matter. Nor, could that order or harmony, and various effects of wisdom and design, which are discernable in the world, be ascribed to matter. Lastly, that this world is not eternal, may be evinced, from what we are afterwards to observe concerning the creation,

tion, as also, from Scripture, the truth of which, we have already sufficiently proved.

WITH respect to the eternity of God. Divines enquire whether it be successive? Which question being rather curious than necessary, we shall not spend much time upon it. Those who deny, that succession should be admitted in eternity, would have eternity to exist, or as they express it, to exist with every part of time. But others assert, that this cannot be plainly conceived, and that the idea of duration, cannot be separated from eternity, so that, according to them, eternity is a duration, without beginning or end. To what is usually objected here, that granting this succession of duration, we must at length come to the first moment, and consequently to the beginning of the Divine Existence; they answer, that this does not at all follow, for always a prior moment must be acknowledged, but never a first, as a first moment, is inconsistent with the idea of a being, without beginning or end. But these things are of little consequence; only, we ought to take care, lest if a successive eternity be granted, we should ascribe unto God, any such thing as change, or imperfection.

IV. THE fourth attribute of God, is his Unity. That there is but one God, may be proved. First, Because it is more agreeable to reason, to fix upon one common principle, one common cause of all things, than more. For the arguments which prove the existence of God, viz. such as are taken  
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from the structure of the world, the order and harmony discernable in it, and the end for which all things were created, do all lead us to one only Supreme Cause. Second, We can very well understand, what that Supreme Being is, whom we call God, providing we suppose only one, for to him we ascribe all perfections. God cannot be otherwise conceived, but as a Being infinitely perfect. But if we suppose more Gods than one, every idea of divinity must be dropped, for we cannot easily conceive of what nature they are, or by what properties they are to be distinguished from each other. Third, By these means, also, all religion must be dropped. For how could it appear to us, what, or of what nature the object of our worship would be? For, either all these Gods, or at least the greatest part of them, or only one, must be worshipped: If the former, we ought to be well assured who they are, and how many, ten, or twenty, &c. If the latter, we ought to know, who the particular deity is, whom we are to worship, the rest being excluded. Fourth, If there were more Gods than one, each of them must have his own essence, and his own properties, distinct from those of others, therefore, all of them must want some property or perfection, and consequently would not be Gods; wherefore, right reason leads us to the unity of God. Hence it is, that such among the very Heathens, as excelled in wisdom and knowledge, acknowledged only one God. Lastly, the Scripture every where teacheth, that there is but one God, Deut. iv. 35. Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know, that the Lord,  
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he is God, there is none else besides him. And vi. 4. Hear, O Israel : the Lord our God, is one God. Isa. xlv, 5, 6. 1 Cor. viii. 4. 5. 6. What has been observed upon the unity of God, overthrows Polytheism, as also the romantic notions of Idolaters, who maintain a plurality of Gods, and of the Manceheans, who hold, that there are two independent, contrary principles, the one good, and the other evil.

V. THE fifth attribute of God, is his Immensity, or Omnipresence. 1 Kings viii. 27. But, will God indeed dwell on the earth, behold the Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee. Jer. xxiii. 24. Especially Psal. cxxxix. 2. 5. Whether shall I go from thy spirit? Here again Divines agreeing as to the matter itself, dispute concerning the manner of it, viz. whether God be every where present, as to his essence, or only with respect to his operation and power. The first opinion seems to ascribe extension to God : For what some assert, that God is every where as a point, but not by way of extension, is altogether incomprehensible. The latter seems to separate God from his essence : Therefore, the former opinion appears to many the more probable. Nothing can be determined here with precision, since we are ignorant of the nature of spirits, and how they exist in a place. We know that our souls exist in our bodies, and that they exert their influence, in, and upon them, yet none can positively affirm how this is affected, or whether they are confined to one part of the body, or diffused through the whole. Therefore, it is  
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folly and rashness, to scrutinize into the manner of the omnipresence of an Infinite Spirit, it is sufficient for us to know this immensity of God, as far as it conduceth to his worship, viz. that we might believe, and have it habitually in our minds, that God is every where present, that he beholds and overrules all things, that we are perpetually concerned with him, and consequently, that he is the witness, and the judge of all our thoughts, and actions, and moreover, the most wise and righteous governor, and at the same time the most benevolent parent of the universe.

VI. THE sixth attribute of God, is his Knowledge, or Science, of which Divines usually consider. First, The object. Second, The manner. Of these two, the former is the principal, the latter not so necessary. But this is the foible of very many Divines, that they combat about things of lesser moment, when they should acquiesce in things necessary.

1. GOD knows all things which are within, as well as without himself, he knows himself, and his own action; for it is peculiar to spirit, that they are conscious of their own actions and existence. Acts xv. 18. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning. He knows all creatures, and all their operations. Psal. cxlviii. 4. 5. The understanding of God is there termed infinite. 1 Kings viii. 39. Psal. cxxxix. 2.

2. It ought principally to be maintained, that God knows future events, which knowledge is termed Prescience. And this is one of the principal attributes, by which he distinguisheth himself from idols, Isa. xli. 22. 23. Among future events, he knows such as are termed contingencies, i. e. such things as may, or may not come to pass. But these are contingent, not with respect to God, but with respect to us, for he either determines the event himself, or knows the part that man would be determined to act. Some are of opinion that the Divine Knowledge does not extend, to future contingencies, because they have no existence, nor certain cause, and therefore cannot possibly be known: But these are fully confuted by the two following arguments. First, From predictions. For God hath foretold future contingencies, - not only the good, but likewise the evil actions of men and their offences, John vi. 70. 71. concerning Judas the traitor. God, therefore must necessarily have foreknown these things, or otherwise, he must have predetermined, and effected them, which would be making him the author of sin. Second, If God did not foreknow future contingencies, he could scarcely foresee any thing as certain, before the event, and that on account of the connection, and concatenation of causes, and effects. As for instance, a certain king hath decreed to wage war with neighbouring kingdoms or nations, hence will ensue great destruction, horrid calamities, and revolutions in empires. Now, if previous to that king's decree, God was ignorant of the course he  
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ment to pursue, he must be ignorant of various events, which depended upon that determination, and so his providence will be entirely abolished. So that this ought to be embraced as a truth, ratified in the most solid manner: That the Divine Knowledge extends to all things. And since the Sacred Scripture assures us of it, we ought to retain it as a doctrine, in which we should entirely acquiesce, though various perplexing questions might be moved, with respect to the Divine Pre-science, which we are not able to solve, on account of the imbecillity of our understanding, and sublimity of the subject. The thing is clear in itself, but the manner of it, we cannot comprehend.

II, BUT to proceed to the manner of the Divine Science, we may observe, that there is no reason why we should be very solicitous about it. For the Scripture informs us, that God is incomprehensible, and that his councils, and his ways, are vastly raised above the sphere of our understanding. Rom. xi. 33. Dismissing, therefore, such things as are disputed in schools, concerning the manner of this science, which are uncertain, obscure, and of little or no utility. Divines explain its order in the following manner. They tell us, That God is possessed of a science of intelligence, which preceeds the act of his will, by which he knows all things which are possible, nay, many things, which shall never come to pass; and a science of vision, by which he knows what things shall certainly happen, or at present exists.

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But this distinction is of no utility. Some add a middle science, by which God knows what part the creatures would have acted, when placed in such and such circumstances; to this refer some passages in Scripture, as Matt. xi. 21. If the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sydon, they would have repented long ago, in sackcloth and ashes. But since the science of God is incomprehensible, its order and manner, cannot be precisely defined, it is best to speak reservedly of these things, or to be entirely silent. But here we ought to beware, lest we confound the science of God, with his will: The will of God is the cause of things existing, which cannot be said of his science. For the things, which are simply the objects of the Divine Knowledge, do not come to pass, nor are they such in themselves, because God hath known them. But God hath known them, because they are to happen, and are such in themselves.

VII. To the knowledge of God, is united his wisdom, which differs from knowledge, in this respect: Knowledge has for its object such things as may be known, but wisdom is employed in disposing and ordering these things. The objects of wisdom are end and means. God is denominated wise, because he always proposes to himself a good end, and such as is agreeable to his perfections. Second, Because he makes choice of, and applies such means as are most proper for accomplishing that end, and conducts the whole  
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of affairs, with consummate wisdom and impartiality.

VIII. THE next thing we have to consider, is, the Will of God ; concerning which, we shall only advance a few of the many things which are related in Theological writings. The will of God, either denotes that which he intends should be done, with respect to us as Matt. vii. 21. 1 Thes. iv. 3. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. Or that act of God, by which he hath decreed to do something, or permit it to be done. For whatever things God wills to permit, are equally subject to the Divine Will, with those which he hath decreed to do, though not after the same manner.

CONCERNING the Will of God, we ought to speak soberly, and according to his word ; and only so far as respects us, and our salvation. In this respect, the Scripture teacheth, that the will of God is, First, Efficacious ; so that whatever he wills must be accomplished, and cannot possibly be changed. Psal. xlvi. 10. Psal. cxv. 3. Our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatsoever he pleaseth, who hath resisted his will ? Rom. ix. 19. Second, Holy ; for God wills only that which is good, and agreeable to his nature ; so that he cannot will sin. Psal. lv. To the objection that God permits sin, we answer, that to will the commission of sin, is one thing, and to will the permission of it, is another. The former, God can never will ; and sin, in this respect, can never be the object of  
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the Divine Will, but the latter only. For God has just reasons, why he should permit sin, or why, by his omnipotence, he should not prevent it; and in this respect, the permission of sin, is a thing necessary, nay, in a certain sense, good. Third, The will of God is good, i. e. profitable to men. Rom. xii. 2. Fourth, It is most free; since God is not determined, nor compelled by any thing, or by any eternal cause. Which yet ought not to be so understood, as if he could either will, or do, any thing without reason, or in an arbitrary manner, which would oppose his nature, especially his goodness. Besides the will of God is variously divided. It is usually distinguished into his secret will, or his will of good pleasure, which exists in himself, and is unknown to us, by this he hath determined, what he himself should do; and his revealed will, by which he hath revealed, what he himself wills to do, as also what should be done by us. It is also divided into absolute, by which he wills to do any thing, absolutely; and conditional, by which he wills a thing under a certain condition; as for instance, the salvation of man, if they believe. Again, it is divided into antecedent, which precedes the act of man. Thus, he wills, that men should be saved; and consequent, which follows the act of man, as when he wills to save such as believe. Besides, into his will of good pleasure, or decree, which determines the event; such is his will concerning the sending of Christ: and of approbation, as when he declares what is acceptable to him, or what is the duty of man; this determines nothing concerning the event.

event. The former is ascribed to God, as he is governor of the world ; the latter, as he is legislator. And these distinctions may, indeed, be admitted, providing, that by them no inconsistency, nor contrariety be allowed between God and his will ; as if any one should say, that God, by his revealed will, was unwilling that sin should be committed, but by his secret will, or will of decree, he both willed and decreed the commission of it. For, by these means, two contrary acts, would be ascribed to God, viz. that he both willed, and did not will a thing, in one and the same instant of time ; and declared, that he did not will a thing, which at the same time, he both willed and decreed.

IX. THE Power of God, denotes both his supreme right over all things, and his mightiness, in accomplishing whatever is his pleasure.

BOTH reason and the Sacred Scripture teach us, that this power is infinite and universal ; let it suffice here, to make the following observations, First, As to the question, how God, who is a spirit, can exert his power or influence over the creatures. We answer, that it is no more difficult to be conceived, than the manner in which our souls act upon our bodies, and move them at pleasure. Second, Such things as are inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, or involve a contradiction, cannot be the objects of the Divine Power. This we observe, against such as assert that God could, if he thought fit, cause things which are impossible and  
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contradictory, to become possible and real. The Scripture teacheth, that God cannot do things which are inconsistent with his perfections, when it says, that he cannot lie, that he cannot deny himself, &c. 2 Tim. ii. 13. The power of God, ought principally to be considered, as it relates to ourselves and our salvation. For he can provide for us things necessary, both for the present, and the life which is to come. By his power, he can inflict punishments upon the wicked, and reward the righteous, which is the foundation of our duty, and the whole of religion.

X. THE goodness, or the love of God, is that perfection, by which he is both benevolent, and beneficent to his creatures, especially man; this is the chief perfection of God, and that which moderates the exertion of his power. For whenever we reflect upon him, we must immediately be struck with a sense of his goodness, 1 John iv. 8. God is love. Ps. cxlv. 8. 9. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy. This goodness of God, is discernable in the works of creation and providence, but especially redemption. John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Eph. ii. 4. 5. Likewise, in his long suffering, patience towards sinners. 2 Pet. iii. 9. God is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

DIVINES distinguish the love of God, into simple love and mercy, the former has for its object, the creature in general, the latter, the creature in distress, or in a state of sin. Likewise, into antecedent love, or the love of benevolence, by which he bears a good will towards mankind, and is ready to communicate happiness unto them: And consequent, viz. his love of friendship or complacency; which he bears to such as discharge their duty. It cannot be denied, that certainly, there are various degrees of the divine love, and that he loves most intensely, such as are truly pious. John xv. 14.

BUT what we are to observe next, being the principal thing, and chief tenet belonging to universal Theology, is, that the whole of religion, is founded on this attribute of God, viz. his goodness and love. Therefore, nothing should be attributed to him, which is inconsistent with his goodness. Such places in Scripture, as speak of the wrath or hatred of God, are not to be understood, in their proper signification, for anger and hatred do not at all appertain unto him, neither are chastisements or punishments, properly speaking, the effects of anger. The chastisements of God, are not the effects of his anger; but on the contrary, ought to be ascribed to his love, for he chastiseth men, because he loveth them. With respect to the punishments of a future world, sinners have brought them upon themselves, and they are nothing else but the necessary consequences of sin. For although God be most affectionate towards mankind, yet it is impossible, that  
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impenitent sinners, should be admitted to the fruition of himself, which will be made appear, from what we shall observe afterwards. The goodness of God has its limits, neither can it be displayed towards men, let them live as they will.

XI. THE Sanctity, or Holiness of God, admits a twofold meaning. First. It denotes his Supreme Excellency and Majesty. Isa. vi. 3. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts. Second. It is taken in a more limited signification, for that purity of the Divine Nature and will, by which he is determined neither to do, nor will, nor approve of any thing that is evil, perverse, impure. But on the contrary, what is good, holy, profitable, and suitable to the dignity of his nature, in which sense he is denominated Holy, 1 Pet. i. 15. 16. As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy. Now this sanctity is so essential to God, that it would be impious and blasphemous, to ascribe any thing to him inconsistent with it, or that would make him the author of sin.

XII. THE Justice of God, is either taken in an extensive sense, and denotes, that he does nothing but what is agreeable to the rectitude of his nature, and in this sense, his justice differs but little from his holiness; or in a strict sense, it signifies the stedfast will of God, by which he renders unto every one his right. Here, we are to suppose, that God has a certain rule, or fundamental principles,

according to which, he regulates his actions towards his rational creatures, such a rule, viz. as is good, and just in itself: We also suppose, that the difference between moral good, and evil, is not an arbitrary thing, but necessary, and founded on the very nature of things: And this rule, I suppose, may be found, both in the nature of God, and in the nature of man. For, First. God can will nothing inconsistent with his nature and properties, therefore, he is determined by his nature, to will certain things. Second. The nature of man confirms this. God requires that man should be holy, because it plainly agrees with the nature of man, since without holiness no man can be happy.

THE case being thus stated, the acts of the Divine Justice are as follow, First. He proposes a just law, agreeable to his own nature, and tending to the good of mankind. Second. He annexes to this law, the sanctions of promises and threatnings, so that men might be bound to observe it. Third. He necessarily executes these promises and threatnings, otherwise his law would be of no authority. He rewards, indeed, not according to the rigour of justice, or of debt, yet justly, and necessarily, because he hath declared that he would do so. Heb. vi. 10. God is not unrighteous to forget your work, &c. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give me at that day. But he punisheth deservedly, and necessarily, because, if he did not so, his law and threatnings would only be vain terrors, and could  
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not recall men from sin. Besides it is plainly impossible, that God could bestow consummate felicity upon a sinner who is unwilling to receive it, and is impenitent. He does not indeed punish so necessarily, but that he may defer the punishment, and invite the sinner to repentance, for he is full of compassion, and of his great mercy, hath delivered up Christ for us, in order, that through faith and repentance, we might obtain salvation; but he cannot save such as will not believe, and are impenitent. Nay, by delivering up his own Son, he hath exhibited his justice, his utter abhorrence against sin, and immoveable purpose, at length to punish it. And these are such things as are necessary to be known, concerning the justice of God.

THERE are many things disputed here, concerning the universal and particular justice of God, by Limborchius and others, which are very intricate; as likewise concerning his sovereignty, whether he could, by virtue of his supreme right or authority, deliver up the creature, however innocent, to eternal torments; to which question, some have audaciously answered in the affirmative. But questions of this nature are vain, and presumptuous, wherefore, we think it proper to dismiss them.

XIII. THE Truth, or Faithfulness of God, denotes that conformity which subsists between the words and actions of God, and his will, and the nature of things; and this is what is called Sincerity.

urity. Heb. vi. 18. Second. It signifies his fidelity, and invariable steadiness, or veracity, in performing whatever he hath spoken. Heb. x. 23. For he is faithful that promised. But since God is every where in Scripture said to be faithful, and true, we ought to be cautious, lest we would ascribe any thing to him, which would oppose his sincerity, and veracity.

XIV. THE only attribute now remaining, is his Beatitude, or Happiness. The very idea and nature of God, evinces his supreme felicity, for since he is God, for that very reason, he must be possessed of every good, in the highest degree, and consequently must be most happy, and the only fountain of happiness. This Paul asserts, 1 Tim. i. 2. and vi. 15. From this attribute of God, much light is reflected upon universal Theology; for since God is perfectly happy in himself, it is evident, that he stands in need of nothing, no not of our services; so that if he hath revealed himself to us, and demands our worship and obedience, this he does, not on account of his own, but our interest Job, xxii. 2. 3. 4. Can a man be profitable unto God? &c. And xxxv. 6. 7. 8. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him. So much upon the Attributes of God.

## C H A P. III.

*Upon the Holy Trinity.*

**W**E have now to shew, that the Divine Essence is in common between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which argument must, indeed, be handled soberly, and according to the word of God. For the various heresies, concerning the Trinity, took their rise from no other cause, but men's departing from the simplicity of Scripture. The Hereticks, on the one hand, were unwilling to admit the true meaning of Scripture, while the Orthodox, on the other, were guilty of many additions, and attempted to explain, and define many things, concerning which, there is the deepest silence in Scripture. Therefore, dismissing arguments, and reasons, taken from Philosophy, with which, both antient, and some modern Divines have endeavoured to explain, and prove this article of our faith, let us here speak from Scripture only, and with Scripture.

THE texts usually produced out of the Old Testament, in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, are of two kinds. First. There are some, which seem to be attended with little force, as that a plurality of persons may be proved from the word Elohim, Gods, being found in the plural number. Also, Gen. i. 26. Let us make man. And, xi. 7. Likewise, xix. 24. Then the Lord rained, from the Lord, out of Heaven. Second. There are some

some prophecies, which have a respect unto the Messiah, and indicate his divinity, as Ps. xlv. 7. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, wherefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, &c. And, cx 1. Isa. ix. 6. Which prophecies being illustrated by the light of the Gospel, prove the divinity of the Lord Jesus; and are applied to him in the New Testament, where we are to look for an ample confirmation of this doctrine, concerning which, the writers of the New Covenant teach us the two following particulars. First. That there is a distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second. That the Divine Nature is in common between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

THE sacred writers openly declare the former, for there is mention made of three, in the books of the New Testament, Matt. iii. 16. 17. and xxviii. 19. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 4. 5. 6. Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 1 John, v. 8. It is disputed by many, whether this quotation be genuine, because it is not to be met with in antient copies, but some contend, that it is genuine.

BESIDES, we may observe, that the Father is every where distinguished from the Son, which is so clear, as to need no proof. But the Holy Spirit

Spirit is distinguished from the Father, and the Son. John, xiv. 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter. 1 Cor. xii. This distinction is expressed, by the term Person, which term may be used, but not urged, otherwise we might fall into Tritheism. Divines differ in their explication of the word person, in divinity; there are some who call it Intelligent Substance; but this is obscure, and needs to be further explained. Others, again, would have persons to be modes of subsisting, which looks more probable. But these things are obscure, and liable to various difficulties; hence it is, that these terms have given occasion to various controversies, which mostly consisted in disputes about words. It is therefore sufficient to say, that the Scripture makes a distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and if any one should ask, wherein that distinction precisely consists, it were better for us modestly to confess our ignorance, than to expose ourselves, and the truth, to the derision of our adversaries. Who would wonder, that there is something here, which surpasseth our comprehension, when treating of an Infinite Being.

II. THE other particular which the Scripture teacheth, is, that the Divine Nature belongs to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, indeed, Divines prove this, with respect to the Son.

1. BECAUSE he is called God. John, i. 1. Which passage, the Socinians erroneously explain, as relating to the beginning of the Gospel. Rom.

ix. 5. There mention is made of both his natures, human and divine, and he is stiled, God, blessed for ever; which phraseology, or mode of expression, is applicable to the true God only. Heb. i. 8. To the Son he sayeth, thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever. Tit. ii. 13. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. 1. John, v. 20.

2. Nor only the name of God, but the very properties of the Divine Nature, are attributed to Christ, as that he had an existence prior to his nativity. John viii. 58. Before Abraham was I am. Which passage, yet, taken singularly, could only prove his pre-existence, but not his eternal Divinity. The Socinians say, that Christ was before Abraham, because he had the same existence in the degree of God, as he had after his nativity, but that is absurd, neither does the series of Christ's discourse, against which, the Jews objected, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? suffer us to admit this interpretation; nor is it better supported, by what others assert, viz. that the meaning that Christ existed before what the name of Abraham denotes, was accomplished, i. e. before he became the father of many nations.

THE Pre-existence and Divinity of Christ, is farther notified, John i. 1. In the beginning was the word. And xvii. 5. Glorify me with that glory, which I had with thee, before the world was.

Omnipotence

Omnipotence is ascribed to Christ. Matt. xxvii. 10. All power is given me in Heaven, and in Earth. Rev. i. 8. Omnipresence. Matt. xxviii. 20. And lo, I am with you, even unto the end of the world. Omniscience, especially the knowledge of the thoughts of the heart. John ii. 24. Rev. ii. 23. I am he, which searcheth the reins and the heart, compared with Jer. xvii. 10. Likewise, John xxi. 17. Lord, thou knowest all things.

III. THE works which are ascribed to Christ, are plainly divine, as, Creation, Redemption, Judgment, &c. John i. 3. Col. i. 15. 16. 17. Who is the image of the invisible God, and the first born of every creature, for by him all things were made. Heb. i. 10. 11. 12.

IV. WE prove that Christ is God, from divine worship being due to him. John v. 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. Phil. ii. 9. 10. 11. That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow. Acts vii. 59. Heb. i. 6. And let all the Angels of God worship him. 2 Pet. iii. 18. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, both now and evermore, Amen. Which doxology cannot be applied to any but the true God. Now if Christ were a meer man, or a creature, he could not be worshipped in such a manner, without incurring the guilt of idolatry. Isa. xlii. 8. I am Jehovah, that is my name,

name, and I will not give my glory to another.  
Rev. xix. 10.

WE may observe, with respect to the Holy Ghost, that the Scripture seldom speaks of his person or essence, but very frequently of his operations. The reason is, because the Scripture speaks of Godly and divine things only, according to the relations he stands in to us, and as far as is necessary for our salvation, so that it concerns us more, to know what are the effects of the Spirit of God within us, than to know what he is in his essence, or how he is to be distinguished from the Father.

BUT that the Divine Nature is essential to the Holy Spirit, is so apparent, that he who denies it, may with equal propriety deny the divinity of the Father. For since the Holy Spirit is the very power of God, by which he acts and effects all things, it is clearer than noon day, that he is of a divine nature, and whatever is essential to God, must be essential to the Spirit of God likewise; this Spirit always existed, frequent mention is made of him in the Old Testament, he is said to have spoken by the Prophets. The attributes of God, Omniscience, Omnipotence, &c. are ascribed to him, as likewise the works of God. John xvi. 13. And xiv. 26. 1 Cor. ii. 10. 11. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1 Cor. xii. 8. 9. 10. 11.

YET many enquiries have been made, and many disputes have arisen, concerning this argument,  
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and first, indeed, concerning the generation of the Son, which many attempted to explain, as, likewise, concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit; Divines asserting, that the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, not by way of generation, but by way of spiration, which term is very obscure. There was another controversy between the Latin and Greek Church, which was tossed about with great warmth of temper, concerning this procession. The Latines asserting on the one hand, that the Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son; but the Greeks on the other, that he proceeded from the Father by the Son; and on account of this expression, *and the Son*, a great schism arose between the Eastern and Western Church. But there was no reason, why the antients contended so warmly about the procession of the Spirit, as there is only one place in Scripture, in which it is mentioned, viz. John xv. 26. The Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father. The meaning of which text, is plain and simple, viz. that the Spirit was sent, or was to be sent by the Father to the Apostles, after the ascension of Christ, as he himself explains it. But Divines were of opinion that the mission of the Holy Spirit was not intended here, but the manner in which the Essence, or Person of the Spirit proceeded from the Father from all eternity, and inquired into the nature of that procession. But these are idle, frivolous, nay, presumptuous and dangerous questions, fictions of the imagination, and mere traditions.

IN the ancient Church, in the first and second century, the doctrine of the Trinity was opposed, by the Ebionites, and Cerinthians, who maintained, that Christ was a meer man, against whom, as we are informed by ancient tradition, John wrote his Gospel. Paulus Samosatenus denied the Divinity of Christ, for which reason, he abolished certain Hymns which were usually sung to his praise. Sabellius, denied that there was any distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, maintaining that there was but one God, who passed under these different denominations, being sometimes called the Father, sometimes the Son, and at other times the Holy Ghost. Arius asserted, that Christ was of a similar essence with the Father, but not of the same essence, saying, that he was made or begotten, before ages. He was condemned in the Nicene Council, A. D. 325. Macedonius denied the Divinity of the Spirit, he was condemned by the Synod of Constantinople, in the year 381. The Socinians maintain that Christ was a meer man, that after his resurrection he obtained the highest glory, and thus became God; but it is certain, that few heresies would have arisen concerning the Trinity, if this doctrine had been taught in the Church, with simplicity, and according to the word of God.

THE proper use of this doctrine, is, First. To acknowledge the infinite mercy of God towards mankind, who delivered up his own Son, for the sins of men, John iii. 16. The excellency of which gift, would be greatly diminished, if we considered

dered Christ but as a meer man. Second. The perfection, both of the doctrine and satisfaction of Christ. Third. That we should render unto him that worship, reverence, obedience, prayers, and praises, which he is justly entitled to, as he is God, and our judge. Fourth. To implore the grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit, with the most ardent prayers, so that as we are redeemed by the Son, we may be purged from the pollution of sin by the Holy Spirit, and thus become partakers of eternal salvation.

HAVING thus premised the doctrine concerning God, let us proceed to the first part of Theology.

OF  
CHRISTIAN  
THEOLOGY.

PART THE FIRST.

*Of the Time which preceded the Advent of Christ.*

C H A P. I.

*Of the Creation.*

As we are now to treat of the Creation, we shall consider it, First. In general. Second. In particular.

I. **W**ITH respect to the Creation, in general, we have two things to demonstrate. First. That the world was created. Second. How it was created.

I. THAT the world was created by God, may be proved, First. From Scripture, which expressly teacheth this article of our faith. Gen. i. and every where else. Second. From reason, in this manner: Either the world had a beginning, or it had not; if it had a beginning, it must have been produced by some cause, but that cause could be none else but God. If it had no beginning, it must be  
eternal,

eternal, but every thing is against the eternity of the world, as for instance, history, which is too recent, not extending beyond the space of six, or seven thousand years. As to the objection that the history of the Egyptians, and Chineses, is far more ancient than Sacred History, it is easily answered, since what the Egyptians relate, concerning the ancient and very remote Dynastians, under the dominion of the gods and demi-gods, are manifestly fabulous. In other respects, the Chronology of the Egyptians and Chineses, exactly corresponds with Sacred History, which has been already fully proved by men of learning. The origin, likewise of nations, empires, arts and sciences, cannot consist with the eternity of the world; the series and order of generations, bring us to the first man, and common principal of the human race. And lest any one should object, that more ancient monuments of history were formerly extant, which since have been lost, we observe, that the ancients acknowledged this novelty of the world, and said that its nature was new, or not of long existence. The poet Lucretius, though an adversary to Christianity, even in his day, made use of this argument, taken from history and the origin of arts, against the eternity of the world.

IF there was no original principle, which gave being to the Heavens and the earth, and if they existed from eternity, why did not more ancient poets treat of facts, previous to the war of Thebes, or the destruction of Troy?

2. CREATION is commonly distinguished, into First, and Second. The first was the production of matter out of nothing, and perhaps this creation of matter, as likewise of the Angels, preceded the creation of this visible world, some space of time : At least the account which Moses gives of man's fall, makes it very probable. Since even at that time, the Devil had arrived at the summit of wickedness, and therefore some space of time must have elapsed, after his revolt, which was preceded by the state of innocence, in which the apostate Angels were created.

BE this as it will, Moses describes the formation of this world, as a second creation. First. God created all things by his word, that is, by his command and will, which is a work of supreme and boundless power. Pf. xxxiii. 6. Second. God observed a certain order in the creation, for he did not create all things in an instant, but in the space of six days, viz. on the first day he produced light, but not as yet collected into a particular space ; on the second, the expanse or firmament ; on the third, he separated the waters from the earth, and produced plants out of the earth ; on the fourth, the stars ; on the fifth, fishes and fowls ; on the sixth, terrestrial animals, and man.

Now, a twofold reason may be assigned, why God did accomplish this work, in the space of six days. First. That he observed a certain order, convenient to the nature of things. Second. That he intended hereby to evince, that he was the author

thor and governor of all, even the most minute of the creatures, and that he implanted in each of them, its peculiar nature and properties.

II. CREATION, considered particularly, respects either Angels or man. First. Concerning the Angels, the following particulars are related in Scripture, for we can understand little or nothing of them from reason. First. That there are Angels, for they are mentioned every where, and they are said to have been created, by God. Ps. cxlviii. 2. &c. So that it is amazing, how the Sadduces came to deny their existence. Second. As to the nature of Angels, we are to understand, that the name Angel is derived from their office, and not from their nature, and signifies an Ambassador, or Minister of God. Yet the word of God informs us wherein their nature consists, they are spirits, endowed with the understanding and will. Heb. i. 4. Immortal. Luke xx. 36. Powerful. Ps. ciii. 20. Their number is very great. Dan. vii. 10. Third. We learn, from the word of God, that a certain order, and subordination takes place among them, there mention is made of Archangels, as also, of the Devil, and his Angels; but they are good or evil. The good Angels persevered in their integrity, and seem to be so confirmed in a state of happiness, that they cannot fall from it, as it is certain, that the wicked are damned without hope of pardon.

SOME Divines have spoke many things, concerning the election and reprobation of Angels, about which the Scripture is entirely silent; but it is best, dismissing these, to enquire into the offices, or employments of good Angels. First. With respect to God, they celebrate his praise, worship him reverently, and fulfil his commands. Isa. vi. 2. 3. 4. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts. Pf. ciii. 20. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandment, hearkning unto the voice of his word. Second. With respect to the world, their operations are various. Third. With respect to men, whom they either protect or punish, of this there are various examples extant in Scripture. Pf. xxxiv. 8. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. Heb. i. 14. And although the operations of Angels be not now a days conspicuous, or visible, nevertheless it is certain, that every day they perform various operations.

It is enquired, whether a guardian Angel be assigned to every person, which was the opinion of many ancient Christians, and is still retained in the Church of Rome.

THE chief passage adduced in confirmation of this doctrine, is in Matt. xviii. 10. Take heed, that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in Heaven, their Angels do always behold the face of my father. That passage in the Acts xii 15. It is his Angel, has no force with it. It is certain, from the word of God, that sometimes

sometimes many Angels preside over one man, and sometimes one Angel over many men. But the opinion which assigns a bad Angel, or genius, to every man, has no foundation, and seems to make God the author of sin.

THE evil Angels, again departed from their integrity, being seduced by the Devil, who exercises a principality over them. It may be asked here, wherein did the nature of their sin consist, and it is commonly said to have been pride, but this does not appear. Yet it is certain, that it must have been most heinous, as they are damned without hope of pardon. 2 Pet. ii. 4. God hath left some power still remaining with them, as appears from Scripture, yet so, as that it hath been greatly diminished since the coming of Christ, for they do not so torment Christians now, as they did men before, yet it is in their power to tempt them. 1 Pet. v. 8. Be sober and vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

WE are now to treat of the creation of Man. God created man last, in the order of creation, as being the most excellent workmanship; he formed his body out of the earth, and breathed into him a living soul, which is a Spiritual, and immortal substance. Now, the distinction between soul and body, is confirmed by many arguments, taken both from Scripture and reason. The Spirit returneth to God, Eccles. xii. 9. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and

the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Matt. x. 28. The faculties of the soul are, First. The understanding, by which we apprehend things, reason and judge concerning them. Second. The will, which is bent towards certain objects, and is averse to others ; but it desires no object but what is good, or under the appearance of goodness. Third. Liberty, which is essential to spirits, and is the faculty of determining, or chusing between two or more objects,

THERE have been various disputes concerning the will, both in Philosophy and Theology, viz. whether it follows the dictate of the understanding? As also concerning liberty, whether it consists only, in immunity from compulsion, or which is the same, in spontaneity, by which a man acts, indeed, necessarily, but at the same time willingly ; or in indifference, so that a man, when every motive necessary for action is proposed to him, may act, or not act, this or the other part or among many objects, chuse, or embrace this, or the other at pleasure.

I do not think that an absolute or precise answer, can be returned to these questions, either by affirming or denying : But we may say, that both are possible, and, that this is the case, every one will be conscious, by looking into himself : These questions, indeed, seem to be very intricate, yet I think they may be solved with little trouble, as our discourse here, is concerning a matter of fact, in which we are almost every moment concerned,  
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and of which we are so conscious. Therefore, these questions are better deduced from sense, and experience, than from the determinations of Philosophers and Divines, who for the most part, departing from nature, and the easy and plain way, indulge themselves in subtile argumentation; so that, if any one would turn his attention inwardly, and examine how he is impelled to action, he will find, or I am greatly mistaken, what I am now to observe to be most certain.

As to the question, whether the will obeys the last dictate of the understanding? I answer, that sometimes it does, and at other times it does not. It oftentimes happens, that on the one side, the most powerful motives present themselves to us, but on the other, very slight ones, and such as affect us very little. Then we obey what the understanding dictates. But at other times, motives, for and against a thing, may present themselves to us, which do affect us much, as in temptations, which are attended with a conflict, then it is possible, that we may not follow the dictate of the understanding. Likewise, as to the question, whether liberty consists in spontaniety, or immunity from compulsion, or in indifference? I answer, that both may happen. For I am sensible, from experience, that I am sometimes so determined to act, that it is not in my power to avoid it, yet at the same time I act spontaneously willing, and not by constraint. But sometimes I find myself making a choice, between two or more objects, and am not so determined on the one part, as not to  
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be also impelled to the other; as, when two objects present themselves to me which are equally attractive, as for instance, in temptations, when I hesitate, doubting, whether I ought to gratify my desire, or resist it, in that case, I chuse and act at pleasure, and use the faculty which God hath given me. Therefore, it is clear, that liberty ought not to be defined, with too much precision. And perhaps it were better to state the question concerning liberty, after a different manner, viz. not wherein liberty consists, for then the controversy will turn upon the term; but how a man does act, to which we answer, that sometimes he acts spontaneously and necessarily, yet willingly, at other times he is indifferent, and makes a choice. So that indifference is not totally to be rejected. But, on the other hand, neither ought liberty to be so placed in indifference, that laying it aside, there could be no liberty, as the remonstrants do, who acknowledge no liberty but of indifference, and assert, that the will acts in this, or in a different manner, merely to shew its liberty, which is by no means true, and is inconsistent with the nature of man, who is always, at least in things of any moment, impelled to action, by some reason, true or false. Some of the Arminians carried this point so far (whilst others were calling out against them) as to assert, that Christ was not absolutely impeccable, or incapable of sinning, which is odious, and almost blasphemous. They were so much of opinion, that liberty was so closely connected with indifference, that it could not consist with necessity. And besides, Limburgius;

gius, at the very beginning of his Theology, ascribes such a liberty unto God. But lastly, as the will of man is greatly depraved by sin, we should be cautious, lest, when we ascribe liberty unto him, such a liberty should be understood, as that man of himself, and by his own faculties, could either chuse, or do any thing that is good.

SOMETHING remains now to be said concerning the Image of God, according to which man was formed. It consisted, First. In that excellency of his nature which is discernable, both in his soul, and in his body. Second. In his innocence, and rectitude. Eccles. vii. 29. God made man upright, &c. Yet the endowments of Adam, ought not to be too highly extolled, as some do, who ascribe to him, knowledge almost infinite, and sanctity almost angelical; since by these means, it can scarcely be conceived how he could have fallen. Third. In his dominion over the creatures. Gen. i. 26. Ps. viii. 6. 7. 8. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet. Fourth. Adam was immortal, not, indeed, absolutely, and of himself, but he would not have died, had he not sinned, this is supposed by the threatening denounced against him. Gen. ii. 16.

It may be here enquired, whether the image of God is still to be found in man, after the fall? It cannot be denied, that it suffered a considerable diminution. Gen. iii. 17. Yet it was not totally abolished. Gen. ix. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 7. But through  
Christ,

Christ it is restored to a higher degree of perfection, than it was in Adam. Put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. iv. 25. Col. iii. 10.

THE use of this doctrine, is to acknowledge the supreme power, and goodness of God, displayed in the creation of man, and to be grateful. Second. To employ these powers and faculties, which he has conferred upon us, whether they be natural, or supernatural, in promoting his own glory, and our salvation.

## C H A P. II.

### *Upon Providence.*

**P**ROVIDENCE comes in next, after the work of Creation. First. We shall demonstrate, that there is a Providence. Afterwards, shew wherein it consists.

THE former is evinced by a variety of arguments, but principally such as follow. First. From this very consideration, that there is a God. For whoever acknowledges the existence of God, and at the same time denies, that he superintends the affairs of the universe, annuls and overthrows his existence. The essence of God consists in nothing else, but his excellencies and perfections. Now, these perfections have an entire respect unto the creatures, such are his wisdom, power, goodness, &c. neither could they be known, or acknowledged, but by his government of the world. So that

that by denying the doctrine of a Providence, these perfections are overthrown, and consequently the very nature of God. Second. From creation. For granting a creation, we must, of course, acknowledge a Providence ; the Creator of the world must, of course, be its governor. For in creating the world, he must certainly have proposed some end, which could not be accomplished otherwise, than by his Providence superintending all things. Third. The harmony which prevails in the world, the disposition and arrangement of the whole creation, so wise and so uniform, is a most evident proof of One Supreme Cause, most wise and most benevolent, as has been already observed. Fourth. The Scripture every where teacheth, that God overrules all things, both great and small. It would be unnecessary here, to multiply quotations ; among others, Matthew may be consulted, vi. 26. Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Fifth. The argument taken from prophecies is of the greatest weight, none of which could have ever existed, had not God foreseen, and procured the events. Sixth. Extraordinary, and miraculous events furnish us with the sixth argument. For if there were no free and intelligent cause, which governed the universe, every thing which happens in the world must be effected by a natural and fatal necessity ; neither would there have ever been any change or interruption, respecting the order of the world, and operation of natural causes ; so that all things must have continued immutably, in an  
unalterable

unalterable state ; but these extraordinary events suppose a free cause, which inverts, or impedes the order and effects of causes at pleasure. But that such extraordinary events have happened, is evident, even from the testimony of other historians, and almost the universal consent of mankind ; as for instance, concerning the flood, &c. The objections, which are commonly urged here, are either trivial, trite, or vulgar, so that we need not consume much time in refuting them ; as that passage in 1 Cor. ix. 9. Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen ? which every one sees, ought not to be taken in an absolute, but comparative sense. The same thing may be said, of that passage in Habac. i. 14. And makes man as the fishes of the sea, and as the creeping things, which have no rule over them ; unless, perhaps, this text might be otherwise translated than we have it in our Bibles ; and we are to understand it, not of God, but Nebuchadnezzar, who, like a fisher, plundered, and dragged all things after him ; which explication is quite consistent with the preceding, and subsequent parts of the discourse.

It is also objected, that many things fall out in a disorderly manner, and for which no cause can be assigned. This we deny, because, it does not follow, from our ignorance of the cause of some things, that they are done without reason : Every thing is conducted, according to the most perfect wisdom, and laws, established by God. It is usually likewise objected, that the wicked are suffered

ferred to flourish and prosper, whilst the virtuous are oppressed and afflicted. But besides, that it is not evident to us, who are really good, or evil, the Providence of God is conspicuous in this, that he permits the godly, sometimes, to be oppressed and afflicted, and the wicked to enjoy temporal plenty, and this for very just reasons; especially, because by these means he plainly shews, that neither real happiness, nor the real punishments of sin, are to be expected in this life, or in things external; but in the world to come, when he will render unto every one, according to his works.

