

ARTICLE XII.

Of Good Works.

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our Sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgment: yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith, insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known, as a Tree discerned by the fruit.

THAT good works are indispensably necessary to salvation; that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord;' is so fully and frequently expressed in the gospel, that no doubt can be made of it by any who reads it: and indeed a greater disparagement to the Christian religion cannot be imagined, than to propose the hopes of God's mercy and pardon barely upon believing without a life suitable to the rules it gives us. This began early to corrupt the theories of religion, as it still has but too great an influence upon the practice of it. What St. James writ upon this subject must put an end to all doubting about it; and whatever subtleties some may have set up, to separate the consideration of faith from a holy life, in the point of *justification*; yet none among us have denied that it was absolutely necessary to salvation: and so it be owned as necessary, it is a nice curiosity to examine whether it is of itself a condition of justification, or if it is the certain distinction and constant effect of that faith which justifies. These are speculations of very little consequence, as long as the main point is still maintained; that Christ came to *bring us to God*, to change our natures, to mortify the old man in us, and to raise up and restore that *image of God*, from which we had fallen by sin. And therefore even where the thread of men's speculations of these matters may be thought too fine, and in some points of them wrong drawn; yet so long as this foundation is preserved, 'that every one who nameth the name of Christ does depart from iniquity,' so long the doctrine of Christ is preserved pure in this capital and fundamental point.

There do arise out of this Article only two points, about which some debates have been made. 1st. Whether the good works of holy men are in themselves so perfect, that they can endure the severity of God's judgment, so that there is no mixture of imperfection or evil in them, or not? The council of Trent has decreed, that men by their good works have so fully satisfied the law of God, according to the state of this

2 Tim. ii.
19.

life, that nothing is wanting to them.* The second point is, whether these good works are of their own nature meritorious of eternal life, or not? The council of Trent has decreed that they are: yet a long softening is added to the decree, importing, *That none ought to glory in himself, but in the Lord; whose goodness is such, that he makes his own gifts to us, to be merits in us:* and it adds, *That because in many things we offend all, every one ought to consider the justice and severity, as well as the mercy and goodness, of God; and not to judge himself, even though he should know nothing by himself.* So then that in which all are agreed about this matter, is, 1. That our works cannot be good or acceptable to God but as we are assisted by his grace and Spirit to do them: so that the real goodness that is in them flows from those assistances which enable us to do them. 2. That God does certainly reward good works: he has promised it, and 'he is faithful, and cannot lie; nor is he unrighteous to forget our labour of love.' So the favour of God and eternal happiness is the reward of good works. Mention is also made of 'a full reward, of the reward of a righteous man, and of a prophet's reward.' 3. That this reward is promised in the gospel, and could not be claimed without that, by any antecedent merit founded upon equality: 'Since our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

The points in which we differ are, 1. Whether the good works of holy men are so perfect, that there is no defect in

* 'Nihil ipsis justificatis amplius deesse credendum est, quominus plene illis quidem operibus, quæ in Deo sunt facta, divinæ legi pro hujus vitæ statu satisfecisse, et vitam æternam suo etiam tempore, si tamen in gratia decesserint consequendam, vere promeruisse censeantur.'—*Sessio vi. cap. xvi.*

'Si quis dixerit justitiam acceptam non conservari, atque etiam augeri coram Deo per bona opera; sed opera ipsa fructus solummodo et signa esse justificationis adeptæ, non autem ipsius augendæ causam: anathema sit.'—*Can. xxiv. Sess. vi.*

'Si quis dixerit, hominis justificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius justificati merita, aut, ipsum justificatum bonis operibus, quæ ab eo per Dei gratiam, et Jesu Christi meritum, cujus vivum membrum est, fiunt, non vere mereri augmentum gratiæ, vitam æternam, et ipsius vitæ æternæ, si tamen in gratia decesserit, consecutionem, atque etiam gloriæ augmentum: anathema sit.'—*Can. xxxii. Sess. vi.*

'Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.' The following, from the same *infallible* source of truth, will shew that good works not only deserve increase of grace and eternal life, but that by them we can make satisfaction to God the Father; and, wonderful to relate, not only satisfaction for oneself, but actually for another!!

'Docet præterea, tantam esse divinæ munificentiæ largitatem, ut non solum pœnis sponte a nobis pro vindicando peccato susceptis, aut sacerdotis arbitrio pro mensura delicti impositis, sed etiam, quod maximum amoris argumentum est, temporalibus flagellis a Deo inflictis, et a nobis patienter toleratis, apud Deum Patrem per Christum Jesum satisfacere voleamus.'—*Sessio xiv. cap. ix.*

'In eo vero summa Dei bonitas, et clementia maximis laudibus, et gratiarum actionibus prædicanda est, qui humanæ imbecillitati hoc condonavit, ut unus posset pro altero satisfacere, quod quidem hujus partis Pœnitentiæ maxime proprie est: ut enim, quod ad contritionem, et confessionem atinet, nemo pro altero dolere, aut confiteri potest; ita, qui divina gratia præditi sunt, alterius nomine possunt, quod Deo debetur, persolvere; quare fit, ut quodam pacto alter alterius onera portare videatur.' *Catechis. ex decreto Concil. Trident. ad Paroch. De Pœnitentiâ.—Que ad veram satisfactionem requirantur.*—[Ed.]

Matt. x.
41, 42.

2 Cor. iv
17.

them; or whether there is still some such defect mixed with them, that there is occasion for mercy, to pardon somewhat even in good men? Those of the church of Rome think that a work cannot be called *good*, if it is not entirely *good*; and that nothing can please God in which there is a mixture of sin. Whereas we, according to the Article, believe that human nature is so weak and so degenerated, that as far as our natural powers concur in any action, there is still some alloy in it: and that a *good work* is considered by God according to the main, both of the action and of the intention of him that does it; and as a father *pities* his children, so God passes over the defects of those who serve him sincerely, though not perfectly.

Gen. vi. 5.
Jam. iii. 2.
Phil. iii. 13,
14.
'The imaginations of the heart of man are only evil continually: In many things we offend all,' says St. James: and St. Paul reckons that 'he had not yet apprehended, but was forgetting the things behind, and reaching to those before, and still pressing forward.'

We see, in fact, that the best men in all ages have been complaining and humbling themselves even for the sins of their holy things, for their vanity and desire of glory, for the distraction of their thoughts in devotion, and for the affection which they bore to earthly things. It were a doctrine of great cruelty, which might drive men to despair, if they thought that no action could please God, in which they were conscious to themselves of some imperfection or sin. The midwives of Egypt *feared God*, yet they excused themselves by a lie: but God accepted of what was good, and passed over what was amiss in them, and 'built them houses.' St. Austin urges this frequently, that our Saviour, in teaching us to pray, has made this a standing petition, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' as well as that, 'Give us this day our daily bread;' for we sin daily, and do always need a pardon. Upon these reasons we conclude, that somewhat of the man enters into all that men do: we are made up of infirmities, and we need the intercession of Christ to make our best actions to be accepted of by God: for Psal. cxxx. 'if he should straitly mark iniquity, who can stand before him? but mercy is with him, and forgiveness.' So that with Hezekiah we ought to pray, that 'though we are not purified according to the purification of the sanctuary, yet the good Lord would pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God.'