II. WE are now to see wherein Providence consists. And here, in the first place, let us consider its object. Secondly, the manner in which it is concerned in the affairs of the universe.

I. ALL things are subject to Divine Providence, things celestial, terrestrial, angels, men, all creatures, events, &c. Likewise, future contingencies, even such as appear to be least important, as we have already shewn, when treating of the science of God, and is confirmed by a variety of Scripture proofs, Matt. vi. 28. and x. 29. Psal. cxlv. 15. 16. This is also evinced by reason, as the power and wisdom of God, is no less conspicuous, in the administration of smaller, than of matters of the greatest moment. Therefore, it is not unworthy of the Majesty of God, to attend to, even the most minute things. Besides, if all things even the smallest, were not subject to the Providence  
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of God, scarcely any thing could be said to be governed by him ; for such is the order, connection, and dependence of causes and effects, that oftentimes the least causes concur, in producing the greatest effects.

THE case here is the same as with an artist, who could not furnish a clock or watch, if he was ignorant of the use of any, even the smallest part, or least wheel, and could not adjust it in its proper place.

2. WITH respect to the manner in which Providence is exercised, in the management of things, Divines inform us, that it consists of two acts, viz. governing and preserving. First. God preserves the essence, and faculties of all his creatures. Acts xvii. 28. In him we live, move, and have our being. Psal. civ. 27. &c. This much might have sufficed, to have been spoken at a word, on this subject, had not Divines here started various questions. For they do not at all agree, as to the manner or method of preservation. There are some of them who would have it to consist in a new, and perpetual creation, or reproduction, if we may so term it, and a positive act of God, by which he reproduceth the creatures, every moment, without which, they would relapse into none-existence. But others are of opinion, that there is no necessity for this new act of God, and that it is sufficient, if we but say, that God created all things by his will, with the intent that they

they should continue in that state of existence as long as he thought proper.

BUT the controversy is greater with respect to men, viz. whether their term of life be fatal or moveable, i. e. whether the particular time of every man's life and death, be so fixed and determined, that it can neither be prolonged, nor contracted ?

IT were to be wished, that Divines would abstain from questions of the like nature, and it were safer to determine nothing with too much precision, concerning arguments of this nature. This much we may affirm with certainty. First. That the term of some men's lives, was immutably fixed by God, as Moses. Second. That God by his prescience, doth know, and hath known, the particular time of every man's death. Third. That the term of man's life is limited, and confined within certain bounds. Job xiv. 5. His days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee. Fourth. That God at his pleasure may deprive man of life. These are certain, and indubitably true.

BUT whether God hath determined the death of all, and every particular person, is not so evident. Divines think, that it may be proved, from that passage in Job, xiv. 5. and some other places in Scripture. But others on the contrary, object various places in Scripture, for instance, the promise in the fifth commandment. Likewise what is said,  
Psal.

Pfal. lv. 24. Bloody and deceitful men, shall not live out half their days, and that King Hezekiah's life was prolonged fifteen years, after his death had been declared by the Prophet. Isa. xxxviii. and 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. Where the option, which was granted to David, seems to imply, that the time, and manner of the death of these 70,000 persons, who were cut off by the pestilence, was not determined since, otherwise, there could have been no choice. It is likewise objected, that by these means we can scarcely avoid, making God the author of sin: For, if he has predetermined the death of every one, and if it is to be effected by murder, or witchcraft, the manner of his death, must likewise have been appointed: For where the end is absolutely intended, there the means must likewise be necessarily, and absolutely, intended, and determined. The use of prudence, temperance, and remedies, seems likewise to avail but little, if God hath prefixed the term of life. If any one should reply, that these means of preserving, and of losing life, are likewise determined, then nothing remains, but that we should wait, until God effects within, and without us, whatever he hath decreed.

II. GOVERNMENT is an act of Providence, by which he overrules all the creatures, and all events, in such a manner, as that nothing can happen, but what he either wills, or permits to be done. Here three particulars are observable.

I. THOUGHT

1. **THOUGH** God governs his creatures, yet he does not govern them all, after one and the same manner. With respect to such as are irrational, he only applies his power; but to the rational, partly his power, and partly laws. I mention his power, because, as to life and faculties, they are equally depending upon God, as other creatures, but as they are rational, he rules them by laws: and in order to induce them to observe these laws, he proposes both promises and threatenings, and at length will pass sentence upon them, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.

**BUT** here, an important question is proposed, concerning the concurrence or operation of God, with respect to the actions of his creatures. Some Divines divide this concurrence, into simultaneous, by which God acts along with the creatures, so that he acts on his part, and the creatures on their's; and previous, or determining, by which he acts immediately in the creatures, and by the creatures, so that the creatures act, because God determines them, or rather acts within them; and some of them urge this concurrence, or physical predetermination so far, as even to extend it to evil actions; which opinion we reject, as being harsh, and as it constitutes God, the author of sin. But there is no reason why we should be solicitous concerning this question, it is sufficient if we believe. First. That the creatures act by powers granted them by God, which he may deprive them of at pleasure. Second. That God so concurs with the actions of men, by his grace, both external and  
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internal, as that they can do nothing truly good without it.

2. IT is to be observed, that God overrules the world in such a manner, that nothing can happen, but what he hath decreed to do himself, or permit to be done; for there are some events, which God himself effects, and there are others which he only permits, and these are equally subject unto Providence, as appears from what we are to observe afterwards.

3. ALL things are directed by God, towards that end, which he hath proposed to himself, and that most wisely. But since his Providence is chiefly concerned about mankind, whom he hath formed after his own image. It is quite clear that the whole of the Divine administration tends principally to promote both their temporal felicity; viz. the preservation of their lives, and society with each other, and their eternal salvation: For whoever will but attentively weigh the scope of Divine Providence, must acknowledge, that he is most benevolent towards mankind, and that he consults their happiness, in all his proceedings.

BUT we come now to treat of the Providence of God, as it has a respect unto sin, the discussion of which question, will be attended with some more difficulty; for, as on the one hand, we must be under the strictest guard, lest God should be represented the author of sin, so, on the other, we should be cautious, lest it should be totally removed,

ed, from under the disposal of his Providence. These two particulars here, claim our closest attention. In the first place, then, this ought to be laid down, as a principle of indubitable truth, and foundation of all religion, that God is not the author of sin. God neither wills, nor commits sin, otherwise, he would be neither holy, good, nor just. See Ps. v. 5. Thou art not God, which hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. Jam. i. 13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, &c. And this indeed, is acknowledged by all divines. Yet there have been some among them, and there are some to be found at present, who ascribe unto God an efficacious Providence, with respect to sin, and who, in order to defend their opinion, produce various texts of Scripture, which seem to refer evil actions unto God, his will and operation. As 1 Sam. ii. 25. Where it is said, that the sons of Heli, would not hearken unto their father, because the Lord would slay them. Prov. xvi. 4. The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. Exod. vii. 3. Concerning the hardening of Pharaoh. 2 Sam. xii. 11. Concerning David's wives, being delivered unto Absalom. And xvi. 11. Concerning Shimea cursing David. Isa. vi. 9. 10. Hear ye, but understand not. With respect to which passages, we may observe in general, that to constitute God the author of sin, or its cause, is a thing so detestable and blasphemous, that it were better, if these places cannot be expounded

to advantage, to acknowledge, that there is something in them, which we do not comprehend, or even to affix to them a different meaning, than to fall into that abominable opinion, that God either wills, commands, or effects sin. But it is not difficult so to interpret these passages, that no such thing might be concluded. To bring these particular passages to close, examination would be tedious. It will be sufficient, to attend to the following rules, by which these, or texts of a like nature may be expounded. First. First of all, it ought to be well observed, whether their translation be accurate, as for example, 1 Sam. ii. 25. This text, as it is read in some of the Latin, and French Bibles, seems openly to declare, that God willed, that the sons of Heli should sin, and die, because, the Hebrew particle is rendered (because) but if it were translated, therefore, or for this cause, the sense would be plain, viz. that the sons of Heli were disobedient, and therefore, it was the will of God, that they should die. This is the more to be observed, because some of those, who were the authors of these versions, were addicted to rigid, and harsh hypotheses and opinions, to which they meant to accommodate the Sacred Scripture. Second. Many portions of Scripture, seem to treat of sin, when it is not at all intended, as Prov. xvi. 4. The sense is, that God hath appointed calamity and punishment, for the wicked. Third. Many places seem to ascribe action to God, with respect to sin, where he is not at all mentioned, as 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. Where it is said, that he moved David, by saying, Go number the people

people. These passages are to be understood impersonally, or, as relating to men, or the Devil. Thus, Isa. vi. 8. 9. 10. Harden the heart of this people, &c. Here the certainty of the event predicted by the Prophet is denoted, and that hardness, of which the people was the cause; but it does not signify, that either God or the Prophet hardened them, so that the meaning is, that the heart of this people is hardened, which is invincibly demonstrated, from Mat. xiii. 14. where that passage is cited, in the very sense we have mentioned. In these places, the certainty and occasion of the event is denoted, but not the cause. Thus, from that saying of Christ, Matt. x. 34. one might erroneously conclude, that he came to promote war among men. Fourth. Such places as speak of God, ought to be understood of his permission, as 1 Kings xxiv. 22. 23. Concerning the lying spirit, sent into the mouth of the false Prophets. But, that this ought not to be ascribed to the action of God, is evident, Ps. xix. 8. The testimony of the Lord is sure. And xxv. 5. Also, 2 Thes. ii. 5. Or if any thing be understood more, than a meer permission, and action be ascribed to God. With respect to sin, it must be, that God permits the occasions or objects of sin to be offered, which the sinner abuseth to his own guilt. Thus, 2 Sam. xii. 2. And xvi. 2. The meaning is, that God being angry with David, delivered up his house and wives unto Absalom; and that he was brought to such a pass by the just judgment of God, as to give occasion to Shimea's malediction. Pharaoh was hardened, because God

permitted the Magicians, some how or other, to imitate the miracles of Moses. As likewise, because he sent plagues of a lower degree, which ceased at the prayers of Moses. This much, indeed was done by God, in order that he might shew the maliciousness of Pharaoh, and his own justice, and power. Exod. ix. 15. 16. But that these words, I will harden Pharaoh's heart, ought not to be urged, is evident, from Pharaoh being said, to have hardened himself, or to have been hardened. Chap. viii. 32. And vii. 16. To conclude, we thus argue, either the King of Egypt was hardened without God being the author of this hardness, or he was not. If the former be allowed, then the action of God, was superfluous and useless. If the latter, then Pharaoh was not so wretched, and hardened, and God only must have been the cause of hardness, and of the people being detained.

II. BUT though God be not the author of sin, neither does he efficaciously procure it, yet it is still subject to Divine Providence, and that in a threefold respect, viz. he permits, determines, and directs it. He permits it, not by a moral permission, as if he approved of it, but physical, by which he suffers it to be committed, this may be conceived, in the following manner. In order that a man may be in a capacity for action, three things are requisite. First. That he should be possessed of powers and faculties. Second. That the objects, and occasions of action, should be offered him. Third. A willingness to act. The first and second  
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of these depend upon God, but the third upon man. But, in as much as God hath granted powers, and faculties to man, and preserves and upholds them, and suffers their objects to be presented to them; this he does justly and wisely, nay, necessarily, because, otherwise human nature would be overturned, the order of the world disturbed, and human obedience never brought to the test. But though he permits sin, yet he imposes no necessity of sinning upon men, nay, he restrains them from sinning, by various methods, so that sin must proceed from man.

MANY Divines make use of the following distinction, with respect to sin, viz. They distinguish between the action itself, and its criminality, or, between its materiality, and formality, and say, that the action itself proceeds from God, but its criminality from man. But, First. Though there are actions, in which these two may be distinguished, as giving alms through vain glory, yet, this distinction is of no use here, because the criminality does not consist in the external action, by which I give alms, but in the manner, or intention of giving. But, as we are now treating of the Providence of God, with respect to sin, actions are not considered materially, but formally, i. e. not as acts simply, but as vicious acts; and the question is, whether such acts have God as their author? Thus, in the example just now produced, the question is not, whether God be the author of the external action, by which I give money to the poor, for the controversy does not turn upon this; but, whether

whether he concurs with that act of the mind by which I give alms through pride, or vain glory, for it is the latter only, that the essence of the sin consists. Besides, there are actions, in which the action itself cannot be distinguished from its criminality, for instance, hatred against our neighbours, and sins of omission. So that all circumstances being maturely weighed, it is best to conclude, that the faculty and objects proceed from God, but the action from man. Neither, for that reason, is man exempted from the dominion of God, since he derives his powers from him, which he may deprive him of at pleasure.

2. GOD determines sin, and sets bounds to the sinner, so that he cannot sin, sooner or later, or more, than he permits; and besides, he restrains evil doers, by various methods.

3. THE Providence of God is conspicuous in this, that he directs sins, and sometimes employs sinners, whilst they themselves are ignorant of it, and intend the contrary, in accomplishing some end, which he himself had proposed. This is abundantly evident, from the example of the Patriarch Joseph.

THE principal uses of this doctrine are, First, Attentively, and daily, to contemplate the works of Divine Providence, which surround us on all hands, in Nature, in the Heavens, in the World, in civil society, &c. Second. Love, and grateful affections towards God, whose Providence is deeply

ly concerned about us, and loads us with innumerable benefits. Third. Reverence of the Divine Majesty, an awful dread of future judgment, and sincere obedience. Fourth. Prayers and reliance. For since all things depend upon God, it is our duty to rest upon him, and to have recourse unto him, for safety and protection. Matt. vi. 25. 26. Fifth. Submission to the Divine will, who rules the universe according to supreme wisdom; but especially, patience in adversity.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Of Sin.*

**A**FTER our treatise upon Providence, we are next to treat of Sin. For the whole of the Divine administration supposes mankind to be in a state of Sin, and Religion is the remedy against sin. Therefore, we find, that the history of the creation is immediately succeeded, in Genesis, by the history of Adam's fall. As this is the case, it would be of no utility to dispute, as some Divines do, concerning the state in which Adam would have been, had he not fallen. Here four things are to be considered, viz. the nature of Sin, its origin, punishment, and lastly, its various divisions.

I. SIN is a voluntary action, committed against law. I say, an action, whether external, or internal, voluntary (for where the action is involuntary, there can be no room for either virtue or vice) committed against law. I John, iii. 4. Sin is the transgression

transgression of the law. For if there were no law, Sin could not be imputed. Rom. v. 13. But by law, here, we understand, either the law of nature, or revelation. Rom. ii. 14.

BUT, with respect to the nature of Sin, it is of the greatest consequence to observe, that men do not sin against God, so as to injure him, or that his beatitude could suffer any diminution thereby. They, indeed, offer violence against the Divine authority, but are injurious only to themselves. Job xxii. 2. 3. 4. Can a man be profitable unto God? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or, is it gain to him, that thou makest thyself perfect, &c. And, xxxv. 6. 7. 8. Prov. viii. 36. He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death. Jer. vii. 19. Do they provoke me to anger, saith the Lord, do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces. And, xlv. 7. &c.

II. CONCERNING the origin of Sin, we have already observed, that God is not its author, since he hath created man upright, and endowed him with liberty. Therefore, the will of man must be the real cause of Sin. The history of Adam's fall is related, Gen. iii. With respect to which, the following particulars merit our attention. First. That the Devil had revolted from God, previous to the fall of man. Second. That God had prescribed a law to Adam, for if he had been subject to no law, he could not have acknowledged his  
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subjection unto God, and might have imagined that he had been created for no other purpose, but that he might enjoy the creatures. But God gave him a positive law, prohibiting his eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, such a law being entirely adapted to his present circumstances. For, the laws which are comprehended in the Decalogue, could not at that time take place. This law he corroborated, with the threatning of death, which threatning, likewise, contained in it a promise of life ; for man, being a free creature, could not be bound to obedience, otherwise, than by promises and threatnings. Third. Adam and Eve sinned freely, and voluntarily, being deceived by the Devil, and their own lust. Gen. iii. 6. 4. Adam, by sinning, became obnoxious to various miseries, especially death. Gen. iii. 17. 19. Neither did he injure himself alone, but likewise his posterity, whom he also rendered obnoxious to sin and death. Rom. v. 12. As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

INQUIRY is usually made here, concerning the propagation of Sin, how it is effected, which question is, indeed, obscure, and of little consequence. This much is certain, from the universal sense, and experience of mankind, as likewise, from the Word of God, that men are prone to Sin, and mortal, which might suffice. Yet, that opinion looks most probable, which makes Sin to be propagated by the body, which contaminates the soul. And this  
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may be proved from Scripture, which ascribes the fountain of Sin to the body, and the flesh; and therefore exhorts us, to subdue the flesh. Gal. v. 16. &c. 1 Pet. ii. 2. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers, and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the spirit.

III. WITH respect to the punishment of Sin, Divines usually divide it into a threefold death, viz. spiritual (or corruption) temporal, and eternal; but corruption, or depravation, accurately speaking, is not the punishment, but the consequence of Sin. This we observe, against such as affirm that God punishes sins, by sins, so that men fall into other sins, as a punishment for those, which they had previously committed. The punishment, therefore, of Sin, consists in enduring that evil and sorrow, which the sinner hath brought upon himself, which evil is, indeed, twofold, either of this, or a future life. Temporal punishments are the miseries of this life, and death. Gen. iii. 17. Yet, it ought to be observed, that, properly speaking, these are not the principal punishments of Sin, for by the evils of this life, God calls men to repentance, neither does he act as judge before death. Therefore the real punishments of sin, are those of a future life, viz. a separation from God, and a state of the most exquisite misery, which separation is the natural and necessary consequence of Sin, for man merely by his being a sinner, separates and alienates himself from God, who is the chief good, so that he must be in a most wretched condition.

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Yet we are not to understand such a necessity, as would exclude man, having once fallen into Sin, from all hopes of pardon ; this is evident, because God himself, immediately after the fall, allowed Adam to entertain hopes of permission. Gen. iii. 15.

IV. WHAT now remains, are the divisions of Sin. And, first, it is divided into original, and actual, which distinction was invented by Augustine.

THE Scholasticks again, divide Original Sin, into imputed and inherent. The former is that Sin of Adam, which is imputed to all his posterity, in such a manner indeed, that all men have sinned in Adam, and on account of his Sin, become obnoxious to eternal death, which imputation many reject. Ezek. xviii. 20. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Gal. vi. 5. Every one shall bear his own burden. There are some who divide imputation, into antecedent, by which the Sin of Adam is immediately imputed to his posterity, without any respect being had to their own corruption ; and consequent, by which God imputes this Sin unto them, on account of their own corruption, viz. because they love Sin, and thus approve of Adam's transgression. But this distinction is absurd, and of no utility, since this consequent imputation, is liable almost to the same difficulties, as that which is antecedent.

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ORIGINAL Sin inherent, is that depravity of nature, which is to be found in all men, even from their birth, and which renders them so prone to Sin, that without the interposition of Divine grace, they must still be under its dominion. This natural depravity, is proved from Sacred Scripture, John iii. 6. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh. Ps. li. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. We might add to these, a variety of other passages, which treat of the universal depravity of mankind, and the necessity of Divine grace. It may be likewise proved from reason, for since all men are sinners, there must be some common principle of Sin, in the nature of man, which discovers itself, even from his infancy. From this natural depravity, none is free but Christ. Yet the Church of Rome maintains the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, and there has been a very warm contest concerning this matter, between the Dominicans, and Franciscans, the latter asserting, that the Virgin was conceived without Sin. This controversy was decided by Pope Alexander VII. A. D. 1661. Who established by a decree, the immaculate conception.

ACTUAL Sin, is that which we commit knowingly, and freely: There are some who assert, that Sin has nothing positive in its nature, but that it is a mere privation, or nonentity; but that is very absurd, for certainly it is of a nature very positive, and real.

THE three following particulars constitute Sin, viz. If the action opposes the dictate of conscience; if it recedes from the rule, or law; or is done for a bad end: If all these three, or only one, or either of them, be found in any action, it must be evil.

AGAIN, actual Sin is variously divided, with respect to the action itself, its object, manner, and punishment.

I. WITH respect to the action, sins of commission differ from sins of omission. The former consists in the commission of an action, prohibited by God; the latter is when we omit the performance of a duty prescribed. But though sins of commission be more grievous, yet sins of omission are real sins, and destructive.

II. With respect to the object, Sin is committed either against God, against mankind, or ourselves: And indeed all sins are committed against God, since whoever sins, violates the Law and Majesty of God. Yet there are certain sins, which directly, and immediately do strike at God, and his glory, as Atheism, Impiety, Idolatry, Perjury, and the Contempt of Religion, which are most grievous.

III. WITH respect to the manner men sin. First. Either in thought, word, or deed. Second. Or through ignorance, as when the person who sins, is ignorant of his duty; or through inattention, as when

when he is negligent, as to his duty ; and against conscience, as when a person offends against the feelings, and admonitions of conscience. These, who sin through ignorance are thought less guilty, if the ignorance is invincible, it excuses entirely, if vincible, it excuses in part. Those who sin through inattention are thought to be more guilty, but such as sin against conscience, offend most grievously. Third. There is a difference between sins, which proceed from infirmity, and such as proceed from malice. Sin is committed through malice, when we offend knowingly, and after a contest ; as also, when we commit sins of a more grievous nature, which cannot consist with piety. Fourth. There are sins which may be termed reigning, and not reigning. A reigning sin is when a man indulges vice, and sins with a habit of impenitence. Rom. vi. 12. Let not Sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Not reigning, such are the sins of godly men, or penitent sinners. Let these suffice, being spoken in few words, concerning the divisions of Sin.

IV. WITH respect to punishment, there is a celebrated division of Sin, into venial, and moral ; which ought to be rejected, if the meaning is, that there are any sins which do not merit punishment. But it may be applied in a right sense, if by it we are to understand, that there are some sins, which, according to the Evangelical Covenant,

nant, through the mercy of God shall not be punished, such are sins which proceed from infirmity.

BESIDES, Sin is divided, into remissible, and irremissible, or the Sin against the Holy Ghost. But Divines differ, in explaining the nature of this Sin; some assert, that it consists in apostacy, attended with a detestation of the truth when known, and opposition to it, and all this contrary to conscience, and from deliberate malice. Others affirm, that it consists in final impenitence, and others in despair; but these things are uncertain, obscure, and of no utility. They are uncertain, since it can scarcely be defined, wherein this Sin consists, for neither apostates, nor such as sin through deliberate malice, or persecute the truth, can be said to sin irremissibly. Unprofitable, as this doctrine can be of no use, nor can it be applied to any man. All Divines acknowledge, that no person ought to believe, that he has been guilty of this sin, as also that it ought not to be said of any one, that he has been guilty of it. Wherein then does the utility of this doctrine consist.

INDEED there are usually three passages of Scripture, quoted with respect to it, viz. Matt. xiv. 32. Whoever shall speak a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. And x. 26. 1 John v. 16. There is a sin unto death, I do not say that ye shall pray for it. And Divines are of opinion, that the sin against the Holy Ghost, is mentioned in all these three

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different places, but indeed they are mistaken, for certainly three different species of Sin are denoted in them. First. Matt. xii. 32. Christ does not speak here concerning Sin, but blasphemy, or a word against the Holy Ghost. But this blasphemy was the Sin of the Pharisees, who attributed to the Devil, the miracles which were wrought by our Lord, through the power of the Holy Ghost. See Mark iii. 30. For they said, he hath an impure spirit. Which blasphemy was indeed so atrocious, that it could not be remitted, because it proceeded from desperate malice, and was accompanied with impenitence, for there was no method now remaining, by which Christ could break the malice or incredulity of the Pharisees. Second. These passages are adduced, Heb. vi. 4. 6. And x. 26. but they evidently treat of apostates. The third passage is, 1 John v. 16. The meaning of which is, that prayers were in vain offered up, in behalf of such as had sinned unto death, i. e. such as God had decreed, should be punished, with temporal death, for John treats here of the efficacy of prayer. Men of learning have acted with little prudence, who have treated of the sin against the Holy Ghost, in their sermons or writings. For many persons, either through melancholy, or some other cause, when hearing or reading such things, have almost fallen into despair, imagining that they had sinned irremissibly.

THE uses of this doctrine concerning Sin, are, First. That horror and aversion, which we ought to feel within us, whenever we reflect upon its nature.

nature. It being in itself, vile, unjust, detested by God, and noxious unto men.

2. FROM what has been said, with respect to the origin of Sin. viz. that it has man, and not God for its author, it follows, that God is just and holy, and that man is guilty, and worthy of punishment. That the cause of sin, is to be found in man alone, is evident, not only from the history of Adam's fall, but likewise from our own experience. For we Sin in the same manner as Adam did, viz. against the Divine Law, voluntarily, and being seduced by our own lusts.

3. FROM what has been said, concerning the punishment of sin, we learn, in what sense temporal evils are, and are not the punishments of sin. Properly speaking, God does not by them, punish the sinner, but uses them as means to promote our good, viz. that we might avoid its real punishments. Hence appears the wisdom, and goodness of God, who, from the consequences of Sin, prepares a remedy against it. As also, the nature of our duty in adversity, viz. to shake off the dominion of Sin, and to submit ourselves unto God. The punishments of a future life, are most to be dreaded, as being most grievous, and most certain.

THE divisions of Sin, are of signal use, as for instance, the doctrine of Original Sin informs us, First. How great the misery of mankind would have been, if Christ had not come into the world:

Second. Of how great consequence the pious education of children must be, in furnishing them with a remedy, against this native depravity, so that they might be maturely imbued, with the knowledge and fear of God, and the fewel of carnal concupiscence, be extinguished within them, lest they should become the children of Hell. Third. We ought also to beware, lest this original depravity, which has its seat in the flesh, should contaminate ourselves. The other divisions of Sin, may be propounded to the people, with great advantage, who for the most part, pay but little attention to them, the most of men think but little of sins of omission, or such as are committed, only in thought. They scarcely make any difference between sins, which proceed from malice, and from ignorance, as likewise between sins reigning, and such as do not reign. Few have either known, or think how dangerous a thing, a habit of sinning must be, therefore, it must be of great moment, rightly to understand, and duly to propose this doctrine to the people.

#### C H A P. IV.

*Concerning the Decrees of God, respecting Man's Salvation.*

**O**RDER now requires, that we should consider the manner, in which God hath conducted himself towards mankind, having fallen into sin. And therefore some things must be premised, concerning the Decrees of God, or his will, respecting

specting man's salvation, which must be done with caution, and according to Scripture. In the first place, we shall treat of the Divine decrees in general, and secondly, in particular.

I. A DECREE is an act of the Divine will, by which he hath determined to do something. The decrees of God are eternal, or made before the world was created. Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us, before the foundation of the world. For we cannot conceive a time, in which God was ignorant of what he intended to do. Acts xi. 18. They are free. Eph. i. 5. 9. Having predestinated us, unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; and unsearchable. Rom. xi. 33. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. So that they cannot be known, but by Divine Revelation, and their events.

THE question is here asked, whether there be conditional decrees, which question may be answered, without any trouble. For if by decree, we understand, an act of the divine will, by which he hath decreed, to do a thing absolutely, that decree is absolute, and if it depends upon any condition, God will accomplish it. But if we understand the divine will, by which he hath decreed to do any thing under a condition, to be performed by a free creature. That decree may be called conditional, though in a certain sense, it is abso-

lute, since let the creature conduct itself as it will, whatever God hath decreed, shall certainly come to pass.

II. DECREES being considered particularly, have a respect unto men, especially their salvation. As to other decrees, for instance, concerning the Angels, it would be rash to inquire. Here a twofold decree is given, the one relating to the sending of Christ into the world, the other, to the salvation, or damnation of men.

THE first decree relates to the Advent of Christ, for he did not come into the world fortuitously, but by virtue of the Father's decree, who had decreed to send his Son, even before the creation of the world. This, the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, every where teach. Gen. iii. 15. The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head. Eph. i. 5. 1 Pet. i. 20. Where Christ is said to have fore-ordained, before the foundation of the world, and made manifest in the last times. We may add to these, all the predictions of the Prophets.

THE latter decree respects, either people of a particular denomination, or every particular person. First. God hath decreed, to reveal himself to a certain people, having for very just reasons, passed by others. Thus he elected the people of Israel. Deut. xxii. 8. And ver. 7. And Paul to the Rom. ix. x. xi. shews, that God might elect the Gentiles, having rejected the Jews. And that decree, concerning  
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the calling of the Gentiles, is that great mystery, concerning which, Eph. i. 9. And iii. 56. In like manner, he hath decreed, to re-assume the Jews into his covenant. Rom. xi. 25.

THE decree concerning the salvation of every particular person, is not explained by Divines, after the same manner, some of them defending an absolute, whilst others maintain a conditional predestination.

AUGUSTINE, and after him some of the Fathers, maintained the former opinion, which likewise has been embraced, by most of the teachers belonging to the reformed Church, and they define Predestination, an act of the Divine will, by which he hath decreed, infallibly to conduct certain men to salvation, by working faith in them irresistibly, the rest being excluded, or at least, passed by. This decree consists of two parts, viz. Election, and Reprobation; but in explaining the nature of it, and assigning the order of decrees, Divines have split into various parties. Various are the methods and hypothesis of Supralapsarians, Infralapsarians, as likewise of the Universalists, and Particularists, concerning which, though it were better to be entirely silent, yet something must be said, rather historically, than dogmatically, lest students, in Theology should be entirely ignorant of the matter.

THOSE who defend absolute Predestination, agree in saying, that God hath elected certain  
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men, upon whom alone he hath decreed to confer salvation, the rest being excluded. And they prove this from Rom. ix. but they differ in assigning the order of the decrees.

THE Supralapsarians teach, that God hath decreed to manifest his glory, by the exercise of his mercy and justice, in the salvation of certain men, and the condemnation of others, and that for this end, he hath decreed, First. To create the World. Second. To permit the Fall. Third. To deliver up Christ, for such as he had decreed should be saved. Fourth. To produce faith within them. They are termed Supralapsarians, because, they place Predestination first, in the order of all the decrees. They tell us, that its object is man not yet fallen. Of which doctrine Beza was patron, and after him Gomarus, The order of the decrees, according to them, is as follows. First. The decree, concerning the manifestation of the Divine mercy and justice, as likewise, the salvation of certain men, and the condemnation of others. Second. Concerning the Creation. Third. Concerning the Fall, not only being permitted, but as others would have it, procured by the subtraction of grace. Fourth. Concerning the sending of Christ. Fifth. Concerning the production of faith in the elect.

THE Infralapsarians place the decree of Predestination after the Fall, and teach, that its object is fallen man, i. e. that God elected, out of fallen men, whom he thought proper, having reprobated others.

others. But these, again, differ among themselves ; some contend, that the object of Predestination is, man fallen in Adam, and that God delivered up his Son for the elect. But others would have the object of Predestination to be man, not only fallen, but in a state of unbelief, i. e. that God, after decreeing to deliver up his Son for all men, being sinners, when he foresaw, that none of them would believe, on account of their natural depravity, out of his meer good pleasure, elected some, and produced faith within them, having passed by others. The former are termed Particularists, because they would have it, that Christ died for the elect only, and dispose of the decrees in the following manner. First. Creation. Second. The Fall. Third. Election. Fourth. The mission of Christ. But the latter are called Universallists, because they hold, that Christ died for all ; and in arranging the decrees, observe the following method, First. Creation. Second. The Fall. Third. The mission of Christ. And, Fourth. Election. So that both parties are agreed in this, that the distinction between those who are to be saved, and such as will be damned, must entirely depend on the election of God, and his good pleasure. As likewise, that faith is irresistibly produced, in the elect, so that they cannot fall short of salvation ; whereas the reprobates must necessarily remain in unbelief. But they only differ in this, the Particularists maintain, that the decree of election precedes the decree concerning the sending of Christ. But the Universallists assert, that the decree, concerning the sending of Christ for all men, was prior to the decree

cree of Election ; but truly, the difference between both is but trifling, and very small ; so that it is marvellous how this fruitless controversy came to be tossed about, with so much warmth of temper. Divines also differ something in explaining the nature of Reprobation : For some assert that it is a positive act of God, by which he hath decreed to deliver over certain men, to eternal torments : But others would have it, to be a negative act, and that Reprobation is a deserved *preteration*, so that whilst God hath elected some, and translated them into a state of salvation, he hath passed by others, and left them in a state of unbelief, and condemnation ; but these they assert are condemned justly, on account of their sins, and unbelief, and that damnation is the effect, not of Predestination, but of sin, and an act of God, considered as judge, who punisheth them, only as guilty ; but others deny this, ascribing Reprobation not to sin, but to the Divine pleasure only. And these are the various hypotheses of our Divines, each of which are liable to almost the same difficulties. It were to be wished, that teachers had never attempted to define the number and order of decrees, being mindful of this saying, Who hath been God's counsellor. Rom. xi. 33. Besides, there are some of these who maintain absolute Predestination, who would have it to be extended even to infants, think that some of them are destined for eternal salvation, but others for eternal damnation.

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THOSE, who defend conditional Predestination, understand it thus. That God hath decreed to save such as believe, or whom he foresaw would believe, and to condemn unbelievers: So that Election, according to them, depends upon foreseen faith, and damnation, on foreseen unbelief. Of this opinion were all the Greek Fathers and the Eastern Church, and it is defended by most of the teachers of the Romish Church, yet there are some of them, who, with Augustine, defend absolute Predestination, viz. those, who are called Jansenists. Of the Lutherans, some differ more and some less from the reformed, yet they all are agreed in this point, viz. that they are most vigorous defenders of universal grace. The Arminians, or Remonstrants, reject absolute Predestination, they were condemned by the Synod of Dort. A. D. 1618.

THE use of this doctrine is. First. To judge soberly concerning the Divine Decrees, to leave to God the things that are hidden, and to acquiesce in what he hath revealed, especially to walk in his ways. Second. To believe, that our salvation wholly depends upon God, and that whatever good we are possessed of, must be ascribed to this grace, and gratuitous election. Eph. i. 5. But that unbelief and condemnation proceed from men themselves, and not from God. Third. If we would desire to know whether we be of the number of those, who are to be saved, or damned, let us turn our attention towards ourself, and examine closely, our consciences, and our lives, according

according to the doctrine of the Gospel, which is the doctrine of faith, and repentance, this is the safest way to salvation, if according to Peter's admonition, we endeavour to make our calling, and election sure. For if we do these things, we shall never fall, and an entrance shall be administered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. i. 10. 11.

## C H A P. V.

### *Concerning the Antediluvian Times.*

**H**AVING premised the doctrine of Divine decrees, we have now to see, what the state of the world was, previous to the Advent of Christ, and here, in the first place, the Antediluvian period occurs, concerning which, the three following particulars merit our observation. First. The religion of that time. Second. The depravation of men. Third. The Deluge.

I. WITH respect to the first of these heads, two particulars ought to be considered. First. What the religion of those primitive times was. It had its articles of faith, its precepts, promises, threatnings, and consisted principally of the following doctrines. That God existed, that the world was created by him, and governed by his Providence; that there was a difference between moral good, and evil; Divine worship, prayers, thanksgivings, that sacrifices were to be offered with pious affections;

tions ; that injuries should be offered to none, that God was the judge of the world, who would reward the pious, and punish the wicked. Each of which may be collected from Gen. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. especially from the history of the fall of Adam, likewise, of Abel and Cain, the life and death of Enoch, see his Prophecy, Jude v. 14. Second. In that primeval religion, we find the traces, and seeds of the Evangelical Covenant, especially in the promise concerning the blessed seed. Gen. iii. 15. That religion was sufficient to render men acceptable unto God, yet we are not to imagine, that those ancient Patriarchs believed nothing, but what may be collected from the book of Genesis.

II. SECONDLY, we are to consider the corruption of mankind in that time. Now, even from the time of Enos, Adam's grandson, the pious posterity of Seth, was separated from the impious offspring of Cain. Gen. iv. 26. But some ages being elapsed, that depravation also invaded the posterity of Seth, and took its rise from a commixture of both. Gen. vi. 1. 2. So that the first, and principal sin, which introduced that general depravity, was impure lusts, and the intermarriages of the sons of Seth with the daughters of the posterity of Cain, who inticed their husbands, and children, to perpetrate the same crimes, to which the posterity of Cain had been habituated. Murder, and injustice, were other sins which they were guilty of. Gen. vi. 2. Concerning this, let Josephus be consulted, B. 1. Ch. 3. Lastly, since impure lusts, and fraud, carry along with them innumerable

numerable vices, it is easy to conceive, how great the perversity of men must have been in those times.

III. CORRUPTION thus prevailing every day, God decreed to overthrow the whole race of mankind, by a flood, lest that religion should be totally lost among them. But, previous to the sending of the flood, he granted them the space of a hundred and twenty years, and called them to repentance, by Noah, and other Patriarchs. Those years being elapsed, he cut off the whole race of mankind, by a deluge, Noah and his family being excepted, in the year of the world, one thousand six hundred and fifty six. Concerning the flood, two things are to be observed. First. Its certainty, which is confirmed, not only by Moses, but likewise the most ancient writers, and almost the universal consent of men, of every nation. See Grotius, on the Truth of the Christian Religion, B. I. XVII.

2. THAT it was universal, is proved from Gen. vi. 17. and vii. 19. &c. Some would have only that part of the earth, which was inhabited by mankind, to have been covered by the flood, but the relation of Moses indicates the contrary, which is also confirmed by reason. For, it scarcely can be conceived, how so small a part of the earth could have been covered with water to such a height. For there must have been a huge mass of water, which must have remained firm as a pillar, through the whole year, and have never dispersed,

perfect, which cannot be conceived. The ark, likewise, must never have approached the extremities, or sides of that heap, otherwise it must have tumbled down the precipice. Those who contend, that the flood was particular, object, where could such a quantity of water be found, as would surround this whole globe of earth, and cover the mountains? I answer, that the surface of the earth was more plain, and overspread with water; neither were the mountains so high, as at present, which might be demonstrated from various passages in Scripture. Here Burnet, an Englishman, may be consulted, in his book, the title of which is, *A Theory of the Earth*.

THE uses of this doctrine are, First. From what has been observed, concerning the religion of those most ancient times, we may plainly see, what are the fundamental principles of religion, viz. to believe that there is a God, and that he is the rewarder of those who seek him. Hence arises the necessity of faith, and obedience. Heb. xi. 4. 5. 6. Where Paul treats of the Antediluvian times, and the religion of the Patriarchs. Second. From a comparison drawn between that, and the present time, it evidently appears, that we enjoy, a much more perfect revelation, through Christ, and that with respect to its articles of faith, precepts, promises, &c. of which far more illustrious examples, are extant in the Gospel. The exit of Enoch testifies, that God is a rewarder, and that eternal life is reserved for the godly; but this is more fully evinced, by the ascension of Christ. Third. Hence

Hence it appears, of how much consequence it is, to avoid evil society, and to flee from lusts. Fourth. The principal uses of this doctrine, concerning the flood are pointed out to us, 2 Pet. ii. 5. 9. And iii. 4. 5. 6. &c.

## C H A P. VI.

### *Concerning the Abrahamick Covenant.*

**T**HIS chapter consists of two parts. The First. Relates to that period, which elapsed between the flood, and the calling of Abraham. The Second. To his vocation.

I. WITH respect to this period, there are four particulars, most worthy of notice. First. The flood having ceased, God entered into a covenant with Noah, and the universal race of mankind, and exhibited a republication of the laws of nature. The ancient Jews have a tradition, that there were seven precepts delivered to Noah. First. Against Idolatry. Second. Blaspheming the name of God. Third. Theft. Fourth. Impure lusts. Fifth. Magistrates. Sixth. Murder. Seventh. The not eating of flesh with the blood. These two last are mentioned by Moses, Gen. ix. 4. 5. 6. The sign of this covenant was the Rainbow, which, it is very probable, did not appear before the flood, since at that time, the nature of the air, and the manner in which vapours ascended, were different, from what we observe

observe at present, for it did not rain upon the earth. Gen. ii. 5. 6. vii. 4.

2. MEN, for some time retained the knowledge, and worship of God, and enjoyed the same habitations, but the posterity of Noah being dispersed, religion began to be corrupted.

3. THIS dispersion is a memorable event, and is recorded in Gen. x. xi. Where we have a description of the building of the Tower of Babel, and of the confusion of tongues, which some erroneously interpret, as respecting concord among men. The words of Moses, Gen. xi. 1. And the whole earth was of one language, and one speech, cannot be understood of harmony, or agreement among men, for who could believe, but there were differences among them? If any one should say, that these words denote the agreement of those only, who were building the Tower of Babel, I answer, that Moses does not speak of those only, but the whole earth, i. e. all mankind and asserts, that they used the same language, which is more than probable. There are likewise other reasons, which overthrow this opinion. But how the posterity of Noah peopled the various parts of the earth, we are informed, Gen. x. which chapter, indeed merits our attention, and affords an invincible argument, in support of the Christian religion, and of Sacred History. Bochart has wrote excellently well upon this subject, in that excellent book of his inscribed Phaleg.

4. AFTER this dispersion, men began to incline towards Idolatry, which seems to have been twofold; for at first, they did not worship false Gods, but the true God, under images; afterwards they fell into a grosser kind of it, and forsaking the true God, worshipped fictitious ones. The first mention of idols, is in Gen. xxxi. 19. But even before that time, Abraham's father and grandfather were Idolaters. Josh. xxiv. 2. 3. Yet in such a manner, that the knowledge of the true God, had not been totally lost among them. Along with Idolatry, various other vices began to be perpetrated, as is plain, from what is related, concerning the Canaanites, and the inhabitants of Sodom. Therefore, at this particular time, God called Abraham, Gen. xi. 33. And xii.

II. ABRAHAM the son of Terah, who was descended from Shem, inhabited Ur of the Chaldees. The intention of God in calling him, was, First. To preserve the true religion in his family. Second. From it to raise up the Messiah. And for this twofold reason, he willed, that the offspring of Abraham, should be separated from every other people. The covenant, which God entered into with him, consisted of two parts, viz. duties and promises. The promises are either general, viz. the singular favour and protection of God. Gen. xv. 1 Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward. Which promise, Christ informs us, does not only relate to this life, but also to the life to come. Matt. xxii. 32. Or special, viz. First. The possession of the land of Canaan,

naan, with respect to which promise, Paul observes, that neither he nor his sons were partakers of it, and hence infers, that a heavenly country was prepared for them. Second. A multiplication of his posterity. Gen. xv. 5. Third. The blessing of all nations. Gen. xxii. 18. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Which promise, indeed, is not to be understood, as only relating to the posterity of Abraham, but as concerning Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles. Gal. iii. 8. 16.

THE duties, again, are either general, that Abraham should walk before God, and be perfect. Gen. xvii. 1. That he should repose a firm belief in God, and his promises. There were also other special commands, especially, that concerning the offering up of his son. Gen. xxii. But all these duties, were performed by Abraham. He testified his obedience, after an excellent manner, by worshipping God, by believing in him, by offering up sacrifices, by departing from his own country, and by the exercise of hospitality and other virtues: But he exhibited a most illustrious instance of his faith and obedience, by believing that a Son, Isaac, would be born to him, and by his offering him up. This Paul highly extolls. Rom. iv. 18. 19. Heb. xi. 8. 9. 17. But with respect to the faith of Abraham, two things merit the strictest attention, which contribute much to the illustration of the doctrine of justification. First. That he was justified by faith, previous to his circumcision. Rom. iv. 9. 10. 11. Hence Paul

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concludes,

concludes, that the works of the Mosaick law, were not necessary to justification. Second. Abraham evidenced his faith, by obedience and works. Heb. xi. 8. Jam. ii. 21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works? Hence it appears, that justifying faith, is by no means to be separated from good works.

THE covenant made with Abraham, was confirmed by certain solemnities. First. By that sacrifice, which was consumed by celestial fire. Gen. xv. 8. &c. For at that time God renewed his promises, and revealed to him certain events. Second. By circumcision, the end of which was. First. That a distinction might be maintained, between the offspring of Abraham, and every other nation. Second. A confirmation of the promise, concerning the multiplication of his posterity, especially the blessed seed. Gen. xvii. 10.

A MORAL reason may be added, viz. that the Jews might be taught the circumcision of the heart, and renunciation of carnal affections.

THE uses of this doctrine are, First. The goodness of God towards mankind, which is conspicuous, in his covenant made with Noah, after the flood.

2. THE truth of Sacred History, is most evidently collected from the description of Noah's posterity. Gen. x.

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3. THE greatest necessity for a Divine revelation, appears, when men after the flood, were bent towards Idolatry.

4. AND, especially in the Abrahamick Covenant, we may observe: First. The wisdom of God, who, after he had decreed to send Christ, who even at that time, laid the foundations of the new covenant, which in the fulness of time he hath revealed, John viii. 56. Abraham rejoiced to see that my day, and he did see it, and rejoiced. God, through his Son, hath entered into a far more excellent covenant with us, for whether we attend to the nature of it, or its precepts, its superiority in point of excellence, must be acknowledged by every one.

2. THE faith and obedience of this Holy Patriarch, ought to be imitated by us, which use Paul declares at large. Heb. xi. Abraham is called the Father of the Faithful, and we must be justified, after the example of Abraham, viz. by faith, in conjunction with works. Jam. ii. 20. Hence it follows, that without obedience none can please God.

## C H A P. VII.

### *Concerning the Law of Moses.*

**A**FTER God had conducted the posterity of Abraham, out of the land of Egypt, he prescribed his law to them, by the ministry of Moses,

a most holy man, and most excellent Prophet, because, the time was now fully accomplished, in which that people was to be entirely separated from every other nation. The end, therefore, of this law, in general, was, to preservè the people of Israel in the profession and practice of the true religion, until the Advent of Christ.

THE Law is divided into Moral, Forensick, and Ceremonial.

I. THE Moral Law, a summary of which, we have in the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, respects our duty towards God, and towards our neighbour. It was necessary, that the Israelites should be instructed in the knowledge of these, on account of the ignorance of that people. This is the first, and principal part of the Divine Law. First. It was given first of all, and that immediately, after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. Second. God himself promulged it, in the presence of the people, and that with magnificent, and dreadful apparatus. Third. He reduced it to tables, and engraved it with his own finger. Fourth. The whole of it is founded on the law of Nature, excepting the fourth commandment, which yet, on account of the commemoration of the Creation, and antiquity of the Sabbath, approacheth very nearly to the laws of nature. All of which indicate the excellency of the moral law, and that its observance is of perpetual obligation. Matt.

v. 17. 18. I did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.

II. THE Forensic, or Judicial Law, takes the second place, for it was given immediately after the Moral Law. Ex. xxi. &c. It respected the political government of the people, and the scope of it was twofold. General, viz. the preservation of justice and order in civil society; and special, viz. the distinction of the Jews from every other people. From whence arise, precepts of two kinds, general and special. Likewise, precepts of a natural and positive right: In the former respect, this law was not abolished, but in the latter.

III. THE Ritual, or Ceremonial Law, comprehends certain sacred rites, or ceremonies, to be used by the Jews in divine worship, and in private life. Of the latter kind, were the laws concerning the difference of meats, cloathing, and uncleanness. But the former respected divine worship, for, besides Circumcision, and the Passover, God had instituted various rites, which are commonly reduced to four classes. First. Holy persons; the High Priest, Priests, Levites, who ministred unto the Priests, Nazerites, &c. Second. Holy things; oblations, sacrifices, tythes, &c. Third. Holy places; the Temple, and its apartments, the Tabernacle, the Court, the Sanctuary, and the Holy of Holies. To which may be added, consecrated vessels; the Ark, altars, &c. Fourth. Holy times; the Sabbath, new moons, the Passover, Pentecost,  
Feast

Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbatical year, and Jubilee.

THOUGH these rites have been abolished by Christ, yet, it is necessary that they should be accurately known, especially by Divines. It would be of utility, to read Josephus, with the History of Moses, as also a French book, Ceremonies, et Coutumes des Juifs.

BUT the principal thing is, to understand the nature of these rites; for of themselves, they were merely indifferent, and of positive right, neither could they justify, or sanctify a man; which is the cause, why God so frequently testifies of them, that of themselves they were by no means pleasing to him. Ps. 1. 8. 9. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. Mic. vi. 7. 8. &c. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams.

Now, the cause, why the most wise God prescribed these rites, and that form of worship, was, First. The carnal disposition of the people of Israel, and their propensity towards Idolatry, whom therefore, it was necessary to have employed about these externals, lest they should have turned aside to an idolatrous kind of worship. Second. God, by these institutions, intended to avert them from Idolatry, by prescribing rites, of a nature quite contrary to the rites of the Gentiles. Here Spencer ought to be consulted, upon the ceremonial laws of the Hebrews, who yet is deservedly reprehensible,

hensible, in some things. Third. The third end was, that he might raise the minds of the Jews to a spiritual worship, and by this means, instruct them in the various capital topicks, and duties of religion: Thus their purifications, and sacrifices, indicated the necessity of internal purification, and sanctification. Fourth. These rites had a respect unto the Messiah, who was to come, and were types of Christ, and the benefits purchased by him. This Paul demonstrates at large, Heb. viii. ix. x. These things being so, we conclude, that the ceremonial law was introduced, only to continue for a season, viz. until the coming of Christ, and that after his Advent it was to be abrogated. It respected the people of Israel only, and was bound to the City and Temple of Jerusalem; so that other nations could not be obliged to the observance of it. Nay, God himself abolished it, when he willed that both City and Temple, should be totally overthrown, and that the Gentiles should be called to the knowledge of himself.

THIS much we thought proper should be observed, in general, concerning the law of Moses. But the Jews have a tradition, that, besides this written law, there was another delivered by God, unto Moses, upon Mount Sinai, which contains an explanation of the written law, and which Moses formerly delivered unto the Elders, and was afterwards preserved by tradition. But lest that this law might be lost in oblivion, the Jews collected it into one book, which they called Mischna. The Rabbins commented again upon this, and out of it compiled

compiled the Gemara, whence was composed the Talmud, which is twofold, of Jerufalem and Babylon. Yet, all the Jews did not equally embrace this oral law, for there are some of them, who receive the written law only, for which reason, they are termed, Kerraïm, or Scripturalists.

USES. Since the moral is the principal, and most excellent part of the Mosaick Law, it is of signal utility, and respects us; as well as the Jews. Christ hath established it, by his authority, Matt. v. 17. and it is wholly of natural right; therefore, no regard ought to be paid to such as imagine that Christians are freed from the observance of the law. Again, attention should be given to the sense, or meaning of this law, viz. that God does not only forbid atrocious crimes, such as Idolatry, Murder, Adultery, Theft, &c. but requires internal sanctity, and obedience, as is most evident, from Matt. v. where the Lord Jesus expounds the true meaning of the law.

2. ALTHOUGH the Political Law, in various points appertains to the Jews only, yet, in many others, it is of great utility, to judges, magistrates, and to persons in private life: For it teacheth, what are the duties belonging to natural justice, by what means order may be preserved in civil society, and that every person should enjoy what is properly his right. It likewise prescribes the various duties of equity, and humanity towards the poor, and strangers, &c. A more particular inspection

inspection into these laws, affords us many, and those very signal uses.

3. **THOUGH** the Ritual, or Ceremonial Law, be abolished, yet it will be of advantage to Christians, to meditate upon it. In it the wisdom of God is perspicuous, for it contains nothing that is trivial, or useless. In it we find the rudiments, and foundation of the Evangelical Covenant. As likewise, of the redemption purchased by Christ, and of our duty, &c. Besides it is worthy of observation, that the Christian Religion, though spiritual, and very simple, has likewise its rites, and those, indeed, but few and simple, yet such as have Christ for their author, and ought therefore to be celebrated, and used with the greatest reverence.

## C H A P. VIII.

### *Concerning the Prophets.*

**A**FTER Moses, God sent Prophets to preserve religion, or to confirm, and illustrate it, or lastly to restore it, when decayed. The word Prophet, is sometimes to be understood in an extensive sense, and denotes a person devoted to things sacred, and the study of the law, or one who discourses upon subjects of a divine nature. But here, by Prophets we are to understand, extraordinary men commissioned by God, and influenced by the Divine Spirit, remarkable for various gifts, especially zeal and piety, miracles, and the

the gift of predicting future events. Yet all these gifts were not to be found in all the Prophets, nor at all times. Some, as for instance, Balaam were destitute of true piety, to whom God yet thought proper to reveal himself. Nor did all of them receive the gift of miracles, or of predicting future events.

BESIDES, the office of Prophets was, First. To preserve, or restore true religion, i. e. to promote both the worship of God, and purity of life, and manners, which are the main points of religion. It is evident from Scripture, that they with great zeal, and boldness of speech, recalled the people of Israel from Idolatry and vice, lest that religion should be entirely lost. This was not only done in the kingdom of Judah, by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, but likewise in the kingdom of Israel, by Elias, Hosea, and others. Second. The second duty of Prophets, was, to predict future events, But now they prophesied, either concerning certain events, which related either to some certain people, or certain men, especially they foretold, what was to befall the Jews, the translation of the Ten Tribes into the Babylonish Captivity, and its duration, &c. or concerning the Messiah, and his kingdom. The Prophecies concerning the Messiah, are of two kinds, some of them have a respect to his person, and the various circumstances of his Advent, the time and place of his nativity, the people from which he was to descend, his family and his mother; likewise his low condition, his passion, death, resurrection, glory, and kingdom.

dom. Others respect the kingdom of the Messiah, which is described, as spiritual and universal.

1. His kingdom must be spiritual, because the Prophets every where inform us, that men were to be brought to the true worship, and obedience of God, and that the ceremonial worship, would at length be abolished, as being of itself no way acceptable unto him.

2. UNIVERSAL. For all the prophets, from Moses until Malacchi, prophecied concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and rejections of the Jews, only for a time, as also concerning the restoration of Christ's kingdom, over the whole terrestrial globe. All of which we shall make appear in their proper places. With respect to the predictions of the Prophets, the following rules are to be observed. First. That every prophecy is obscure, before its event, at least in some respect: Wherefore, no one need marvel, that there is some obscurity to be met with in the most of Prophecies; nay, they must necessarily have been obscure, otherwise they could not have been accomplished, unless God had frequently inverted the order of the world, and there would have been need of perpetual miracles, lest men should have impeded the accomplishment of the events foretold. Second. Prophecies are principally to be explained from the event, and from Scripture. The events, and the Spirit of God, speaking in Scripture, are the best interpreters of prophecy. Third. Some prophecies are already

ready fulfilled, such as treat of the first Advent of Christ, his nativity and death, and the rejection of the Jews ; but there are others, which are to be fulfilled in futurity, such are those which treat of the universality of Christ's kingdom, the overthrow of Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the end of the world, &c. Truly, there are events latent under the writings of the Prophets, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Apostle John, and others which are unknown to us, and there are many predictions more exprefs than we imagine, which being fulfilled, many discoveries will be made, in the writings of the Prophets, which we at present have no notion of. Acts iii. 21.

USES. First. Here the wisdom, and goodness of God should be acknowledged, who hath recovered his people from Idolatry, and impiety, by sending his Prophets as occasion required.

2. WHAT has been spoken by the Prophets, against impiety, hypocrisy and other sins, are of signal use, and merit the most serious meditation.

3. THESE ancient Prophets predicted many things, which relate to our own times, and which have been clearly revealed in the Gospel : Here appears the great happiness of our state. 1 Pet. i. 20. Where Christ is said to have been foreordained, before the foundation of the world, but made manifest in these last times upon our account. Matt. xiii. 17. Many Prophets and righteous men, have desired to see those things which we see, and have  
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not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. God, in former times, taught his people by the Prophets, but, in these last times, we have Christ himself for our instructor. Heb. i. 1. Hence, we are put under a greater necessity of worshipping, and of loving God. &c. Fourth. From the predictions of the Prophets, an invincible argument may be drawn, for the confirmation of the existence of God, and our faith, and by these the objections of Atheists, and other prophane persons, we either deny, or call in question the truth of religion, are in the most solid manner refuted.

## C H A P. IX.

*Concerning the various State of the Jews.*

**T**HE State of the Jews may be considered, either with respect to political government, or religion.

I. **T**HEIR Political State was fourfold, viz. under judges, under kings, in the Babylonian Captivity, and from that 'till the Advent of Christ.

**T**HE Judges were Princes, or extraordinary Magistrates commissioned by God, to rule over the people, and to protect them from their enemies. For at that time, the Jewish Republick was greatly disordered and disquieted, and the Israelites, having fallen into various sins, especially Idolatry, were delivered by God into the hands of  
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their enemies, and were afterwards delivered from them by their Judges. Neh. ix. 16. 27. Acts xiii. 20. The Tabernacle was then in Shilo, until the time of Samuel, the last of the Judges.

2. THEIR second state, was under Kings, viz. Saul, David, and Solomon, who ruled over the Twelve Tribes. But again, after the separation of the Twelve Tribes, under Rehoboam son of Solomon, they were partly under the Kings of Israel, and partly under the Kings of Judah. Jeroboam, the first King of Israel, or of the Ten Tribes, who had revolted from Rehoboam, introduced Idolatry in a public manner, by erecting two calves, one in Dan, and the other in Bethel, which worship was retained by all the successors of Jeroboam, until the overthrow of the Israelitish Empire. God oftentimes sent Prophets, to recall the Israelites from Idolatry, and preserve among them the knowledge of himself: But at length those Ten Tribes were carried off into Assyria by Salmanazar, who were never restored excepting a few Israelites, who returned into their country with the Jews, upon their return from Babylon, and thus ended the Israelitish Empire. But the kingdom of Judah, ceased an hundred and seventy years after the captivity of the Ten Tribes, Jerusalem being taken by the Chaldeans, the Temple burnt, and the Jews carried off into Babylon. Concerning the destruction of both kingdoms, and its causes, see Chap. xvii. of the Second Book of Kings.

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3. UNDER the Babylonish captivity, the Jews were humanely treated, nay, there were some among them, as for instance, Daniel, and others, who were in great favour with the Babylonian, and Persian kings. They lived according to their own customs, and retained a certain form of authority and government. Ezekiel, and Daniel prophesied at that time.

THE Jews having returned to their own country, the Temple was rebuilt, and religion restored. They lived at that time under the kings of Persia, again, under the Kings of Syria, and afterwards, under the Asmonians, and lastly, under the Romans, who constituted Herod I. King of the Jews. After the captivity, a great synagogue was instituted, of which, as ancient tradition informs us, Ezra was president; and it is believed, that he was the person who compiled the canon of the Old Testament. At that time, likewise, was composed the version of the Seventy Interpreters, and the celebrated sects of Pharisees, Sadduces, and Essenes arose, concerning which, Josephus and others may be consulted.

II. WITH respect to the state of the Jews, concerning religion, two things must be acknowledged. First. That their state was far more happy than that of other nations, for God manifested himself to the Jews, and conferred upon them various benefits, both temporal, and spiritual, especially, he entered into a particular covenant with  
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them, whereas, all other nations lived under the covenant of nature.

2. BUT though the Jews enjoyed singular prerogatives, yet their state, when compared with that of Christians, was imperfect, and that with respect to knowledge, faith, sanctity, and consolation, or confidence. First. Their knowledge was imperfect, for there were many things, which God did not reveal to them, or but in part, obscurely, and under various types, and figures; and what ought to be observed, is, that even the Prophets themselves had not an accurate knowledge of the things which they predicted. Matt. xiii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12. Second. As their knowledge was imperfect, so likewise must their faith, which is always in proportion to the degree of knowledge; yet it was sufficient, because they believed in what was revealed to them. Third. The same thing may be said of the sanctity of the faithful, under the Old Testament, whence it is, that we observe many blemishes in them, which God, indeed, did not approve of, but tolerated, on account of the disposition of that people, and the imperfection of their revelation. This Christ teacheth, Matt. v. &c. As also, xix. 8. Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives. Fourth, Lastly, since confidence and hope, must always be according to the measure of knowledge, faith, and sanctity, their consolation must likewise have been less, therefore, they are said to have had the spirit of bondage. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 2.

3. And Paul asserts, that the law could not perfectly

fectly justify, and sanctify a man, and that it was weak. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. iii. 21. For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law. Heb. vii. 18. 19. For the law made nothing perfect. And x. &c.

3. YET the faithful among the Jews, were acceptable unto God, and were made partakers of salvation, i. e. of the remission of sins, and life eternal. First. Of the remission of their sins, Rom. iv. 5. 6. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David, also, describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness, without works. Concerning eternal life, it is plain, that the Jews expected, and obtained it. Heb. xi. 9. 10. 13. 16. Abraham is said to have looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Nay, they obtained salvation, in the same manner as we, for there is, and always hath been, only one way to salvation, viz. faith, accompanied with good works. This Paul declares, through the whole of the ix. chap. of his Epistle to the Hebrews, and shews, that all the ancients, from Abel unto Christ, were acceptable unto God, through faith. But of these more at large, when we come to treat of Justification. Therefore, they were saved under the law, but not by the law, but by the mercy of God in Christ. Rom. iii. 24. So that, even at that time, there were seeds of the Evangelical Covenant, for they had the promise

mise concerning the Messiah, who was to come, and expected his coming.

As to the question, whether they had any knowledge of Christ, or had any respect towards him, or what was the degree of their knowledge? There is no one who can answer with precision. They believed, in general, that the Messiah was to come, but their faith was obscure, which plainly appears, from the death of Christ being a stumbling block to the Jews; and the Apostles themselves, who had been with the Lord Jesus, could not believe that the Messiah was to die. Without doubt, the Patriarchs, and Prophets, were real, and excellent Saints, whose faith was superior in strength to others; but it is scarcely credible, that they knew what the Messiah was to do, and suffer, for the salvation of mankind. See that passage, which we have just now quoted. 1 Pet. i. 10. 11 12.

THE uses. In the various state of the Jews, we see very many examples, both of the goodness and justice of God. For, according to their behaviour, that people experienced the favour, or wrath of God. At length, when wickedness prevailed among them, God overthrew, first, the kingdom of Israel, and afterwards, the kingdom of Judah. Which dreadful overthrow of the Jews, is an instance of Divine wrath, seriously to be reflected on by Christians.

2. WE may observe, that God, by what happened to the Jews, prepared the way for the calling  
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ing of the Gentiles. For the reason why he willed the dispersion of that people, was not only the punishment of their sins, but also that by this means, the knowledge of God might be spread over the whole world, so that the Gentiles might be prepared for the reception of the Gospel.

3. FROM a comparison drawn between our state, and that of the Jews, with respect to religion, it appears, that God has conferred upon us, a much larger portion of his favour; therefore, every duty of faith and obedience, which we owe to him, ought to be performed by us in the most perfect manner,

## C H A P. X.

### *Concerning the State of other Nations,*

**A**FTER treating of the Jews, it now remains that we should see, what is the state of other nations, previous to the Advent of Christ.

It appears, at first sight, that there was a vast difference between the Jews, and other people who lived without the limits of the Jewish covenant, and walked in the darkness of ignorance and vice. Ps. cxlvii. 19. 20. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, and his statutes unto Israel: He hath not dealt so with any nation, so that they have not known those laws. Acts. xiv. 16. In times past, he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. But the question is, whether the Gen-  
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tiles, were in such a manner destitute of the knowledge of the true God, that all men, excepting the Jews, were sunk in Idolatry, and wickedness, and consequently perished eternally?

It appears that this can scarcely be asserted, for, First. It is more than probable that the primeval religion of the Patriarchs, and consequently the relicks of the knowledge and worship of God, remained among mankind for some time after the flood. Second. The goodness of God will not allow us to believe, that he entirely forsook all mankind, whom he had created, except the posterity of Abraham; neither does it seem agreeable to his wisdom, to appoint a revelation by nature, which would be attended with no advantage, and that he made choice of such a method of manifesting himself, as would induce none to his worship. Third. There are passages in Scripture, which seem altogether to suppose, that there were some who made a good improvement of the law of nature. Rom. ii. 9. 10. But glory, and honour, and peace, to every one that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Acts. x. 24. Peter saith, that God is no respecter of persons, and that in every nation, every one is accepted by him, who feareth him, and worketh righteousness. And xvii. 27. 4. But what principally ought to be attended to, is, that the Sacred Scripture affords various examples, which manifestly shew, that there were persons who worshipped the true God, and at the same time were not of Abraham's seed. What Moses relates concern-

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ing Pharaoh King of Egypt, Gen. xii. 15. 16. supposes, that all reverence of the Deity had not totally decayed in that country. Moses relates, Gen. xx. that God manifested himself to Abimeleck, King of Gerar, and that this King, as soon as he knew that Sarah was Abraham's wife, delivered her to her husband. That passage Ps. vi. is remarkable. Likewise, what Abimeleck says, Gen. xxi. 22. 23. And, xx. 9. 10. But especially the example of Melchisedeck, Gen. xiv. who was an excellent worshipper of God, a Priest, and a type of Christ, to whom Abraham paid the greatest deference: Now, as he was both King and Priest, who could believe, that there was none belonging to his kingdom who worshipped the true God, and was of the same religion with himself. But it is beyond doubt, that the true religion was preserved for some time among the posterity of Abraham, viz. the Ishmalites, Idumeans, and others, who were sprung from Hagar, Keturah, and Rabeka, see Gen. xviii. 19. which is plainly evinced from the rite of circumcision, being observed among them.

BESIDES, it is certain, that the true God was known by Laban in Mesopotamia, neither would Abraham and Isaac, have consented to their sons intermarrying with persons, idolatrous and profane.

THE worship of idols, had indeed got into the family of Laban, as appears from Gen. xxxi. 19. 20. Yet the worship and fear of God, had not entirely

tirely vanished from them, as appears from the conversation which passed between Eleazor, and Laban. Gen. xxiv. The Fiftieth verse of which chapter is to be observed, where Laban saith : The thing is of the Lord, we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Likewise from the expostulation of Laban with Jacob, see Gen. xxxi. 24. Where we read, that God appeared unto Laban, and that Rebecka and Rachel were pious, may be collected from Sacred History. Job was a man of such piety, as that his equal could not be found upon earth. Job. i. 8. Neither was he the only one in his country, who worshipped God, his friends Eliphaz, Bildad, Tophar, and Elihu, likewise were worshippers of him, and it appears from their discourses, that there were men of piety in those places; neither ought it to be overlooked, what the Seventy Interpreters have annoted, at the end of the Book of Job, that those friends of Job, were Kings or Princes, and consequently true religion had not been banished from their dominions. Another example we find in Jethro, Moses's father in law, a Priest, and Prince of the Medionites, whose excellent piety is extolled; Exod. xviii. 11. 12. 13. 23. But that the posterity of Jethro, did not depart from the worship of the true God, may be learned from Judg. iv. 11. It is likewise evident from the history of Balaam, that God was not unknown in Mesopotamia. Num. xxii. &c. In subsequent times, true religion underwent a greater decay, yet was not extinct in such a degree, but that the knowledge of God, at certain times, reached those foreign people. What  
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the sacred writers relate, concerning Hiram King of the Tyrians, is worthy of being read. 1 Kings v. 7. As also of the Queen of Shiba, 1 Kings x. 9. Of Cyrus, and Darius, Ezr. i. 2 3. And vi. 10. 11. &c. Of Nebuchadnezar, Dan. iii. And iv. Of Darius, Dan. vi. 26. Though I would not assert, that all those Kings are to be numbered among the worshippers of the true God. Neither ought we to omit the example of the Ninevites. Jonah iii. 6. 7. See chapter i. 6. of the same Book. Besides, it cannot be denied, that the Jews being dispersed over the various regions of the earth, for many ages before the birth of Christ, brought over many men to the acknowledgement of the true God. Nay, it appears from history, that the number of profelytes was very great who worshipped God, after the Babylonish captivity, and in the time of Christ, having rejected the worship of idols, though they had not been received into the Jewish covenant by circumcision, and these were acceptable unto him, as, the centurian Cornelius, Acts x. 1. 2. The Eunuch of Queen Candace, Acts 8. 27. And if there was a more complete history of those times extant, without doubt, we might add many more examples of the same kind, to what we have already produced. It has been the common opinion of the ancient Christians, that some decree of piety and virtue, was to be found among the Gentiles, as appears from Justin Martyr's second Apology, Chrysostom, Hieronymus, and others. Some of our teachers belonging to the reformed Church, were of the same opinion, especially Zuinglius, in his exposition of the Christian

tian faith, which was delivered to the King of France, in the common name of the Helvetian Churches, and which was recommended by Bullingerus, where page 27, he classes Socrates, Aristides, Numa, the Catos, Scipios, with the Saints, and virtuous men, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Moses, &c. whom we shall see in the life to come; though he does by no means think, that all those whom Zuingleius mentions, ought to be numbered among the godly. It is true, that the Scripture, Pf. cxlvii. 19. 20. Acts xiv. 16. excludes the Gentiles from the covenant and worship of God; but these passages ought not to be so urged, as that we were to believe, that all men, who were not of the Jews, were Idolaters, and impious, for if that were the case, the Scripture would contradict itself. These places are not to be understood absolutely, and without any limitation, but comparatively, with respect to the Jews, who lived under a special covenant. These who differ from us in opinion, object, that without the grace of God, and faith in Christ, there can be no salvation. We answer, that no injury is offered to Divine grace, providing we maintain, that such among the Gentiles, as worshipped God, did so, by the assistance of his special grace. Likewise, that none are made partakers of salvation, but by the mercy of God through Christ. To be saved without Christ, is one thing, and to be saved without the knowledge of him is another. But if any one should pretend, that the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, are absolutely necessary, let him beware, lest  
along

along with the Gentiles, he excludes the Jews themselves from ſalvation.

LASTLY, we conclude, that at the time, in which Chriſt appeared in the world, the ſtate of mankind, was very miſerable, and deplorable. Of this the Apoſtles every where inform us, in their Epiſtles, as Eph. ii. 1. And you hath he quickned, who were dead in ſins, wherein, in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of this world, &c. and iv. 17. Tit. iii. 3. and 1 Pet. iv. 3 4. &c.

USES. Firſt. This doctrine is of ſignal uſe, as it furniſhes us with an answer to prophane perſons, who object, that God hath forſaken the greateſt part of the world, for ſo many ages, in ſuch a manner, ſo that all men, excepting a few among the Jews, muſt have ſuffered eternal perdition.

2. FROM what has been ſaid, appears the great goodneſs of God towards us, who live in theſe times, in which the Gentiles have been called to his covenant.

3. IT is our duty to make a proper uſe of that knowledge, which we enjoy, as otherwiſe, we have to undergo more grievous puniſhments than thoſe, who live in the groſs darkneſs of ignorance, and vice, who ſhall riſe up againſt us in the day of judgment. Matt. xi. 21. 22. 23. and xii. 41. 42. The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it. And

as

as Paul assures us, Rom. i. 20. and ii. 12. that the Gentiles, who abused the revelation, that is by nature, were inexcusable, and obnoxious to Divine wrath, what are we to expect, who are illuminated with the light of the Gospel, if we do not worship the true God, with sincerity of heart ?

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

THE

THE LATTER PART  
OF  
CHRISTIAN  
THEOLOGY.

*Of the Time subsequent to the Advent of Christ.*

THIS latter part of Theology consists of seven sections. First. Concerning John the Baptist. Second. Jesus Christ. Third. The constitution of the Christian Church. Fourth. The doctrine which was preached in the Church. Fifth. The Church itself. Sixth. The assistances to salvation. Seventh. The world to come.

SECTION I.

*Of John the Baptist.*

WE come now to treat of that most blessed period, in which the Messiah was exhibited. But, since the divine mission of John the Baptist preceded the Messiah's Advent, we shall, in the first place, make some observations upon this most happy Prophet, his person, and office.

I. JOHN the Baptist was a most excellent Prophet, concerning whom, the three following particulars

culars are related in the Gospel. First. His nativity, which was attended with circumstances, which were very extraordinary; for he was born at a time when both his father and mother were far advanced in years, and that by virtue of the Divine promise, recorded, Luke i. But this miracle, thus accomplished in the birth of the Baptist, may be considered, as a prelude to the nativity of the Lord Jesus, who was soon after to be born of the Virgin Mary. Second. His life, in which we may observe, a certain austerity of morals, sanctity, and zeal. His habitation was in the wilderness, where he lived upon simple food, in a very plain habit, in which respects, he resembled Elias, whose name, for that reason, was transferred to him by Malachi. Chap. iv. 5. Behold, I will send unto you the Prophet Elias, before that dreadful day of the Lord cometh. And Matt. xi. 14. This is that Elias, who was to come. And xvii. 10. 13. But God willed, that the forerunner of the Messiah should appear in the likeness of Elias, in order that the minds of men might be prepared for the reception of Christ, who was to be a King, entirely spiritual. And that the Jews might be freed from the gross apprehensions, which they had entertained, relative to the Messiah's kingdom. Third. His death is to be observed: He was cut off by violence. Matt. xiv. Which event, so fell out by the peculiar determination of God, viz. that the Jews might understand, that the Messiah's kingdom was entirely spiritual, and that they should not be offended at the death

death of Christ. So that, in this respect, John was a type of the Lord Jesus.

II. THE office of John the Baptist may be considered, either in general, or in particular.

I. WITH respect to his office in general, we have to consider, his vocation to it, as likewise, the nature and necessity of the office itself. His vocation to it was plainly divine, as he was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. Luke i. 15. And his designation for it was by an Angel: But when the time was accomplished, in which it was to commence, he was in a special manner, called to it by God himself. Luke iii. 2. John i. 6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. As to the office itself, he was a harbinger or forerunner of Christ. But it became the Messiah to have a forerunner, and, indeed, such as John was, in order, that the Jews might be prepared to give due attention to his instructions; for it behoved Christ to appear in a character quite different from that which the Jews had conceived of the Messiah, viz. that of a royal potentate, attended with formidable armies, and with worldly pomp and splendor. But on the contrary, the character which became him, was that of a spiritual king, who was to deliver men from sin, and of a man subject to infirmities, who at length must suffer death; each of which circumstances, stood in direct opposition to the prejudices of the Jews. This was the reason, why John, who announced the Advent of the kingdom of Heaven, exhibited  
nothing

nothing that favoured of any thing terrestrial ; and like the other Prophets, exhorted men to repentance, and purity of life. But so excellent was the office of the Baptist, that Christ himself pronounced him the greatest of Prophets. Matt. xi. 11.

2. THIS office considered particularly, respected either Christ, or the people of the Jews. With respect to Christ, he was commissioned, to bear testimony of him, and baptize him. He bore witness to Christ, John i. 7. 8. where he sayeth, that he came to bear witness of that light, that all men through him might believe. This he did various ways : For he taught that the Messiah would in a short time be present ; he extolled his person, dignity, and office, saying, He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes latchet, I am not worthy to unloose. John i. 27. He openly pointed him out, John i. 32. 33. 36. which testimony being exhibited, by this most Holy Prophet, must indeed be of great weight. Again he baptized Christ, that previous to his entrance upon his office, he might be initiated by this solemn rite, and that the Jews, who greatly revered the Baptist, might be the better disposed, to believe in him ; and therefore God willed, that the Holy Spirit should at that time descend upon him from Heaven, under a visible form, and openly declared him his well beloved son. Matt. iii. 16. 17.

WITH respect to the people, the office of John consisted of two parts, viz. his Doctrine, and Baptism.

ism. Again, his Doctrine consisted of three parts. First. Duties, viz. that the Jews would repent, and believe in Jesus. Matt. iii. 2. Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And Luke iii. 3. Preaching the Baptism of repentance, and remission of sins. But for this reason, did this most holy man urge repentance, because the wicked and ungodly, could, by no means, be subjects of the Messiah's kingdom; only such as were men of sincerity, or amended their lives, could embrace his Gospel. Second. Promises; which were merely spiritual, viz. the manifestation of the kingdom of Heaven. Matt. iii. 2. Remission of sins, Luke iii. 3. and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Matt. iii. 11. He shall baptize you with the Spirit, and with fire. Third. Threatnings; an exclusion from the kingdom, and covenant of God, and the most dreadful punishments to be inflicted upon unbelievers. Matt. iii. 10. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. John baptized all who confessed their sins, professed faith in Christ to come, and reformation of life. Matt. iii. 6. But the rites of Baptism, then in use among the Jews, corresponded exactly with the scope of John's preaching, as they fitly represented both the remission of sins, and their regeneration.

It may be here enquired, whether the Baptism of John was the same with that of Christ? To which question, which indeed, is of little moment, we answer: That they differed in some circumstances, as the degree of revelation, and the gifts of

the Holy Spirit, as John himself testifies. Matt. iii. 11. But they agreed essentially, that is, as to their scope, and duties prescribed, for both had a respect unto Christ, and required the same duties, viz. faith and repentance.

USES. First. what is related concerning John the Baptist, in the Gospel, is confirmed by the testimony of Josephus. B. xviii. C. 7. Which confirms the truth of Evangelical History.

2. HERE the wisdom of God is conspicuous, who, previous to the mission of Christ, had prepared the Jews for his reception, by the ministry of this holy man.

3. LET Ministers of the Gospel propose to themselves, John the Baptist as a most perfect example. And that, First. With respect to their office, they are sent to prepare the way for God, to convert the rebellious, and to preach repentance and amendment of life, by exhorting all men in general, and every individual. John did the very same thing, he admonished the whole body of the people, and besides this, the Soldiers, Publicans, Pharisees, nay, even Herod himself. Second. With respect to their lives, in innocence, and purity of manners, in their food, and manner of living. This was what procured weight and authority to John's doctrine. The Ministers of God, ought therefore to conduct themselves in the same manner.

LET Christians hence learn, what is the sum of Evangelical preaching. John has taught us this, when he says, Repent. The first, and principal duty of him who professeth to be a disciple of Christ, and a citizen of his celestial kingdom, is repentance and sincerity of heart. It is clear, from the sermons of John the Baptist, that an admission into the Divine Covenant, will be of no advantage to hypocrites, or prophane persons. Matt. iii. 9. 10. Which words have as much respect to Christians, as to the Jews. The more particular uses may be found, by reading the iii. chap. of Matthew and Luke.

## SECTION II.

## Of JESUS CHRIST.

## C H A P. I.

*That Jesus is the Messiah.*

**N**OW commences a treatise, concerning Jesus Christ; and in the first place, indeed, we shall prove. First. That Jesus is the Messiah. Second. We shall treat of his Person. Third. His Office. Fourth. His Twofold State.

MANY, and invincible arguments prove, that Jesus is the Messiah, out of which, we are to select the principal, and these are either general, or special.

I. It is to be supposed, that Jesus, in times past, dwelt upon this earth, which is so certain, as that nothing can be more so, since the Jews themselves, Heathens, Mahometans, and other adversaries of the Christian religion confess it. This being laid down, our general argument is this, Jesus must either have been the Messiah, and had his commission from God, or he must have been the most abandoned wretch, that ever existed: For no medium can be granted. Since he professed, that he was sent by God, nay, that he was the Son of God: But the latter cannot occur to any person,  
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right in his understanding, therefore the former must be acknowledged.

II. THAT Jesus is the Messiah, may be proved particularly. First. From the circumstances which attended his Advent. Second. His doctrine. Third. Miracles. Fourth. The events subsequent to his coming.

I. FIRST, the circumstances of the Messiah's Advent, had been formerly marked out by the Prophets. (a) The time of it must happen before the overthrow of the Jewish Palacy. Gen. xlix. 10. The tribe (Scepter) shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until his son (Shilo) come, and to him shall the obedience, or gathering of the people be. Which passage, the ancient Jews interpreted, as respecting the Messiah, but the modern Jews understood it, of a rod of correction, which interpretation is erroneous, for the latter part of the verse, viz. For a lawgiver, &c. explains the former, as will appear to any one who closely looks into the words. Besides, the Messiah was to come, the second temple being standing. Hag. ii. 9. Malach. iii. 1. The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple. Likewise, at the end of four hundred and ninety years, after the return from the Babylonish captivity. Dan. ix. 24. Concerning the seventy weeks, Under the fourth, viz. the Roman Monarchy. Dan. ii, 4. And vii. 13. &c. But since that particular time which was fixed by God, has long since elapsed, we must either say, that the Messiah is already  
P 3 come,

come, or that he never will come. The same conclusion may be justly drawn from the following circumstances.

(b) THE second circumstance is, the place of his nativity, viz. the city of Bethlehem. Micah v. 2. But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the many thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting. Which Prophecy, to apply to any other but Jesus, viz. to David or Zorobabel, would be the greatest absurdity.

(c) THE third circumstance is the people, and family from which the Messiah was to descend, viz. the people of Israel, tribe of Judah, and family of David, not when in a flourishing, but in an abject condition. Isa. xi. 1. and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. This is the reason why this son of David, was a name, in a peculiar manner assigned unto Jesus, by the Jews, as may be observed every where in the Gospel.

(d) A FOURTH circumstance is, his mother being a virgin. Isa. vii. 14. Lo, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son.

BESIDES, the Prophet here speaks of some extraordinary son, who is termed Immanuel, likewise the mighty God. Isa. ix. 6. Now, the Jews  
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can produce no person, to whom these extraordinary titles are applicable, but Jesus Christ.

FROM these, and other predictions of the Prophets, it is evident, that Jesus is the Messiah. Here it is to be observed, that there is much force in each of these prophecies, when taken separately, but far greater, when taken complexly, as they all have been fulfilled in Christ, and in him only.

THE Jews object, that all the prophecies have not been fulfilled in Jesus. That the peace, which the Messiah was to introduce, did not as yet take place, nor was his kingdom so glorious and universal, nor did the people of the Jews, enjoy that felicity which is so frequently mentioned by the Prophets. But this objection may be answered with little trouble, if we but say, First. That these prophecies are to be understood, in a spiritual sense, viz. a celestial kingdom, and peace, and a new Israel, which is according to the spirit, that is, all believing and godly persons, which might be demonstrated even from the very predictions of the Prophets. Second. That all these prophecies are not as yet accomplished, but, that the time will come, when the Messiah will rule over all nations, and the Jews being again received into the Divine covenant, shall enjoy the glory promised them.