Psal. cxxx.
3, 4.
2 Chr. xxx.
18, 19.

The second question arises out of this, concerning *the merit of good works*; for upon the supposition of their being completely good, that merit is founded; which will be acknowledged to be none at all, if it is believed that there are such defects in them, that they need a pardon; since where there is guilt, there can be no pretension to merit. The word *merit* has also a sound that is so daring, so little suitable to the humility of a creature, to be used towards a Being of infinite majesty, and with relation to endless rewards, that though we do not deny but that a sense is given to it by many of the church

of Rome, to which no just exception can be made, yet there seems to be somewhat too bold in it, especially when *condignity* is added to it: and since this may naturally give us an idea of a buying and selling with God, and that there has been a great deal of this put in practice, it is certain that on many respects this *word* ought not to be made use of. There is somewhat in the nature of man apt to swell and to raise itself out of measure, and to that no indulgence ought to be given, in words that may flatter it; for we ought to subdue this temper by all means possible, both in ourselves and others. On the other hand, though we confess that there is a disorder and weakness that hangs heavy upon us, and that sticks close to us, yet this ought not to make us indulge ourselves in our sins, as if they were the effects of an infirmity that is inseparable from us. To consent to any sin, if it were ever so small in itself, is a very great sin: we ought to go on, still 'cleansing ourselves' more and more, 'from all filthiness both of the flesh and of the spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Our readiness to sin should awaken both our diligence to watch against it, and our humility under it. For though we grow not up to a pitch of being above all sin, and of absolute perfection, yet there are many degrees both of purity and perfection, to which we may arrive, and to which we must constantly aspire. So that we must keep a just temper in this matter, neither to ascribe so much to our own works as to be lifted up by reason of them, or to forget our daily need of a Saviour both for pardon and intercession; nor on the other hand so far to neglect them, as to take no care about them. The due temper is 'to make our calling and election sure, and to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;' but to do 'all in the name of the Lord Jesus,' ever trusting to him, and 'giving thanks to God by him.'

ARTICLE XIII.

Of Works before Justification.

Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive Grace, or (as the School-Authors say) Deserve Grace of Congruity: Yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath commanded and willed them to be done, we doubt not but that they have the nature of Sin.

THERE is but one point to be considered in this Article, which is, whether men can, without any inward assistances from God, do any action that shall be in all its circumstances so good, that it is not only acceptable to God, but meritorious in his sight, though in a lower degree of merit. If what was formerly laid down concerning a corruption that was spread over the whole race of mankind, and that had very much vitiated their faculties, be true, then it will follow from thence, that unassisted nature can do nothing that is so good in itself, that it can be pleasant or meritorious in the sight of God. A great difference is here to be made between an external action as it is considered in itself, and the same action as it was done by such a man. An action is called good, from the morality and nature of the action itself; so actions of justice and charity are in themselves good, whatsoever the doer of them may be: but actions are considered by God with relation to him that does them, in another light; his principles, ends, and motives, with all the other circumstances of the action, come into this account; for unless all these be good, let the action in its own abstracted nature be ever so good, it cannot render the doer acceptable or meritorious in the sight of God.

Another distinction is also to be made between the methods of the goodness and mercy of God, and the strictness of justice: for if God had such regard to the feigned humiliation of Ahab, as to grant him and his family a reprieve for some time from those judgments that had been denounced against them and him; and if Jehu's executing the commands of God upon Ahab's family, and upon the worshippers of Baal, procured him the blessing of a long continuance of the kingdom in his family, though he acted in it with a bad design, and retained still the old idolatry of the calves set up by Jeroboam; then we have all reason to conclude, according to the infinite mercy and goodness of God, that no man is rejected by him, or denied inward assistances, that is making the most of his fa-

1 Kings

xxi. 29.

2 Kings x.

30, 31.

culties, and doing the best that he can; but that he who is faithful in his little, shall be made ruler over more.

The question is only, whether such actions can be so pure, as to be free from all sin, and to merit at God's hand, as being works naturally perfect? For that is the formal notion of the *merit of congruity*, as the notion of the *merit of condignity* is, that the work is perfect in the supernatural order.

To establish the truth of this Article, beside what was said upon the head of original sin, we ought to consider what St. Paul's words in the 7th of the Romans do import: nothing was urged from them on the former Articles, because there is just ground of doubting whether St. Paul is there speaking of himself in the state he was in when he writ it, or whether he is personating a Jew, and speaking of himself as he was while yet a Jew. But if the words are taken in that lowest sense, they prove this, that an unregenerate man has in himself such a principle of corruption, that even a good and a holy *law* revealed to him, cannot reform it; but that, on the contrary, it will 'take occasion from that very law to deceive him, and to slay him.' So that all the benefit that he receives even from that revelation is, that 'sin in him becomes exceeding sinful;' as being done against such a degree of light, by which it appears that he is 'carnal, and sold under sin;' and that though his understanding may be enlightened by the revelation of the law of God made to him, so that he has some inclinations to obey it, yet he does not that which he would, but that which he would not: and though his *mind* is so far convinced, that he 'consents to the law that it is good,' yet 'he still does that which he would not;' which was the effect of 'sin that dwelt in him;' and from hence he knew, 'that in him, that is, in his flesh,' in his carnal part, or carnal state, 'there dwelt no good thing; for 'though to will,' that is, to resolve on obeying the law, 'was present, yet he found not a way how to perform that which was good;' the good that he wished to do, that he did not; but he did the evil that he wished not to do; which he imputed to the 'sin that dwelt in him.' He found then a *law*, a bent and bias within him, that when he wished, resolved, and endeavoured, to do good, 'evil was present with him,' it sprung up naturally within him; for though in his rational powers he might so far approve the law of God as to *delight* in it; yet he found 'another law' arising upon his mind from his body, 'which warred against the law of his mind, and brought him into captivity to the law of sin which was in his members:' all this made him conclude, that 'he was carnal, and sold under sin;' and cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' For this 'he thanks God through our Lord Jesus Christ:' and he sums all up in these words; 'So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.'

Rom. vii.
11, 12, 13.

Ver. 14.

16.

17.

18.

24.

25.

If all this discourse is made by St. Paul of himself, when he had the light which a divinely inspired law gave him, he being educated in the exactest way of that religion, both zealous for the law, and blameless in his own observance of it; we may from thence conclude how little reason there is to believe that a heathen, or indeed an unregenerated man, can be better than he was, and do actions that are both good in themselves, which it is not denied but that he may do; and do them in such a manner that there shall be no mixture or imperfection in them, but that they shall be perfect in a natural order, and be by consequence meritorious in a secondary order.

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

ARTICLE XIV.

Of Works of Supererogation.

Voluntary Works, besides, over and above God's Commandments, which they call works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without Arrogancy and Impiety. For by them men do declare, That they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do: but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden Duty is required. Whereas Christ saith plainly, when ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable Servants.

THERE are two points that arise out of this Article to be considered, 1st. Whether there are in the New Testament counsels of perfection given; that is to say, such rules which do not oblige all men to follow them, under the pain of sin; but yet are useful to carry them on to a sublimer degree of perfection, than is necessary in order to their salvation. Luke x. 2d. 10. Whether men by following these do not more than they are bound to do, and, by consequence, whether they have not thereby a stock of merit to communicate to others. The first of these leads to the second; for if there are no such counsels, then the foundation of supererogation fails.