II. THE doctrine of Jesus Christ, the most holy and perfect of all, and having an entire respect to the

the glory of God, could not proceed from an impostor, falsely pretending a divine commission. The Jews object, that Jesus has abrogated the Mosaick law. We answer, that if by law, we are to understand the most excellent part of the law, Jesus did not abolish it, nay, he hath established and fulfilled it. Matt. v. 17. I did not come that I might break the law, but that I might fulfil it. Second. If we are to understand the ritual, or ceremonial law, we answer. First. That Jesus observed the Mosaick rites. Second. That God himself abolished them, when it was his pleasure, that the City and Temple of Jerusalem should be demolished. Third. if Jesus and his Apostles taught, that these rites considered in themselves, were not at all pleasing unto God, the Prophets speak the very same language. Ps. i. 8. 13. Isaiah i. 11. What have I to do with the multitude of your sacrifices? saith the Lord. And every where else. The Apostles urged many things, against the necessity of circumcision; but this rite was confined to the posterity of Abraham only, and that men could be acceptable unto God, without circumcision, is proved even from the example of Abraham himself. Rom. iv. 7. &c.

3. THE miracles wrought by the Lord Jesus, prove his divine mission, which argument we find Jesus himself principally using. John v. 36. The very works which I do, testify of me, that the Father hath sent me. Which argument is the more valid, as the Jews, and other adversaries of the Gospel, durst not deny that Christ wrought miracles,

miracles, as appears from Celsus, the writings of the Jews, and the Gospel. All that they could urge against them was, that he performed these works by the power of magic, which is so absurd, that we need not spend time in confuting such a cavil.

4. THE events consequential upon the Advent of Christ, prove his divine commission, viz. the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Temple, the dispersion of the Jews, the conversion of very many nations to the worship of the True God, and the overthrow of Idolatry. For these events are of so extraordinary a nature, that an energy truly divine, the truth of the Gospel, of the Christian religion, and consequently the divine mission of Christ, are invincibly proved by them.

USES. 1. As this doctrine is the foundation of all religion, faith, piety, and consolation, it ought therefore, sincerely to be thought upon, and inculcated with ardour; yet, so as not to treat it in too sublime, or subtile a manner; wherefore, the arguments adduced in support of it, ought principally to be taken from Scripture, and History. Here the state of the greatest part of Christians, is very deplorable, who know but little concerning these foundations upon which their faith should rest.

2. SINCE it appears evident to us, that Jesus is the Messiah, it remains, that we should embrace him with sincere faith, as our Redeemer, yield that obedience to him which he is entitled to, and expect

pect eternal salvation from him. For since he is the Messiah, whatever things he hath taught, must be most true, and certain, whether they consist of precepts, promises, or threatnings.

## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Person of Christ.*

**W**ITH respect to Christ's person, two things are to be proved. First. That there are two natures in him. Second. That these two constitute one person,

I. **T**HERE are two natures in Christ, the divine and human. We have already proved his divine nature, in our treatise upon the Trinity. There is no necessity for a multiplicity of words, concerning his human nature, as it is sufficiently proved, that Jesus was a man like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. Heb. ii. 17. Wherefore, in all things it behoved him, to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful, and faithful Highpriest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. This is evident through the whole history of his life and death. But it was necessary that Christ should be man, in order that he might maintain familiar conversation, and intercourse with men, and die for them; as likewise, that he might afford us, in himself, a sure pledge of the resurrection, and a future life.

II. **T**HESE

II. THESE two natures constitute only one person, i. e. one Christ; and therefore this union of natures is denominated a personal union. Yet, at the same time, each nature hath preserved its essential properties; which we observe against our Lutheran brethren, who, that they might defend their opinion concerning the real presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist, as also, its ubiquity, or omnipresence, assert, that the properties of the divine nature, were communicated to the human.

THERE have been many controversies in the ancient Church, concerning the natures and persons of Christ, occasioned by Nestorius and Eutyches. Nestorius, who was Patriarch of Constantinople, maintained two persons, and denied that the Divine nature could be born of the Virgin. He was condemned in the Council of Ephesus, anno, four hundred and thirty one. Eutyches, on the other hand, lest he should acknowledge two persons, fixed upon only one nature, and confounds the two natures into one. He was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, anno, four hundred and fifty one. But many are of opinion, that these controversies were only disputes about words, and that they were originated from the terms Person and Nature being understood in different senses. Nay, there have been some, who thought, that the opinion of Nestorius was, indeed, erroneous in itself, but that he was falsely charged with it. But it is of little moment to us, what  
Nestorius

Nestorius believed, providing that we maintain the doctrine of two natures in one person.

THE Fathers, who constituted the Synod of Chalcedon, held that this union was effected without division, without separation, without change, without confusion. This union is the cause, why the Scripture ascribes to the person of Christ, that which belongs to either nature, which the Scholasticks term, a communication of properties, as when it is said, that the Son of God died. Acts xx. 28. Divines add a communication of gifts, or graces, because, this union is the cause of various gifts being conferred upon the human nature.

USES. Hence it appears, how excellent the dignity of that person is, whom God has constituted our Mediator, as he hath both God and man. Likewise, the greatness of God's love towards mankind, and how glorious the work of Redemption, &c. As Christ is God, he must be possessed of infinite power, by which, he is able to save all who believe in him. As he is man, we have in him, especially in his death and resurrection, a sure pledge, both of the expiation of our sins, and of our future resurrection. As also, of his love, as he is our brother, like unto us, and must therefore be merciful towards us. See Heb. iv. 15. 16. For we have not an highpriest, who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted, as we are, yet without sin.

2. PAUL terms this doctrine, the Mystery of Godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16. because it produces gratitude, and love towards Christ, in imitation of him, humility, &c. But as the human and divine natures are united in Christ, so it is the will of God, that we in some measure, should be partakers of the divine nature. 2 Pet. i. 2. &c. viz. if having escaped the corruption which is in the world, and being sanctified, we are made partakers of that glory, which Christ enjoys in the Heavens.

## C H A P. III.

*Of the Threefold Office of Jesus Christ.*

THE office of the Lord Jesus is marked out to us, under various characters: As Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer, but he is chiefly called Christ, Messiah, i. e. anointed, which name is derived from that illustrious prophecy of Daniel. Dan. ix. 25. Where the Prophet says, that from the going forth of the commandment, to restore, and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the prince, shall be seventy weeks. But he was anointed, in order that he might discharge a threefold office: Prophetical, Sacerdotal, and Royal, which we observe in opposition to the Jews, who scarcely acknowledge any thing in the Messiah, but royal dignity. But that this threefold office is compatible with the Messiah, appears, because the titles and functions of a Prophet, and Priest, are attributed to him by the Prophets, as also, because he could

could not be a celestial king, unless he were at the same time, both Prophet and Priest, as shall be made appear, by what we are afterwards to observe. But Divines observe, that the unction of Christ denotes, First. His vocation to this threefold office. Second. A collation of gifts, necessary for his undertaking it.

THESE things being premised in general, we come now to a particular treatise, upon these three offices.

## I.

*Of the Prophetical Office.*

**F**IRST. We have to prove, that it became the Messiah, to discharge this office. Second. Explain its nature. Third. Shew that Christ has discharged it.

I. THE first of these is evinced by three arguments. First. Because the Messiah is marked out to us, under the discription of a Prophet. Deut. xviii. 15. and 18. The Lord thy God, will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken. Which passage, the Apostles, with the ancient Jews always interpreted, as respecting the Messiah, Acts iii. 22. Second. The offices of a Prophet were to be discharged by the Messiah, Isa. lxi. i. 2. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings

tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison, to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, &c. Third. It was necessary that the Messiah should be a Prophet, in order, that he might be king, viz. that he might lead mankind to the knowledge and worship of God, and thus restore the kingdom of God, according to the Prophet, but he could not otherwise accomplish this, but as a Prophet.

II. THE nature of the prophetic office, may be sufficiently understood, from what has been already observed, concerning the Prophets. For, First. They announced a doctrine, which they received from God, and incited men to his worship. Second. They predicted future events. Third. They testified their vocation by their zeal, sanctity, and miracles.

III. IT remains that we would shew that all these were requisite in Christ, and that he himself was that excellent Prophet, who in times of old, had been promised by God, and, First. Indeed, that his vocation to this office was from God. Second. That he fulfilled the various parts of it. Third. How his vocation hath been proved, and confirmed.

I. THAT Jesus was called of God, to the prophetic office, appears, from Matt. iii. 17. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,  
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and xvii. 5. Hence Jesus declares, that the prophecy of Is. lxi, was fulfilled in himself. Luke. iv. 18. 21. Besides, he received the gifts which were necessary for this purpose from God. John iii. 34. Acts x. 38. Where Peter says: That God anointed Jesus with the spirit and with power, and that in an especial manner, at his Baptism. The Socinians assert, that Jesus, after his Baptism was received into Heaven, in order to be there instructed concerning the will of God. But this is a meer fiction.

2. HE discharged the office of a Prophet, for, First. He announced a doctrine, which contains a most perfect revelation of the will of God, concerning the salvation of men, the constituent parts of which are, articles of faith, precepts, promises, and threatenings, of which we shall not at present treat particularly. We may just observe with respect to precepts that Jesus has delivered, what, in the proper sense of the word, may be termed precepts, or commandments, and that the Gospel contains real laws. Matt. v. But that he hath not added new precepts to the law, as the Socinians would have it. For whatever Christ prescribed, is, comprehended under this commandment: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. Matt. xxii. 37. But the law indeed is not so perfect as the Gospel, if we consider it only as to the letter, as likewise the evidence of revelation, the excellency of the promise, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; but if we attend to the internal, and true meaning of the law,

law, and ultimate intention of God, he required the same things under the law, as under the Gospel. Second. Christ as a prophet predicted future events, his own resurrection, and the advent of the Holy Ghost, Jerusalem's overthrow, which was to happen in the very age in which he dwelt upon earth, the constitution and perpetual duration of his Church : Likewise, the treason of Judas, Peter's denial, &c. but he discharged this office, not only when upon earth, but likewise after his ascension, by the ministry of his Apostles.

3. His vocation to this office hath been confirmed by various and illustrious methods. By the testimony of John the Baptist, which was of considerable influence among the Jews. John i. 19. &c. iii. 26. &c. by the testimony of God the Father, at his baptism and transfiguration. John xii. 28. By the predictions of Moses, and the other Prophets. John v. 39. Search the Scriptures, and they are they, which testify of me. And 46. 47. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me. By the innocence of his life, in which he excelled the other Prophets. John viii. 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? By his zeal, boldness of speech, stupendous wisdom, admirable perspicuity in teaching : Lastly, by that divine power and energy of his doctrine, which is conspicuous in the gospel. Matt. vii. 29. For he taught them as one having authority. John vi. 46. But especially by his miracles, which were works stupendous, and unheard of, most certain, most frequent, and innumerable, universal, over

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all creatures performed at a single word, and in a moment of time, and all acts of pure disinterested benevolence. Besides, he conferred upon his Apostles and disciples, the gift of working the same miracles in his name: He likewise confirmed his doctrine by his death, and the shedding of his blood: And lastly, all his predictions were so confirmed by their events, that no person could deny that he was a Prophet sent from God, this is abundantly evident, from the conversion of the Gentiles, extinction of Idolatry, and other events consequential to the administration of his office.

## II.

### *Of his Sacerdotal Office.*

SINCE the death of Christ is most offensive to the Jews, it ought principally to be proved, that it became the Messiah, to execute the office of a Priest, and to undergo death, to expiate the sins of men. This is demonstrated, First. Because the name, or title of Priest, is ascribed to him, Ps. cx. 4. Thou art a Priest forever. Also the functions of a Priest, Dan. ix. 24. Is. liii. 10. Because he offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, verse 12. Therefore will I divide a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. For here the Messiah is described as a victim, and mention is made,  
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both of his sacrifice, and intercession, both of which are the function of, and peculiar to Priests.

In both these respects, Christ has executed the office of a Priest. For first, he offered himself up as a real, and what may be properly termed, a proper sacrifice unto God, by which he hath reconciled him unto us, and hath satisfied for us. This the Socinians deny, and would have us believe, “ That Christ died, in order to confirm his doctrine, to afford us an example of patience, and that by entering unto Heaven, by his blood he might acquire the highest power, by which he might convert men from their sins, and bestow upon them eternal glory.” Which things indeed are true, but they do not comprehend the whole of Christ’s Priesthood, as they reject his satisfaction. These are confuted, First. From Scripture, which represents Christ as a sacrifice, and oblation for sins. Isa. liii. 10. A propitiation. 1 John ii. 2. He is the propitiation for our sins. Isa. liii. We have remission in his blood. Eph. i. 7. He expiated sins, which the legal sacrifices could not do. Heb. ix. and x. All of which places, do represent, what properly speaking, may be called a real sacrifice, otherwise they must be explained, in a manner too subtile and frigid. Second. They are confuted from the nature of the Sacerdotal office, for they confound it with the prophetic and royal, or totally lay it aside. For to establish a doctrine, to preside by example, to convert men, to forgive sins, to bestow eternal life, are properly functions, not of a Priest, but of

a King. Besides, these functions do properly refer unto men; whereas the sacerdotal office has a reference unto God, Heb. v. Where then does the Priesthood of Christ consist, if he hath not rendered God propitious unto us. Now, the satisfaction of Christ, and the efficacy of his death, is founded, both upon the will of God, who hath transferred the punishments due unto us, upon Christ, and upon the dignity of Christ's person. If it be here inquired, how could Christ suffer in our room? We answer, that he offered himself freely, and obtained the highest glory. But if it be further enquired, whether God could have been reconciled unto us, by any other method, but the death of Christ, it is not our business, to return an answer to such questions. It may suffice us, that God was unwilling that this should be accomplished in any other way; but at the same time, he had just reasons why he chose that method, which it does not belong to us to search after.

THE other act of Christ's Priesthood is intercession. Rom. viii. 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Heb. vii. 25. But this is a figurative manner of expression, which ought not to be understood properly, as if Christ as a supplicant, poured out his prayers for us, in the same manner as the Highpriest did, when he had entered into the Holy of Holies. The intercession of Christ denotes, First. That his entrance into Heaven, has assured us of our reconciliation  
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with God, in the same manner, as the ancients were assured, by the entrance of the Highpriest, into the sanctuary, that their sins were expiated. Second. That Christ's presence before the Father, is of the greatest efficacy, in rendering God propitious unto us. The Socinians overthrow this act of the Priesthood. For according to them, intercession signifies nothing else, but that Christ of his consummate power, hath procured all things necessary for our salvation; so that here again, they confound the priestly with the regal office, and contrive such a kind of intercession, as refer to men only, but not to God. Many things have been disputed concerning intercession, which we shall omit, viz. whether Christ intercedes for all sinners in general, according to that passage, 1 John ii. 2. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Or for the faithful only, which he seems to say, John xvii. 19. or always after the same manner, and at all times, or according to both natures? The term intercession is figurative, and ought not therefore to be urged.

## III.

*Of the Kingly Office.*

**T**HAT the Messiah was to be a King, is so clear, that it is almost needless to prove it. It is certain, that the name Messiah, denotes principally regal dignity. For the Kings were first of all annointed, and were termed annointed. The

Kingly Office of the Messiah was predicted, Dan. ii. 44. Zach. ix. 9. Rejoice daughter of Zion, thy king cometh unto thee, he is just, and having salvation. And elsewhere.

BUT it concerns us more deeply, to be informed with respect to the character, which this King was to support, or wherein the nature of his kingdom consists, this being what is principally controverted, between us and the Jews. First. It behoved his kingdom to be universal over all nations. Isa. xlix. 6. I give thee for a light unto the Gentiles. Dan. vii. 14. And to him (viz. the Son of Man) hath been given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and languages may serve him. Ps. ii. 6. 7. Second. Spiritual and celestial, which consisted in the knowledge and worship of God. The Jews were of opinion, that the Messiah's kingdom was to be terrestrial. But they are easily refuted, because such a kingdom, would scarcely have contributed any thing to the glory of God, and the real happiness of mankind. Third. The Prophets in a special manner, declare the nature of this kingdom, whilst they attribute to the Messiah, a variety of royal functions, viz. the vocation of men, legislation, dominion over the hearts, judgment, which functions manifestly indicate, that this kingdom was not to be administered by external force, or after the same manner as kings usually reign, but in a manner entirely spiritual. For vocation, legislation, dominion over the conscience, judgment, entirely

entirely suppose obedience to be performed by a creature endowed with liberty.

THESE things being premised in general, it plainly appears, that Jesus is that king who was foretold by the Prophets. He did not manifest his kingdom in an instant, or all at once, but in parts, and by degrees; for before he was in the full possession of it, and was invested with supreme power, it was necessary that he should undergo death. Luke xxiv. 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory. And though he was king, during the time of his conversation upon earth, yet he did not openly profess his being a king, and his royal dignity at length began to brighten, after his resurrection, according to the predictions of the Prophets. Isa. liii. 12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured his soul unto death. Dan. ix. 26. &c.

1. JESUS is a universal King, whose dominion extends to all things. Phil. ii. 9. 10. 11. Eph. i. 20. 21. &c. Matt. xxviii. 18. All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Yet it is to be observed, that Christ has not obtained a universal empire over all people, by his word and spirit, and that his kingdom will be fully discovered, in the last times, and in the day of judgment. 1 Cor. xv. 25. 26. He must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet.

2. HE is a spiritual and celestial King, therefore his kingdom is called the kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of God. Matt. iii. 2. John xviii. 36. My kingdom is not of this world. Which is confirmed from the nature of the doctrine, contained in the Gospel, its laws, promises, &c. as likewise the manner in which this kingdom is administered, which is entirely spiritual.

3. He exercises royal functions (a) for he calls men, but does not compel them by force, or violence. The nature of this kingdom requires this, as it is seated in the heart. (b) He prescribes to them spiritual laws. (c) He rules over all creatures, as far as is necessary for his glory, and the salvation of the faithful; but in a special manner, he governs the Church of which he is King and head. He rules it by means entirely spiritual, viz. by his word, spirit, and discipline, and defends it from its enemies, the world, Satan, sin, and death, (d) At length he will come as judge and king at the last day, and then his kingdom will be finished. 1 Cor. xv. 24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. The meaning of which is, the administration, by which the Church is at present governed, shall then cease, or that his mediatorial kingdom, as Divines term it, shall then have an end.

INQUIRY is made, concerning his reign of a thousand years. Rev. xx. 1-6. It is beyond controversy,

troverſy, that ſuch a reign obtained credit, even from the very beginnings of the Church, as appears from almoſt all the writings of the ancient Fathers, as Juſtin Martyr, Tertullian, &c. Some have been of opinion, that Jeſus would then return into the world, that he would reſtore the Jews to the Land of Canaan, and that thoſe who ſuffered martyrdom would riſe from the dead, and reign together with him. The latter ſeems to be collected from Rev. xx. 6. They ſhall be prieſts of God, and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years. Others think, that the Church will enjoy peace, after the converſion of the Jews, and Gentiles, and that it will be much more pure than in its preſent ſtate. There are others, who imagine, that this prophecy of John hath already been fulfilled. Concerning this point, it is beſt to ſpeak reſervedly, and to determine nothing too precisely, either upon the one ſide, or upon the other.

USES. I. From what has been ſaid, it follows, that the faith which embraceth Chriſt, as Prophet, Prieſt, and King, can only be deemed a true and ſaving faith, ſo that they are far from true faith, who have a reſpect to the prieſtly office only, and the expiation of ſins, being little mindful; that Chriſt is a Prophet and King, whom we ought to obey. Theſe divide Chriſt, and deſtroy the nature of faith.

2. SINCE Chriſt is a Prophet, a twofold duty is incumbent on us, to receive his doctrine, and to obey

obey him. To this refer the words of the Father, Hear ye him; and of Moses, Deut. xviii. 19. Whosoever will not hearken unto that Prophet, I will require it of him. The doctrine of Christ tends entirely to practice, as it consists of precepts most pure, and incitements most powerful,

3. FROM the Priesthood of Christ, do also result two particular duties. First. An assured trust in the mercy of God. Heb. x. 19-22. Having therefore boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the blood of Christ, let us draw near with a true heart. Second. An earnest desire after piety, for he offered up himself as a sacrifice, that he might convert us from our sins. Heb. ix. 14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Neither will the sacrifice of Christ be of any avail to the disobedient. Heb. x. 26. 27. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. And there will no satisfaction for sin remain, but what they will give in a future world. Therefore, we ought to be upon our guard, lest we should abuse this doctrine, concerning the satisfaction of Christ.

4. THE same duties are deduced from the Regal Office. First. Confidence. For since his dominion is universal over the world, the Devil, nay, even Death, what could be injurious to his Church, or faithful followers. Second. Obedience is necessarily

rily due unto such a king, and that internal and sincere, as he is a King entirely spiritual; neither does he reign otherwise, but as far as he emancipates us from the servitude of sin, by his word and spirit. But such as are under servitude to the flesh and the world, are not subjects of this King, but rebels and enemies, &c.

C H A P. IV.

*Concerning the Twofold State of Christ.*

THE state of Christ is twofold: Of humiliation, and exaltation. First. Concerning the former, it is to be observed, in opposition to the Jews, to whom it is offensive, that it was predicted by the Prophets, especially in that noble prophecy, Isa. liii. Where the Messiah is described, as a man subject to infirmities, forsaken, obnoxious to troubles, and who, after his sufferings and death, was to arrive at the height of glory, verse 10-12. But when the Jews could not deny, that many prophecies referred to his state of humiliation, some of them imagined, that there were two Messiah's, the one the glorious Son of David, the other the son of Joseph, who was to suffer death: They chose rather to fix upon two Messiah's, than to acknowledge a twofold state. Christ speaks of his twofold state, Luke xxiv. 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

THE humiliation of Christ consists in the following degrees. First. In his nativity, which was mean  
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and obscure. Second. A life of humility, obnoxious to miseries. Third. The sufferings, both of his body and soul, especially those agonies, concerning which, Matt. xxvi. 37. 38. Yet he did not suffer the punishments of the damned, which are attended with the wrath of God, and desperation. Fourth. His death, which was necessary, both to expiate our sins, and to confirm us in the faith of our resurrection. Fifth. His burial, which hath confirmed the certainty of his death and resurrection,

SOME add, his descent into Hell; but no mention is made of this in any of the ancient creeds, especially that of Nice. Some interpret this article, as relating to the agonies of Christ's soul; others, to his burial; others, to his being detained under the power of death; others, to the state of the soul in Paradise, until the resurrection. For the Hebrew word denotes a place, in which the souls are detained after death, which they believed consisted of two parts, viz. Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, and Hell. See Luke xvi. 23. &c. Others thought that Christ descended into Limbus Patrum, that he might carry from thence the souls of the faithful under the Old Testament, who had been detained there, into Heaven along with himself, which is the opinion of the Romish Church, to which many of our reformers have acceded, as Zuinglius, Bullingers, Occolampadius, nay, there are some who are of opinion, that Jesus, after his death descended into Hell, that he might there triumph over devils, and the damned which is absurd,

furd, and without any authority from Scripture. This much is evident, that the soul of Christ was in Paradise, and with God. Luke xxiii. 43. 46. To day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. That passage, 1 Pet. iii. 19. By which (viz. spirit) he also went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which is adduced to prove Christ's descent into Hell, is obscure; it seems to denote the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, that were in prison, i. e. in a state of ignorance and condemnation.

II. His state of exaltation consists of three degrees. First. The first was his resurrection, the truth of which is to be demonstrated by solid arguments, since upon this depends all our faith, which would be vain unless Christ were risen. 1 Cor. xv. 14. But it is to be proved, not from the circumstances of his burial, and resurrection, which are related in the History of the Gospel as some do; for this would be of no weight with such as do not believe the Gospel. But, First. From the sincerity of the testimony of the Apostles; which argument Paul uses, 1 Cor. xv. 6. 7. 8. 11. where he gives a detail of the apparitions of Christ, after his resurrection. As also from the evidence of a great many others who could not be deceived themselves, nor were they inclined to deceive others. Second. Because the accounts which they gave, obtained credit with men. Third. From their miracles. Fourth. From the admirable success which attended their preaching, the constitution of the Church, and destruction of the Jews. Christ's resurrection was predicted. Ps. xvi. 10. Thou wilt not leave my

my soul in Hell, compared with Acts ii. 29 31. Likewise, Isa. liii. 10. 11. We may add to these, all the predictions which relate to Christ's sufferings, his death and glory. The fruits of his resurrection are, First. The certainty of our justification. Rom. iv. 25. He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Second. Our sanctification, Rom. vi. 4. 5. As Christ hath been raised from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Third. The firm hope of our resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 20. 21. 22. We shall not dwell longer upon these things.

2. THE second degree is his ascension, the truth of which appears from what has been already observed, as also from the events which were consequent upon his departure. The circumstances of his ascension are related in Sacred History. It is sufficiently evident that this ascension was a real change of place, which overthrows the opinion of the Romish Church, concerning the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist, as also that of the Lutherans, concerning its ubiquity. Christ ascended unto Heaven. First. That he might arrive at his kingdom, and that all might be convinced that he was a celestial, and not a terrestrial king. Second. That he might intercede for us. Rom. viii. 34. Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Third. That he might send from thence the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 7. For if I go not away, that comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him  
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him unto you. Fourth. That he might elevate our affections, to that glory which is repositied for us in Heaven. Col. iii. 12. Seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

3. THE third degree is his sitting at the right hand of God. Which phrase denotes, First. The consummate glory of Christ, and a power equal to that of the Father. Second. That he received his power from God, both of which we learn from Paul. Eph. xx. 22. But we have already treated of Christ's kingdom, in the preceding chapter. The Lutherans, not indeed all of them, in order to defend their doctrine, concerning ubiquity, would have us to understand, by the sitting of Christ, a communication of the Divine omnipresence, to his human nature, in confuting whom, we need not spend time.

USES. What has been observed concerning the twofold state of Christ, may be considered, either with respect to Christ himself, or with respect to us. First. We ought to consider the wisdom of God, displayed in the work of our redemption. It became our Redeemer to be possessed of the highest power, but before he arrived at it, it was necessary that he should humble himself, and suffer. This was that mystery which offended the Jews. 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. But upon which, the whole of our salvation and hope depends.

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HENCE appears the love of Christ, his humility, obedience, as also his power and glory, which he obtained, whilst he emptied himself. Phil. ii. 7. 8. 9. Therefore the fruits of both these states of Christ, have a respect unto us, it was upon our account and not his own, that he was born, and died, &c. Hence it follows, that he is perfectly able to save us, since he has satisfied for us, and hath obtained infinite power, and that it is lawful for us, to have access unto God, with firm confidence. Heb. iv. 15. 16.

2. IN Christ we have a resemblance, both of our state and vacation, for we are predestinated to be conformable to him, in both his states. Rom. viii. 29. It needs not therefore appear wonderful to us, if, previous to our arrival at that glory, which is promised, we be exposed to various miseries, we are born, we live, we suffer, we die, in like manner as Christ did. But as the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, and his death, conducted him to the highest glory, in like manner shall we also be glorified, we shall rise again, ascend unto Heaven, and sit upon his throne, nay, we are already risen with, and in Christ our head, are exalted. Eph. ii. 6. 1 Thes. iv. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 11. If we are dead with Christ, we shall also live with him. John xvii. 24. Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, which certainly must produce admirable consolation, in adversity, and even in the very hour of death. It only remains that we would tread  
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in the footsteps of Christ, in patience, self-denial, obedience, sanctity.

WE omit here the more particular uses, which might be deduced from the nativity of Christ, his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and sitting at the right hand of the Father.

## SECTION. III.

Of the Events which happened after the Ascension of Christ.

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Of the Constitution of the Church.

THIS Section consists of five parts, viz. First. The mission of the Holy Spirit. Second. The preaching of the Apostles. Third. The destruction of the Jews. Fourth. The calling of the Gentiles. Fifth. The constitution of the Church.

## C H A P. I.

*Of the Mission of the Holy Spirit.*

THE order of the different periods of time now requires, that we should treat of such things as happened after the exaltation of Christ. First. He sent the Holy Spirit from Heaven, ten days after his ascension. Acts ii. And after this manner, was the commencement of his kingdom. But now Jesus deferred the mission of the Holy Spirit, till that particular time, in order that his Apostles might be fully assured of his reception into Heaven, and of his having obtained an universal empire; as also, that they might understand that he was a heavenly, and spiritual king.

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2. THE gifts poured out upon the Apostles were various, but the principal one was the gift of tongues. Acts ii. 3. The design of which was, that they themselves, as well as all others, might be convinced, that they were sent to preach the Gospel, to both Jews and Gentiles. Second. They received a more comprehensive knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. John xiv. 26. But the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things. This is evident, because, immediately after they had received the Holy Ghost, Peter and the rest of the Apostles spoke with greater clearness, and boldness, concerning Christ's kingdom, and redemption, than they had done before. Chap. ii. iii. iv. v. of the Acts. But it is to be observed, that yet there were several points of Christian doctrine, which they were ignorant of, and concerning which, they were afterwards instructed: Especially, that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews. Acts x. 28. Where Peter affirms, that God had shewed him, that no person should be called polluted, or unclean. Third. To these may be added, other gifts of an extraordinary nature; as the gift of healing, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 8. 9. 10. For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. Yet they had before this, received those miraculous gifts, while Christ

was upon earth. Matt. x. 8. They had likewise a power of communicating these unto others, by imposition of hands. Acts viii. 15. and x. 44. The Holy Spirit furnished the Apostles with other gifts and virtues, necessary for the discharge of their office, as zeal, steadiness, boldness of speech, &c.

THESE extraordinary gifts did not immediately vanish; for as the Apostles conferred them upon others, as we just now observed, after the decease of the Apostles there were men for some time to be found in the Church, who were remarkable for the gift of miracles, as is evident from ecclesiastical history. It is enquired here, whether these gifts have failed in such a manner, as that we are no more to expect them. To which we answer, First. That at present they are not visible, which is certain. Second. It is likewise certain, that God can endow men with these gifts at pleasure. Third. It is very probable, that they will again take place, when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles enter into the Church of God. But here nothing can be precisely determined.

BESIDES these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, Christ communicates his spirit to all the faithful. Rom. viii. 14. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God. Now, the ordinary gifts are these. First. Faith. Second. Sanctity. Third. Consolation, and Hope. But these are most necessary to all men, as being salutary of themselves; whereas, impious and profane

phane persons, have sometimes received the gift of miracles. Matt. vii. 21. 22. We are not therefore to imagine, that the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles only, the gift of the Holy Spirit has a respect to all the disciples of Christ: But we shall treat of the operation of the Holy Spirit, when we come to speak of the assistances to salvation.

USES. 1. THE mission of the Holy Spirit, and extraordinary gifts, prove the ascension of Christ, and the divinity of the Gospel. Peter uses this argument, Acts ii. 32. 33. and v. 32. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them who obey him.

2. SINCE the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit are absolutely necessary to salvation, we ought to use our utmost endeavours, in order that we may be partakers of them; these gifts may be acquired, or increased by prayers. Luke xi. 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. As also, by the hearing, and reading of the word of God, by pious conversation, especially a prevailing desire after godliness, vigilance, and good works: On the other hand, they may be diminished, or even totally lost by our neglect, &c.

It will be likewise of advantage, to shew how we might come to know whether we have the Spirit of God? viz. by the effects and gifts of this

Spirit, devotion, zeal, gentleness, the love of our neighbour, purity, self-denial, and renouncing the lusts of the flesh.

## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Preaching of the Apostles.*

**T**HE Apostles began to preach the Gospel, immediately after they had received the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's command. Mark xvi. 15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. Four things are to be observed here.

FIRST. Who were the persons who preached, Second. To whom. Third. What. Fourth. With what success.

I. Among those who preached the Gospel, we may rank, First. The Apostles, whom Christ himself had chosen. Matt. x. 1. 2. Likewise, the Seventy Disciples, concerning whom, Luke x. 1. Besides Evangelists, Prophets, Bishops, Presbyters, either called by God himself, or elected by Presbyters. But we shall treat of the vocation and office of those ministers, whether ordinary, or extraordinary, in that chapter which relates to the government, and ministers of the Church.

II. THE Gospel was preached, First. To the Jews, who dwelt in Jerusalem and Judea, where the Apostles resided for some time. Acts i-vii. Afterwards

Afterwards to the Samaritans, whose conversion is related Acts viii. 14. 15. Lastly, to the Gentiles, after that the Apostles had received a special command, by divine revelation, concerning the preaching of the Gospel. Acts x. and xi. Therefore they travelled to various nations, through the whole world. Matt. xxviii. 19. Yet so, as that they always preached to the Jews first. See Acts xiii. 5. 14. 46. Where they are said, always to have entered first into their synagogues.

III. THEY preached the Gospel, i. e. faith in Christ, and repentance: This was the sum of their preaching. Luke xxiv. 47. It was fit that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, unto all nations. Where we may observe, that the Apostles did not treat with the Jews, in the same manner, as with the Gentiles; for, whereas the Jews had already obtained the knowledge of God, the Apostles had only to prove to them, that Jesus was the Messiah, predicted by their Prophets. This is evident from their sermons to the Jews. Acts ii. and xiii. 17. &c. But when they addressed themselves to Heathens, before exhorting them to believe in Christ, they endeavoured to recall them from Idolatry, to the knowledge and worship of the only true God, after this, they directed them to Christ. See Paul's sermon to the people of Lystra, Acts xiv. 15. and to the Athenians, chap. xvii. 22.

IV. THE success which attended the Apostles' preaching was amazing: For a great number of  
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the Jews believed in Jesus Christ ; very many nations, who before had been destitute of the knowledge of the true God, and had lived in a state of barbarity, received the Gospel, and became converts unto godliness ; innumerable churches were erected ; idols, and false oracles were banished, according to the prediction of Isaiah, ii. 18. 20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship, unto the moles, and to the bats. Paul treats of this admirable success, which attended their preaching. Rom. xv. 18. 19. 20. Col. i. 6. So that the face of the world was entirely changed, and all things became new.

USES. Hence is deduced an invincible argument, in support of the divinity of the Gospel. For the persons who at first announced this doctrine, did all by the sole energy of preaching. They were persons obscure, attended with no safeguards, unsupported by any power, obnoxious to poverty, miseries, persecutions. Their doctrine contained nothing that could entice, or allure men ; nay, it directly opposed the prejudices of both Jews and Gentiles, and the received religions of the times ; as also, their customs, pleasures and love of the world ; and what ought not to be omitted, such as embraced their religion, and became Christians, must undergo poverty, banishment, persecutions.

2. WHAT the Apostles formerly accomplished by word of mouth, the Doctors of the word do at present by their writings, and which they will do,  
until

until the consummation of ages, so that in this respect, apostolic preaching has not ceased.

3. WHEN we turn our eyes towards those blessed times, when the world was illuminated by the preaching of the Apostles, we ought to pray, that in these our present times, God would vouchsafe to send us fit preachers of his word, furnished with the Apostolic Spirit, who would instruct others, and convert men from their sins unto God, which is the duty of Pastors and Preachers, whom God, in this respect, has set over us as successors of the Apostles.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Of the Destruction of the Jews.*

**T**HE Destruction of the Jews happened shortly after the Ascension of the Lord Jesus, and the preaching of the Apostles, with respect to which we are to observe. First. Its Predictions. Second. Time. Third. Manner. Fourth. Cause. Fifth. Duration.

1. THE destruction of the Jews does not only denote that horrid desolation, which they underwent, when Jerusalem was taken by the Romans, their temple burned, and themselves expelled their country, but likewise, their rejection; for whereas, they before had enjoyed the blessings of the Divine Covenant, afterwards being rejected by God, they were excluded from it. This memorable

ble event was predicted, Deut. xviii. 49-64. and xxxii. in that song of Moses, which, besides threatenings, contains also a description of the destruction, and rejection of that people. Likewise, Dan. ix. 26. After those sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself, he shall destroy the city, and sanctuary, Isa. lxy. 1. 12.

II. THE time of this destruction ought to be particularly remarked, viz. about seventy years after the birth of Christ. For at that time, the Romans had waged war with the Jews, and raised from the foundation, Jerusalem, and the Temple. So that the Jews were rejected, immediately after the Messiah was exhibited, and at the particular time, which Christ had marked out. Matt. xxiv. 34. Hence it appears, from a twofold reason, that Christ was the Messiah, since what he himself had expressly predicted, was accomplished, and the Messiah must be sent, whilst the Temple, City, and Jewish Republic were standing.

III. THE manner of this destruction is to be considered: It was dreadful, and of so extraordinary a nature, that the like was never seen before, nor heard of, as appears from Josephus, who has described this overthrow of the City, and Temple, so as that the divinity of Christ's predictions, cannot be otherwise better proved, than by the testimony of a man, who himself was a Jew. Matt. xiv. 21. Luke xxi. 24. 26. The Jews before this time had underwent various calamities, under Nebuchadnezzar,

buchadnezar, who carried them off captives under Antiochus, &c. but these were but as preludes, to this their ultimate ruin, which as yet endures, the Jews being dispersed over the whole face of the earth, and bearing testimony to the truth of this event.

IV. WE are to enquire into the causes of this event. Now that God should thus will the overthrow of a people, who were his only beloved, and of a City and Temple that was dedicated to himself, must some way or other depend upon the most weighty reasons, and his own certain and determinate council. But the principal cause of it was their rejection of the Messiah. Luke xix. 42. &c. Neither can the Jews themselves produce any other cause, for it is certain, that after their return from the Babylonish captivity, they had never provoked God unto anger by Idolatry. Again, it happened, because the worship of the true God was no longer to be bound unto one people, or a place, the ceremonial law was to be abolished, the prerogatives of the Jews were not to be such under the kingdom of the Messiah, as they had formerly enjoyed, and all nations were to be admitted to a participation of the Divine Covenant. Thus God hath openly shewn that the Messiah is already come, and that the prophecies are fulfilled.

V. IT remains now that we should enquire into the duration of their rejection, and whether they be rejected without hope of restitution. Paul  
moves

moves this question, and solves it. Rom. xi. 1-11. He answers, that the Jews shall again be received into the Divine Covenant. v. 12. 25. &c. where he describes this conversion, as a most illustrious event. The Prophets have likewise foretold this, in their various predictions concerning the felicity of the Jews, under the Messiah's kingdom, which have by no means been fulfilled in that small number of them, who returned from the Babylonish captivity, or who have embraced the Gospel, the rest, who form by far the greatest part of this people, remaining still in a state of unbelief. Nay, there have been some among both ancients, and moderns who have been of opinion, that the Jews would again be restored to their own country: Besides it is certain, that the Israelites of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes were never restored, and yet the Prophets had foretold, that the house of Israel, together with the house of Judah should be saved. Jer. xxxi. 1. 5. 24. 31. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Ezek. xxxvii. 16. 18. &c. But if any one considers the present state of the Jews, he will observe this, which merits the greatest attention, viz. that this people, though banished and miserable for the space of seventeen centuries, yet remain distinct from all others, and have not changed their ancient institutions, which is a plain indication, that God has reserved them, for more happy times.

USES.

USES. 1. The destruction of the Jews in general, proves the existence and providence of God, since it has been expressly predicted by him, in particular, it proves that Christ is the Messiah who was promised: Nay, the Jews being every where dispersed, though adversaries to the Gospel, prove the truth of it, and are witnesses of the antiquity, integrity and truth of the books of the Old Testament, beyond all exception.

2. It is our duty to invoke the God of Israel, with fervent supplications, to commiserate that people, to entertain an affectionate regard towards them. Rom. ix. 1. 2. &c. xi. 28. As also to use our utmost efforts to remove those offences, which alienate them from the Christian faith, which indeed are grievous, and abound with Christians, as idolatry, impiety, and divisions.

3. AMONG the various examples of divine justice, none ever existed, fitter to beget within us the fear of God, than the destruction of the Jews. For if God did not spare this people, with whom he had entered into covenant, much less shall he spare us. Rom. xi. 21. 22. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he also spare not thee.

4. THE destruction of the Jews is an argument for the last judgment.—As also a specimen and resemblance of it. Matt. xxiv. And ought therefore to excite us, to vigilance and piety. v. 42.  
Watch

Watch therefore, for ye know not in what hour your Lord will come.

#### C H A P. IV.

##### *Of the Calling of the Gentiles.*

**T**HE Jews being rejected, the Gentiles were called to a participation of the Divine Covenant. Concerning the vocation, three things are to be observed.

I. THAT it was clearly predicted, which must be proved in a solid manner, on account of the Jews. Deut. xxxii. 21. 43. And I will move them to jealousy, with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Ps. lxxvii. 31. Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Ps. lxxxvii. 4. 5. And xcvi. 7-9. Isa. ii. 1. 2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that all nations shall flow unto it, and xlv. 6; lii. 10. lv. 1. 2. Joel ii. 32. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, compared with Rom. x. 12. 13. Besides it was but fit that as God is the Creator of all men, all nations should be called to a participation of his covenant. Moreover the various dispersions of the Jews, the providence of God procuring them, paved the way for this conversion of the Gentiles.

II. BUT though various and clear productions were extant, concerning this matter, yet it was a mystery

mystery unknown before the Advent of Christ. Eph. iii. 31. Therefore the Jews were filled with indignation, when they beheld the Gentiles put upon an equal footing with themselves. Of this very many instances may be found in the history of the Apostles; nay, this was a mystery to the Apostles themselves, and a divine revelation was necessary, before they could be brought to go to the Gentiles, and converse with them with equal freedom, as with the Jews. Acts x. xi. Although they had previously received the express mandate of Christ, to preach the gospel unto them. Mark xvi. 15.

III. THE Gentiles were not called of Christ himself, for he was not willing, while upon earth, that the Gospel should be preached to any but the Jews, lest he should offend them. Matt. x. 5. 6. Go not into the way of the Gentiles. And xv. 24. But it was afterwards preached to them by his Apostles, whom he commissioned to go to the various nations of the world, after he had ascended unto Heaven, and obtained an universal dominion. Therefore he furnished them with the gift of tongues, and was willing that the Christian Doctrine should be more especially delivered in the Greek language, as being most common. However, this vocation was not accomplished in an instant, but by degrees, for the Apostles did not immediately travel abroad, but continued preaching for some time in Judea. Afterwards, receiving a commission from God himself, they went into various countries, and at length the incredulity of the

the Jews, gave occasion to the increase of the Christian Church, by the accession of the Gentiles. Concerning this vocation, see Rom. x. 12. 13. &c. and xv. 19. Col. i. 23.

USES. In the calling of the Gentiles, we ought to acknowledge the singular providence of God, the accomplishment of his promises, and consequently the truth of the Christian religion.

2. WE ought to celebrate the Divine goodness, who hath called us, who were formerly Gentiles, to a participation of his covenant. To this refers that passage, Eph. ii. 11. 12. 14. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh—Ye were without Christ—But now, in Christ Jesus, ye are made nigh, by the blood of Christ.

3. OUR duty here consists essentially in conducting ourselves in a manner suitable to so holy a vocation. Eph. iv. 17. 18. Let us not walk as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, being mindful from whence we have been taken. Rom. xi. 22. &c. Otherwise it were better for us to have remained in a state of heathenism, having to undergo more grievous punishments in the day of judgment.

4. GOD ought to be implored, to accomplish that work which he hath in former times begun, by converting all nations to the faith, so that all  
men,

men, with one voice, might glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C H A P. V.

*Concerning the Constitution of the Church.*

**W**ITH respect to the Constitution of the Church, the following particulars are to be observed.

I. THAT it was composed of Jews and Gentiles, so that all people were indiscriminately called, and received admission into the Church, by faith. So that both Jews and Gentiles constitute but one people. Eph. ii. 18. 19. For through him we both have an access by one spirit, unto the Father, now, therefore ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Yet the Jews, at first, obtained the preference, at least, in some respects: For the first Bishops, and almost all teachers were chosen from among them.

II. IN order that men might join in union with the Church, it was necessary that they should be called to the faith, and be taught the way of salvation, by the preaching of the Gospel. Therefore, vocation is an ordinary mean of salvation, and that most agreeable to the nature of Christ's kingdom, as being entirely spiritual, and the nature of man, as endowed with reason and liberty. Hence a Christian society is termed a Church, i. e. an assembly,

fembly of men who have been called ; concerning which vocation Christ treats, Matt. xxii. 3. &c. in the marriage parable. It is usually distinguished into external, which is by the word of God ; and internal, less properly speaking, which is by the spirit. So that the former acts objectively as Divines term it : But the latter subjectively, as it excites men, and disposes them to embrace the Gospel.

III. NONE were received into the Church, by the Apostles, but such as answer the divine call, spontaneously embraced the Gospel, and made an open profession of their faith in Christ, by a public renunciation of Idolatry, Satan, the world, and its pomps, the flesh, and sin. Which profession was indeed made, previous to the receiving of Baptism, and after a very solemn manner. And was most sacred, as appears from Ecclesiastical History.

IV. It ought not to be omitted here, that the Church was almost every where constituted, and founded in the midst of persecutions, and those most grievous, which so happened by the peculiar providence of God, since this very circumstance was to be a most valid argument, in support of the truth and divinity of the Christian religion.

V. LASTLY, it is to be observed that wherever a certain number of men were to be found, who believed in Christ, they immediately assembled in one body, and formed particular congregations,  
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for the celebration of divine worship, and the exercise of the other duties of piety. Besides, the Apostles, or their deputies, constituted a certain and fixed form of a Church, by establishing Bishops, and Presbyters, and prescribing a certain form of government and discipline, which is testified by the book of the Acts, and the History of the Ancient Church. But all these things which relate to the order of the Church, shall be discussed more accurately in their proper place, let it suffice to have observed these things, in our way, which relate unto the primitive constitution of the Christian Church.

USES. 1. The constitution of the Church, argues the divine origin of the Doctrine of the Gospel, especially if we reflect, that Jesus predicted this event, and by what means his Church was founded and enlarged. We behold it as yet standing, and it will stand unto the end of the world. Matt. xvi 18. For the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

2. HENCE appears the necessity of a divine call, and consequently of the ministry, and preaching of the word. This hath been, and ever will be the ordinary way to arrive at faith, and salvation.

3. IT is our duty to attend to our vocation, and state, and to walk worthy of it. Eph. iv. 1. Now the nature of our duty in this respect, as likewise what they are to expect, who are only

external members of the Church, may be learned from the parable of the marriage. Matt. xxii. Eph. iv. as also from what was observed in the primitive Church, previous to the administration of Baptism.

4. It is entirely necessary to associate with the Church, as members to make a public profession of faith, to submit to the Government of the Church, and to maintain union with it, providing it be pure in worship and doctrine, and does not tolerate vice. This we remark against such as withdraw from religious associations, and external worship.

## SECTION IV.

Of the Doctrine which is preached in the Church.

## C H A P. I.

*Of Faith.*

**T**HE constituent parts of the Christian doctrine, are duties, promises, and threatenings. The duties consist of faith, repentance, and good works. Which three are so closely connected, and combined together, as to constitute only one duty. For the whole of our duty is sometimes represented by the term faith, sometimes by repentance, and at othertimes by obedience: And faith includes repentance and good works. Yet it will be of advantage, to treat of these three separately, and indeed, we shall first begin with faith.

FAITH is not always understood in one sense in Scripture, for besides, that in its proper signification, it denotes fidelity, or veracity, nay, sometimes hope. It oftentimes denotes the object of faith, i. e. the Gospel, and the doctrine which faith embraceth, as Gal. i. 23. more frequently, it signifies that act of man, by which he receives the Gospel; but here faith is a certain inward persuasion, by which we sincerely, and with our whole heart, do embrace the doctrine contained in the word of God, as true, but especially Christ as

our Saviour. But, in order that we may arrive at a more accurate knowledge of the nature of faith, let us consider, First. What is the object of faith, or what are the things which we ought to believe. Second. The acts of faith, or what it is to believe. Third. Its effects.

I. THE general object of faith, is the word of God, and whatever things are contained in it, especially those articles of faith and precepts, without which God cannot be worshipped; but the special and most proper object of Christian and saving faith, is Christ the Saviour and Redeemer. John xvii. 3. This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent. Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other.

II. THE acts of faith, are knowledge and persuasion, or assent. Knowledge is an antecedent act of faith, or its prerequisite; for in order that we might believe, it is quite necessary that we should have a previous knowledge of the thing which we are to believe, as being true; but this thing we could not assent to, without having the knowledge of it, as also of the arguments and reasons which prove its certainty. Right reason teacheth us, that such a knowledge is requisite; for as a thing entirely unknown, cannot be the object of our desire, so without knowledge there can be no faith. The word of God confirms this, Rom. x. 14. 17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. For this reason, faith is termed knowledge,

knowledge. John xvii. 3. Where yet we are not to understand a bare knowledge, but such as penetrates the heart and affections, and is accompanied with a suitable practice. The Church of Rome teacheth, that it is sufficient for the laity or common people, to believe what the Church believes, and this they term an implicit faith, neither do they grant them the liberty of examining doctrines. Which doctrine, First. Opposes right reason, and is very absurd. Second. It encourageth ignorance and slothfulness, and averts men from the study of religion. Third. It placeth faith upon an uncertain foundation, nay, destroys the very nature of it; for how will the laity understand what the Church believes, or hath determined should be believed, or what particular Church they ought to believe. Fourth. It is contrary to Scripture, which exhorts men to search into, and examine doctrines, form a judgment concerning them, and still to make proficiency in knowledge. 1 John iv. 5. Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God. 1 Theff. v. 21. Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

2. PERSUASION, or assent, and confidence, is an essential act of faith, by which we believe without doubt, that whatever things are related in the Gospel are most certain, especially, by which we embrace with all our mind, Christ, and the benefits purchased by him, and repose all our hope in him only. In order to a more perfect understanding of this, there are two acts of faith, which  
ought

ought to be distinguished, the former respecting the understanding, the latter the will and affections. The act of the understanding is that persuasion, by which we believe the Gospel to be a doctrine most certainly true, and at the same time, of such moment, that upon it alone depends our chief happiness. Therefore it is necessary to acknowledge, not only the truth, but also the excellency and utility of that doctrine. The act of the will, is that by which we adhere to Christ, and his doctrine, as our chief good, esteem him as the most amiable of objects, desire the fruition of him, and place our dependence on him only: This latter act of faith, is that which properly constitutes the essence of faith, and distinguishes those which are truly faithful, from the prophane, and hypocrites, who are not quite destitute of that knowledge, nay, sometimes that persuasion which appertains to the understanding only. We may hence see, how great the necessity of faith must be, and why God requires it of us, viz. because it is entirely requisite, on man's part, willingly to receive the benefit offered him by God, for none can possibly enjoy it against his will.

III. THERE are three effects of faith. First. A public profession. Rom. x. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, Matt. x. 32. 33. He that will confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father. Christ therefore willed, that all who embraced the Gospel, should receive Baptism, that by this  
solemn

solemn rite, men might testify that they were Christians. Neither is it possible, that any person who believes in God, should not publicly demonstrate his faith; this profession is the more necessary, because, by this mean, the glory of God, and edification of men, are more effectually promoted.

2. OBEDIENCE, and observance of the precepts of Jesus Christ, which is proved, First. From the word of God, Gal. v. 6. In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, that worketh by love, and Jas. ii. 14. Second. From the nature of faith, it is impossible that any person who believes in God with his whole heart, and sincere affections, flies to him for refuge, and expects salvation from him, should not love him and be disposed to obey him. Faith cannot be one moment sincere, without a purpose of obeying God, therefore it is by no means to be separated from works, and they are in a most gross and dangerous error, who feign to themselves, I know not what kind of faith to term it, which is not attended with an ardent desire after obedience.

3. THE third effect is reliance, or consolation. Reliance is not always understood in the same sense, for it may be considered, either as an essential act of faith, or as its effect. If by reliance we understand that persuasion by which we believe that Christ is the Saviour of all men, who come unto him, such reliance, or assurance, is so essential to faith, that without it there can be no faith: But  
if

if it denotes that peace and tranquility of conscience, which arises in the mind, from a sense of the Divine favour, when we are firmly assured, that we are in a state of salvation, such a reliance is the effect of faith. See Rom. v. 1. &c. where Paul describes the excellent effects of this assurance. But in order to attain this, it is necessary we should discern within us the marks and effects of a true and saving faith. For whoever is destitute of these, precipitately and falsely confides in God. But it ought to be observed, that this assurance, i. e. peace, or consolation, is not at all times to be found in every pious person, and that there are many endowed with sincere piety, who yet are sometimes destitute of it, and pass over life in fears and terrors.

IN order that we may comprehend this argument more fully, it remains, that we should consider the more celebrated and principal divisions of faith: And first, indeed, there are two divisions mentioned in Scripture, the former distinguisheth faith into its various degrees, the latter separates a true, from a false faith.

IN the former respect, the Scripture divides faith into firm, and infirm, or believers into weak and strong. But now faith may be denominated weak, or strong, with respect to its requisites already mentioned, viz. with respect to knowledge; thus they are said to be weak in the faith, who thought it unlawful to eat particular meats. Rom. xiv. With respect to persuasion, as Mark ix. 24.  
I believe

I believe, Lord help mine unbelief. John xx. 15. With respect to obedience, such is the faith of those, whose obedience is performed imperfectly, and is attended with a conflict. With respect to consolation, little or nothing of which is at some times to be found even with the godly. Yet it is to be observed, that faith, though weak, may be acceptable unto God, and true faith. Therefore, Paul exhorts to bear with such as are weak in the faith, and to account them as brethren. So that those who offend them, do sin against God. Rom. xiv. 15. I Cor. viii. 12. Yet, here we ought fully to understand, in what sense faith may be said to be weak, viz. when it does not proceed from malice, nor voluntary ignorance, nor is attended with perseverance in ignorance, which might be overcome, nor in sin, or if it daily becomes stronger; otherwise, weak faith is not to be confounded with incredulity.

In the latter respect, the Scripture distinguisheth between a living and a dead faith. Jam. ii. 20. A living faith, is that which is seated in the heart, and affections, and produceth its genuine effects, but a dead faith is directly opposite to this. So that, according to James, the sincerity of our faith is principally to be estimated by our works. Besides, this division of faith into living and dead, is not a distinction between faith in general, and its different species, as if a dead faith could be called faith. There are some who think, that a dead faith may be termed faith; and say, that it may be proved from the words of James, chap. ii. 19.

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Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well. But in this they err: For it only follows, from that passage in James, that knowledge, and persuasion, with respect to the existence of God, is a thing, indeed, good in itself, and a requisite of faith, but this does not constitute the essence of faith, but that assent, both of the understanding and will, we have already mentioned. Whoever are destitute of this (but all are destitute of it, who are destitute of works) are destitute of faith.

FAITH is commonly divided into historical, and temporary, justifying, and a faith of miracles. To begin with the last, which constitutes a distinct and extraordinary species of faith, it is twofold, the one is termed active, as when a person believes that he is about to work miracles, by a divine power. Matt. xxi. 21. If ye have faith, and say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. The other again is passive, as when a person believes that God is about to work a miracle upon his account; this faith Christ required from those upon whom, or in whose favour, he wrought miracles. Mark ix. 23. If thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believeth. But this species of faith does not properly belong to this place, as being extraordinary, and not of itself salutary. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. and xiv. 22.

THAT faith is termed historical, by which we believe the Gospel to be true; but which is destitute

tute of a real assent, and obedience, to which refers that passage, James ii. 19.

A TEMPORARY faith, is that which endures but for a season, and fails when temptations come the way. Matt. xiii. 21. Which words of Christ do vindicate, that this faith may be attended with some degree of goodness, and sincerity, a sense of joy, and a degree of zeal, but being not well enough rooted, fails in temptation; such is the faith of those, who indeed receive the Gospel, but have not well examined themselves, in order that they might be assured, whether they can bear the cross, and renounce the world, and the flesh.

JUSTIFYING and saving faith we have already treated of. A person may easily understand the opposites of faith, who has maturely considered the true nature of it.

FOR we may easily understand, from what has already been observed, what are the opposites of faith, viz. ignorance, doubtfulness, incredulity, denial of the truth when known, disobedience, false confidence. Yet it ought to be observed, that some authors, especially Limburgius, distinguish the opposites of faith into two kinds, the one in excess, and the other in defect. Which distinction is taken from the Aristotelian Method, and is not accurate, for properly speaking, there is no opposite of faith to be granted, in point of excess. For neither faith, nor any other virtue, can offend in this respect. Credulity, and two  
much

much confidence, which are usually termed opposites of faith in excess, are things entirely different from true faith. For when a sinner, being destitute of true faith, and repentance, applies to himself the promises which were only intended for the faithful, this is a false persuasion, and a most gross and dangerous error, but has nothing in it, in common with true faith.

USES. 1. This doctrine is of the greatest utility, nay, necessity, and therefore we ought to use our utmost efforts to arrive at a comprehensive knowledge of its nature. Many have entertained the most dangerous, and false notions concerning it, such as those who imagine, that simple knowledge, or a bare profession, or reliance on the mercy of God, are sufficient, without obedience and amendment of life.

2. LET us examine whether we are in the faith, since they must necessarily perish eternally, who are destitute of it. The tokens by which it may be known, are evident, from what we have already observed.

(a) KNOWLEDGE. Therefore they are destitute of faith, who dwell in ignorance, who have no desire to attain the knowledge of the truth, and who do not read the Scriptures.

(b) PERSUASION. Which is not to be found in the minds of many, or at least in a low degree; very

very few embrace, and receive Christ, as they ought.

(c) OBEEDIENCE, and an external profession, not only of religion, but of piety. Now if we are to judge of faith by men's works, it is plain, that very many are totally destitute of it.

(d) RELIANCE, or assurance. Here many deceive themselves, who imagine, that faith consists in believing and confiding, that their sins are remitted through Christ, let them lead what manner of life they will. Which confidence is presumptuous and false, and infallibly leads to destruction. Therefore every Minister should be at great pains, to eradicate this pernicious opinion, out of the minds of their hearers.

3. MEN ought to be exhorted to the attainment of true faith, both by requesting it from God, who is its author, and applying those means which tend to produce, preserve, and increase it, such as reading, and meditating upon the word of God, the study of a good conscience, which, whoever rejects, he must necessarily make shipwreck of faith. 1 Tim. i. 19.

## C H A P. II.

*Of Repentance.*

**T**HIS treatise consists of two parts ; the former of which respects the necessity of repentance, and the latter explains its nature.

I. THAT repentance is necessary, in order, that a man being in a state of sin, might obtain the favour of God, is proved.

I. FROM the word of God, where three particulars respecting the necessity of repentance, are to be observed (a) that it is expressly described both in the Old and New Testament. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live, Matt. iii. 2. and iv. 7. Acts ii. 38. and iii. 19. Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. (b) That it is prescribed, as the only method of avoiding the Divine wrath. That passage, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. plainly supposes the death of sinners, if they do not repent. Likewise, Luke xiii. 3. Unless ye repent, ye shall all perish. Acts iii. 19. (c) That repentance is the scope of Evangelical preaching. Acts xvii. 30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men, every where to repent. And xxvi. 20. And a condition, without which, none can be admitted, to a participation of the Divine Covenant, which appears very clearly,  
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from Matt. 10. Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.

2. IF we look into the nature of the thing itself, it will appear, that repentance is so necessary, that without it there can be no faith, no religion, no salvation; for it cannot be conceived, how a sinner should obtain the pardon of his sins, who does not sincerely fly unto God, and has no desire after the enjoyment of his love; Again, it is impossible for a person to fly unto God, who is not deeply concerned, for the sins which he has committed, neither can he be sensibly affected with this trouble, without renouncing sin.

II. WITH respect to the nature of repentance, it is sometimes termed in Scripture, conversion, repentance, regeneration; which terms, in general, denote a deep concern for sin, as also a firm purpose of amendment of life, and a return to a better understanding. But in order to a more accurate knowledge of the nature of repentance, it is to be observed,

1. THAT it contains a sense of sin, not a general, vague, and confused sense, but special, and of such a nature, as places before our eyes the magnitude and number of our sins.

2. WITHOUT such a knowledge as this, there can be no true sense of sin, nor can there be any

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real repentance. The acts of repentance are as follow :

(a) **SORROW**, proceeding from the consideration, both of the vileness and atrocious nature of sin, as also of the evil, and punishment which we have brought upon ourselves by sinning. But the more intense this sorrow is, the greater discovery will it afford of true repentance ; yet it is not always found intense, especially in the beginning of conversion, they grieve more for their sins who have made farther advances in piety. Yet that trouble may be acceptable to God, provided that it be sincere, and is attended with an aversion to sin, which is a most certain mark of real repentance.

(b) **CONFESSION** of sin, without which there can be no remission. Prov. xxviii. 13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy. 1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. But our sins must be confessed, not only in general, but particularly, so that we may recount in the presence of God, the principal sins which we have committed, and which constitute us most guilty. For this it of the greatest utility, in making us sensible of sorrow, it causes us to be more ashamed of our sins, and fills us with greater abhorrence against them ; but they ought to be confessed before God, nay, sometimes before our neighbours, or the Church, if we have offended our neighbour, or before the  
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Pastors of the Church, if conscience be galling to us, or we stand in need of their admonition.

(c) FAITH in the mercy of God through Christ. For where there is no hope of pardon, there could be no room for repentance, neither is there any hope of pardon, but by Jesus Christ, who has expiated our sins. Where there is no hope of remission, there can be no repentance. Pf. cxxx. With thee there is forgiveness, that thou mayst be worshipped reverently.

(d) CONVERSION, by which we depart from sin, and cherish the most ardent desires after holiness. Isa. i. 16. 17. Which two are so closely combined, that they are inseparable, and so necessary, that without them there can be no sincere penitence; for it is impossible for a person to grieve for his sins, who is just setting about to commit them. True contrition produceth aversion and hatred of sin, as likewise a sincere purpose of amendment. But that we may more fully comprehend, wherein the essence of repentance consists, the four following particulars are to be observed.

I. THAT every contrition for sin is not real repentance; for there are some who grieve for their sins, but not according to godliness. 2 Cor. vii. 12. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. But because they

have incurred certain embarrassments, as temporal punishments, dishonour, and the like.

2. EVERY amendment or change of life, is not a sign of real repentance; for many desist from the commission of certain sins, and in some measure conform their morals to virtue, not from a love to piety, and detestation of sin, but from other causes; as for instance, because their particular station in life, their age, or a desire of popular fame, do require it.

3. CONVERSION is not sincere, unless we abstain from all sins in general, as far as is possible, especially such as we are most addicted to. This is one of the principal marks of repentance.

4. IN order to a true repentance, it is necessary that we should make restitution if possible, for the evil which we have committed by sinning, both with respect to ourselves and our neighbour, as when he has sustained any detriment from us, either spiritual, respecting his salvation, or temporal, relating to his reputation, substance, &c. And this reparation of sin, is a most certain discovery of true repentance; but this does not always take place, for there are some sins, which do not admit of reparation.

5. IT is not sufficient for true conversion, for a person to abstain from more atrocious sins, as theft, fornication, &c. the principal thing is to lay aside the love of the world, and carnal desires.

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The former, Paul terms, the denying ungodliness ; but the latter, denying of worldly lusts ; such are the love of riches, honours, and pleasures. Tit. ii. 11. 12. For the grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. 1 John ii. 15. and v. Besides, in order to a more accurate explication of this passage, three particulars ought to be observed, First. That the repentance which the Apostles preached in the primative times of the Gospel, was not the same with what is at present preached in the Church : For at that time, the Apostles exhorted the Gentiles to renounce their former religion, and manner of life, especially Idolatry, and to embrace Christianity. 1 Theff. i. 9. Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. Acts xiv. xv. and xvii. Such a repentance does not take place among Christians. This observation is of the greatest utility, in expounding very many places of Scripture, and is otherwise of the greatest advantage\*. Secondly. That repentance by which a person departs from a wicked life, and a habit of sinning, and from sins of a more atrocious nature, such as fraud, whoredom, &c. is different from that by which a man is raised from lapses into sin. By the former the prophane are converted unto God, by the latter, the godly do

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\* See *Sherlock upon Death*, Page 224.

recover after falling. Thirdly. There are various degrees of penitents,

(a) **BEGINNERS**, whose purpose of amendment is but feeble, and who, without a grievous conflict, are unable to abstain from those vices, to which they have been long accustomed; the repentance of such may be acceptable to God, providing it be sincere, and they do not remain in such a state.

(b) **THERE** are proficients, in whom the purpose of a pious life is more firm, and the conflict less.

(c) **THERE** are such as are termed adult, or perfect, yet not in every respect, for such perfection is not attainable in this life, but they have made such proficiency in piety, and in a habit of sanctity, as to conquer the depravity or their affections, and being emancipated from sin, are servants of righteousness. Yet it is very difficult for persons to arrive at this degree, who have not maturely, and from their youth, devoted themselves to piety.

**USES.** As this doctrine is totally practical, the use of it appears of itself, it chiefly respects such as are as yet in a state of sin, and who are of the number of those, who, as Christ expresseth it, need repentance. That there are many such to be found among Christians, is undeniable; there are many who live in sin, being in a worse state  
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perhaps, than even the Heathens, and more distant from the life of God.

2. THESE ought to be admonished, and interrogated, whether they fulfil the duties of repentance, or whether they are sensible of their sins? All, in general, indeed, acknowledge, that they have sinned; but the main point is, whether every one fully knows in what respect, and in what manner he has sinned; whether he grieves for his sins, or rather lives in a state of tranquility, and security? Nay, perhaps they rather conceive a certain pleasure upon the remembrance of their sins, than a hearty concern, or real trouble for them. Whether they have confessed their sins, either to God, or the Church? Especially, whether they have departed from their sins, have made due reparation for them, and reformed their lives? Few perform these things, but think it sufficient, if now and then, they have felt some sort of concern for their sins, &c.

3. HERE it ought to be shewn, how miserable the state of impenitent sinners must be, and how certain, and inevitable that destruction is, which hangs over them. But they are not only called impenitent, who do not at all repent, but likewise such as do it not in a proper manner.

THE discourse ought likewise to be directed to such as are of the number of beginners, proficients, or adult persons: Such ought to entertain good hopes concerning their state, and may be well

well assured, that God will forgive their sins, providing that they make daily advances in amendment of life, and are heartily sorry for their past sins, as also, for those lapses, which proceed from infirmity, or habits not yet subdued, &c.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Of Good Works.*

**I**N treating of good works, we shall, First, Shew their necessity. Second. Explain their nature;

I. WITH respect to their necessity, we shall shew wherein it consists, as also, how it may be proved.

I. WHEN we say, that good works are necessary, our meaning is, that both the desire, and actual performance of them, is of such necessity, that without them, there can be no salvation for us.

THEY are not only good, honest, just, profitable, but they are absolutely necessary, not that they are meritorious, for there is no meritorious cause of salvation, but the satisfaction of Christ; but they are a necessary prerequisite of salvation, or, as it is termed, a condition, without which, there can be no salvation. But we observed, that the study, or desire, and the actual performance of them, are requisite, for these two are inseparably connected

connected together. For the study, design, and sincere desire of obeying God, must necessarily produce actual obedience. Yet we may observe, that it is possible, that the practice and actual performance of good works, may not accompany this desire, however sincere, viz. when time and opportunity of performing them are wanting, as was the case, with the penitent Heathens, who after they had been received into the Church by Baptism, being prevented by death, could not fulfil their baptismal vow, in that case, they might be partakers of salvation, though they had not produced the fruits of obedience.

YET there is no reason why sinners should use this as a handle, by which they might flatter themselves, or imagine, that it will be sufficient for them to entertain some general design of living well, or grieve for their sins at the hour of death. For such a resolution, or purpose, without its effects, can only be sufficient to salvation, when time and opportunity of performing good works are wanting. But the person who has time and opportunity of performing them, and yet neglects them, falsely affirms, that he has a design of living piously, and that design is nothing else but a bare, or general approbation of piety, which is to be found in all sinners, who have not arrived at the highest pitch of obduration. Besides this ought to be received as a most certain truth, that it scarcely or seldom happens, that a man who has been a hearer of the Gospel for many years, and who has spent the greatest part, or even the whole  
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of his lifetime in sin, should be affected with true repentance at the hour of death:

2. AGAIN, this necessity for good works, may be proved by a twofold kind of arguments. First. From the command of God. Second. From the nature of the thing itself.

1. GOOD works are necessary, because God prescribes them, and that very clearly and expressly. For,

(a) FIRST. He hath given us various laws, both in the Old and New Testament, and various precepts, according to which we ought to regulate our lives. But he has given us these in a serious manner, and with an intention that they should be observed by us, otherwise they would be vain things, and at best, they would be but counsels, and not laws, properly speaking.

(b) GOD prescribes good works after such a manner, as indicates the greatest necessity, for he wills, and commands us, to keep his commandments. 1 Thess. iv. 3-5. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel, in sanctification, and honor. First. God prescribes sanctity, as the only duty acceptable to him, without which, all other duties, all other gifts, such as the knowledge of God, hearing the Divine word, a profession of the Christian faith, extraordinary gifts,

gifts would be of no utility. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3. Though I could speak with the tongues of men, and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal. Christ, and his Apostles, every where testify, that without holiness, and obedience to the Divine commandments, no man shall see God. Matt. vii. 20. and Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Second. God has annexed to his precepts, the sanctions of promises, and threatnings, which two imply the greatest necessity. All the power of promises and threatnings, is totally abolished, if obedience be not necessary. Lastly, the doctrine concerning the last judgment, plainly supposes the necessity of good works, since without that necessity, no judgment could take place.

2. THE very nature of the thing itself confirms this. For,

(a) ALL do acknowledge the necessity of faith, but without good works there can be no faith. Therefore, if the necessity of faith be granted, so must also the necessity of good works. The same thing may be said concerning repentance,

(b) LET us attend to the nature of good works, they are in themselves holy, good, just, profitable unto men, and agreeable to the nature of God, who prescribes them, as also to the nature of man. But now, if the laws which are only of positive right, if the ceremonial statutes of the Jews, because

cause of their divine authority, were to be observed, upon pain of death, certainly the observance of the moral laws and duties, must be much more necessary; unless this necessity be acknowledged, the difference between moral good and evil, must be totally laid aside, as might be proved by many arguments.

(c) If we attend to the nature of happiness, we will acknowledge, that it cannot be obtained, either in this, or in a future life, without an ardent desire after holiness, and the renewal of our minds. In this life, the felicity of man consists principally in the enjoyment of peace of conscience, tranquility of mind, and being at peace with others; but we can obtain neither of these, unless we obey the dictates of conscience, and are able to govern our passions, and affections, unless those laws flourish, which prescribe the mutual offices of justice, and benevolence. But in a future life, our happiness entirely consists in God, and his love: In order, therefore, that we might enjoy that blessedness, it is requisite that we should be affected with a desire of it, that we should cherish the most lively expectations of it, and look for the whole of our happiness in God, but what else is that love of God, but holiness itself. Can this desire of celestial bliss, consist with the love, and desire of carnal, and earthly things? by no means: Hence appears the reason, why God, who is most benevolent towards mankind, has prescribed to us good works, viz. because this was altogether

gether necessary, in order that it might be well with us.

(d) THIS necessity appears, from our being in duty bound to procure the salvation of our neighbour: For if we ought to promote the temporal good of men, how much more ought we to exert ourselves to promote their supreme eternal good: But this cannot otherwise be better accomplished, than by good works. Matt. v. 16. Christ denounces the most grievous punishments against those, who are defective in their duty as to this point.

(e) THE nature of religion evinceth the same things, for it must either consist in the sincere worship, and love of God, otherwise it must be a thing vain, and chimerical; among the very Heathens, they were only reputed religious, who cultivated virtuous dispositions, and affections; and if we attend to the nature of the Christian religion, we must acknowledge, that obedience is of the greatest necessity, unless we would say, that the end of Christ's coming into the world, was only to purchase unto mankind, a liberty of sinning with impunity.

II. WE have now to explain the nature of good works, First. In general. Second. In particular.

I. IN order to a right understanding of the nature of good works, or evangelical sanctity, and obedience, we have to enquire, what we are to understand

understand by works, and how they are good. Although the external actions, principally are wont to be called works, yet it is to be observed, that when we speak of works, or obedience, not only the external actions, facts, or words are denoted, but also the internal actions, motions, and thoughts of the heart, for whatever is transacted by the understanding and will, is that, which properly speaking merits the appellation of virtue, and vice. And such is the nature of evangelical obedience that it ought to proceed from the heart, and therefore, God has a principal regard to the motions of the will. But in order that works may be good, three things are necessary. (a) The principle. (b) The rule. (c) The end.

(a) THE proximate, and immediate principle of our actions, is conscience ; concerning which, we shall make some observations in general. Conscience is chiefly taken in a twofold sense, it denotes, First. The rule of what is to be done. Second. The judgment which we pass upon our actions, when committed. In the former sense, it teaches, what we are to do, and what we are to avoid, and in this respect, it is either right, erroneous, or doubtful. The conscience is right, which judges rightly concerning our duty, and perceives the true sense of the law ; erroneous, which errs with respect to our duty, and the sense of the law, as when we imagine a thing to be lawful, which is prohibited ; doubtful, which hesitates concerning our duty, being ignorant of what we ought to determine, or what we ought to do. In the latter

latter sense, conscience passes judgment upon our actions, and discharges the office both of witness and judge, who either approves or disapproves of them. Rom. ii. 15. In this respect, it may be either good, evil, or doubtful. That which approves of our actions is called good; whence arise peace, and tranquility of mind. That which reproves and accuses men, and which is attended with fear and dread of punishment, we call evil. It is termed doubtful, or scrupulous, when we are uncertain, whether what we have done be right, or the contrary, and therefore we are suspended between hope and fear.

THESE things being premised, we return to our purpose. In order that any action may be good, it is requisite, that it be done according to the dictate of conscience, otherwise it will be evil. Rom. xiv. 23. He that doubteth if he eateth, is damned. If conscience be right, its dictate ought to be obeyed, and he does well who obeys it; if it be erroneous, we can scarcely avoid falling into sin. For he who errs, sins, do what he will, for he either offends against conscience, if he opposes it, or against God if he obeys it. If conscience be doubtful, the one or other of these must be done, the action must either be deferred, if it can be put off, and circumstances will permit this, or the safer part is to be chosen; if the case will not admit of delay, or being deferred; but that is to be thought the safest, which agrees with the most certain principles of the law, whether natural, or  
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revealed; or likewise, that which mostly opposes our own inclinations.

(b) THE rule of our actions is the law of God, whether natural or revealed; it is not sufficient that we act according to conscience, but it is requisite, besides this, that our actions should be conformable with the prescript of the divine law. Conscience directs our actions, but conscience itself, is directed by the divine law, therefore, it is our duty to enquire into the true sense of the law, which indeed is not difficult: For God, the benevolent parent of mankind, hath willed, that the duties which are necessary to salvation, should be easily understood.

(c) THE end of our actions should be the glory of God, and our own, and our neighbour's happiness. For these two are so knit together, that the one cannot be obtained without the other, nay, accurately speaking, they are one and the same thing: but it is necessary that our actions should have a reference to this end, both from their own nature and our intention; for in vain should any one attempt to promote the glory of God, any action being good in itself, would be to no purpose, unless we undertook it, with a desire of promoting God's glory. Besides, it is to be observed, that the event is not to be confounded with the intention, the event does not make any action good, unless it proceeds from a right intention; for it oftentimes happens, that actions either evil in themselves, or proceeding from an  
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evil intention, are directed by God to a good end, as for instance, the sale of Joseph ; but it does not hence follow, that such actions are good. Neither ought it to be omitted here, that good actions are of two kinds, there are some, the end or scope of which cannot be evil, such as those actions which are internal, as, the love of God, &c. These things being laid down we conclude, that these three, viz. conscience, rule, and end, are requisite, in order that an action may be denominated good, which is thus to be understood, viz. that no action can be called good unless attended with three conditions ; but if either one or the other of these be wanting, it must be defective. Thus, though an action be conformable to conscience, and the law, yet if it is done for an evil end, it is reputed evil, and so on the contrary.

OUR Christian Ethicks treat of good works particularly. We only here observe two particulars, First. That our duties are either external or internal. Internal duties are prescribed upon their own account, because they are good, and necessary in themselves ; but external duties, as outward worship, &c. because they are the necessary effects of inward piety, or as they are means of producing and encreasing it, in ourselves or others. Secondly. The sum of our duties, is the love of God and our neighbour. Matt. xxii. 36. 37. Paul delivers a special detail of these, Tit. ii. 11. 12. where he says, That the grace of God teacheth us, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly. The first duty respects

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ourselves,

ourselves, the second our neighbour, and the third refers to God. Besides these general duties, which are incumbent upon all, and each particular person; there are particular ones, which ought to be discharged by every person, according to his condition in life, or the station in which he is placed, such are the duties of parents, children, masters, and servants, &c.

USES. First. From what has been said concerning the necessity of good works, it follows, That we ought to be intent upon them principally, through the whole of our lives, and that they must perish eternally, who neglect them. But here it will be very necessary, to answer the various objections of carnal men, against the necessity of good works, and to refute those errors, with which many are infected, as for example, that reliance upon the mercy of God is sufficient, that faith alone justifies us, that we are not justified by works, that we obtain salvation through the mercy of God, without any merit of our own.

It ought to be shewn, that these, and others of the like nature, are objected through ignorance, and contrary to the word of God.

SECONDLY. From what has been said concerning the nature of good works, every one may judge, whether he be endowed with true piety. All our actions ought to be examined according to the three rules which we have laid down, viz. conscience, the law, and the end of our actions.

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It will be very easy, and of much advantage to shew, that these three are for the most part wanting in all our actions.

THIRDLY. We may hence learn, First. How much it concerns us, to maintain a good conscience, imbued with the true knowledge of our duty, and pure; here it ought to be shewn, how criminal it must be to commit any action which opposes conscience. Second. It is of great moment, to procure an accurate knowledge of the divine law, and rule of our actions, and for this purpose, we should read, hear, and meditate upon the word of God incessantly, and without prejudice or party affection. Thirdly. That in all our actions, we would propose a proper end, which is accomplished by turning our attention habitually towards God, and seeking after our true happiness. In these three particulars men offend very frequently, and are therefore reprehensible. But this argument is most fruitful, so that all the uses of it can scarcely be pointed out.

FOURTHLY. Men should be admonished, to pay the greatest deference to the duties which are internal, and that they would be most solicitous about purifying the heart. Again, that above all other things, we would learn to love God, and our neighbour; lastly, that every one would discharge the duties belonging to his particular station, or condition in life.

## C H A P. IV.

*Of Promises and Threatnings in General.*

**N**O W follows the other part of Evangelical doctrine, which consists of promises and threatnings. Concerning which, we shall First. Speak in general. Secondly. In particular.

AND indeed, it ought to be observed, in general, that whereas man is impelled to action, by two motives principally, viz. the hope of obtaining some good, and the fear of some evil. It was therefore necessary, that God, in order to move him, should propose both promises and threatnings, that he should propose some good, more excellent than that, which the world and the flesh do afford, and that he would threaten some evil more grievous than what he perceives, from the frustration of his carnal desires, or the enduring of bodily pain.

I. THEREFORE God allures men with the hope of reward. There have been some, who were of opinion, that it is unworthy of the children of God, and mercenary, to discharge their duty from a view of reward: And that it is more becoming the faithful, to be governed by the pure love of God, without any regard to personal utility. Which opinion is both false and dangerous, opposes the nature of religion, and the word of God. For, First. As we formerly observed, God hath revealed religion unto mankind, and prescribed

scribed various duties, not upon his own account, but that it might be well with them; whence it follows, that religion must necessarily have a respect unto happiness, and remuneration, which is solidly confirmed from Heb. xi. 6. He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them, that diligently seek him. Second. It is so far from being the case, that the love of God should be separated from the desires of our happiness, that it rather includes and supposes that desire, and that so necessarily, that laying aside a respect to remuneration, and consummate felicity, the other is laid aside likewise. For God himself is our reward, as the Scripture expresseth it, and the chief good of man. Third. The Scripture frequently allures, and excites us to the worship of God, with the hope of a reward. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of the flesh and spirit. Gal. vi. 7. 8. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Godliness hath the promise, both of this life, and that which is to come. 1 John iii. 3. That passage is to be noted, Rom. ii. 7. 8. Where Paul teacheth, that it is the distinguishing characteristic of the godly, that they seek for glory, honour, and immortality, i. e. remuneration, by well doing; so that they are vain things which some conjecture, concerning a pure love of God, which has no respect to a reward. To what we have already observed, may be added the examples of holy men, as Moses, Heb. xi. 26. Who esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches, than the treasures of Egypt, because he had a respect to

the recompence of reward, likewise of Christ himself, who is said, Heb. xii. 2. To have endured the cross, for the joy that was set before him.

2. THE same holds good, with respect to threatnings; and here indeed we suppose in the first place, that the Gospel does not only contain promises, but likewise threatnings, and these of a most dreadful nature, so that they are in an error, who pay no respect to any thing in the Christian religion, and the Gospel, but promises and benefits, as if we had nothing more to fear, since Christ has shed his blood for us. For through unbelief, or disobedience, we may bring utter ruin upon ourselves. They likewise err, who set the Law, and the Gospel in such opposition to each other, as to say that the law denounces indeed threatnings, and a curse, but not the Gospel: For the Gospel contains threatnings, and these far more grievous. Heb. v. 28. 29. He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God. And xii. 18-29. But as some believe that the obedience is mercenary, which proceeds from the hope of retribution, in like manner they think the obedience is servile, which flows from the fear of punishment. Nay, some have got to such a pitch of insanity, as to assert, that the faithful are so possessed of the pure love of God, as to be willing to suffer eternal damnation if he thought; but such things are foolish, vain deliriums, nay impious. First. The  
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Sacred Scripture teacheth, that as long as we are in this world, piety is not only produced, but also cherished within us, by the fear of punishment. Heb. xii. 28. 29. 1 Pet. i. 17, &c. And if ye call him Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's works, pass the time of your sojourning here with fear. Secondly. Those threatnings move, and respect the faithful. 2 Cor. v. 11. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Ezek. xxxii. 19. If the righteous doth iniquity, he shall die in his iniquity. Thirdly. Faith, and religion ought to comprehend whatever God hath revealed, and consequently both promises and threatnings. As to the objection that the obedience is servile, which is performed through fear of punishment; we answer,

I. THAT obedience is indeed servile, and no way laudable, viz. when a person against his will, shews only an external obsequiousness, and with the wicked servant obeys his master, lest he should be beaten. A man may indeed be compelled to external acts. But that makes nothing for the purpose, because there can be no obedience respecting God, but what proceeds from the will. Therefore it is absurd to say, that a person obeys God against his will. A man's obedience, indeed, may be attended with some reluctance, especially at the first beginnings of conversion, yet it is not involuntary.