We deny both upon this ground, that the great obligations of 'loving God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves,' which are reckoned by our Saviour the 'two great commandments, on which hang all the Law and the Prophets,' are of that extent, that it seems not possible to imagine, how any thing can be acceptable to God, that does not fall within them. Since if it is acceptable to God, then that obligation to love God so entirely must bind us to it; for if it is a sin not to love God up to this pitch, then it is a sin not to do every thing that we imagine will please him: and, by consequence, if there is a degree of pleasing God, whether precept or counsel, that we do not study to attain to, we do not love him in a manner suitable to that. It seems a great many in the church of Rome are aware of this consequence, and therefore they have taken much pains to convince the world that we are not bound to love God at all, or, as others more cautiously word it, that we are only bound to value him above all things, but not to have a love of such a vast intention for him. This is a proposition that, after all their softening it, gives so much horror to every Christian, that I need not be at any pains to confute it.

We are further required in the New Testament, 'to cleanse' 2 Cor. vii. 1.

A R T.
XIV.1 Cor. vi.
20.

ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God:’ and to reckon ourselves ‘his, and not our own,’ and that ‘we are bought with a price;’ and that therefore ‘we ought to glorify him both in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are his.’ These and many more like expressions are plainly precepts of general obligation, for nothing can be set forth in more positive words than these are: and it is not easy to imagine, how any thing can go beyond them; for if we are Christ’s property, purchased by him, then we ought to apply ourselves to every thing in which his honour, or the honour of his religion, can be concerned, or which will be pleasing to him.

Isai. xxix.
13. Matt.
xv. 7—9.
Coloss. ii.
18.Matt. xix.
16, 17.

Ver. 20, 21.

Our Saviour having charged the Pharisees so often, for adding so many of their ordinances to the laws of God, ‘teaching his fear by the precepts of men,’ and the ‘apostles condemning ‘a show of will-worship and voluntary humility,’ seem to belong to this matter, and to be designed on purpose to repress the pride and singularities of affected hypocrites. Our Saviour said to him that asked, ‘What he should do that he might have eternal life?—Keep the commandments.’ These words I do the rather cite, because they are followed with a passage, that, of all others in the New Testament, seems to look the likeliest a counsel of perfection; for when he, who made the question, replied upon our Saviour’s answer, that ‘he had kept all these from his youth up,’ and added, ‘what lack I yet?’ to that our Saviour answered, ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me:’ and by the words that follow, of the difficulty of a ‘rich man’s entering into the kingdom of heaven,’ this is more fully explained. The meaning of all that whole passage is this; Christ called that person to abandon all, and come and follow him, in such a manner as he had called his apostles. So that here is no counsel, but a positive command given to that particular person upon this occasion. By *perfect* is only to be meant complete, in order to that to which he pretended, which was *eternal life*. And that also explains the word in that period, *treasures in heaven*, another expression for *eternal life*, to compensate the loss which he would have made by the sale of his possessions. So that here is no counsel, but a special command given to this person, in order to his own attaining *eternal life*.

Nor is it to be inferred from hence, that this is proposed to others in the way of a counsel; for as in cases either of a famine or persecution, it may come to be to some a command, to *sell all* in order to the relief of others, as it was in the first beginnings of Christianity; so in ordinary cases to do it, might be rather a tempting of Providence than a trusting to it, for then a man should part with the means of his subsistence, which God has provided for him, without a necessary and

A R T.
XIV.Luke xii.
33.Prov. xxx
8.1 Cor. vii.
38.

pressing occasion. Therefore our Saviour’s words, ‘Sell that ye have, and give alms,’ as they are delivered in the strain and peremptoriness of a command, so they must be understood to bind as positive commands do: not so constantly as a negative command does, since in every minute of our life that binds: but there is a rule and order in our obeying positive commands. We must not rest on the *sabbath-day*, if a work of necessity or charity calls us to put to our hands: we must not obey our parents in disobeying a public law: so if we have families, or the necessities of a feeble body, and a weak constitution, for which God hath supplied us with that which will afford us ‘food convenient for us,’ we must not throw up those provisions, and cast ourselves upon others. Therefore that precept must be moderated and expounded, so as to agree with the other rules and orders that God has set us.

A distinction is therefore to be made between those things that do universally and equally bind all mankind, and those things that do more specially bind some sorts of men, and that only at some times. There are greater degrees of charity, gravity, and all other virtues, to which the clergy for instance are more bound than other men; but these are to them precepts, and not counsels. And in the first beginnings of Christianity there were greater obligations laid upon all Christians, as well as greater gifts were bestowed on them. It is true, in the point of marriage St. Paul does plainly allow, that such as ‘marry do well, but that such as marry not do better.’ But the meaning of that is not as if an unmarried life were a state of perfection, beyond that which a man is obliged to: but only this; that as to the course of this life, and the *present distress*; and as to the judgment that is to be made of men by their actions, no man is to be thought to do amiss who *marries*; but yet he who *marries not*, is to be judged to do *better*. But yet inwardly and before God this matter may be far otherwise: for he who *marries not* and burns, certainly does worse than he who *marries and lives chastely*. But he who finding that he can limit himself without endangering his purity; though no law restrains him from marrying, yet seeing that he is like to be tempted to be too careful about the concerns of this life if he *marries*, is certainly under obligations to follow that course of life in which there are fewer temptations, and greater opportunities to attend on the service of God.

With relation to outward actions, and to the judgments that from visible appearances are to be made of them, some actions may be said to be better than others, which yet are truly good: but as to the particular obligations that every man is under, with relation to his own state and circumstances, and for which he must answer at the last day, these being secret, and so not subject to the judgments of men, certainly every man is strictly bound to do the best he can; to choose that

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course of life in which he thinks he may do the best services to God and man: nor are these free to him to choose or not: he is under obligations, and he sins if he sees a more excellent thing that he might have done, and contents himself with a lower or less valuable thing. St. Paul had wherein to *glory*: for whereas it was lawful for him as an apostle to suffer the Corinthians to supply him in temporals, when he was serving them in spiritual things; yet he chose rather for the honour of the gospel, and to take away all occasion of censure from those who sought for it, 'to work with his own hands, and not to be burdensome to them.' But in that state of things, though there was no law or outward obligation upon him to *spare them*; he was under an inward law of doing all things to the glory of God: and by this law he was as much bound, as if there had been an outward compulsory law lying upon him.

This distinction is to be remembered, between such an obligation as arises out of a man's particular circumstances, and such other motives as can be only known to a man himself, and such an obligation as may be fastened on him by stated and general rules: he may be absolutely free from the latter of these, and yet be secretly bound by those inward and stronger constraints of the love of God, and zeal for his glory. Enough seems to be said to prove that there are no counsels of perfection in the gospel; that all the rules set to us in it are in the style and form of precepts; and that though there may be some actions of more heroic virtue, and more sublime piety, than others, to which all men are not obliged by equal or general rules; yet such men, to whose circumstances and station they do belong, are strictly obliged by them, so that they should sin, if they did not put them in practice.