2. WE have likewise to consider the nature of punishments. Indeed it would be servile, to be moved by the sole fear of temporal punishments, but it is by no means so, to be impelled by the fear of spiritual, and eternal punishment. Nay, the more we are governed by filial love, the more will we dread that punishment, because it consists in nothing else, but a separation from God.

3. IT remains, that we should mention particularly, what those promises and threatnings are. The promises are either temporal, or spiritual. There are no special temporal promises granted under the Gospel, as were under the law. We have only general ones, viz. That God will bestow upon us, whatever things are necessary for our passage through this life, if we but fear him. Matt. vi. 25-31. Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. xiii. 5. Be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. Which things, yet, are not promised to all, nor absolutely, but only under this condition, viz. that God sees it fit. For Christ hath predicted, that the godly would be obnoxious to various evils, and persecutions. Therefore, the promises of the Gospel, properly speaking, are spiritual, viz. Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification, of which we are soon to treat.

THE threatnings, again, are likewise temporal, or spiritual. The Gospel does not propose, in a particular

particular manner, any temporal ones. In general, God makes use of the punishments and evils of this life, for the reformation of particular persons, or nations, or for a trial of the godly. But these evils, properly speaking, are not to be included under the idea of punishments; nay, they rather proceed from the love of God towards mankind: Yet temporal death may be considered as a real punishment, since by it God cuts off the sinner from this life, precludes him from all hopes of salvation, and then begins to act the part of a judge.

SPIRITUAL threatnings, respect either the present, or a future life. In this life, the Scripture threatneth hardness of heart, utter desertion, blindness of mind. Heb. iii. 13. And iv. 11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Yet, it ought to be observed here, that this is not, properly speaking, a punishment, for God is not its author. But these are the horrid consequences of sin, evils in their nature most grievous, which the sinner hath brought upon himself, and which render him obnoxious to eternal destruction, and which we ought to dread most vehemently. What remains therefore, are the punishments of another life, of which we will treat in our last Section, viz. Concerning the world to come.

USE. I. Hence appears the consummate wisdom and goodness of God, who proposes such motives unto mankind, as are aptest to move them: Whence

Whence it follows, that they are inexcusable if they abide in unbelief, and are disobedient.

2. THE divinity, and excellency of our religion, which is conspicuous, not only in the articles of faith, and precepts it contains, which are most just, and agreeable to the law of nature, but likewise, and especially, in its promises and threatnings. We ought to give the strictest attention, First. To their nature, since God has prepared for us a good surpassingly great, than which, nothing more excellent can be conceived ; as also, an evil, of all others the most grievous ; and both of these eternal. Second. We ought to attend likewise to their certainty, which appears not only from the word of God, and the arguments it affords, for the truth of our religion, but also from the feeling of conscience. For if we will but examine it, there cannot remain with us the least doubtfulness concerning the verity of promises and threatnings. Upon these two, the whole force and energy of both do depend.

3. HENCE may be inferred the necessity of obedience ; for what can put us under a greater necessity of living piously, than an assured hope of the greatest, and eternal good, and the fear of the greatest eternal evil, if we are but desirous of our own salvation ? Therefore, we must obey, or perish eternally.

4. HENCE we may likewise learn the nature of obedience : It is not constrained, but sincere, and voluntary :

voluntary : God is to be served, not with an unwilling, and reluctant mind, but with love, and joy, since we are engaged in the acquisition of the Supreme Eternal Good, and in avoiding everlasting damnation. Whatever God prescribes tends to our advantage. Therefore, with alacrity of mind, we ought to entertain, and cherish the most ardent, and sincere breathings after godliness. Let this, therefore, be the effect, and use, of both promises and threatnings. 2 Cor. vii. 2. 2 Pet. i. 34. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life, and godliness, through the knowledgh of him, that hath called us to glory, and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, through lust. Heb. xii. 28. 29.

## C H A P. V.

### *Of Justification.*

**T**HE first, and principal benefit of the Gospel, is Justification : Which, no doubt, is the reason, why the Apostles treat of it so copiously, and professedly, particularly in the Epistles to the Romans, and Gallations, and in the Epistle of James, chap. ii. We shall here teach from Scripture, in a brief and simple manner, First. Wherein Justification consists. Second. How we may obtain this benefit.

### I. THE

I. THE term Justification, as likewise righteousness, is not always used in the same sense in Scripture: In general, to be justified, signifies to please God, or to be acceptable to him. Heb. xi. 6. But as man is in a state of sin, it is impossible he should please God, without his special mercy: So that the term Justification is to be understood principally in a forensick sense, as it denotes absolution from guilt, by which a man is treated as innocent. That this is the meaning of the word, fully appears from Paul, who describes Justification by this phrase: Faith is imputed for righteousness, which denotes, that a man, through faith, is treated as if he were righteous. Rom. iv. 5. The same Apostle, Rom. iv. 6. 7. teacheth, that the benefit of Justification, consists in the remission of sins. Acts xiii. 38. Rom. viii. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Here he opposes Justification to condemnation: But the opposite of condemnation is absolution.

THEREFORE, Justification is a judicial act of God, by which, of his great mercy to sinful man, he remits his sins, and gives him a right to eternal life, through Christ, apprehended by true faith.

FROM this definition it is plain, that Justification comprehends two benefits, viz. remission of sins, and a right to eternal life.

I. THE remission of sins, Rom. iv. 6. 7. If man were innocent, his justification would be nothing else,

else, but a declaration of his innocence, and righteousness; but being guilty, he cannot be justified, without his sins being previously forgiven. Some are of opinion, that this justification extends, not only to sins that are past, but likewise to those that are future. But this assertion is inaccurate, and dangerous. But when God remits sins, he does not only remit their criminality, or guilt, but likewise their punishment. The Romans maintain, that God remits the eternal guilt, but not the temporal, and therefore assert, that we must satisfy for our sins, both in this life, and in Purgatory.

THAT purgatory is a mere fiction, is evident, as there is no mention of it in Sacred Scripture. As to the punishments of this life, it cannot be denied, that those whom God justifies, are sometimes obnoxious to them; but these are not, properly speaking, punishments, much less are they punishments, by which the justice of God could be satisfied.

2. JUSTIFICATION comprehends a right to eternal life. Tit. iii. That being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life. For the sinner being reconciled by Christ, is an object of the Divine love, so that God wills, that he should be completely happy: And Christ was sent for this very purpose by the Father, that whosoever believeth in him, should not be condemned but have everlasting life.

II. WE are to consider, by what means we are justified. Here we are to observe, in general, that this is a blessing merely gratuitous, for both the remission of sins, and a right to eternal life, solely depend upon the mercy of God, so that whoever desires to be justified, ought previously to acknowledge, that he finds no cause within himself of absolution, but of condemnation.

IN particular, we are to hold, that two things are requisite to justification: The one on God's part, the other on ours. On the part of God, our justification depends entirely on his mercy, which is founded upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Rom. iii. 24. There we are said to be justified freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and for this cause, the righteousness of Christ, is termed our righteousness, hence it is enquired wherein that righteousness of Christ consists, which is imputed unto us. Whether it be his passive righteousness only, i. e. his sufferings, and his death, or also, his active, i. e. the obedience which he performed unto God, or his holiness. Many of our Divines admit both. They say, that his active righteousness, appears before God, as a part of his satisfaction, and merits, and that as Christ suffered for us, so likewise he fulfilled the law, upon our account, that his obedience might be imputed unto us, that we might be just and righteous through him. But some do not approve of this opinion, they acknowledge, indeed, that the active righteousness of Christ, or his obedience, was a qualification, or condition, requisite in our Mediator,

diator, that it is of advantage to us, and performed for our good. But they deny, that this righteousness is properly imputed to us, and say, that such a doctrine is dangerous. On our part faith is requisite, this Paul teacheth, Rom. iii. 28. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, and through the whole Epistle. Likewise Acts xiii. 38. 39. And certainly it was altogether necessary, that a man should embrace salvation when offered him, neither is it possible that God should bestow eternal happiness, upon a person who is unwilling to receive it, and refuses it. But here that faith is to be understood which is sincere, and displays itself by good works. Gal. v. 6. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love. So that in point of justification, works are by no means to be separated from faith, nor to be set in opposition against it. For that faith is not sincere, which it not accompanied with a firm purpose of obeying God. Which purpose, indeed, if sincere, will display itself by good works. Trust in God, and Christ, without such a resolution is false, and hypocritical, and it is so far from being the case, that a person void of this purpose should embrace Christ and his benefits, that he rather rejects him. Yet we are by no means to imagine, that we are justified by works: As if works were the foundation, or meritorious cause of our justification. Works can merit nothing of God, taking the word in its proper signification. First. Because they are imperfect. Second. If they were perfect, they are but debts. Third.

Third. Because there is no proportion between them, and the reward of eternal life, nay, neither does faith properly speaking justify. The act of believing is not our justification or the meritorious cause of our justification, but only a requisite necessary to it.

It is asked, how Paul, who teacheth, That we are justified by faith, without works, may be reconciled with James, who teacheth, Chap. ii. 22. That we are not justified by faith alone, but also by works? But the answer is easy, if we attend to the scope of both these Apostles. Paul confutes certain false teachers, who maintained, that faith in Christ was not sufficient; but that, besides this, the observance of circumcision, and the Mosaick rites, was necessary. Acts xv. 1. Against those, Paul asserts, that faith alone was sufficient, i. e. that it is enough, if we believe in Christ, and obey his Gospel. Neither was it any longer requisite to observe the Mosaick rites, but he understands such faith here, as is accompanied with works. Gal. v. 6. In which chapter, he expressly admonisheth, that no person should abuse his doctrine, so as to indulge licentiousness. James, on the other hand, is disputing against Hereticks, who acknowledge indeed, the necessity of faith, but not of works; and thus boasted of what was not a true, but a dead and empty faith; these he refutes, from the example of Abraham, and proves, that faith necessarily produceth good works, and in  
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this sense asserts, that a man is also justified by works.

USES. 1. This doctrine is of such importance, that our salvation wholly depends upon it: The chief good of man consists in justification. Rom. iv. 7. 8. Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Hence we learn, how great, and excellent the blessing of our justification in the sight of God must be. Nothing is more happy than the man whom God justifies, and is at peace with him: On the other hand, he is most miserable, who is not partaker of this blessing; for he is in a state of condemnation, and the wrath of God abideth on him. John. iii. 36.

2. THERE is no person, who ought not to be solicitous about his condition, viz. whether he be in a state of justification, or not; but this cannot be otherwise known but by faith. Wherefore we ought to examine, whether we are possessed of that true faith, which justifies? Whether we cordially embrace those most excellent promises: The grace of God in Christ, or whether we feel within ourselves, the effect of true faith. Many understand this doctrine of justification but badly, and feign to themselves, I do not know what kind of justification, by which they are made partakers of salvation, without piety and holiness.

THIS was the error of the false teachers, whom James refutes in his Epistle, Chapter ii. as also of the Gnosticks of old, who thought that faith  
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be true and salutary, without good works. This error hath almost every where prevailed among Christians, in the present time, so that men should be well fortified against it. But this perverse and destructive error, may be confuted from Scripture. Gal. v. Jam. ii. As also from the very nature of justifying faith, by shewing that such is the nature of faith, that it is always accompanied with good works: Hence it follows, that those who live in sin, are destitute of faith, and consequently are not in a state of justification, but of condemnation.

3. THE third use is of consolation, consisting of that peace, security, and that ineffible and glorious joy, with which the hearts of believers are stored, in full hope of eternal life. Concerning this, see Rom. v. 1 5. and viii. 28. &c.

## C H A P. VI.

### *Of Sanctification.*

**S**ANCTIFICATION may be considered separately, either as a benefit, or as a duty to be performed by man. But we shall here consider it, in the former respect, viz, as it is one of the principal blessings of the Evangelical covenant.

AND in the First place, we shall consider the nature of it. Secondly. Its cause.

SANCTIFICATION is twofold, external and internal. That sanctification is denominated external,  
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of federal, by which God calls, or invites us to his covenant, and separates us from others, in order that we might become partakers of eternal life; for to sanctify in Scripture, oftentimes denotes the same thing, as to set apart from a profane or common, and to appropriate to some sacred use. And in this sense, the people of Israel are called holy, and Christians, a holy nation. 1 Pet. ii. 9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light. They are so denominated, because God hath set them apart from the world, and profane persons, for his worship and glory.

FOR here the scope of this destination is twofold, as it is not possible, that God could have destined us for glory, without also calling us into holiness.

INTERNAL Sanctification, and the real purification of the man himself, is termed in Scripture, Renovation, Regeneration, concerning this, John iii. 3. Verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Tit. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 19. 20. &c. But now sanctification consists in the renewal of the mind, viz. First. In the renovation, or illumination of the understanding; for a man cannot undergo this change, without his mind being previously enlightened, with the knowledge of the truth. Again, in the reformation of the will, and affections. For in

order that a man may be said to be regenerated, or sanctified, a renewal and change of the affections is requisite, by which he departs from sin, and is entirely devoted to holiness; and this change is of absolute necessity, so that without it, no salvation can be expected. John iii. 5. Heb. xii. 14. &c. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

II. THE other particular which we have to consider, concerning Sanctification, is its cause. As all men are sinners, it follows, that sanctification does by no means proceed from them, but that it is a benefit, which we derive from God. But he works out our sanctification.

1. By his word. Which is therefore termed the seed of regeneration. 1 Pet. i. 2. 3. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. Jam. i. 18. Which is most efficacious both in enlightening the understanding, and moving the will; as it propounds to us our duty, and lays before us the most powerful reasons, and motives to excite us.

By his Holy Spirit, who disposes the mind and bends the heart. John iii. 5. Verily I say unto thee, unless a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And in this does the operation of the Holy Spirit properly consist.

3. HE likewise makes use of a variety of means, as, the sacraments, benefits, chastisements, and examples: Yet the whole of our sanctification so depends upon God, that without his grace it cannot be accomplished; but he does not produce it in us, without our own endeavours, hence we are commanded to make perfect, and to work out our sanctification, and salvation. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Phil. ii. 12. Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling. But Divines observe, that man is entirely passive in the beginning of regeneration: But as soon as he has received the first principles from God, he then acts himself, which is the reason, why sanctification is sometimes described as the work of God, and at other times as the work of men. This sanctification is completed by degrees, for besides that it consists of two parts, the former respecting the present, and the latter a future life, it has its degrees: For some men have made greater, and others lesser proficiency in sanctification. Besides in one and the same person, sanctification has its beginnings, and increase, so that the faithful, as long as they continue in life, make daily advances in holiness.

USES. 1. The first use here, is, that Justification is not the only benefit of the Evangelical covenant; there is another, and that equally necessary, viz. Sanctification. Therefore all the agency of divine grace, does not consist in the forgiveness of sins; but likewise in the sanctification, and con-

version of the sinner unto God. And the sole end of Christ's coming into this world, was not the expiation of sin, but likewise, to destroy the dominion of it, and make us a holy people. Tit. ii. 14. Therefore they overthrow the grace of Christ, and the Gospel, and labour under a fundamental error, who turn the whole of their thoughts towards justification, being no way solicitous about their sanctification.

2. FROM this doctrine, follows the possibility of holiness, and of keeping the commandments of Christ Jesus. For if God sanctifies a man, he may live a holy life, nay, arrive at an excellent degree of sanctity, otherwise our sanctification will be nothing, the energy of the Gospel, and Holy Spirit will be of no avail, and this benefit of God, is totally laid aside.

3. SINCE sanctification is the work of God, it follows, that no one can be partaker of it without divine grace, which therefore we ought to apply for by daily prayer. The neglect of prayer is utterly inconsistent with sanctification.

4. SANCTIFICATION may be considered as a duty incumbent upon us. These two, the grace of God, and man's industry and care, correspond exactly with each other. The grace of God supposes our labour, and is given in order that we might work out our sanctification; again, our labour presupposes divine grace, since without it, we can do nothing. The tendency of which doctrine, is to make  
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make us humble and diligent; humble in imploring the grace of God, and acknowledging our own misery, and diligent in the performance of good works.

WHAT has been observed concerning the various degrees of sanctification, has this tendency, viz. that every one should examine himself, and be well informed, whether his sanctification be as yet begun, and whether he has arrived at any degree of perfection in it? The principal mark of real sanctification, and which is of equal moment with all the rest, is, that we always be making farther advances in regeneration.

WE should now treat of Glorification, and eternal life, which is the most excellent benefit, belonging to the Christian doctrine. But this treatise belongs to the last section of Theology.

## THE LATTER PART

OF

## CHRISTIAN

## THEOLOGY,

## SECTION. V.

*Concerning the Church, &c.*

IN this Section, we are to consider, First, What is meant by the Church. Second. We shall treat of its government. Third. Discipline. Fourth, Its various state.

## C H A P. I.

*Concerning the Church in general.*

**H**ERE we have to see, First. In general what we are to understand by the Church. Second. Who are its members. Third. What are its characteristicks, or marks. Fourth. What are its attributes.

I. THE Church is the united body of men, who are called to eternal life by the Gospel. But since the term Church is variously understood, its various acceptations should be accurately distinguished, as  
this

this will afford us an easy solution of the various questions which are usually moved concerning this argument.

1. THE Church, in its most extensive signification, denotes all men who profess the Christian faith, whatever place, or sect they belong to.

SOMETIMES, it denotes any one particular assembly, or more, who are united together, by a certain common bond : Thus we say, the Church of Geneva, the Church of Rome, &c.

3. THE Church may be considered, as it respects only such as are truly faithful, all pious and elect persons, who sincerely worship God, and this is the true Church of Christ—his true Body. Yet it oftentimes happens, that the Scripture attributes to the Church in general, what is only applicable to the faithful.

THE Church is variously divided. We dismiss that trite division of it into militant and triumphant, because that distinction has no foundation in Scripture. But it is divided into visible, and invisible. The former is that external society, which is made up of the faithful, and reprobates. But the latter includes only the faithful. It is termed invisible, not as if the faithful, or their works were invisible, but because such as are truly faithful are known to God alone, and because they are intermixed with hypocrites, and do not constitute

tute any visible body, and distinct, or select society.

INTO universal, and particular. The Universal, or Catholic Church, is dispensed over the whole earth, and extends itself to all places, and persons. That Church is termed particular, which is of any one place.

INTO pure, and impure. But a particular Church may be pure or impure. First. With respect to doctrine; and it is called Orthodox, or Heterodox.

2. WITH respect to worship, which may be either pure or corrupt.

3. MORALS. For according as scandals are uncommon, or frequent, or as they increase, or are suppressed, in any Church, that Church is denominated pure, or impure.

4. WITH respect to discipline: For in order that any Church might maintain its purity, the exercise of Apostolical discipline is requisite, &c.

5. UNION. Those who maintain this union, according to sincerity, and charity, are denominated pure; but such as violate it, and without cause separate from others, are termed Schismatical.

BUT it is necessary, that such as would be saved, should associate with the Church. Acts ii. 47. And the

the Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved. Hence it may with propriety be said, that without the Church there can be no salvation; which ought to be understood of the Universal Church, but not of any particular one: For there is no particular Church, out of which salvation might not be obtained, though it cannot be gained so readily in all churches.

II. ALL persons whatever, who embrace the Christian faith, in a certain sense, may be denominated members of the Church; but accurately speaking, the faithful alone are its members; Wherefore, the wicked are by no means to be deemed such, though they maintain external communion with it. *Matt. xiii.* See the parable of the tares, and the wheat. The wicked are ungodly persons, and hypocrites: Ungodly, viz. such as make an open profession of impiety; none of which would be found in the Church, if the discipline of the Apostles took place. But an intermixture of the good, and of the evil, cannot be prevented in the Church.

BUT the duty of members is threefold. *First.* An external, and public profession of the Christian faith; to which may be referred, public worship, sacred assemblies, and the use of the sacraments. *Second.* Due subjection to that order which is constituted in the Church, to Pastors, and to the Church. *Heb. xiii. 17.* Obey them that have the rule over you,

you, and submit yourselves. Third. Purity of life, and manners, especially charity.

III. *INQUIRY* is made, concerning the marks, or characters of the Church, what they are? In order to the solution of which question, we ought to fix what we are to understand by the Church. If it denotes all true believers, or the invisible Church, then no marks of it can be produced, but those, by which such persons as are truly faithful, are distinguished from others. But if we understand a particular Church, then the marks may be assigned, by which the more pure societies are distinguished from such as are impure. But these marks are none else, but purity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and manners. To which, the more or less any Church accedes, the more or less it is to be deemed pure.

THE Romans lay down fifteen marks of the true Church, and indeed the most of them are such, as agree with their own Church. First. The title of Catholick. Second. Antiquity. Third. Uninterrupted duration. Fourth. Amplitude. Fifth. A succession of Bishops. Sixth. Agreement as to the same doctrine. Seventh. The union of the members with each other, and with their head. Eighth. Sanctity. Ninth. Efficacy of doctrine. Tenth. The sanctity of the lives of its authors. Eleventh. Miracles. Twelfth. Prophecy. Thirteenth. Confession of their adversaries. Fourteenth. The unhappy fate of their enemies. Fifteenth. Temporal felicity. These marks are either absurd, or false,

false, as 1. 3. 4. 5. Contrary to the word of God, or such as do agree with the Romish Church, as 2. 11. 12. But concerning these, let the writings of Divines be consulted.

IV. THE attributes of the Church, according to the word of God, are Unity, Universality, and Sanctity.

1. UNITY, for the Church of Christ is one, and not more, which may be seen every where in the New Testament, where mention is made of only of one Church, as Eph. iv. 4-6. There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope, of your calling, &c. Therefore, no particular Church can assume the title of a church exclusively.

2. UNIVERSALITY, or its being Catholick; For the Church is diffused over the whole world, and all Christians constitute only one body, so that the title of Catholick is not to be limited to any particular Church.

3. SANCTITY. Eph. v. 27. Christ loved the Church that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, i. e. not having spot or wrinkle, but that it should be holy. Which sanctity is federal, or external, as it is separated from the world, and dedicated to God; or real, and internal, as the true members of the Church, are cleansed from the defilements of the world.

THERE are three other attributes which are usually ascribed unto the Church. First. Authority. Second. Infallibility. Third. Perpetuity.

AUTHORITY. In the Church there is no authority, properly speaking, besides the authority of Christ. But whatever things are transacted by the Church, or his Ministers derive their whole authority from Christ. And do not bind men's consciences but as far as they are done in his name. For in that case, whatever the Church does, Christ ratifies. Matt. xviii. 18-20. Whatsoever thing ye shall bind upon earth, shall be bound in Heaven. John xx. 23. With respect to things necessary to salvation, the Church has no power to advance new laws, or to make any new articles of faith; in other cases, which God hath not determined, and yet ought to be determined, for the preservation of order, the Church may enact laws, for otherwise no society could subsist. 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Let all things be done decently and in order. Thus, with respect to the various circumstances of divine worship, time, place, &c. the Church may determine, providing that its determination, be conformable with the laws of the Gospel, Prudence, and Charity, and all ought to submit to statutes of this nature.

As to infallibility, it is sufficiently evident, from what has been already observed, that it does not belong to the Church. The Romans assert, that the Church is infallible, i. e. that it cannot err in doctrine, or concerning doctrine, or manners. But they

they have not as yet defined, what that infallible Church is, whether it be the Pope, or Universal Council, or the Pope and Council conjointly. But, First. Though we should grant that the Church is infallible, i. e. that it cannot err, how will they prove, that that privilege belongs to the Romish Church, rather than to the Greek, or our Church. Second. There is no such privilege : It is impossible indeed, that the true Church, i. e. true believers, can err fundamentally, for in that case, there would be no faithful person to be found in the world ; but any visible Church may err.

WE prove that the Church is not infallible. First. Because if so excellent a prerogative were granted to the Church by God, the Scripture would have informed us of it, which it no where does. That passage Matt. xviii. 17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church, and 1 Tim. iii. 15. Where, according to the Romans, the Church is termed the pillar, and ground of the truth, make nothing for their purpose, and though they attributed any thing to the Church, they do not speak of the Romish, more than any other Church. Second. The Scriptures overthrow this infallibility, when they foretel the defection of Christians from truth, and piety, and the coming of false teachers ; also when they command the faithful to examine into the truth of doctrines. Third. Every particular Church, the Pastors of a Church, or any particular denomination of Christians may err, therefore, the whole united body of Christians, and Pastors may err. Fourth. History informs us, that

that the Jewish and Christian Church, as likewise the rulers of both, nay, whole general Councils have erred. Particularly the Romish Church, and the Pope, have erred most basely, which will sufficiently appear, by looking into the Councils of Constance, and Trent; it is likewise confirmed from this, viz. that Councils have made decrees directly contrary to each other.

**PERPETUITY.** Which signifies that the Church will endure to the end of the world. A question is here moved, between us and the Roman Church, whether the Church can totally decay? We answer that it cannot. First. Because it is impossible that it should be totally extinguished. Second. It is likewise impossible, that no faithful persons should be found in the world. But the Church may fall away, i. e. First. The number of faithful men, or of Christians, may be greatly diminished, and errors, abuses, ignorance, vice, may almost every where prevail. In such circumstances, the Church apostatizes, in part, but not totally, and such was the state of it before the reformation. Second. There is no particular Church, which may not apostatize from the faith, and embrace the most grievous errors, yet it is scarcely possible, that such corruption, should infect all its members to such a degree, that none truly faithful should remain. This may be proved, First. From Scripture. For a dreadful, and nearly a general apostacy was predicted. 2 Thess. ii. 3. For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. 2 Tim. iii. 1. &c. Rev. xiii. 8. and xii. 5. 6. 7. Second.

Second. Experience teacheth the same thing. Under the Old Testament, the Church was not always eminent, and the number of the faithful was but small, as in the times of Noah, Elias, Antiochus, &c. Under the New Testament, innumerable Churches had apostatised, both in Asia and in Africa. The whole world had almost revolted, under the Arians; and in the following centuries, such a dreadful defection happened in the Latin Church, from purity of doctrine, worship, and morals, that he must be blind who could deny it.

THE principal uses. 1. The great kindness of God towards mankind, whose pleasure it was, to collect a Church from among them; likewise the happiness of our state, whom he hath called to be its members. Heb. xii. 22. 23. Under which title let us express our gratitude to him, especially when we reflect, that we are of the number of those, who have been favoured with the purer light of the Gospel, and have been freed from Idolatry, and those errors which have crept into the Church.

2. THE second use is taken from the title of Catholic; which word denotes, that there is only one Church diffused over the whole world, whence it follows, that all Christians should maintain unity, and concord with each other. In this respect, the state of the Church is very imperfect. For that union is destroyed by schisms, sects, anathemas, so that there is not one Church, but many, opposing each other by mutual animosities.

3. THE third use will be, to treat of the threefold duty of the members of the Church, which we have inculcated above. All indeed make a public, profession of the Christian faith, but many do not submit, to order and discipline, and the fewest in number testify, their being Christians in reality, by their faith, and innocence of morals.

FROM the Church being denominated holy, we conclude, that the principal scope of the divine vocation, is sanctity, and that it is the duty of Christians to be intent upon holiness, and to separate themselves from the pollutions of the world, which, if any one neglects to do, he to no purpose, boasts of the appellation of Christian, nor do such belong to the Church. At present there are many impious, and openly prophane persons in the Church, on account of the defect of discipline, who yet ought by no means to be tolerated, as likewise many hypocrites, who are unknown to men; but let us reflect, that God knoweth those that are his, and that the time is approaching, when he will separate them from true believers. 2 Tim. ii. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. Matt. xiii. 42.

## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Government and Ministry of the Church.*

**A**S the Church is governed, First. By the Ministry. Second. By Discipline, we shall here treat of both.

#### I. OF

I. OF the Ministry. Here in the first place, we shall treat of the institution of the Ministry. Secondly. Of the Ministers themselves. Thirdly. Their Vocation. Fourthly. Their Office.

IT has been the Divine pleasure, in order to collect, and to preserve his Church, to make use of the ministration of men. He did not chuse to teach, or govern his Church by Angels, or extraordinary revelations; but he chose the Ministration of men, of his consummate wisdom, and made choice of this mean, as being most agreeable to the nature of man:

THE necessity, and divine origin of the Ministry, may be proved from various passages in Scripture. Eph. iv. 11. Christ gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and teachers. Acts. xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5. Where Paul writes to Titus, that he left him in Crete, to ordain Elders, or Presbyters. The universal consent, and constant practice of all churches that ever existed, prove this, as likewise the signal utility, and necessity of this office. For without it, neither knowledge, nor piety, nor order, nor union, could be maintained. Eph. iv. 12. 13. He gave pastors——for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we come in the unity of the faith. And such is the nature of every society, that it stands in need of some government over it, so that disorder and confusion, might be prevented, which Fanaticks, and such as oppose the Ministry, are so eager to introduce.

II. BUT the Ministers whom God thought fit to employ, are either extraordinary or ordinary. The extraordinary are, First. Apostles, whose vocation is related, Matt. x. 12. Their prerogatives are as follow. (a) They were chosen and commissioned by Christ himself. (b) They were witnesses both of his life, and resurrection. Acts. i. 21. 22. (c) They were instructed by the Holy Ghost, who lead them unto all truth. (d) They were sent unto all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19. So that being bound to no particular flock, and because they were the first preachers of the Gospel, they are denominated the foundations of the Church. Eph. ii. 20.

2. PROPHEETS, of whom some predicted future events and announced hidden things, which they had by divine revelation, such as Agabus, Acts xxi. 10. Others taught and interpreted the Scripture, in which sense the word Prophecy is understood. 1 Cor. xiv. 1-4. &c.

3. EVANGELISTS. These were the Apostles vicars, or assistants, who were sent to various parts of the world; such were Titus, Lucas, &c.

WITH respect to ordinary Ministers, it ought to be observed first of all: That Christ and his Apostles, instituted no new form of Government; but followed that which took place, in the synagogues of the Jews. This is discernable in other points. For both the Sacraments, and form of divine worship, viz. praises, reading, prayers, and the particular circumstances of their sacred assemblies, and discipline,

discipline, of which we are soon to treat, were derived from the practice of the Jews.

IN their synagogues were elders, or Presbyters; likewise there was a President, or Ruler of the synagogue, Bishop, Charan, head of the Church, or Angel of the congregation. Lightfoot demonstrates this fully, Vol. II. P. 20. and 279. Hence the Apostles still retained these names. 1 Tim. iii. 1. 1 Pet. v. 1. Rev. ii 1. With respect to the signification of which names, we are not to judge according to the modern use of them, or the ideas which at present we affix to them, but from the usage and practice of the Jews, and primitive Christians. Therefore, for the government of the Church, were appointed Bishops, Presbyters, Ministers, &c.

IT may be asked here, whether the office of Bishops, be different from the office of Presbyters, so as that Presbyters and Bishops, do constitute two distinct orders. We answer, that there is no essential difference between them, and that they both belong to the same order. For the Scripture confounds Bishops and Presbters together, see Acts xx. 17. compared with verse 28. Tit. i. 5. compared with verse 7. Yet it cannot be denied, that in the primitive Church, there was always a President, or head of the Presbytery, who presided over others, who were in a state of equality with himself. This is invincibly proved, from the catalogues of Bishops, to be found in Eusebius and others. In them, we may see the names of the Bishops belonging to the principal churches, many of whom were ordained,

whilst the Apostles, but especially John, were still alive.

It is asked, whether there be two kinds of Presbyters, some of whom do preach the Gospel, and others are employed with Ministers, in the government of the Church, and who with us are termed Anciens or Elders (Aelteste) ? We answer, that their institution is of advantage, yet it cannot be proved, either from ecclesiastical history, or from Scripture. That passage, 1 Tim. v. 17. Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word, and doctrine, proves nothing ; otherwise it would follow, that a reward was due to ruling Elders.

THE office and institution of Deacons is described, Acts vi. It is to be lamented, that this order has been abolished in the most of Churches. Afterwards, other orders were constituted, as may be seen in the Church of Rome, and Greece. In the Church of Rome, are the Orders, viz. four lesser ushers, Readers, Acolytes, Exorcists, three greater, Subdeacons, Deacons, Presbyters or Priests ; afterwards, for the preservation of order, Archbishops, or Metropolitans, were set over the Bishops of each Province, over these again were placed Primates, or Patriarchs, and over them the Pope. In subsequent ages, is added, the office of Cardinals, who were formerly Presbyters, and Deacons, belonging to the Church of Rome. Hence the distinction, between Cardinal Bishops, and Cardinal Deacons.

III. WITH

III. WITH respect to the vocation of Ministers, there are two particulars which merit our attention. First. The qualifications of the persons to be called, Second. By whom the call is to be rendered.

1. As to the former, Paul informs us, 1 Tim. iii. 1-7. If a man desireth the office of a Bishop, he desireth a good work, &c. And the qualifications of a Bishop, according to Paul, respect either his learning, or morals. Hence emerges a twofold duty, viz. the one of such as prefer the call, and the other of such as are called. The former ought to consider attentively, whether the persons whom they call, are furnished with necessary endowments. But the latter should take care, that they be properly prepared for undertaking the ministerial office, by study, reading the Scriptures, but especially piety and prayer.

2. THE right of vocation belongs to Presbyters, and the Church. Tit. i. 5. Acts xiv. 27. Presbyters, have the right of examination, election, and ordination. But the Church are invested with the right of approbation, or refusal; so that the abuse might in no wise be approved of, which hath prevailed in the most of Churches, that Bishops should be appointed at the pleasure of Princes, and the vocation of Pastors depend upon the civil magistrate, which opposes the word of God, and the practice of the primitive Church, and has been the source of many evils in the Church.

BUT

BUT that order which ought to be observed in the vocation of Pastors, is not necessary, unless in a Church already constituted. The case is quite otherwise, with respect to a Church when decayed, or which has not yet been established. So that the Romans, without cause, enter into a controversy with us, respecting the vocation of our Reformers, some of whom yet had their vocation in the Romish Church.]

IV. THE office, and duty of Pastors, of Ministers of the Church, consists, First. In preaching of the Word. Tit. i. 9. 2. Tim. iv. 1. 2. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering, and doctrine. Second. The government of the Church, which was committed to them, by Christ. 1 Tim. iii. 5. and through the whole of the New Testament: And it hath been retained by the ancient Church, for the space of fifteen centuries. But at present, under the Reformation, the power of governing the Church, and the exercise of discipline, is, in the most of places, extorted from Ministers by the political magistrature; so that nothing now remains to them, but the power of preaching, and they can only be termed Preachers, but not Rulers, or Pastors of the Church. In the primitive Church, all Ministers did not preach, and there were many who were entirely taken up in its government. It is likewise of utility to hold Synods, in which ecclesiastical matters should be handled, in order that Pastors might be kept

kept within the bounds of their duty, and order be maintained and preserved in the Church.

THE use of this doctrine respects either the Laity, or the Church, or Ministers themselves.

I. HERE the goodness and wisdom of God are conspicuous, who has made such provisions for the Church's edification, by the institution of a Ministry; and besides, the necessity of this office ought to be acknowledged: For it is by his Ministers that Christ overrules, and superintends what relates to his Church; it is by them that he invites the faithful, and conducts them to eternal life. Ministers are God's assistants, in the work of salvation, and without their ministrations the Church could not subsist. Wherefore it is the duty of Christians, to render thanks unto God, for so great a benefit, to demean themselves reverently towards the sacred ministry, and hold them in estimation.

AGAIN, they ought to make a proper use of them, to submit themselves to their Pastors, both in doctrine, and discipline. Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may give it with joy, and not with grief. Which if any refuse to do, they offend against Christ, and bring down eternal destruction upon their own souls, &c.

II. THESE things ought to be carefully weighed by Ministers: Let them reflect upon the dignity,  
and

and nature of this most sacred function. Its dignity is of such high importance, as cannot be surpassed, which the very nature and scope of this office sufficiently evince; consequently, such as are invested with this office, or aspire after it, should demean themselves in such a manner, as to be worthy of it: Let them reflect, that they are men of God, the legates of Christ, and successors of the Apostles. Let them use their utmost efforts, to purify themselves, by the study and practice of piety; and again, to be furnished with necessary gifts. Let them likewise attend to the nature, and duties of the Ministry; lest they should imagine, as the most of men do, that the whole of it is discharged by preaching. They labour under an egregious error, who think so. The particular inspection over their flock, is committed to their charge, private admonitions, family visitations, the exercise of discipline. This Pastors ought to be continually intent upon. Besides, they ought to preside over their flock, by their example, because this procures energy, and authority to their preaching. Let so much suffice to be observed briefly upon an argument most copious.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Concerning Discipline.*

**C**ONCERNING Discipline, the two following particulars are to be considered. First. Its necessity. Second. Its nature.

#### I. THE

I. THE necessity of discipline is demonstrated by three arguments.

1. FROM the word of God, Matt. xvi. 19. Where Christ says unto Peter, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. And xviii. 18. 1. Cor. v. Concerning the excommunication of the incestuous person. Likewise, the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. Which passages are expounded in our treatise, upon the sources of the degeneracy of Christianity, part 2. c. 2. which any one who pleases may consult.

2. FROM the practice of both the Jewish, and Christian Church. First of the Jewish Church. For that form of ecclesiastical government, which the Lord Jesus and his Apostles prescribed, was, according to that, which took place in the synagogues of the Jews. Discipline, and excommunication, were observed by the Jews, after the captivity, and their excommunication was twofold, the first Segregation, by which the delinquent is separated from the fellowship of others, for some time, so that a person could not lawfully converse with him, with freedom and familiarity. The latter, Anathema, by which the delinquent is totally separated, and devoted to execrations. Christ hath approved of, and established this order.

BUT the Christian Church, hath constantly retained this discipline, viz. separation, and excommunication, as is most evident from ecclesiastical history, nor was there any Church in the primitive ages of  
Christianity,

Christianity, in which it was not observed. Many things might be said here upon the discipline of the ancient Church, concerning the various degrees of penitents. But this requires a particular treatise.

3. FROM the nature of the thing itself. For without order and discipline, no society can subsist. But this order is the more necessary in the Church, because it is a spiritual society, which is not governed by force, or coercive power, as civil societies are. Second. By Discipline we consult the honour of the Christian religion, and the Church, which might be justly called in question, if it tolerated vice, and scandal; it is likewise subservient to the conversion of sinners, to the edification, and confirmation of the godly. Whence it appears, how imperfect the state of almost all Churches, is at present, being destitute of this sacred discipline. The objections which are commonly urged against discipline, are examined in our treatise quoted above. Part 2. Chap. 2.

II. As to the nature of Discipline, we may attain to an accurate idea of it, by attending to the following particulars. First. By whom it is to be exercised. Second. Against whom. Third. How, and by what means.

I. THE exercise of discipline, belongs to the Pastors, and governors of the Church, neither is it lawful, to transfer it to others. There are some who imagine, that as the people may choose this, or the other form of government at pleasure, and confer

fer authority on one, or more persons, so they may commit the government of the Church, to the magistrate, but this is an egregious absurdity : For here, the people have no right, to change that form of government, which Christ hath instituted. For Christ himself hath delivered that government to Pastors, so that without sacrilege, it cannot be extorted from them. The government of the Church, and the government of civil society, are two distinct things, and separate from each other.

BUT that the exercise of discipline, and the government of the Church, was committed to Ministers, is evinced, from the titles given them, as Governors, Bishops, Pastors, &c. Likewise, 1 Tim. iii. 5. Heb. xiii. 17. &c. And this power they always were invested with, until the time of the reformation, when the power of discipline was wrested out of their hands.

HERE, therefore a twofold error is to be condemned. First. Of Anabaptists, and Fanaticks, who totally reject the Ministry. Second. Of Politicians, who have usurped the authority of Pastors, and the Church.

2. DISCIPLINE is to be exercised against erroneous persons and sinners. Against the erroneous. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 John v. 10. Tit. iii. 10. A man that is an Heretick, after the first, and second admonition, reject. Against sinners. 1 Cor. v. 11. If any that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or an Idolater—with such an one do not eat; and elsewhere.

where. Yet discipline, and excommunication, ought not to be levelled against all who are erroneous, or sinners. But only against such as err, or sin grievously, or in a public manner.

3. WE are now to see how discipline is to be exercised. In the exercise of discipline, spiritual means ought to be applied, not violence, corporal punishments, imprisonment, &c. But there are two acts of discipline, according to the word of God. The first is admonition, which must be done, first privately, and afterwards in a public manner. Matt. xviii. 15. If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone, &c. What method is to be observed in admonitions, we learn from Gal. vi. 1. If any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness. 2 Tim. iv. 2. 1 Tim. v. i. 2. Rebuke not an Elder, but in-treat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren. Hence appears, the vast need that Ministers stand in, of erudition, in order that they might instruct others, as likewise of zeal, boldness, meekness, patience, and singular prudence, for if these are wanting, all admonitions will be to no purpose.

THE second act is separation; which is twofold, lesser and greater. The lesser consists in exclusion from the Holy Supper. That prophane and impious persons should not be admitted to the Holy Supper, may be proved.

a. FROM the practice of the Jewish Church, who excluded such from their sacred communion.

b. FROM the constant and universal practice of the Church, for many centuries.

c. BECAUSE the Scriptures prohibit the acknowledgement of such, as brethren, and forbids our eating with them.

d. FROM various reasons, drawn from the edification of the Church, and the salvation of sinners. Yet there are innumerable churches at present, in which all are admitted indiscriminately to the Holy Supper, nor is it in the power of Pastors to prevent them of a participation of it ; which abuse, truly, is most grievous, and unsufferable.

THE greater excommunication is, that by which the Church declares, that it will not account a person as a brother, because he openly testifies that he is not a brother. The passages of Scripture, and arguments already produced, prove that this excommunication is of divine authority, and apostolical institution ; nor was this matter ever controverted, during the space of sixteen centuries ; but in the time of the reformation, it was always every where abolished ; whilst our Doctors, Calvin, Occolampaduis, Bullingerus, Zevinglius, and others were calling out loudly against it.

WE have now to make some observations, concerning erroneous persons, or Hereticks ; there are some

some who imagine, that corporal, nay, capital punishments, ought to be inflicted upon them. Of this opinion were \* Calvin, Beza, who wrote a treatise concerning Hereticks, and others, among whom we may reckon Ryssenius, Vol. II. p. 158. Hence Servetus was burnt by Calvin's influence at Geneva. But others condemn this opinion as cruel. The magistrate can punish none, nor cut them off from the world, unless such as disturb the peace of society. Erroneous persons ought first to be admonished, secondly, borne with. 2 Tim. ii. 24. 25. The servant of the Lord must be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, &c. As long as the error is light, and no damage threatens the Church thereby. In the third place, they are to be separated and excommunicated. Tit. iii. 10. A man that is an Heretick, after the first and second admonition, reject. 2 John v. 10. And by these means, the edification of the Church is most effectually consulted.

USES. Since discipline is of divine institution, and of such necessity, who may easily find, how to judge, concerning the present state of the Church, and what is requisite to restore it to its perfection. Any one, from reading the writing of the New Testament, and the History of the ancient Church, will acknowledge, that in the present times, there is almost no discipline. There are many churches, in which adulterers, thieves, drunkards, and all other atrocious sinners, are admitted, to the Table of

\* How these great men may be excused, see *Alph. Turret. Comp. of Eccles. Hist.* p. 392.

of the Lord, there is no excommunication, and the authority of Christ's Ministers is quite banished, hence it comes to pass, that corruption of manners is every where coming to a greater height, neither does the least glimmering hope of reformation, appear. In this most deplorable state of affairs, prayers ought to be offered up unto God, that he would have compassion upon his Church; and Pastors ought to use their utmost efforts, to have this holy discipline restored.

2. THE duty of the members of the Church, is to submit to discipline. For since it is authorised by God, whoever they are who reject, or despise it, in that very instance, shew, that they do not belong to the sheepfold of Christ. Here ought to be shewn the criminality of rebellion against discipline, and of the contempt of ecclesiastical admonitions, and censures.

YET we ought not to stop here; it is not sufficient to salvation, that a person be obnoxious to the discipline, and censures of the Church; there are many impious persons in the Church, many hypocrites, against whom Ministers do not exercise discipline, because they are unknown, who have free access to the Holy Supper. Such, though tolerated, and admitted, shall not escape the just judgment of God. The Church is no judge of things unknown, as it is commonly expressed, but nothing is hid from God, he searcheth into our very thoughts, as well as words, and actions. Wherefore we ought to entertain, and cherish a most ardent desire after real, solid, and internal piety, so that we may be found blameless,

not only before men, which is but of little moment, but likewise in the judgment of God.

C H A P. IV.

*Concerning the various State of the Church.*

**W**HAT remains now, is the last chapter under that head, which relates to the Church, and that of considerable utility, viz. concerning the various state of the Church, which leads us to consider, what the state of the Christian Church was, from the apostolick age, down to the present time, and what it will be with respect to doctrine, worship, manners, and discipline. For upon these four, principally depends the safety of the Church, and this treatise is for the most part historical.

WE shall begin with the first ages of Christianity, and thence proceed, to the following times, and consider the state of the Church under Popery; in the third place we shall come to the Reformation; and lastly speak something upon the subsequent periods, until the end of the world.

I. IN the time of the Apostles, and primitive ages of Christianity, the Church was much more pure, than ever since, which was owing chiefly to three causes. First. Because the Church at that time was under the government of the Apostles, who were eminent for miracles, and authority. Second. Because Christians were obnoxious to persecutions, for the Church is never more pure, than when under the cross. Third. Because, in those times, apostolick

lick discipline was executed, so that then, there was not so great a number of impious persons to be found in the Church, as in subsequent times. Yet various errors arose, likewise various offences, with respect to doctrine. It is particularly worthy of notice, that the errors of the ancient false teachers, and Hereticks, may be reduced principally to three heads. First. There were some who erred with respect to the person of Christ, denying that he was the son of God, and asserting that he was but a meer man, as the Ebionites, and Cerinthians, against whom it is said, John wrote his Gospel. Second. Others maintained, that faith in Christ, and evangelical obedience, were not sufficient to salvation, unless that circumcision, and the Jewish rites were retained; and this was the point which was most commonly controverted, in the times of the Apostles. Third. There were other carnal men, who, under the pretext of grace, and Christian liberty, introduced licentiousness, refused to suffer persecutions, and who gave themselves over to carnal lusts. Such were the Nicolaitans, Gnosticks, and others. These were in a spirited manner opposed, by James, Jude, Peter in his Second Epistle, and John in his Epistles, and Revelation.

THERE were three principal sources of heresies. First. False Philosophy, and the abuse of Philosophy; for, from the time that the tenets, and methods of Philosophers were blended with the Christian religion, which is very simple, all things began to degenerate.

2. THE prejudices of the Jews, and their preposterous zeal for the law of Moses.

3. CORRUPTION of manners. For carnal men could not endure the cross, nor divest themselves of the love of wealth, and pleasures, and by these means corrupted the pure doctrine of the Gospel.

II. IN the subsequent periods, a great depravation ensued, viz. when Emperors became Christians, and the Church began to enjoy tranquility and wealth; and discipline was either corrupted, or totally laid aside. At this time we may behold, the most grievous errors prevailing, many things were set entirely aside, many additions made, many changes, errors, contests, controversies, schisms, took place. That horrid ignorance which reigned in the following ages, greatly augmented this depravation of doctrine and religion, as likewise did the imprudence, and temerity of the scholasticks; and matters at length came to such a pass, that the Sacred Scripture was entirely unknown, and true religion would appear to have been totally banished. In worship, likewise, a great change was made, both with respect to its object, and the manner of it, viz. by the invocation of Saints, removal of the Calice, and rites in the celebration of divine worship, and the Eucharist: The Church likewise sustained a great detriment, with respect to government; for discipline was abolished gradually, and in the room of it were substituted, indulgencies, auricular confession, and other abuses. Bishops and Pastors, laying aside the preaching of the Gospel,  
and

and care of their flock, gave themselves entirely over to secular employments : Likewise, in morals there was such a depravation, that scarcely any piety or faith were discernable in the Church. Nay, even Bishops, and Popes were men of most desoluate morals, and monsters of men, rather than men. Thus happened that general and dreadful apostacy, which was predicted by Paul and John. 2 Theff. ii. Rev. xiii. and xviii. And lastly, what consummated this evil, was, the Romish Church established those most grievous errors, intollerable abuses, Idolatry, &c. By their decrees, this was done in the Council of Constance, held in the year one thousand four hundred and fourteen, and in the Council of Trent, celebrated from the year one thousand five hundred and forty-five, to the years one thousand five hundred and sixty-three, so that from that time, there remained no hope of reformation, on the part of the Romish Church.

III. WE are now to consider the state of the Church under the Reformation. Those abuses and errors, were in a great measure removed, by the blessing of the Reformation ; but it is to be observed, that the work of reformation was at first interrupted, for a great part of the Western Church, did not admit it, neither did it take place, in the Eastern and Greek Church. Secondly. It remained imperfect, which is mostly discernable, in the discipline and government of the Church, as likewise in morals. For with the reformed, the true government of the Church was changed, apostolick discipline laid aside, and the whole authority engrossed

by politicians, so that at present the most grievous abuses are flagrant, in many churches, with respect to the vocation of Ministers, the exercise of discipline, the use of Sacraments, &c.

IV. THERE remains now the fourth, and that the most happy period, viz. the time when Antichrist, being cut off, errors, vices, schisms, laid aside, and tyranny, both temporal and spiritual destroyed, the Church shall assume a quite different appearance; then the Jews shall be converted, and the Gentiles enter into the Church, which blessed state, hath been foretold by the Prophets, both of the Old, and New Testament.

USES. What has been delivered concerning the various state of the Church, is of signal utility, in order that we might be enabled, to form a right judgment, and have just sentiments, concerning those matters, which appertain to religion: Hence we understand what is requisite, in order that the constitution of the Church might be brought to perfection: Hence it appears, that many controversies, which have been tossed about with much warmth of temper, are of very little moment, and that there are many things in the Church, which ought to be corrected, laid aside, or undergo some change.

2. WE ought to acknowledge the providence of God, who hath preserved his Church, in the midst of so many errors, persecutions, scandals; but especially, appears the necessity of the Holy Scriptures, for

for unless the true religion had been preserved in Scripture, it might have been entirely lost.

3. WE ought to render thanks unto God, for that restoration of the Church, which was accomplished by the Reformation.

4. WE ought to use our endeavours, so that those means might again be restored, which tend to a perfect reformation. For we are by no means to acquiesce, in that state in which matters stand at present, as if it were the most perfect. The state of the Church will be very imperfect, and unhappy, as long as the morals of Christians will be such, as they are at present, as long as ecclesiastical discipline will be banished, as long as contentions, and schisms, will be seen among the reformed themselves, and as long as the Ministers of Christ are robbed of their authority, &c.

5. WE ought to offer our supplications unto God, that he would shortly accomplish, that excellent work, which he hath already began, and that he would bring about those happy times, in which truth, peace, order, and piety will reign.

## SECTION VI.

*Concerning the Assistances to Salvation.*

Now follows our treatise concerning those assistances which God affords us, in order that he might bring us to salvation. Which doctrine is very necessary, in order that we might understand, by what methods we may become partakers of eternal life; as also to make a proper use of those means. But these are either external, or internal.

## C H A P. I.

*Concerning the Internal Assistances.*

**T**HE internal assistances, are those operations of divine grace, and the Holy Spirit, which inwardly affect the mind. We suppose in the first place, that God does not act only without us, but likewise within us, by affecting, and moving the soul; and this is proven, First. Because the heart of man is subject to the influence of God, who, as he can impress motion upon the body, so he can excite thoughts in the soul, and affect the heart. Second. The Scripture frequently speaks of this divine grace, and efficacy, which moves the heart, bends it, and inclines it to obedience. Ps. li. and cxliii. 10. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightneſs. And cxix. through the whole psalm. In many places it is said, that God excites and inclines the heart of kings and other men; which places,

ces, do certainly denote an internal operation, and not only an external disposition, or presentation of objects. Nay, this internal operation of God, is distinguished from external means, Acts xvi. 14. where it is said, that God opened the heart of Lydia, so that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. With respect to these portions of Scripture, it is to be observed, that the Scripture here speaks in a simple style, and such as is accommodated to the capacity of the vulgar, and not in a subtile, or philosophical manner. Now, if an internal operation be not granted, the sense of these words will be far from being simple. Third. The corruption of human nature, and depravation of our faculties, renders this inward operation necessary. Fourth. This operation has always been admitted both by Jews and Christians, and there is scarcely any person, who would not acknowledge the necessity of it, from his own experience.

BUT it is objected here, that by this doctrine enthusiasm would be introduced. We answer, that a door would be opened for enthusiasm, if we maintained, First. That internal operations are sufficient, without the word of God, and external means. Second. If such an operation were held, as forced and impelled a man, so that whether he will or will not, he must yield to it. Such were the extasies, and inspirations of the Prophets. Third. If any person, under the pretext of internal inspiration, would produce a new doctrine, or new revelations. But we teach no such thing, nay, directly the contrary. First. By that operation external means are

are not set aside, for these are still necessary. Internal operation disposes the faculty, but the object must be proposed to it: This human nature requires. Second. That operation does not destroy the use of reason, and liberty; nor does it move, or impel a man, by a blind impulse. Third. We receive no doctrine, nor revelation, distinct from the word of God: But we maintain, that his word is the only rule, or standard, according to which, all things are to be examined and tried.

NEITHER ought it to be objected, that we scarcely can determine, wherein this action consists, which exerts itself upon the soul, and its faculties, and moves them. The reason why that cannot be explained, is at hand, viz. because we are ignorant of the nature of our souls, and how thoughts are raised in them. We know not how God, being a spirit, acts upon bodies, or how thoughts, and motions are exerted within ourselves; nor do we understand how our soul moves the body, or in what manner the body produces certain motions in the soul, and yet all these are most certain. Therefore, it is no way marvelous, if we are not able to explain the manner of the divine operation.

BUT God may excite man two ways: By acting upon the soul, i. e. by producing certain thoughts, and certain motions in it. He can likewise exert his influence upon the body and constitution. And granting certain motions in the body, such and such motions must necessarily arise in the soul. The degrees of this operation are various, for sometimes  
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it moves the heart of a man but slowly, and at other times more powerfully ; sometimes it is such as men may resist, at other times it is so powerful, as to produce obedience irresistably, though not without our willingness.

IN the dispensation of this grace, God acts most freely, for he bestows upon some a larger, and upon others, a lesser portion of it, and when he bestows it, he does it gratuitously, and not out of merit. Besides, God acts agreeable to his justice, and not holiness. For there is no person, on whom he does not confer some portion of it, and that is what all men experience within themselves, and renders sinners inexcusable. Besides, God oftentimes affords a greater degree of it, to such as make a becoming improvement of it. According to what our Saviour declares, Matt. xxv. 29. To him that hath, it shall be given. On the other hand, when men abuse his grace, he deprives them of it.

USES. This doctrine concerning divine assistances, ought to be laid before the people, especially that of internal assistances, as being the most efficacious of all. Our duty with respect to which is,

1. To acknowledge the superlative love of God towards men, who procures their salvation so liberally, and powerfully, who invites and impells us by so many methods, so that nothing is wanting to us, which is necessary to life, and godliness. 2 Pet. i. 3. &c.

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2. SINCE the necessity of divine assistance, is so great, it ought to be requested of God, with the most ardent prayers.

3. WE ought to attend to those operations of divine grace. Admonitions of conscience, pious motions, and affections, which we now and then experience within us. Whenever these occur, God, calls us most powerfully.

4. IT is our duty to make a proper use of those assistances: To improve the talent committed to our charge, least we be deprived of it, and not to quench the spirit, nor resist its operations.

5. LASTLY. Hence it follows, that men are inexcusable, if they do not arrive at salvation.

## C H A P. II.

### *Of External Assistances.*

**T**HE doctrine of external assistances is of great moment in religion. There is such a variety, and multiplicity, to be found in these, that it is scarcely possible to enumerate them; for there is nothing which does not afford an incitement, and assistance, to godliness. Yet we shall point out some of the principal ones, and they are twofold, there are some of them, which we derive from the ordinary dispensation of Divine Providence, and others from Religion.

1. IT is certain that the Providence of God, is chiefly employed in procuring the happiness of men, so that the various events, and various circumstances in human life, are so many invitations, and assistances to salvation. Amongst the assistances of this kind, we reckon,

1. A LIBERAL and pious education, which conduceth very much to piety : This benefit, indeed, is not allotted to all, but in this men are culpable. For it is the pleasure of God, that children should obtain a religious education, and such as are favoured with it, must have a signal aid to godliness.

2. THE blessings of God, which are both great, and innumerable, as soundness of body and mind, such things as inable us, to pass over life in tranquility, various deliverances, the patience of God, and his long suffering towards the ungodly. Rom. ii. 4. Dispest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

3. CHASTISEMENTS, diseases, pains, poverty, and other adverse circumstances, it cannot be denied, that these ought to be counted amongst the most efficacious means, as the Scripture every where teacheth. Heb. xii. 6. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. By adversity, God avocates us from the love of the world, and excites within us, a desire after spiritual good.

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4. VARIOUS examples, both of the justice, and the wrath of God, against the wicked ; and his love towards the godly ; add to these the fellowship, conversation, and examples of godly men.

5. FASTING, which hath always been accounted, a mean to promote piety. For this we have the mandates, and examples of the Lord Jesus, and the Apostles. Matt. vi. 16. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Defraud not one another, except it be with consent, for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer. Acts xiii. 3. xiv. 23. As also the universal practice of the Christian Church. It always was believed, even from the times of the Apostles, that fasting was of use in subduing the flesh, and extinguishing the love of the world. Therefore, it is to be lamented, that this aid is omitted by the greatest part of mankind.

USES. Very few attend to these assistances, especially such as are offered by Providence. Here the most of men do not at all acknowledge the intention of God, they behold various things, and have daily experiences of various occurrences in human life, benefits, chastisements, examples, &c. But they never reflect, nor consider God, as inviting them by these, and stretching out his assisting hands. They have eyes, but see nothing.

WITH respect to the assistances, which are derived from religion, a most dangerous error hath prevailed amongst Christians ; viz. they imagine, that religion consists in these external means which  
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yet are not religion itself, but assistances to religion. They think that they have discharged their duty sufficiently, and are in a state of salvation, if they attend upon external worship, and use certain ceremonies. This is that error, that hypocrisy which God so often complains of in his word.

3. HERE it ought to be shown particularly, how men ought to use these means.

C H A P. III.

*Concerning the Sacraments in general.*

WE shall first treat of the Sacraments in general, secondly in particular. We shall only offer a few things in general, as there are but two Sacraments, the nature of which we are to explain in a more special manner. Let it suffice, to make some observations. First. With respect to their nature. Second. Their number.

THE word Sacrament is not to be found in Scripture, wherefore its meaning ought to be defined, lest we should have a controversy about words. By Sacraments we understand, certain sacred rites, ceremonies, external, or actions, instituted of God, for the confirmation of his covenant. I say rites, not the signs alone, for the sign of itself, bread and wine, does not constitute a Sacrament, but the entire action with the words which are used concerning them, which observation is of much service, in order to a right understanding of this matter: For all controversies with respect to this, and all errors almost,

almost, took their rise, from Christians placing their attention upon the sign only, and not the entire rite. Therefore two things ought to be considered in Sacraments. First. The rite, or something visible. Second. The signification of the rite, or something invisible, but both these must depend upon the Divine pleasure only, so that he alone can prescribe such rites. From a special consideration of Baptism, and the Holy Supper, it may be understood, that Sacraments were instituted, that they might be public pledges, and seals of the divine covenant, both on God's part, and on our's. For by them, God offers, and confirms his grace unto us, and we testify, and bind over our faith and obedience unto him.

THE efficacy of Sacraments is twofold. First. Objective, or moral ; as it fully presents to our view, both the grace of God, and our duty. Second. Subjective ; as the grace of the Holy Spirit accompanies the legitimate use of the Sacraments. The controversy between us and the Romas, viz. whether they have their influence in consequence of the action being performed, i. e. whether they confer grace, by virtue of the external action, without the devotion of the receiver, providing that he does not prevent it by a mortal sin. Likewise, whether they be absolutely necessary to salvation, as also whether the intention of the Minister, be requisite, in order to a true, or real Sacrament. These controversies, I say, are easily solved, from what has  
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been already said, and what we are afterwards to observe.

II. As to the number of Sacraments, we have to observe, lest we should fall into a controversy about words, what we are to understand by this term. For as the word Sacrament does not occur in Scripture, it may be applied to various things, and sacred uses, like the Greek word *Mystery*, which was even done by ancient writers, but if by Sacraments we understand certain sacred rites, prescribed by God, for a confirmation of his covenant, and necessarily to be used by Christians : There are only two Sacraments, which is evidently collected from the New Testament, which two exactly correspond with Circumcision, and the Passover of the Jews. Here something is to be said concerning the five Sacraments, which have been superadded by the Romans.

I. CONFIRMATION, is the unction of chrism, or ointment, which was made up, and consecrated by the Bishop, for that particular purpose, which rite is performed in the following manner : Persons who had received Baptism, when they arrived at mature age, are annointed by the Bishop in the forehead, after the form of a cross, with certain rites, and prayers, and with these words, I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Bishop gives his peace to the confirmed person, with a slight box, to teach him to be in readiness to endure persecutions. The origin of this rite, is refered to the custom of the

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Apostles, who laid their hands upon those who were Baptised, and confirmed them in the faith, by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

IN confirmation there is something which is good, nay necessary, viz. If persons having received Baptism, when they arrive at mature age, give an account of their faith, confirm their baptismal vow, and are admitted to the Holy Supper, with benediction and prayer. The Reformers recommended, and were willing that this confirmation should be retained, see Cal. B. V. C. 19. But that unction of the chrism, and other ceremonies usually observed in the church of Rome, are vain; nay, superstitious, nor have they any foundation in Scripture.

2. PENITENCE, in which they distinguish between the matter and the form. The matter is the contrition of the sinner, confession made to the Priest, and satisfaction. The form is the absolution of the Priest, concerning which we hold, that there is something in it which ought to be admitted, and something rejected. We acknowledge the necessity of contrition, provided it be sincere and affecting. We likewise judge confession to be necessary, viz. that we should at all times confess our sins to God, and in certain cases only, to our neighbour, to the Church, and to Pastors, viz. when we have injured the Church, offended our neighbour, and when on account of scruples of conscience, we stand in need of the counsel and assistance of Pastors. But auricular confession, with enumeration of every particular

cular sin, ought by no means to be imposed upon sinners, as it is destitute of divine institution, and attended with various inconveniences. With respect to satisfaction, we acknowledge that the sinner ought to satisfy his neighbour, if he has done him an injury, as also to subdue his carnality, by fastings and other means. But these duties are no satisfactions for sins, and it is absurd and tyrannical, to put Christians under the necessity of undergoing whatever punishments, or satisfaction the Priest chuses to impose upon them. With respect to absolution, we hold, that Pastors have a right to announce the remission of sins to the penitent; but properly speaking, he cannot absolve them.

3. EXTREME unction is usually administered to persons when afflicted with excruciating pains, and seven parts of the body are anointed. The eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands reins, and feet with consecrated oil, with this form : May God, by this holy unction, and of his most pious mercy, pardon thee, whatever thou hast sinned, in seeing, hearing, smelling, &c. And they would have the effect of this unction to be, a mitigation of the disease, if that be expedient, and the remission of sins. What gave rise to this rite, was the miraculous cures, which were performed by unction. Mark xvi. 18. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. And Jam. v. 14. 15. Is any one sick among you, let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord, &c.

MIRACLES having ceased, that unction was erroneously retained. There is no institution of this rite, as if it extended to all times, nor could persons agonizing, or in the pangs of death, perceive any benefit from it, either as to soul or body.

4. WE acknowledge that matrimony is of divine institution, but that it is not a Sacrament, is evident, because it is not in common with all the faithful, and is to be found among Infidels, nor was it ever instituted, as a confirmation of divine grace. That passage, Eph. v. 32. where the vulgar translation has the word Sacrament, which signifies in Greek, Mystery, gave occasion to this doctrine of the Roman Church.

WITH respect to order, we have already mentioned them in that chapter which treats of the Ministry. Here we briefly observe, First. That some of them are neither necessary, nor of divine institution, as ushers, exorcists, &c. Second. We confess, that the order of Bishops, or Presbyters, and Deacons, is divine. But these orders are not a Sacrament, since they do not appertain to all the faithful. Third. Various vain and superstitious rites, are used in the collation of orders, neither is the vocation, and ordination of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, performed in a proper manner.

USES. We ought to attend to the goodness and wisdom of God, which is conspicuous in these means, which he applies in procuring our salvation. As man consists of soul and body, he  
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aptly makes use of such means, as affect our senses, and excite attention.

2. HENCE we may learn, what judgment we ought to form, concerning the externals of religion. External things, rites and ceremonies, ought not to be universally condemned, since God has been pleased to prescribe such. Therefore, they are egregiously mistaken, who, under the pretext of perfection, and godliness, reject these external means, as if those who used them, were but carnal men. The Apostles themselves, and the very martyrs of the primitive Church, used them most reverently, and frequently, &c.

3. SINCE Sacraments are things of an external nature, of themselves they are no way profitable. As they are means, they are of no utility, when separated from their end viz. confirmation of our faith, and piety. Therefore, they ought to be treated with the greatest reverence, not only at the particular time, when we are using them, but likewise through the whole of our lives. Lastly, they hold these sacred rites in estimation, who being mindful of the grace of God, and their duty, conform their lives to the precepts, and conditions of the divine covenant.

## C H A P. IV.

*Of Baptism.*

**W**E have four things to consider, concerning this Sacrament. First. The institution of Baptism: Second. Its rites. Third. Signification. Fourth. The Baptism of infants.

I. **W**ITH respect to the first of these, it is to be observed, that Baptism was in use among the Jews. Profelytes were baptised by them, though not of divine institution. Besides, the Jewish doctors baptised their disciples; which rite John the Baptist used, and no person offended at him.

**T**HE necessity of Baptism is proven, First. Because when Christ was in the world, his disciples baptised. John iii. 22. and iv. 1. 2. And he himself prescribed this rite in a solemn manner. Matt. xxviii. 19.

2. **T**HE Apostles initiated all who embraced the Gospel, to Christ, by Baptism, and commanded every one to be baptised. Acts ii. 38. Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. And viii. 12. and 38. As likewise ix. 18. and x. 47.

3. **T**HE doctrine of the Apostles supposes, that he is not a Christian, who hath not received Baptism. Eph. iv. 5. Rom. vi. 3. Know ye not, that so many

many of us, as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death, &c.

4. THE universal practice of the Church confirms this.

II. THE rites of Baptism are very simple, viz. immersion into pure water, and sprinkling, with the pronounciation of certain words; besides, the persons to be baptised made a profession of their faith, and renounced the world and the Devil. The Holy Spirit was invoked upon them, they were conducted to the font, descended into the water, and were baptised by the Minister. Afterwards they were delivered to their sponsors, milk and honey were offered them to be tasted, they were confirmed by imposition of hands, cloathed with a white garment, and at length were admitted to the Eucharist. In subsequent times, other rites were superadded, as salt, spittle, exorcism, which Bellarmin describes, upon the Sacrament of Baptism. B. I. C. 4. &c.

III. THE signification, or scope of Baptism, is admission into the divine covenant, and the Church of God. Now, since that covenant comprehends two things, the one on God's part, and the other on our's, it is evident, that Baptism, on the part of God, confirms, and confers upon us the benefits of the Gospel, as the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and a right to eternal life. Mark xvi. 16. And he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. Acts ii. 38. Col. ii. 12. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Which benefits are excellently represented, by the  
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washing of water. But, on our part, Baptism is a public declaration of our faith, and obedience to the Gospel ; so that it is a vow, or oath, by which we are solemnly bound unto God. Baptism, therefore, is a rite instituted by God, by which we are admitted into the devine covenant, by the washing of water.

IV. WE are now to see, who are the persons who have a right to receive Baptism. At the commencement of Christianity, adult persons were baptised, but at present, infants are dedicated unto God, by this rite ; which practice is condemned by the Anabaptists. We hold, that Pædobaptism is by no means to be condemned ; and maintain, that it may be piously, and with advantage retained, providing, that as soon as infants have arrived at mature age, they publicly, and in the presence of the Church, confirm their baptismal vow. Without this confirmation, Pædobaptism can scarcely be defended. For such is the nature of Religion, that every person must give an account of his own faith, neither can others do this for us, whilst we ourselves remain in ignorance. But granting this confirmation, it may be defended in the following manner.

I. THE children of believers, by the right of nativity, are under the covenant, and in a better condition than the infants of Heathens. I Cor. vii. 14. They may therefore receive the sign of the covenant, in like manner as they were formerly circumcised.

cised. viz. because Baptism was instituted in the room of Circumcision.

2. WE find, that Christ blessed little children, which were brought to him. Matt. xix. 13. 14. And why might not the same be done by the prayers of the Church, Pastors, and Parents.

3. THE Jews did not only baptize adult profelytes, but also their children.

4. WE learn from the New Testament, that the Apostles baptised whole families.

5. THAT custom was introduced from the first ages of Christianity, as we learn from Cyprian, and others, and at length was received by the universal Church. But now, with respect to things which are attended with utility, we ought to acquiesce in that order, which is constituted in the Church, and they are culpable who oppose it.

USES. Many are the signal uses of this doctrine, we shall only point out four of them.

1. THE first relates to that reverence which is due to this most sacred rite. For whether we attend to its author, the Lord Jesus Christ, or its scope, it will appear, that this Sacrament is of the highest dignity; and therefore, as often as we administer it, it is not a trivial matter which we transact, but serious, sacred, and divine, which ought to be

be duly weighed, by both parents and sponfors, and all who are present.

2. THIS doctrine is attended with signal consolation. We have cause of inward joy, as often as we reflect upon our Baptism, by which we are declared members, brethern, and coheirs of Christ. It is most certain, that God receives baptised persons into his covenant, and pours out his Holy Spirit upon them, unless they put some obstruction in the way. How pleasant, how efficacious must the thought of this be, in producing consolation, and an assured hope, in the most adverse circumstances, &c.

3. LET us be mindful, that by Baptism we are called to holiness of life. Paul teaches the duty of baptised persons. Rom. vi. As also the practice of the ancient Church, respecting the baptismal vow. It ought to be urged, that Baptism will be of no avail, to such as do not live the life of Christians, and that they are not real members of the Church.

4. I AM of opinion, that Ministers would do what is of the greatest utility, if as often as they treat of Baptism, they would direct their discourse to younger persons. For this doctrine ought to be applied unto them, in a particular manner, and is propounded to such, with greater advantage, than to adult persons.

C H A P. V.

*Concerning the Holy Supper.*

**T**H E R E are four things here to treat of. First. The justification of this Sacrament. Second. Its rites. Third. Signification, and use. Fourth. The controversies relating the to Holy Supper.

I. THE origin of the Holy Supper, is derived from the practice of the Jews, for they annexed this rite of breaking bread, to the Passover. But that this rite is of divine institution, and consequently necessary to be observed, may be proved,

I. FROM the institution itself, which is accurately described by three Evangelists, as also the words of Christ: Do this in remembrance of me. Second. The Apostles, immediately after Christ's ascension, observed it, and prescribed the observance of it, unto Christians. Acts ii. 46. and xx. 7. Where it is said, That the disciples were met together to break bread. Third. The doctrine of Paul, 1 Cor. xi. supposeth, that it was usual for Christians to celebrate the Holy Supper, and that this rite was a most holy institution of Christ himself, which ought to be used with the greatest reverence. Fourth. Lastly, it is manifest, from the universal practice of the Church; for there was never any Church in which the Eucharist was not celebrated. Therefore this rite is rightfully, and deservedly retained. It only were to be wished for, that the use of it was  
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more frequent ; for with the primitive Christians, the celebration of it was frequent.

II. AMONG the rites, we are to consider both the signs, and the actions relating to them. First. The signs are bread and wine. Unleavened bread was used in that supper which Christ celebrated, hence a controversy arose between the Greeks, who used leavened bread, and the Latins who used unleavened. But this controversy is of little moment. It is evident, that the Lord Jesus and his Apostles, made use of common bread. Many assert, that wine mixed with water was used in the celebration of the Passover, and retain that custom at present.

2. THE rites, or actions, relating to the signs, belong either to the Minister, or the people. On the Minister's part, are benediction, or consecration, which the Romans assert, is performed by these words: This is my body. But erroneously : For the benediction is nothing else but praises, and thanksgivings which Christ used, after the example of the Jews, who praised God at the celebration of the Passover. Hence we read, with Justin Martyr, and others, that the ancient primitive Christians, gave thanks unto God, the author of all things, in the celebration of the Holy Supper. Breaking, which ought by all means to be observed, Matt. xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. x. 16. Acts ii. 42. This rite has not only a respect to distribution, but to the representation of Christ's body, which was broken, so that it is erroneously omitted by the Romans, and others. Distribution, which was performed in various ways,

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in the ancient Church. For sometimes Presbyters, and at other time Deacons, distributed the bread and wine.

THE rites on the part of the people, and communicants, are the taking of the bread into their hands, and the eating of it, and the drinking of the wine. Concerning all these, various rites have been formerly used, which Johnston has described, in his book upon the communion of the ancient Church.

III. CHRIST, and likewise Paul, declare the signification of this rite. Christ does it in these words; Do this in remembrance of me. But what we are to understand by that commemoration, he teacheth, when he says, that the bread is his body broken, and the wine is the blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of sins. Therefore, the Holy Supper represents to us the death of Christ, and the benefits purchased by it. But the reason why Christ instituted a rite in commemoration of his death, was, because his death is the foundation of our salvation, in like manner as the Israelites were emancipated from Egyptian bondage, by the blood of a lamb. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death until he come, plainly declares what is the design of this Sacrament. But to announce, or shew forth the death of Christ, is not only to call it to remembrance, but to render solemn thanks unto God upon its account, and to renew its remembrance with gratitude and joy. In like man-  
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ner as the Jews in their Passover, returned solemn thanks unto God, for their deliverance from the Egyptians. Therefore, the principal duty of communicants, is to return thanks unto God. But that duty cannot be sincere, and acceptable to God, unless it be accompanied with faith, repentance, the love of Christ, and our neighbour, zeal, purity, and other virtues. Besides this principal end, others may be assigned, viz. that the Eucharist is a public mark, or token of Christianity, a declaration of brotherly love, a renewal of the baptismal vow, the spiritual food of the soul, and a pledge of the resurrection. But all these are comprehended in the end above. Thus we have briefly, and with the greatest simplicity, explained the nature of the Holy Supper. For as we are treating of a rite, which all Christians ought to celebrate, and understand its signification, in treating this argument, we ought to study simplicity, and perspicuity, and to abstain from a more prolix, and elaborate treatise, of the several questions, which are moved concerning it.

CONCERNING the eating of Christ's body, and blood, many things have been said, from John vi. With respect to which we briefly observe. First. That Christ in that chapter, does not speak of the Holy Supper, which as yet had not been instituted. Second. To eat his flesh, and drink his blood, is nothing else but to believe in him, which the reading of this Chapter most evidently demonstrates; hence it follows, that this eating may be as well without, as in the Holy Supper. Third. If by eating, no more is denoted, but that we partake of  
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Christ, and the benefits of his death, it is most certain, that we in this respect, do eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ. If any thing more be denoted by this phrase, and it be urged, that in the Holy Supper we do really feed upon, and are nourished by the real substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; it may be doubted, whether this be accurately enough spoken; for it cannot be conceived, how we should become real partakers of the real substance of the Lord, and that his body not being present, should be eaten. For the substance of his body is something corporal, in which we cannot communicate in a spiritual manner, only as far as the fruits of Christ's death, redound unto us. The Ministers of the Helvetic Churches, in the year one thousand five hundred and seventy two, wrote to a national Synod held in France, requesting in an amicable manner, that the phrase, That we really feed upon, and are nourished by the proper substance of Christ's body, should be changed in their confession of faith, and liturgy, which met with the Synod's refusal. Let Calvin be consulted, concerning that mode of expression. Instance, B. iv. Chap. 17. Sec. 7.

IV. MANY controversies have arisen, concerning the Holy Supper, which were originated from no other cause, but Christians departing from the ancient simplicity of this rite. Dismissing various rites, and ceremonies, both vain, and superstitious, by which the Supper of the Lord hath been corrupted,

ed by the Romish Church, we shall here only point out four of their principal errors, and abuses.

THE first error relates to the real presence of Christ's body, which is defended by the Papists, and Lutherans. The former hold, that the body of Christ is present by transubstantiation, which signifies, that the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of Christ's body. Paschasius Radbertus, in the ninth century, began to say: That the flesh of Christ was present in the Eucharist; which opinion was refuted, in a particular treatise by Bertram. In the tenth century, that doctrine began to spread itself farther, whilst many were calling out against it, as Berengarius; and after him the Waldenses. But it was only received in the twelfth century, and established by the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth. The Lutherans teach, that the body is in, with, and under the bread, so that the bread still remains bread, but that Christ's real body is present with the bread.

THE opinion concerning the real presence of the body of our Lord is refuted. First. Because it is contrary to the word of God, which teacheth, that Christ has a real human body, and that the Heavens contain him: Likewise, because it calls the Eucharist bread. Second. It opposes right reason, which does not admit our conceiving a body, without extension, visibility, &c. Third. Because the presence, and the eating of the flesh of Christ, is a thing monstrous, and of no utility to salvation, John vi. 63. Fourth. This opinion is absurd, and contradictory,

contradictory, and that, not only in one respect, as has been invincibly demonstrated at large, by our teachers. As to what is objected, from these words of Christ, *This is my body*, The answer is easy, viz. that they are to be understood in a figurative sense. For First. Christ spoke after the custom of the Jews, who in the Passover used these words, this is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in Egypt. Second. This phrase, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood*, cannot be understood in its proper sense, for the cup is not a covenant, but only a seal of the covenant. Third. If these words, *This is my body*, were to be understood properly, it would follow, that Christ's body even at that time was broken; for he expressly says, *This is my body which is broken*. But if the breaking is not real, neither will the presence be real. It would also follow that the Apostles did eat the body of the Lord Jesus, whilst he himself did celebrate the Holy Supper with them.

THE second error is the Church of Rome's holding, that the Eucharist is to be adored with as high a degree of religious homage, as God himself. We do not deny that adoration is due to Christ, but the adoration of the Sacrament we reject. First. Because there is no precept, no example relating to it. Second. Because the Sacrament is not Christ himself, but bread, consequently they involve themselves in the guilt of Idolatry, who pay religious worship unto bread. It may be further observed, that the people of the Romish Church, are in perpetual danger of Idolatry; because, according to the doctrine

that Church, the intention of the Priest is necessary, that consecration may be effected, and the Sacrament complete. But no one can be assured of such an intention, and therefore cannot with any certainty, know whether consecration be rightly performed, and transubstantiation accomplished.

THE third, and that a most grievous and intolerable error, is the laying aside of the cup. For in the first place, we have the express institution, and special mandate of Christ : Drink ye all of it. They answer to this, that this was spoken to the Apostles, as Apostles, or Presbyters, but not as laymen ; but if this availed any thing, the same might be said of the bread. Again, the Apostles were present at the Holy Supper, not as Presbyters, but as faithful and private persons. Christ alone administered it, and was a public person, but the Apostles represented the universal Church. The reason which is added : Which is shed for the remission of the sins of many, has a respect to the whole body of the faithful, and proves, that the cup ought to be allowed unto all for whom Christ shed his blood. Second. The mandate of Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 28. Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, includes all that are faithful. Third. The universal Church during the space of ten centuries and more, communicated under both kinds, and communion under one kind only, was at length, after the year one thousand four hundred and fourteen, prescribed in the Council of Constance. The objections which are offered, are mere trifles, as Luke xxiv. 30. And it came to pass, as he sat at  
meat

meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave it to them, viz. the two disciples going to Emmaus. And Acts ii. 46. The Holy Supper is called the breaking-of bread; for in the former passage, the Sacrament is not spoken of. In the latter, the breaking of bread denotes the entire and whole Sacrament. Likewise, that the faithful partake of the blood when they partake of the body, when the blood is included in the body; this was what they term concomitance. Also, because abstemious persons may be found, as if a divine institution, were to be altered on account of a few. With equal propriety it might be said, that the word of God ought no longer to be read or heard, because there are some persons to be met with, who are deaf or blind. Lastly, that communicating under both kinds, is obnoxious to various inconveniences, as that the blood of Christ would be liable to be spilt, &c. but such reasons are frivolous, nay impious, where the express mandate of Christ is extant.

THE fourth error is the doctrine of the Romish Church, concerning the sacrifice of the Mass; for it teacheth, that a real propitiatory sacrifice is offered in the Eucharist, in which Christ is offered for the sins both of the living and the dead. We readily grant, lest we should combat about words, that the Supper may be termed a Sacrifice, and that it was so denominated by the ancients, on account of the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice, as also the spiritual sacrifices of the faithful, prayers, praises, &c. likewise on account of the oblations, that were

usually made before communion. But that in the Eucharist, the real body of Christ is really offered in sacrifice, we deny. First. Because the Scripture no where makes mention of such a sacrifice. For these words, which are usually quoted, Do these things, &c. and that passage Mal. i. 11. Teach no such thing. Second. The Scripture teacheth many things which overthrow that sacrifice, as that Christ is the only Priest, and that his sacrifice is the only perfect one, and not to be repeated. Heb. ix. and x. Third. The nature of a Sacrament cannot consist with this. For a Sacrament is a commemoration of a sacrifice, but not a real sacrifice. Fourth. To the essence of a propitiatory sacrifice, properly called so, three things are requisite: A Priest, a victim, and the death of the victim; which three, by no means can take place here, as might be very easily shewn.