This being thus made out, the foundation of works of supererogation is destroyed. But if it should be acknowledged that there were such counsels of perfection in the scripture, there are still two other clear proofs, to shew that there can be no such thing as supererogating with God. First, every man not only has sinned, but has still so much corruption about him, as to feel the truth of that of St. James, 'in many things we offend all.' Now unless it can be supposed that, by obeying those counsels, a man can compensate with Almighty God for his sins, there is no ground to think that he can supererogate. He must first clear his own score, before he can imagine that any thing upon his account can be forgiven or imputed to another: and if the guilt of sin is eternal, and the pretended merit of obeying counsels is only temporary, no temporary merit can take off an eternal guilt. So that it must first be supposed, that a man both is and has been perfect as to the precepts of obligation, before it can be thought that he should have an overplus of merit.

The other clear argument from scripture against works of supererogation is, that there is nothing in the whole New

Testament that does in any sort favour them; we are always taught to trust to the mercies of God, and to the death and intercession of Christ, and 'to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling:' but we are never once directed to look for any help from saints, or to think that we can do any thing for another man's soul, in this way. The Psalm has it, 'No man can by any means give a ransom for his brother's soul:' the words of Christ cited in the Article are full and express against it.

The words in the parable of the five foolish virgins and the five wise, may seem to favour it, but they really contradict it; for it was the foolish virgins that desired the wise to give them of their *oil*; which if any will apply to a supposed communication of merit, they ought to consider that the proposition is made by the *foolish*, and the answer of the wise virgins is full against it: 'Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.' What follows, of bidding them 'go to them that sell, and buy for themselves,' is only a piece of the fiction of the parable, which cannot enter into any part of the application of it. What St. Paul says of his 'filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church,' is, as appears by the words that follow, 'whereof I am made a minister,' only applicable to the edification that the church received from the sufferings of the apostles; it being a great confirmation to them of the truth of the gospel, when those who preached it suffered so constantly and so patiently for it; by which they both confirmed what they had preached, and set an example to others, of adhering firmly to it. And since Christ is related to his church, as a head to the members, it is in some sort his suffering himself, when his members suffer: and that conformity which they ought to express to him as their head was necessary to make up the due proportion, that ought to be between the head and the members. So St. Paul rejoiced in his being made *conformable to him*: and this, as it is a sense that the words will well bear, so it is certain they are capable of no other sense; for if the sufferings of the apostles were meritorious in behalf of the other Christians, some plain account must have been given of this in the New Testament, at least to do honour to the memory of such apostles as had then died for the faith. If it is suggested, that the living apostles were too modest to claim it to themselves, that will not satisfy; all runs quite in a contrary style: the mercies of God and the blood of Christ being always repeated, whereas these are never once named. Now to imagine that there can be any thing of such great use to us, in which the scripture should be not only silent, but should run in a strain totally different from it, is not conceivable: for if in any thing, the gospel ought to be full and explicit in all that which

Acts xx.
34.
1 Cor. ix.
18.
2 Cor. xii.
13.

James iii.2.

A R T.
XIV.
Phil. ii. 12.

Ps. xlix. 7.

Matt. xxv.
9.

Col. i. 24

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concerns our peace and reconciliation with God, and the means of our escaping his wrath, and obtaining his favour.

There is another doctrine that does also belong to this head, which is purgatory, that is not to be entered on here, but is referred to its proper place. Thus it appears, how ill this doctrine of works of supererogation is founded; and upon how many accounts it is evidently false; and yet upon it has been built not only a theory of a communication of those merits, and a treasure in the church, but a practice of so foul a nature, that in it the words of our Saviour spoken to the Jews, 'My house is a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves,' are accomplished in a high and most scandalous manner. It has been pretended that this was of the nature of a bank, of which the pope was the keeper; and that he could grant such bills and assignments upon it as he pleased:* this was done in so base and so crying a manner, that all who had any sense of probity in their own church were ashamed of it.

Mark xi.
17.

In the primitive church there were very severe rules made, obliging all that had sinned publicly (and they were afterwards applied to such as had sinned secretly) to continue for many years in a state of separation from the sacrament, and of penance and discipline. But because all such general rules admit of a great variety of circumstances, taken from men's sins, their persons, and their repentance, there was a power given to all bishops by the council of Nice, to shorten the time, and to relax the severity, of those canons; and such favour as they saw cause to grant was called *indulgence*. This was just and necessary, and was a provision without which no constitution or society can be well governed. But after the tenth century, as the popes came to take this power in the whole extent of it into their own hands, so they found it too feeble to carry on the great designs that they grafted upon it.

They gave it high names, and called it a plenary remission, and the pardon of all sins: which the world was taught to look on as a thing of a much higher nature, than the bare excusing of men from discipline and penance. Purgatory†

* 'Upon the whole then it is evident, that the doctrine of purgatory is of heathen original; that the fire of it is, like the thunder of the Vatican, a harmless thing, which no wise man would be afraid of, were it not too often attended with church thunderbolts, persecutions, and massacres; and that it only serves to cheat the simple and ignorant out of their money, by giving them bills of exchange upon the other world for cash paid in *this*, without any danger of the bills returning protested.' *Meagher's Popish Mass.* A just exposure of this iniquitous traffic.—[Ed.]

† 'The doctrine of purgatory is the mother of indulgences, and the fear of that hath introduced these: for the world happened to be abused like the countryman in the fable, who, being told he was likely to fall into a *delirium* in his feet, was advised for remedy to take the juice of cotton. He feared a disease that was not, and looked for a cure as ridiculous.' *Bishop Taylor.*—[Ed.]

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was then got to be firmly believed, and all men were strangely possessed with the terror of it: so a deliverance from purgatory, and by consequence an immediate admission into heaven, was believed to be the certain effect of it. And to support all this, the doctrine of *counsels of perfection*, of works of *supererogation*, and of the *communication* of those merits, was set up; and to that this was added, that a treasure made up of these, was at the pope's disposal, and in his keeping. The use that this was put to, was as bad as the forgery itself. Multitudes were by these means engaged to go to the Holy Land to recover it out of the hands of the Saracens: afterwards they armed vast numbers against the heretics to extirpate them: they fought also all those quarrels which their ambitious pretensions engaged them in with emperors and other princes, by the same pay; and at last they set it to sale with the same impudence, and almost with the same methods, that mountebanks use in the venting of their secrets.

This was so gross even in an ignorant age, and among the ruder sort, that it gave the first rise to the Reformation: and as the progress of it was a very signal work of God, so it was in a great measure owing to the scandals that this shameless practice had given the world. And upon this single reason it is that this matter has been more fully examined than was necessary; for the thing is so plain, that it has no sort of difficulty in it.

ARTICLE XV.

Of Christ alone without Sin.

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

THIS Article relates to the former, and is put here as another foundation against all works of supererogation: for that doctrine, with the consequences of it, having given the first occasion to the Reformation, it was thought necessary to overthrow it entirely; and because the perfection of the saints must be supposed, before their supererogation can be thought on, that was therefore here opposed.

That Christ was 'holy, without spot and blemish, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;' that there was 'no guile in his mouth;' that he never did amiss, but 'went about always doing good,' and was as a 'lamb without spot,' is so oft affirmed in the New Testament, that it can admit of no debate. This was not only true in his rational powers, the superior part called the *spirit*, in opposition to the lower part, but also in those appetites and affections that arise from our bodies, and from the union of our souls to them, called the *flesh*. For though in these Christ, having the human nature truly in him, had the appetites of hunger in him, yet the Devil could not tempt him by that to distrust God, or to desire a miraculous supply sooner than was fitting: he overcame even that necessary appetite, whensoever there was an occasion given him 'to do the will of his heavenly Father:' he had also in him the aversions to pain and suffering, and the horror at a violent and ignominious death, which are planted in our natures; and in this it was natural to him to wish and to pray that the cup might pass from him. But in this his purity appeared the most eminently, that though he felt the weight of his nature to a vast degree, he did, notwithstanding that, limit and conquer it so entirely, that he resigned himself absolutely to his Father's will: 'Not my will, but thy will be done.'

Besides all that has been already said upon the former Articles, to prove that some taint and degree of the original

corruption remains in all men; the peculiar character of Christ's holiness so oft repeated, looks plainly to be a distinction proper to him, and to him only. We are called upon to follow him, to learn of him, and to imitate him, without restriction; whereas we are required to 'follow the apostles, only as they were the followers of Christ:' and though we are commanded 'to be holy as he was holy in all manner of conversation;' that does no more prove that any man can arrive at that pitch, than our being commanded 'to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect,' will prove that we may become as perfect as God is: the importance of these words being only this, that we ought in all things to make God and Christ our patterns; and that we ought to endeavour to imitate and resemble them all we can.

There seems to be a particular design in the contexture and writing of the scriptures, to represent to us some of the failings of the best men: for though Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have been *blameless*, that must only be meant of the exterior and visible part of their conversation, that it was free from blame, and of their being accepted of God; but that is not to be carried to import a sinless purity before God: for we find the same Zachary guilty of misbelieving the message of the angel to him, to such a degree, that he was punished for it with a dumbness of above nine months' continuance. Perhaps the Virgin's question to the angel had nothing blameworthy in it: but our Saviour's answers to her, both when she came to him in the temple, when he was twelve years old, and more particularly when she moved him, at the marriage in Cana, to furnish them with wine, look like a reprimand. The contentions among the apostles about the pre-eminence, and in particular the ambition of James and John, cannot be excused. St. Peter's dissimulation at Antioch in the Judaizing controversy, and the sharp contention that happened between Paul and Barnabas, are recorded in scripture, and they are both characters of the sincerity of those who penned them, and likewise marks of the frailties of human nature, even in its greatest elevation, and with its highest advantages. So that all the high characters that are given of the best men, are to be understood either comparatively to others whom they exceeded, or with relation to their outward actions, and the visible parts of their life: or they are to be meant of their zeal and sincerity, which is valued and accepted of God: and, as it was to Abraham, is imputed to them for righteousness.

Yet this is not to be abused by any to be an encouragement to live in sin; for we may carry this purity and perfection certainly very far, by the grace of God. In every sin that we commit we do plainly perceive, that we do it with so much freedom, that we might not have done it; here is still

A. R. T.
XV.1 Cor. xi. 1.
1 Pet. i. 15.

Matt. v. 48.

Luke i. 6.

Ver. 20.

Luke ii. 49.

John ii. 4.

Matt. xx.
20, 24.Gal. ii. 11,
12, 13, 14.Acts xv.
39.

A R T. XV. just matter for humiliation and repentance. By this doctrine our church intends only to repress the pride of vain-glorious and hypocritical men, and to strike at the root of that filthy merchandise that has been brought into the house of God, under the pretence of the perfection, and even the overdoing or supererogating, of the saints.

ARTICLE XVI.

Of Sin after Baptism.

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again and amend our Lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

THIS Article, as it relates to the sect of the Novatians of old, so it is probable it was made a part of our doctrine, upon the account of some of the enthusiasts, who, at that time, as well as some do in our days, might boast their perfection, and join with that part of the character of a Pharisee, this other of an unreasonable rigour of censure and punishment against offenders. By *deadly sin* in the Article, we are not to understand such sins as in the church of Rome are called *mortal*, in opposition to others that are *venial*: as if some sins, though offences against God, and violations of his law, could be of their own nature such slight things, that they deserved only temporal punishment, and were to be expiated by some piece of penance or devotion, or the communication of the merits of others. The scripture no where teaches us to think so slightly of the majesty of God, or of his law. There is a *curse* upon every one 'that continueth not in all things which Gal. iii. 10. are written in the book of the law to do them:?' and the same curse must have been on us all, if Christ had not redeemed us from it: 'The wages of sin is death.' And St. James Rom. vi. asserts, that there is such a complication of all the precepts 23. of the law of God, both with one another, and with the authority of the lawgiver, that 'he who offends in one point is Jam. ii. 10, guilty of all.' So, since God has in his word given us such 11. dreadful apprehensions of his *wrath* and of the *guilt of sin*, we dare not soften these to a degree below the majesty of the eternal God, and the dignity of his most holy laws. But, after all, we are far from the conceit of the Stoics, who made all sins alike. We acknowledge that some sins of ignorance and infirmity may consist with a state of grace; which is either quite destroyed, or at least much eclipsed and clouded by other sins, that are more heinous in their nature, and more deliberately gone about. It is in this sense that the word *deadly sin* is to be understood in the Article: for though in

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the strictness of justice every sin is *deadly*, yet in the dispensation of the gospel, those sins are only *deadly*, that do deeply wound the conscience, and that drive away grace.

Another term in the Article needs also to be a little explained; *the sin against the Holy Ghost*; concerning which, since there is so severe a sentence pronounced by Christ, it is necessary that it be rightly understood; and that can only be done by considering the occasion of those words, as well as the words themselves. Christ wrought such miracles in the sight of his enemies, that when there was no room left for any other cavil, they betook themselves to that, that 'he did not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.' And this was the occasion that led our Saviour to speak of the sin or *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. It was their rejecting the clearest evidence that God could give to prove any thing by: the power by which those miracles were wrought, and which was afterwards communicated to the apostles, is called through the whole New Testament, the *Holy Ghost*. By which is not to be meant here the third person of the Trinity, but the wonderful effusion of those extraordinary gifts and powers that were then communicated, the economy and dispensation of which is said to be derived from that *one Spirit*. This was the utmost proof that could be given of truth: and when men set themselves to blaspheme this, and to ascribe the works of Christ to a collusion with the Devil, they did thereby so wilfully oppose God, and reproach his power, they did so stifle their own conviction, and set themselves against the conviction of others, that nothing could be done further for their conviction; this being the highest degree of evidence and proof: and this was so high an indignity to God, when he descended so far to satisfy their scruples, that it was not to be pardoned; as their impenitence and incredulity was so obstinate as not to be overcome.