USES. Since the Holy Supper hath been instituted by our Lord, in order that it might be celebrated in the Church, Christians ought to be exhorted to the proper use of it. Here every one ought seriously to weigh, how holy a rite this is; by whom it was appointed, viz. Christ our Lord and Saviour; the time when it was instituted, viz. when he was very nigh unto death; for what end, viz. that we might shew forth his death. Therefore, nothing in religion is more holy, no act of external worship of greater moment, than the Holy Supper; so that this act invites us, to the most perfect discharge

charge of all the duties of a grateful mind, and of piety.

2. The duty of such as approach to the Holy Supper, is related, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29. In which, they offend variously, who do not at all examine themselves, or after an improper manner. Also such as are entirely satisfied without self-examination, being no way solicitous about the reformation of their lives. Lastly, those who do not persevere in a course of piety. But there can be no better preparation, than to procure a habit of piety, in the ordinary course of life, and always to maintain communion with Christ, as well when celebrating the Sacred Supper, as at other times. They are all in an error, who imagine, that piety and devotion are only requisite, when we are called to the Eucharist.

WITH respect to the controversies, concerning the Supper, the following particulars may be observed. When we reflect upon the errors of the Romish Church, the question may be proposed, how comes it to pass, that errors and abuses of so gross a nature, have prevailed for so many ages, and are still retained. The reason of this is at hand. That proceeds from ignorance of the word of God, and the defect of knowledge, from prejudices, education, fear of persecution, a desire of retaining wealth and dignities, &c. Wherefore it will be our duty, to render due thanks unto God, that we have been delivered from so many, and so gross errors; which yet will avail us nothing, unless our profession, and knowledge of the truth be attended with purity of  
B b 3 life,

life. In vain do we boast, that those errors and abuses which relate to doctrine and worship, are removed, whilst others no less dangerous, are flagrant among us, I mean such as relate to morals, practice, and discipline; which are equally inconsistent with the word of God.

THESE, ought likewise to impell us to the proper use of the Holy Supper. We reject the doctrine concerning the real presence of the Lord's body. But the divine and spiritual presence of Christ, ought to beget within us, the highest veneration. The Papists adore the Sacrament. It is fit that we should adore God and our Saviour, with the greatest humility, as sitting at the right hand of God. We partake of the cup, as well as the bread, but of what advantage will it be to us, to receive both signs, and to enjoy an entire Sacrament, if we abuse it, and trample under foot the blood of Christ, as an unholy thing. We defend the perfection of Christ's Sacrifice, in opposition to the Sacrifice of the Mass. But of what service will that be to us, if we render that sacrifice unprofitable to us, through impenitence, and unbelief. It appears from what has been said, how these controversies may be handled to advantage, and edification.

OF THE LATTER PART.

SECTION VII.

CONCERNING A FUTURE WORLD.

CHAP. I.

*Of the State of Men after Death.*

**W**E come now to the last head of Theology, viz. that which respects a future world, which consists of five parts. First. Concerning the State of Men after Death. Second. The end of the World. Third. The Resurrection. Fourth. Universal Judgment. Fifth. Life and Death eternal.

WITH respect to the state of men after death, it is to be observed, in the first place, that the soul does not perish with the body, which may be proved. First. Because right reason informs us, that the soul is of a substance entirely different from the body, and not liable to corruption; hence the very Heathens believed in the immortality of the soul. Second. From Scripture, Matt. x. 28. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Eccles. xii. 9. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

BUT it is questioned, what the state of souls will be, when separated from the body. First. Some have been of opinion, that the souls slept, and were destitute of all sense, and perception, until the resurrection, who are therefore termed, *Psychopannichites*, or soul-sleepers, whose opinion ought by no means to be admitted, as appears from what has been already said, and will be evinced, from what we are afterwards to observe.

2. THE ROMANS teach, that the souls are in Purgatory; that is, the souls of such as have not died in mortal sin, to satisfy there for venial, as also for mortal sins, the guilt of which has been remitted, but not the punishment. That they are there tormented with corporal fire for some time, in order to be purified, and satisfy divine justice. This doctrine is deservedly rejected. For, First. There is not the least traces of this fire to be met with in Scripture, nor of prayers for the dead, and other things connected with this doctrine. For these passages, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Every man's work shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, &c. And xv. 29. Concerning Baptism for the dead, and Matt. xii. 32. make nothing for the purpose. Second. The Scripture teacheth such things, concerning the state of souls after death, as overthrow a Purgatory, as shall soon be made appear. Third. That doctrine opposes the perfect satisfaction of Christ, and the full remission of sins. Fourth. It was unknown in the first ages after Christ, and is only calculated for procuring gain. It cannot indeed be denied, that even so early as the third century,

century, prayers were used for the dead, but for a different end than those which are offered for the souls which are said to be in Purgatory. viz. the ancient Christians returned thanks unto God, for the happy departure of the Holy Martyrs, and prayed that he might grant them a happy resurrection.

3. IT can scarcely be asserted, that souls after death do immediately enter into the enjoyment of perfect and absolute felicity in Heaven, or that they endured the same torments which Christ by his last sentence will inflict upon the wicked. For the Scripture assigns both remuneration and punishment, to the ultimate judgment of God. Matt. xiii. 41. &c. and xxv. 46. 1 Theff. iv. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 8. There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also which love his appearance.

BESIDES, man cannot be perfect, as long as his body, which is an essential part of him, is under the power of death.

4. YET we assert, that the souls of the godly are now in a state of felicity, and that they are in possession of tranquility and joy, in the presence of the Lord. And on the other hand, that the wicked are miserable. First. Reason teacheth us, that such is the nature of the soul, that it cannot be destitute of sense and thought, or otherwise it must perish: Because its essence consists in thought. Therefore, if it were deprived of thought it must perish. Second.

cond. It was believed, that the souls of the just were received after death into a state of rest; but that the contrary was the case of the wicked. This was not entirely hid from the Heathens, as appears from their sayings concerning the Elysian fields, and Hell, and at present the inhabitants of Africa, China, and America, are not quite ignorant of it. We learn what was the opinion of the Jews, from the third chapter of Wisdom v. 1. 2. 3. and xvi. 14. and 2 Maccab. vii 36. and this was the received opinion among them, in the time of Christ, as also among the primitive Christians, though they believed that the godly were not to be translated into Heaven, until after the resurrection, which they prove by the example of Christ. Third. the Scripture confirms this opinion. Eccles. xii. 9. Matt. x. 28. Luke xvi. 22. 23. Concerning the rich glutton and Lazarus. With respect to which passage we may observe, that Christ speaks here entirely according to the opinion of the Jews, who believe, that the godly after death were received into Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, but that the wicked were thrust down into hell. To which opinion Christ would have never accommodated his discourse, had it been false. But the series of this parable manifestly supposes, that Christ speaks concerning the state in which men are placed after death, and before the last judgment.

BESIDES there are other express passages, as the words of Christ. Luke xxiii. 43. To day thou shalt be with me in Paradise, which expressly denote, a state of happiness immediately after death. For that

that word, *To day*, teaches us beyond all controversy, that that Robber was received into Paradise, on the very day, in which he died along with Christ, who here speaks according to the opinion of the Jews, and uses their very expressions. Other passages might be added, as Acts vii. 59. Where Stephen calls out, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. 2 Cor. v. 1. 2. 3. For we know that if this earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, &c. 1 Pet. iv. 10. Rev. xiv. 13. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Especially, Phil. i. 23. Where Paul hesitating, whether he ought to desire life or death, supposes, that immediately after death, he would be with the Lord. Otherwise, if he was only to be partaker of that blessedness, after the resurrection, he would have no cause of this doubtfulness, neither would he have been sooner or later happy, though his death had been hastened or deferred.

**USES.** This doctrine ought to be seriously meditated upon by all. There is none who can avoid death, and consequently none who ought not to be concerned about his condition after death.

1. THIS doctrine is productive of the highest consolation, which would suffer great diminution, were we to expect nothing before the day of judgment. Praise therefore be to our God, who hath inspired us with such noble expectations, as afford the most solid,

lid, and efficacious consolation against the fear of death, and replenish the souls of the faithful, with ineffible joy in the hour of it.

2. THEREFORE our lives ought to be ordered in such a manner, as might enable us to look for this happy departure.

WHEN we reflect upon the state of the soul, when separated from the body, let us remember, that it is the most excellent part of us, in which we shall instantaneously, after death, receive the rewards or punishments of our past lives. But let us abandon all anxious cares, concerning the body which is reduced to dust, let us divest ourselves of corporeal pleasures, and employ our utmost efforts, in order that our minds may be more and more purified and united unto God.

3. THE doctrine contained in this chapter, warns us maturely, and without further delay, to engage ourselves in the study of good works. Life passes over very quickly, so that should we die in sin, there is no further hope of salvation remaining. Whatever we have omitted, or neglected in this life cannot be compensated in a future one. Let us hasten our repentance, whilst an opportunity is offered us, lest that our last hour should find us unprepared.

## C H A P. II.

*Concerning the End of the World.*

**T**HERE are four questions propounded concerning the end of the world, or consummation of time. First. What we are to understand, by that world which is to be destroyed. Second. How it is to be destroyed. Third. When. Fourth. What will be its state after its consummation.

I. By the world here, we are not to understand the universal system of things, as the remoter Heavens, stars, &c. But that globe which we inhabit, and whatever things do nearly surround it. Peter indeed, 2 Eph. iii. 10, speaks of the Heavens and the earth; but that is to be understood of that Heaven, which approacheth nearest unto our earth, for he mentions, that the same world will be destroyed by fire, which formerly perished by the deluge. But the deluge could by no means reach to the higher Heavens.

II. THIS desolation of the world will be effected by fire. It hath been believed among the Heathens, that the world would not always endure. There are many passages in Scripture, which treat of the end of the world, as Gen. viii. 22. Pf. cii. 26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure, &c. Matt. xxiv. 25. Heaven and earth shall pass away. 2 Pet. iii. &c. The Apostles often speak of the end of all things; but there is a most ancient, and constant

constant tradition concerning fire. The words of Josephus are memorable. *Antiq. B. I. Chap. III.* That Adam predicted the universal destruction of things, one by fire, and another by a deluge. The stoicks Heraclitus, Empedocles, and the ancient Indian Philosophers the Brackmans, taught the conflagration of the world. Cicero. *B. I.* Upon the nature of the Gods, introduces a stoick saying, that it was in futurity, that the whole world would be set on fire. And Ovid ;

*Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur affore tempus,  
Quo mare, quo tellus, universaque regio coeli  
Ardeat et mundi moles operosa laboret.*

It is also upon record, that it has been decreed, that time was approaching in which the whole earth, and universal region of Heaven would be in flames, and the elaborate mass of the world convulsed. And Peter teacheth this most clearly, *2 Eph. iii. 6. 7.* The world that then was, being overflowed with water perished ; but the Heavens and the earth, which now are, are reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Which words are absolutely and unskilfully interpreted, as relating to the destruction of Jerusalem : For a close inspection into that passage, and the series of the discourse plainly shew, that they are spoken of the end of the world, and not the destruction of Jerusalem.

III. THE time of the end of the world is unknown ; to which refers that passage, *Matt. xxiv. 36.* But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only. Yet there

there are signs, by which men will know when that end is nearly approaching. Paul, 2 Theff. ii. 1. 2. &c. teacheth, that the Son of Perdition will be revealed and destroyed, before the day of the Lord cometh. The conversion of the Jews and Gentiles will also precede the end of time; as also that happy state of the Church predicted by John. When these things shall be accomplished, it will be easy to know that the end of the world is at hand. Perhaps, at that time there may also appear signs and wonders in Heaven, and there may happen dreadful, and uncommon changes in the world, and affairs of mankind.

IV. It is enquired, what the state of the world will be after this conflagration; and whether it will be destroyed as to its essence, or only its qualities? Or whether it will be totally annihilated, or only renewed? Scarcely any thing can be determined here with precision. Yet the latter opinion seems most probable, and is confirmed from that passage in Peter, for he says, that the world shall perish by fire, as it had formerly perished by the flood. And the Apostle adds, that after this conflagration, we are to look for a new Heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. But in these things it is safest to determine nothing precisely.

USES. Peter teacheth the use of this doctrine. 2 Eph. iii. where, in the first place, he confutes certain prophane persons, who held what is said concerning the end of the world in derision, and confirms this doctrine by the history of the Flood. Second.

cond. He points out the cause, why the Lord defers his coming, viz. because he is merciful, and grants unto all men an opportunity to repent. Third. He shews, that this ultimate conflagration is a most powerful motive to piety, and good works, viz. because here we may easily learn, how great the vanity of this world is, and what they are to expect, who indulge themselves in a vicious course of life. The fire of that great day will consume the wicked, and that day will be a day of destruction. See verse 7 of that chapter. Fourth. Peter teacheth, that there is another world, another life, the duration of which will be eternal, after which we ought to aspire by holiness of life, v. 13. and 14.

## C H A P. III.

### *Concerning the Resurrection.*

**W**E shall here in the first place, demonstrate the certainty, and truth of the Resurrection. Second. Explain the nature of it.

SINCE the Resurrection is the foundation of all our hope, and consequently of universal religion; its truth ought to be confirmed by the most solid arguments. 1 Cor. xv. 16. 17. If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised, and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. The Sadduces of old denied it. Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8. Also some Hereticks belonging to the Church of Corinth, who, no doubt were imbued

ed with the leaven of the Sadduces. 1 Cor. xv. 12. also, 2 Tim. ii. 18. In the present age, there were some of the Socinians, who denied the resurrection of the wicked.

THE universal resurrection of mankind is proven by a threefold kind of argument. First. From the testimony of Scripture, and first, indeed, from various passages which confirm this doctrine, not in a direct manner; but by necessary consequence, as Matt. xxii. 31. 32. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, therefore, since God calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, &c. who yet were dead, it is necessary that they should revive. There are many passages from which such a consequence may be drawn, as when Paul says, that the bodies of the faithful are the temple of the Holy Ghost, that Christ hath redeemed both soul and body. 1 Cor. vi. &c. Besides there are places, in which this doctrine is openly and expressly delivered, as Dan. xii. 2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake some to everlasting life, &c. John v. 28. The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Acts xxiv. 15. Especially; 1 Cor. xv. where this question is handled directly, and in plain terms. It is true indeed, that the promise concerning the resurrection, was not so fully revealed under the Old Testament, as under the New. Yet that the godly, even then entertained the hopes of it, is evident, from 2

Maccab. vii. 9. 14. 23. which seems likewise to be proved from Heb. v. 19.

2. FROM examples taken both from the Old and New Testament, 2 Kings, iv. 36. 37 concerning the Shernommite's son, who was raised by Elisha. and xiii. 21. The person who was restored to life, upon touching Elisha's bones. Luke vii. 12. The widow of Nain's son. John xi. Lazarus. Matt. xxvii. 52. Those who were risen at the time of Christ's death. But the principal example was the resurrection of Christ, which argument Paul chiefly insists upon, 1 Cor. xv. And this was one of the principal causes, why God condescended to expose his Son to death, viz. that by his illustrious example, he might confirm the faith and hope of the resurrection.

3. FROM various arguments, taken from the most certain principles of religion, both natural and revealed. This doctrine agrees excellently well with right reason and conscience, as also with what we have formerly observed, concerning the difference between moral good and evil, rewards and punishments in a future life, and concerning God, Religion, and Providence. Faith in God, and Christ, cannot consist without the hope of remuneration, and all the capital points of religion, must fall to the ground if the dead are not raised: as Paul demonstrates at large, 1 Cor. xv. All the parts of which capter, its argument's and reasons, ought to be particularly considered.

II. WITH respect to the resurrection itself, there are two particulars which the Scriptures teach, First. The persons who are to be raised. Second. In what state.

I. ALL men shall be raised, both good and evil. John vi. 28. 29. Matt. xxv. 31. &c. Acts xxiv. 15. Where Paul says, that he had hope toward God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. 2 Cor. v. 10. All must appear before the tribunal of Christ, &c. 2 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. xx. 12. but it may be enquired, whether the same bodies shall be raised, or if men shall be clothed with new bodies? The former ought by all means to be maintained, otherwise there would be no resurrection, but only a new creation; neither would the Scripture have taught us, that those who sleep shall come out of the dust, and that the dust of the earth shall deliver up their dead. Again, since man consists of soul and body, it seems entirely requisite, in order that the same man should rise, that he should have the same body. The resurrection of Christ also proves this, since he had the same body at his resurrection and ascension. Besides Paul tells us, that these vile bodies, this corruptible and mortal, shall be changed. Phil. iii. 21. It is said that Christ will change these vile bodies of ours, that they may be like unto his glorious body. 1 Cor. xv. 42. 43. 44. also 53. Besides it is to be observed, that all, both Jews and Christians, when treating of the resurrection, always understood the resurrection of the body. See that passage, 2 Maccab. vii. already quoted. The objections of

the Sadduces, suppose the same, Matt. 22. 24. And the judgment of the Heathens, concerning this doctrine, Acts xvii. 32. We learn from Tertullian, Minucius, Felix, and other ancient writers, that this was the principal objection of the adversaries to Christianity. How could it be possible, that our bodies should be restored? In order to remove which objection, it may be observed, that if there were no resurrection of the body, Christ and his followers would have plainly said, that the Sadduces and Heathens did not understand this doctrine, and that the bodies were not to be raised, but they said no such thing, but took their answers from Scripture, and the omnipotence of God, which supposes the resurrection of the bodies. As to the objections commonly offered, How could bodies, after being dissolved into the smallest particles, be again restored? We answer, That as there is nothing contradictory in this, we ought to acquiesce in the promises and omnipotence of God. We ought so to adhere to the simplicity of the word of God, as not to indulge the vanity and giddiness of curiosity; we only add, that there is no more power requisite, for the restoration of a body, the parts of which, however dissolved and dispersed, yet still exist, than would be required, in order to create a new body.

2. BUT though the bodies shall be raised, they shall also be adorned with new qualities. Phil. iii. 21. 2 Cor. xv. 42. &c. but what these qualities precisely will be, cannot be distinctly conceived; they

they will principally consist in spirituality, and immortality.

THE transmutation of the living, shall immediately succeed the resurrection of the dead, concerning which, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 52. and 1 Thess. iv. at the end. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. There is a passage extant in Rev. xx. 4. 5. 6. concerning a twofold resurrection, one of the martyrs, and another of the rest of mankind, but the sense, of that passage is controverted.

USES. 1 The hope of a resurrection affords the strongest consolation against the calamities of this life, against persecutions, to which we are sometimes obnoxious, nay, even against death itself. 1 Cor. xv. 19. also 53. 54. And the more so as that hope is most certain, and confirmed by so many promises, examples, and arguments. When we reflect upon this within ourselves, we ought to say with Peter, 1 Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again, unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

2. WE ought to draw from this doctrine, the strongest motives and incitements to piety, lest in that hope we should be entirely frustrated. Acts xxiv. 16. We shall indeed be raised, let our lives be what they will. The wicked shall rise, but it

were better for them, that they always remained under death. Lastly, the hope of a resurrection, can only be of advantage to such as being filled with it, do purify themselves. 1 John iii. 3. We cannot otherwise prepare ourselves better for the resurrection, than by endeavouring to subdue the body, and the lusts thereof; and if whilst we are in the body, we become daily more spiritual, so that at length being partakers of a blessed resurrection, we may become like unto the Angels of Heaven. Luke xx. 35. 36.

#### C H A P. IV.

##### *Concerning the last Judgment.*

**F**IRST. We shall demonstrate the certainty of a Judgment. Secondly. Treat of the Judgment itself.

I. THE former of these is demonstrated chiefly by three arguments. First. By reasons adduced above, which were drawn from the energy of conscience, the distinction between moral good and evil; also this, that a God exists, who is the governor and judge of the world, and who is holy just and good. All of which prove, not indeed directly that there will be a judgment, in which all men will be judged together, for that hath been notified by revelation only, but that there will be a distribution of rewards and punishments, after this life. So that this doctrine exactly corresponds with the dic-  
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tates of right reason, and rests upon the universal consent of mankind.

2. THE Scripture either teacheth this expressly, as Jude, verse 14. Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all that are ungodly, &c. Job. xxxiv. 11. Ps. lxii. 13. Eccles. xii. 14. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Matt. xxv. 28. &c. Acts xvii. 31. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. 2 Cor. v. 10. 2 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. xx. 2. Or by consequence, for whatever the Scripture delivers concerning God, concerning Christ, concerning faith, &c. are so agreeable, and so closely connected with the doctrine of a future judgment, that laying it aside the others must be reduced to nothing.

3. IT was the Divine pleasure, that there should be extant, various illustrious examples, by which men might be instructed concerning a future judgment, viz. he has exhibited various instances of his justice against the creatures, and particular persons, or nations. For instance, the punishment of the Angels, the Deluge, the overthrow of the Sodomites, the various destructions of the Israelites, which argument Peter uses. 2 Epist. chap. ii. 9. 10. The Epist. of Jude, verse 5 6 &c. Many things also occur in the ordinary course of Providence,

dence, which fully evince that God is the judge of the world.

IT is in vain objected here, that the godly are oftentimes miserable in this life, and that the wicked do prosper, for that rather confirms the certainty of a judgment. Because, if the godly and the wicked reaped the fruits of their deserts in this life, it might thence be concluded, that we were to expect nothing after death. But since the contrary sometimes happens, it plainly indicates, that God in an after state will render unto each according to their works.

II. WITH respect to the Judgment itself, we have to consider, who is to be judge, who are the persons to be judged, how, what will be the end, or event of this judgment, and lastly its time.

I. THE Lord Jesus will be judge, John v. 22, For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Matt. xvi. 27. and xxv. 31. Acts. xvii. 31. 1 Cor. xv. 24. But it behoveth him, who will be the judge of the world, and mankind, to be omniscient powerful, and just. This likewise adds the greatest influence to the commandments, and threatnings of the Gospel, since we are to be judged by the very same person, who died for us, and who delivered his commandments unto us. Therefore men have no cause, why they should either complain, or flatter themselves, since their Saviour is to be their judge. But Jesus Christ will descend visibly from  
Heaven,

Heaven, and render himself conspicuous unto all. How magnificent his advent will be, we learn from Matt. xxv. 32. Rev. xxi. 11. &c.

2. ALL men shall be judged, the quick and the dead, the good and the evil, of whatever state and condition they are. Matt. xxv. 32. Rev. xxi. 12. Nay, the Heathen. Rom. ii. 12. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law. And all shall appear together, and at the same time, before their Judge, wherefore this judgment is termed universal. It may be collected from various passages in Scripture, that the wicked Angels shall then be judged also, as Matt. 25. 41. where fire is said to be prepared for the Devil and his Angels. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Epist. of Jude, 6. It is said that God hath reserved the Angels, who kept not the first estate, unto the judgment of that great day.

3. As to the manner and method in which this judgment will be conducted, it is to be observed, (a) that God will judge men according to their works, Rom. ii. 6. according to the good, and evil which they have done, 2 Cor. v. 10. and in which they have persevered until death, likewise according to their words and thoughts, as also their sins of omission. (b) They shall be judged by the law of God, and the measure of knowledge which they enjoyed, viz. Such as had no other law but the law of nature, shall be judged by the natural law, and those to whom a divine revelation was given, shall be judged according to the law of revelation.

revelation. Rom. ii. 9. 10. and 14. 15. (c) This judgment is not so to be conceived, as if a judicial process were to commence against every man by interrogations, witnesses, &c. The judgment shall pass in every man's conscience, the good shall be separated from the evil, all being conscious of the good and evil which they have done, shall acknowledge the reasonableness and equity of that judgment, whilst they will be either received into Heaven, or thrust down into Hell.

4. THE event of this judgment will be life and death eternal, of which we are soon to treat.

5. WITH respect to the time of that judgment, besides what has been already said, concerning the end of the world, there are two things to be observed. (a) That its time is certain, and determined. For God hath appointed a day for the last judgment. Acts xvii. 31. Hence, frequent mention is made of that great day in the New Testament. (b) That the time of it is unknown, and concealed from us. 2 Pet. iii. 10. That day shall come as a thief in the night. There are many reasons which shew it necessary, that the time when we are to be judged, should be hidden from us, that men might live in the daily expectation of it, and be incited to vigilance. Matt. xxiv. 41. Watch therefore, for ye know not the hour in which your Lord will come. But since our state immediately after death is immutable, nor is there any more regress to salvation, or damnation, therefore

fore, every person is said to be judged at the hour of death.

USES. There is scarcely any doctrine productive of so many uses, as this; the principal of which are as follow.

1. SINCE the whole efficacy of this doctrine depends upon our being firmly persuaded of the certainty of a judgment, it is of great moment, to give due attention to the arguments and reasons which establish the truth of it. Here the most of men are culpable, whose faith is unstable, who entertain only a certain slender, and superficial opinion concerning it, which not being well rooted, remains barren and without efficacy in the heart.

2. PETER affords us the second use. 1 Eph. i. 17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. No doctrine tends more to produce within us an ardent desire after piety. Which use, if any one desires to prosecute more particularly, let him resume those five articles which we have already mentioned. First. Christ will be judge, who is omnipotent, and omniscient, who has a thorough knowledge of all our words, thoughts, and actions, so that no one shall escape his judgment. Second. All men shall be judged, of whatever condition they are, and according to  
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the nature of their state ; great and small, rich and poor, kings and pastors, &c.

3. **THEY** shall be judged according to their works. The rule of judgment will be the divine law, and respect will be had chiefly to the tenor of our lives. Hidden things shall then be revealed, and all those sins which are latent from men, shall be brought to light. Therefore our greatest care should be, to live a life of godliness, and to be much employed in doing good works, so that when that tremendous day cometh, we may appear with confidence before the tribunal of Christ. Then it will avail us nothing, that we were Christians, or had the knowledge of God, an account of our works must be given. But if the discourse here be pointed principally at the ungodly, this argument will afford the greatest scope, for saying a great many things.

4. **THE** event of this judgment ought to create within us the most awful dread, and at the same time the most rejoicing hopes, and expectations. Who could rest unconcerned, when speaking of the rewards, and punishments of eternity ? How great the madness of those, who, that they might gratify their sensual desires, plunge themselves in eternal destruction ? The pleasures which we perceive from the enjoyments of sin, do vanish in a short time ; but the fruits of sin endure through eternity. Fifth. What the Scripture relates concerning the time of this judgment are of the greatest consequence : The time is concealed from us,  
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when we are to be placed at the judgment seat of God ; but every one knows that death is most certain, and very nigh to us. Let us therefore beware lest it should find us unprepared, let us watch and pray without ceasing, according to our Saviour's admonition, and whilst we are looking for that glorious hope, and illustrious advent of the glory of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, let us live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Tit. i. 12. 13.

## C H A P. V.

*Concerning Life Eternal.*

**T**HIS is the last head of Theology, as life eternal, is the end and scope of religion, concerning which we may observe in general : That we know but imperfectly, wherein it consists. These four following particulars we are certain of. First. That it is another life reserved after death. Second. That it is a life of happiness. Third. Eternal. Fourth. That it is destined only for the godly.

I. THIS life is to be considered as a life of the entire man, that is, both with respect to the body, and soul, and far more excellent than that, which we at present enjoy. The body will be immortal, and the soul a living Spirit ; that is, living of itself, and subsisting without the use of such means as are now necessary, for the preservation of life, 1 Cor. xv. 45. But as we are to enjoy  
eternal

eternal life, with respect to the body, hence is confirmed the doctrine of the resurrection.

II. IT will be a life of happiness which shall consist of two parts. First. An immunity from the evils of this life, such as diseases, pains, sin, death, as also from those of a future one, viz. those dreadful torments, which are destined for the wicked, Second. In future of the chief good, viz. God, or in the vision, i. e. the knowledge or love of God.

WE shall then know God, and his works, in a far more perfect manner than they are known at present, I say his works, whether of nature, and providence, or of grace, and redemption, which knowledge it is very probable, will be successive, and progressive. To this knowledge will be united, perfect sanctity, or the perfect love of God. But that holiness will not be of the same nature, with the holiness of this life. First. For there will be no occasion in Heaven for many offices, which we have to discharge, while upon earth, such as avoiding temptations, temperance, patience, beneficence, faith, hope. Second. We will also have to perform many duties there, which we cannot discharge here. Third. Those duties, which are imposed upon us now, shall then be discharged in the most perfect manner, such are the love of God, and of mankind, in which love, all our perfection and happiness will consist. Then we shall enjoy the fellowship, and love of God, of Christ, of the Angels, Apostles, Martyrs, and in

a word of all the Saints, and consequently consummate and perfect felicity.

III. WITH respect to the duration of that state, it will be eternal, so it is every where expressed in Scripture, and this is what greatly augments the beatitude of the saints.

IV. LASTLY, and what ought chiefly to be attended to, is, that this life is only destined for the godly : For, First. It is promised to them alone, all others being excluded. Matt. xxv. 46. The just shall go into life eternal. Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Rev. xxii. 14. 15. Second. Such is the nature of eternal life, and its happiness, that such as have persevered in sin, and have been destitute of piety and holiness, cannot be made partakers of it, as is evident from what we have already observed, concerning God's justice, and the necessity of good works.

THERE are two questions moved here. First. Whether the remembrance of the things of this life, will take place in a future one, and whether the saints will have any knowledge of each other. To which questions we answer in the affirmative. For, First. It cannot be conceived, how the saints could know that they were the same persons who formerly lived in this world, if no idea, no remembrance of their past life remained. Second. It cannot be conceived, how the saints should celebrate God's praise, for his goodness in calling them  
them

them to salvation, by the Gospel, if they did not remember that they formerly lived in this world, and that they derived the knowledge of Christ, from the preaching of his Gospel, and were members of his Church, all of which suppose the remembrance of time, place, persons, and other circumstances. Third. The saints will converse upon the benefits of God in their past state, and other subjects; so that of course they must know each other. Fourth. It contributes not a little to the glory of God, and the felicity of the saints, that they should know so many pious souls, as have faithfully worshipped God, as the Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs. Now if those excellent servants of God, are to be known by all the godly, which can scarcely be called in question, why not others? What Paul asserts. 1 Theff. ii. 19. 20. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory, and joy. Evidently supposes, that Paul and the faithful shall mutually know each other.

NOR ought it to be objected, that granting this knowledge, the absence of their friends and kindred, would create uneasiness to the saints. That objection is frivolous, for the saints will then love none, but in God, and on God's account, and here we understand such a knowledge, as hath nothing in common with terrestrial, and carnal affections.

2. It is asked, whether there will be degrees of glory? The most of Divines answer in the affirmative, and they prove this, both from Scripture, as Matt. xxv. In the parable of the talents, 1 Cor. iii. 14. 15. 2 Cor. ix. 6. He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Matt. xix. 28. Dan. xii. They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever. And from reason, First. A special and higher degree of glory, can scarcely be denied to some certain persons, as the Apostles and Martyrs. Second. We can scarcely conceive, that a person who has spent the greatest part of his life in wickedness, and at length reformed a little before death, should obtain as high a degree of glory, as he who devotes the whole of his life time to piety, and has contributed much to the glory of God, and the salvation of men: God indeed rewards no person out of debt, but he has a respect to the state, life, and obedience of men. But though we grant, that there are degrees of glory, yet we are not to imagine, that they will be the less happy, upon that account, who have obtained a smaller portion; shall the sower or the husbandman be the less happy, or complain of his state, because he is not crowned with the same glory as the Apostle Paul. In a future world, there will be no room left for envy, all things shall be referred unto God, and God shall be praised in all and by all. On the other hand is objected, that passage, Matt. xx. 9. 10. Concerning those labourers, who being hired about

the eleventh hour, received as much wages, as those who had been hired early in the morning. But the meaning is, that the Gentiles who were to be called last, unto the divine covenant, should be partakers of the same grace, and the same benefits with the Jews, who had long since, and before the Gentiles, been called unto that covenant.

USES. What we are to mention here, may be reduced to two heads. First. That there is an eternal life. Second. For whom it is reserved.

1. SINCE there is a life after death, and that most happy and eternal, what is it that can affect men more, afford them more solid comfort, or fill them with greater joy? There is nothing which they desire more than life, so that the life which they enjoy at present, though short and calamitous, is desirable, and they are not more solicitous about any thing, than its preservation. How much therefore ought the certain, and unquestionable hope of that celestial life affect us? Who would not here acknowledge the divine energy, and excellency of the Christian religion?

2. BUT what chiefly merits attention, is, that this life is not reserved for all. Indeed all have access unto it, by faith in Jesus Christ. But all have not faith, and consequently all are not partakers of eternal life. We have already proved, from places of Scripture, and reason, that it is promised of God, and reserved for the pious only. So that the unbelieving and impenitent part of mankind

mankind shall be excluded from it. Of which also we are frequently reminded by Scripture. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Rev. xxii. 15. For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loveth and maketh a lie. Therefore, the legitimate use of this present life, will be, to prepare ourselves for the fruition of that life which is to come. This may be accomplished, if we but duely weigh wherein the nature of that spiritual, and celestial life consists, which shall unite us unto God, and the Angels, and bring us to resemblance of them; the which we shall live in Heaven, and not upon earth. We shall become worthy of it, by always advancing towards that state, as far as is possible, by subduing the flesh, offering up prayers, and by raising our thoughts, desires, and endeavours, towards him, and Heaven, and heavenly things. Col. iii. 23. Thus it shall come to pass, that having begun that blessed life here, that having lived to God before death, we shall forever live with him after death.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Of Death Eternal.*

**T**HE same thing may be observed concerning the state of the wicked in a future world, that we formerly mentioned concerning eternal life, viz. that we cannot precisely define wherein the nature of that state will consist. The following observations may suffice.

#### I. THAT

I. THAT there are punishments after this life, which is evident. First. From innumerable places in Scripture, in which there is no ambiguity, as Matt. xxv. 46. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. 2 Pet. ii. 9. The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust, unto the day of judgment, to be punished. And, Second. From reasons which we have already produced, concerning judgment, and the resurrection.

WITH respect to the nature of punishments, three particulars are to be considered. First. Their weight. Second. Duration. Third. Degrees. First. They will be most grievous punishments, not only of privation, but likewise of sense. This is vindicated by the various places of Scripture, both proper and figurative, concerning hell, fire, weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Mark ix. 43. 44. Luke xvi. 23. In which places, it is plain, that Christ denotes the punishments of a future life, both from the series of his discourse, as also because he speaks here according to the custom of the Jews, who distinguished these punishments by these phrases. Yet these figurative expressions are not to be understood precisely, according to their literal meaning. They are only images, or representations of a state of the greatest misery. These punishments comprehend. First. A privation of the chief good, separation from God, and exclusion from the happiness of Heaven, which is denoted by these words of Christ, depart from me ye cursed. Matt. xxv. 41. also, 1. Cor. vi. 10. Rev. xxii. 15. Second. The sufferance

ferance of the gréateft evils, and moft intense punishments, both of body and foul. With respect to the body it is asked, whether the wicked shall be tormented with material fire? Truly we cannot conceive that bodies should be always burning; and yet that they should not perish, nor be destroyed. It is very probable, that the wicked shall be tormented for some space of time, with that fire which, at the end of the world, shall consume all things, which being finished, they shall survive. Therefore, the proper, and most severe punishments, are those of the soul, and that most intense sorrow, which proceeds from the loss of the chief good, which is attended with desperation, and remorse of conscience. For conscience will accuse the wicked, because they rejected salvation, when offered them, and willingly thrust themselves into the banishment. Which sorrow will be greatly augmented by despair, as there will remain no hope of deliverance. Many, when discoursing upon the punishments of the damned, attribute to them hatred against God, blasphemies, &c. But absurdly. For hatred against God cannot be applied to any creature, however wicked, and if such a hatred were to be found among the damned, they would not grieve so intensely on account of their being separated from him. They will some way or other be sensible, that God is the chief good of man, and besides, will acknowledge the justice of his judgment.

II. WITH respect to the duration of these punishments, we learn from the word of God, that they are eternal in the same respect, as in the context,

text, life is termed eternal. Besides, Rev. xiv. 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever, and ever. And xx. 10. And the Devil and Beast, and the false Prophet, shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Also what is said concerning the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. But it is best to speak soberly here, and with the word of God. It is sufficient to believe, that whether God hath spoken is true, and that he will not punish any, beyond their deserts. The difficulties which are moved concerning the eternity of punishments, take their rise from our not understanding precisely, what the state of reprobates will be.

III. WHAT relates to the degrees of punishment is plain, and evident, and the justice of God makes it entirely requisite, that every one should be punished according to the number and nature of their sins. But the atrocity, and measure of sins shall be estimated according to the degree of knowledge and grace, which was granted in this life. Luke xii. 47. 48. That servant which knew his will, prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. Matt. xi. 21. 22. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre, and Sydon, in the day of judgment, than for you. So that the Heathens shall be treated more gently, than Christians; and among Christians, those shall undergo greater punishments, who have obtained a larger degree of grace.

USES,

USES. There are three things to be considered here, the certainty, severity, and degrees of those punishments. First. Even the Heathens were not ignorant of punishments being reserved for the wicked after this life: How much more firmly should this doctrine be believed by Christians, who have such clear evidences from the word of God, and so many arguments to support it. How comes it to pass then, that the most of men are but little affected with the dread of them. And not only this, but they bring them down upon themselves, and like persons blind, or brutes, rush headlong into destruction, viz. because they are destitute of faith, do not reflect, nor turn their attention towards these things.

2. BESIDES, we ought to contemplate the grievous nature of these infernal regions, how dreadful a thing it must be, to be excluded from the chief good, from the presence of God, from the fellowship of the Saints and Angels; and to be joined in fellowship with the most wicked, nay, with the Devil himself, and the apostate Angels to be tormented with the stings of conscience, and over and above all this, with desperation. There is one thing very moving, viz. that the damned have knowingly, and after long and frequent admonitions, cast themselves into that deplorable state, because they would not cleave unto God and Christ, in order that they might be partakers with the Saints in the celestial kingdom, and avoid such dreadful torments.

3. WE

3. WE ought to recollect what we have taught; concerning the degrees of punishment from the word of God. These certainly ought to beget fear and solicitude, in such as God has favoured with a remarkable degree of knowledge. The greater benefits God loads us with, the more bountifully he supplies us with what is necessary to godliness, the greater should our terror be, when reflecting on the degrees of punishment.

Now before we conclude, one thing is to be observed occasionally, from what has been said, viz. That of all men, such as are employed in the Sacred Ministry, shall meet with the most severe and grievous punishments, if they are deficient in their duty, and that on account of their sacred function, and the degree of knowledge conferred upon them by God. Those, I say, are the unprofitable servants and hypocrites, who shall be cast into utter darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. *Matt. xxiv. 45-51.* These considerations ought to impel such as are vested with the ministerial office, to piety, vigilance, and temperance, they ought to excite their diligence, inflame their zeal, and rescue them from the love of the world, and youthful lusts. To this let all their studies, undertakings, actions, and in a word their whole life be referred; let this be the scope of our studies, and of our Theological Treatise.

F I N I S.

# E R R A T A.

**P** A G E 28, Line 3, for public—read public. Page 33 line 11, for devote—read devout. Page 72, line 19, for tents—read tentes. Page 81, line 7, for where—read were. Page 84, line 24, for existance—read existence. Page 85, line 8, for his—read this. Page 100, line 28, for preced—read preceds. Page 114, line 17, for degree—read decree. Do. line 21, for suffier—read suffer. Page 149, line 5, for permission—read pardon. Do. line 14, for bocome, —read become. Page 157 line 24, for adfolutely—read absolutely. Page 158, line 19, after have—read been. Page 162, line 10, for preteration—read preterition. Page 163, line 25, for possed—read possessed. Page 181, line 25, for neer—read need. Page 193, line 28, for decree—read degree. Page 205, line 11, for pality—read policy. Page 209, line 6, for coval—read cavil. Page 230, line 24, for unto—read into. Page 242, line 11, for raised—read rased. Page 246, line 27, for productions—read predictions. Page 261, line 4, after come—read in. Page 266, line 25, for it—read is. Page 270, line 16, for or—read of. Page 275, line 4, after as, omit a, after or—read a. Page 286, line 31, after thought—read fit. Page 287, line 18, for furvile—read servile. Page 291, line 25, for Gallations—read Galatians. Page 296 line 1, for porportion—read proportion. Page 299, line 1, for of—read or. Do. line 18, for into—read unto. Page 305, line 12, for truely—read truly. Page 316, line 9, for unto—read into. Page 317, line 6, for Lightfood—read Lightfoot. Page 318, line 6, for anciens—read ancients. Page 340, line 11, for least—read left. Page 341, line 15, for inable—read enable. Page 355, line 4, for the to—read to the. Page 378, line 5, for Shernommites—read Shunammite's. Do. line 29, for Capter—read Chapter. Page 385, line 22, for morks—read works. Page 387, line 25, for Omnicient—read Omniscient.—Page 395 line 11. for duely—read duly. Page 397, line 4, for truely—read truly. Do. line 19, for dispair—read despair. Page 398, line 9, for whether—read whatever.

*N. B. Most of the above, were omissions in the Copy.*