Upon this occasion given, our Saviour makes a difference between their blaspheming him, and, instead of owning him to be the Messiah, calling him a *deceiver*, a *glutton*, and a *wine-bibber*; of which, upon hearing his doctrine, and seeing his life, they were still guilty. This was indeed a great sin, but yet there were means left of convincing them of the truth of his being the great prophet sent of God; and by these they might be so far prevailed on as to repent and believe, and so to obtain pardon: but when they had those means set before them; when they saw plain and uncontested miracles done before them; and when, instead of yielding to them, they set up such an opposition to them, which might have been as reasonably said of every miracle that could have been wrought, then it was not possible to convince them. This is an *impious* rejecting of the highest method that God himself uses for proving a thing to us. The scorn put upon it, as it flows from a nature so depraved, that it cannot be wrought on, so

Matt. xii.
24, 31.A R T.
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it is a sin not to be pardoned. All things of extreme severity in a doctrine that is so full of grace and mercy as the gospel is, ought to be restrained as much as may be. From thence we infer, that those dreadful words of our Saviour's ought to be restrained to the subject to which they are applied, and ought not to be carried further. Since miracles have ceased, no man is any more capable of this sin.

These terms being thus explained, the question in the Article is now to be explained. There are words in St. John's Epistle, and elsewhere, that seem to import, that *men born of God*, that is to say, baptized or regenerated Christians, *sin not*: 'Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, for he is born of God.' This is again repeated in the end of that Epistle, together with these words, 'He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.' As these words seem to import that a true Christian sins not, so in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said to be 'impossible to renew again, by repentance, those who fall away, after they had been once enlightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.' Upon these expressions, and some others, though not quite of their force, it was, that in the primitive church, some that fell after baptism were cast out of the communion of the church; and though they were not cut off from all hopes of the mercy of God, yet they were never restored to the peace of the church; this was done in Tertullian's time, if what he says on this subject is not to be reckoned as a piece of his *Montanism*.

But soon after there were great contests upon this head, while the Novatians withdrew from the communion of the church, and believed it was defiled by the receiving of apostates into it: though that was not done so easily as some proposed, but after a long separation and a severe course of penance. Upon this followed all those penitentiary canons concerning the several measures and degrees of penance, and that not only for acts of apostacy from the Christian religion, but for all other crying sins. According to what has been already said upon the former Articles, it has appeared, that the sanctification of regenerated men is not so perfected in this life, but that there is still a mixture of defects and imperfections left in them: and the state of the new covenant is a continuance of repentance and remission of sins; for as oft as one sins, if he repents truly of it, and forsakes his sins, there is a standing offer of the pardon of all sins; and therefore Christ has taught us to pray daily, 'Forgive us our sins.' If there were but one general pardon offered in baptism, this would signify little to those who feel their infirmities, and the sins that do so easily

1 John iii.
6, 9. v. 18Heb. vi. 4,
5, 6.

A R T. XVI. beset them, so apt to return upon them. It was no wonder if the entertaining this conceit brought in a superstitious error in practice among the ancient Christians, of delaying baptism till death; as hoping that all sins were then certainly pardoned; a much more dangerous error than even the fatal one of trusting to a death-bed repentance. For baptism might have been more easily compassed; and there was more offered in the way of argument for building upon it, than has been offered at for a death-bed repentance.

St. Peter's denial, his repentance, and his being restored to his apostolical dignity, seem to be recorded, partly on this account, to encourage us, even after the most heinous offences, to return to God, and never to reckon our condition desperate, were our sins ever so many, but as we find our hearts hardened in them into an obstinate impenitency. Our Saviour has made our pardoning the offences that others commit against us, the measure upon which we may expect pardon from God; and he being asked what limits he set to the number of the faults that we were bound to pardon, by the day, if seven was not enough, he carried it up to *seventy times seven*, a vast number, far beyond the number of offences that any man will in all probability commit against another in a day. But if they should grow up to all that vast number of four hundred and ninety, yet if our brother still 'turns again and repents,' we are still bound to forgive. Now since this is joined with what he declared, that if we pardoned our brother his offences, 'our heavenly Father would also forgive us,' then we may depend upon this, that according to the sincerity of our repentance, our sins are always forgiven us. And if this is the nature of the new covenant, then the church, which is a society formed upon it, must proportion the rules both of her communion and censure to those set in the gospel: a heinous sin must give us a deeper sorrow, and higher degrees of repentance; scandals must also be taken off and forgiven, when the offending persons have repaired the offence that was given by them, with suitable degrees of sorrow. St. Paul, in the beginnings of Christianity, in which it, being yet tender and not well known to the world, was more apt to be both blemished and corrupted, did yet order the Corinthians to receive back into their communion the incestuous person, whom by his own directions they had 'delivered to Satan;' they had excommunicated him, and, by way of reverse to the gifts of the Holy Ghost poured out upon all Christians, he was possessed or haunted with an evil spirit: and yet, as St. Paul declares that he forgave him, so he orders them to forgive him likewise; and he gives a reason for this conduct, from the common principles of pity and humanity, 'lest he should be swallowed up by overmuch sorrow.' What is in that place mentioned only in a particular instance, is extended to a general rule in the Epistle to the Galatians: 'If any one is overtaken in a fault, ye which are

Luke xvii. 4.

Matt. xviii. 35.

1 Cor. v. 5.

2 Cor. ii. 7.

spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' Where both the supposition that is made, and the reason that is given, do plainly insinuate that all men are subject to their several infirmities; so that every man may be overtaken in faults. The charge given to Timothy and Titus to 'rebuke and exhort,' does suppose that Christians, and even bishops and deacons, were subject to faults that might deserve correction.

A R T. XVI. Gal. vi. 1.

2 Tim. iv. 2.

Tit. i. 13.

In that passage, cited out of St. John's Epistle, as mention is made of a 'sin unto death,' for which they were not to pray, so mention is made both there and in St. James's Epistle of 'sins for which they were to pray,' and which upon their prayers were to be forgiven. All which places do not only express this to be the tenor of the new covenant, that the sins of regenerated persons were to be pardoned in it, but they are also clear precedents and rules for the churches to follow them in their discipline. And therefore those words in St. John, that 'a man born of God doth not and cannot sin, must be understood in a larger sense, of their not living in the practice of known sins; of their not allowing themselves in that course of life, nor going on deliberately with it.

1 John v. 16.

Jam. v. 15, 16.

By the 'sin unto death,' is meant the same thing with that apostasy mentioned in the 6th of the Hebrews. Among the Jews some sins were punished by a total excision or cutting off, and this probably gave the rise to that designation of a 'sin unto death.' The words in the Epistle to the Hebrews do plainly import those who, being not only baptized, but having also received a share of the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost, had totally renounced the Christian religion, and apostatized from the faith, which 'was a crucifying of Christ anew.' Such apostates to Judaism were thereby involved in the crime and guilt of the crucifying of Christ, and 'the putting him to open shame.' Now persons so apostatizing could not be renewed again by repentance, it not being possible to do any thing toward their conviction that had not been already done; and they, hardening themselves against all that was offered for their conviction, were arrived at such a degree in wickedness, that it was impossible to work upon them; there was nothing left to be tried that had not been already tried, and proved to be ineffectual. Yet it is to be observed, that it was an unjustifiable piece of rigour, to apply these words to all such as had fallen in a time of trial and persecution; for as they had not those miraculous means of conviction, which must be acknowledged to be the strongest, the sensiblest, and the most easily apprehended, of all arguments; so they could not sin so heinously as those had done, who, after what they had seen and felt, revolted from the faith.

Heb. vi. 6.

Great difference is also to be made between a deliberate sin, that a man goes into upon choice, and in which he continues; and a sin, that the fears of death and the infirmities

of human nature betray him into, and out of which he quickly recovers himself, and for which he mourns bitterly. There was no reason to apply what is said in the New Testament against the wicked apostates of that time, to those who were overcome in the persecution. The latter sinned grievously; yet it was not in the same kind, nor are they in any sort to be compared to the former. All affectations of excessive severity look like pharisaical hypocrisy; whereas the Spirit of Christ, which is made up of humility and charity, will make us look so severely to ourselves, that on that very account we will be gentle even to the failings of others.

Yet, on the other hand, the church ought to endeavour to conform herself so far to her Head, and to His doctrine, as to ²Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15. 'note those who obey not the gospel, and to have no company with them, that they may be ashamed; yet not so as to hate such a one, or count him as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother.' Into what neglect or prostitution soever any church may have fallen in this great point of separating offenders, of making them ashamed, and of keeping others from being corrupted with their ill example and bad influence, that must be confessed to be a very great defect and blemish. The church of Rome had slackened all the ancient rules of discipline, and had perverted this matter in a most scandalous manner; and the world is now sunk into so much corruption, and to such a contempt of holy things, that it is much more easy here to find matter for lamentation, than to see how to remedy or correct it.

ARTICLE XVII.

Of Predestination and Election.

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

As the godly consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the Flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their Faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their Eyes the sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, We must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: And in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

THERE are many things in several of the other Articles which depend upon this; and therefore I will explain it more fully: for as this has given occasion to one of the longest, the subtlest, and indeed the most intricate, of all the questions in divinity; so it will be necessary to open and examine it as fully as the importance and difficulties of it do require. In treating of it, I shall,

First, State the question, together with the consequences, that arise out of it.

Secondly, Give an account of the differences that have arisen upon it.

Thirdly, I shall set out the strength of the opinions of the contending parties, with all possible impartiality and exactness.

Fourthly, I shall shew how far they agree, and how far they differ; and shall shew what reason there is for bearing with one another's opinions in these matters; and in the

Fifth and last place, I shall consider how far we of this church are determined by this Article, and how far we are at liberty to follow any of those different opinions.

The whole controversy may be reduced to this single point as its head and source: Upon what views did God form his purposes and decrees concerning mankind? Whether he did it merely upon a design of advancing his own glory, and for manifesting his own attributes, in order to which he settled the great and universal scheme of his whole creation and providence? Or whether he considered all the free motions of those rational agents that he did intend to create, and according to what he foresaw they would choose and do, in all the various circumstances in which he might put them, formed his decrees? Here the controversy begins: and when this is settled, the three main questions that arise out of it will be soon determined.

The first is, whether both God and Christ intended that Christ should only die for that particular number whom God intended to save? Or whether it was intended that he should die for all, so that every man that would, might have the benefit of his death, and that no man was excluded from it, but because he willingly rejected it?

The second is, Whether those assistances, that God gives to men to enable them to obey him, are of their own nature so efficacious and irresistible, that they never fail of producing the effect for which they are given? Or whether they are only sufficient to enable a man to obey God; so that their efficacy comes from the freedom of the will, that either may co-operate with them, or may not, as it pleases?

The third is, Whether such persons do, and must certainly persevere to whom such grace is given? Or, whether they may not fall away both entirely and finally from that state?

There are also other questions concerning the true notion of liberty, concerning the feebleness of our powers in this lapsed state, with several lesser ones; all which do necessarily take their determination from the decision of the first and main question; about which there are four opinions.

The first is of those commonly called Supralapsarians, who think that God does only consider his own glory in all that he does: and that whatever is done arises, as from its first cause, from the decree of God: that in this decree God, considering only the manifestation of his own glory, intended to make the

world, to put a race of men in it, to constitute them under Adam as their fountain and head: that he decreed Adam's sin, the lapse of his posterity, and Christ's death, together with the salvation or damnation of such men as should be most for his own glory: that to those who were to be saved he decreed to give such efficacious assistances, as should certainly put them in the way of salvation; and to those whom he rejected he decreed to give such assistances and means only as should render them inexcusable: that all men do continue in a state of grace, or of sin, and shall be saved or damned, according to that first decree: so that God views himself only, and in that view he designs all things singly for his own glory, and for the manifesting of his own attributes.

The second opinion is of those called the Sublapsarians, who say, that Adam having sinned freely, and his sin being imputed to all his posterity, God did consider mankind, thus lost, with an eye of pity; and, having designed to rescue a great number out of this lost state, he decreed to send his Son to die for them, to accept of his death on their account, and to give them such assistances as should be effectual both to convert them to him, and to make them persevere to the end: but for the rest, he framed no positive act about them, only he left them in that lapsed state, without intending that they should have the benefit of Christ's death, or of efficacious and persevering assistances.

The third opinion is of those who are called Remonstrants, Arminians,* or Universalists, who think that God intended to create all men free, and to deal with them according to the use that they should make of their liberty: that therefore he, foreseeing how every one would use it, did, upon that, decree all things that concerned them in this life, together with their salvation and damnation in the next: that Christ died for all men; that sufficient assistances are given to every man, but that all men may choose whether they will use them, and persevere in them, or not.

The fourth opinion is of the Socinians,† who deny the certain prescience of future contingencies; and therefore they think the decrees of God from all eternity were only general; that such as believe and obey the gospel shall be saved, and that such as live and die in sin shall be damned: but that there were no special decrees made concerning particular persons, these being only made in time, according to the state in which they are: they do also think that man is by nature so free and so entire, that he needs no inward grace; so they deny a special predestination from all eternity, and do also deny inward assistances.

This is a controversy that arises out of natural religion: for if it is believed that God governs the world, and that the wills

* See note, p. 202.

† For an account of the heresy of Socinus, see note, p. 60.

of men are free; then it is natural to inquire which of these is subject to the other, or how they can be both maintained? whether God determines the will? or if his Providence follows the motions of the will? Therefore all those that believed a Providence have been aware of this difficulty. The Stoics put all things under a fate; even the gods themselves: if this fate was a necessary series of things, a chain of matter and motion that was fixed and unalterable, then it was plain and downright atheism. The Epicureans set all things at liberty, and either thought that there was no God, or at least that there was no Providence. The philosophers knew not how to avoid this difficulty, by which we see Tully and others were so differently moved, that it is plain they despaired of getting out of it. The Jews had the same question among them; for they could not believe their law, without acknowledging a Providence: and yet the Sadducees among them asserted liberty in so entire a manner, that they set it free from all restraints: on the other hand, the Essens put all things under an absolute fate: and the Pharisees took a middle way; they asserted the freedom of the will, but thought that all things were governed by a Providence. There are also subtle disputes concerning this matter among the Mahometans, one sect asserting liberty, and another fate, which generally prevails among them.

In the first ages of Christianity, the Gnostics fancied that the souls of men were of different ranks, and that they sprang from different principles, or gods, who made them. Some were carnal, that were devoted to perdition; others were spiritual, and were certainly to be saved; others were animal of a middle order, capable either of happiness or misery. It seems that the Marcionites and Manichees thought that some souls were made by the bad god, as others were made by the good. In opposition to all these, Origen asserted, that all souls were by nature equally capable of being either good or bad; and that the difference among men arose merely from the freedom of the will, and the various use of that freedom: that God left men to this liberty, and rewarded and punished them according to the use of it; yet he asserted a Providence: but as he brought in the Platonical doctrine of pre-existence into the government of the world; and as he explained God's loving Jacob, and his hating of Esau, before they were born, and had done either good or evil, by this of a regard to what they had done formerly; so he asserted the fall of man in Adam, and his being recovered by grace; but he still maintained an unrestrained liberty in the will. His doctrine, though much hated in Egypt, was generally followed over all the east, particularly in Palestine and at Antioch. St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Basil drew a system of divinity out of his works, in which that which relates to the liberty of the will is very fully set forth: that book was much studied in the east. Chrysostom, Isidore of Damiete, and Theodoret, with all their followers,

Joseph.
Ant. Jud.
lib. xviii. c.
1—deBell.
Jud. lib. ii.
c. 7.

Iren. adv.
Her. lib. i.
c. 1. sect.
11.
Epiph.
Her. 31.
Clem. Al.
Pæd. lib. i.
c. 6.
Orig. Peri-
archon.
l. iii. Philo-
cal. c. 21.
Explan.
Ep. ad.
Rom. l. vi.
c. 3.

Orig. Phi-
local.

taught it so copiously, that it became the received doctrine of the eastern church. Jerome was so much in love with Origen, that he translated some parts of him, and set Ruffin on translating the rest. But as he had a sharp quarrel with the bishops of Palestine, so that perhaps disposed him to change his thoughts of Origen: for ever after that, he set himself much to disgrace his doctrine; and he was very severe on Ruffin for translating him: though Ruffin confesses, that, in translating his works, he took great liberties in altering several passages that he disliked. One of Origen's disciples was Pelagius, a Scottish monk, in great esteem at Rome, both for his learning and the great strictness of his life. He carried these doctrines further than the Greek church had done; so that he was reckoned to have fallen into great errors both by Chrysostom and Isidore (as it is represented by Jansenius, though that is denied by others, who think they meant another of the same name). He denied that we had suffered any harm by the fall of Adam, or that there was any need of inward assistances; and he asserted an entire liberty in the will. St. Austin, though in his disputes with the Manichees he had said many things on the side of liberty, yet he hated Pelagius's doctrine, which he thought asserted a sacrilegious liberty, and he set himself to beat down his tenets, which had been but feebly attacked by Jerome. Cassian, a disciple of St. Chrysostom's, came to Marseilles about this time, having left Constantinople perhaps when his master was banished out of it. He taught a middle doctrine, asserting an inward grace, but subject to the freedom of the will; and that all things were both decreed and done, according to the prescience of God, in which all future contingents were foreseen: he also taught, that the first conversion of the soul to God was merely an effect of its free choice; so that all preventing grace was denied by him; which came to be the peculiar distinction of those who were afterwards called the Semipelagians. Prosper and Hilary gave an account of this system to St. Austin, upon which he writ against it, and his opinions were defended by Prosper, Fulgentius, Orosius, and others, as Cassian's were defended by Faustus, Vincentius, and Gennadius. In conclusion, St. Austin's opinions did generally prevail in the west; only Pelagius, it seems, retiring to his own country, he had many followers among the Britains: but German and Lupus, being sent over once and again from France, are said to have conquered them so entirely, that they were all freed from those errors: whatever they did by their arguments, the writers of their legends took care to adorn their mission with many very wonderful miracles, of which the gathering all the pieces of a calf, some of which had been dressed, and the putting them together in its skin, and restoring it again to life, is none of the least. The ruin of the Roman empire, and the disorders that the western provinces fell under by their new and barbarous masters, occa-

Ruffin.
Peror. in
Vers. Com.
Orig. in
Ep. ad.
Rom.
Chrys. Ep.
4. ad
Olymp.
Isid. Pelus.
lib. i. Ep.
514.

sioned in those ages a great decay of learning: so that few writers of fame coming after that time, St. Austin's great labours and piety, and the many vast volumes that he had left behind him, gave him so great a name, that few durst contest what had been so zealously and so copiously defended by him: and though it is highly probable, that Celestine was not satisfied with his doctrine; yet both he and the other bishops of Rome, together with many provincial synods, have so often declared his doctrine in those points to be the doctrine of the church, that this is very hardly got over by those of that communion.

The chief, and indeed the only material, difference that is between St. Austin's doctrine and that of the Sublapsarians is, that he, holding that with the sacrament of baptism there was joined an inward regeneration, made a difference between the *regenerate* and the *predestinate*, which these do not: he thought persons thus regenerate might have all grace, besides that of *perseverance*; but he thought that they, not being predestinated, were certainly to fall from that state, and from the grace of regeneration. The other differences are but forced strains to represent him and the Calvinists as of different principles: he thought, that overcoming delectation, in which he put the efficacy of grace, was as irresistible, though he used not so strong a word for it as the Calvinists do; and he thought that the decree was as absolute, and made without any regard to what the free-will would choose, as any of these do. So in the main points, the absoluteness of the decree, the extent of Christ's death, the efficacy of grace, and the certainty of perseverance, their opinions are the same, though their ways of expressing themselves do often differ. But if St. Austin's name and the credit of his books went far, yet no book was more read in the following ages than Cassian's Collations. There was in them a clear thread of good sense, and a very high strain of piety that run through them; and they were thought the best institutions for a monk to form his mind, by reading them attentively: so they still carried down, among those who read them, deep impressions of the doctrine of the Greek church.

This broke out in the ninth century, in which Godescalus, a monk, was severely used by Hincmar, and by the church of Rhemes, for asserting some of St. Austin's doctrines; against which Scotus Erigena wrote; as Bertram, or Ratramne, wrote for them. Remigius, bishop of Lyons, with his church, did zealously assert St. Austin's doctrine, not without great sharpness against Scotus. After this, the matter slept, till the school-divinity came to be in great credit: and Thomas Aquinas being accounted the chief glory of the Dominican order, he not only asserted all St. Austin's doctrine, but added this to it; that whereas formerly it was in general held, that the providence of God did extend itself to all things whatso-

ever, he thought this was done by God's concurring immediately to the production of every thought, action, motion, or mode; so that God was the first and immediate cause of every thing that was done: and in order to the explaining the joint production of every thing by God as the first, and by the creature as the second cause, he thought, at least as his followers have understood him, that by a physical influence the will was predetermined by God to all things, whether good or bad; so that the will could not be said to be free in that particular instance *in sensu composito*, though it was in general still free in all its actions *in sensu diviso*: a distinction so sacred, and so much used among them, that I choose to give it in their own terms, rather than translate them. To avoid the consequence of making God the author of sin, a distinction was made between the positive act of sin, which was said not to be evil, and the want of its conformity to the law of God, which being a negation was no positive being, so that it was not produced. And thus, though the action was produced jointly by God as the first cause, and by the creature as the second, yet God was not guilty of the sin, but only the creature. This doctrine passed down among the Dominicans, and continues to do so to this day. Scotus, who was a Franciscan, denied this predetermination, and asserted the freedom of the will. Durandus denied this immediate concurrence; in which he has not had many followers, except Adola, and some few more.

When Luther began to form his opinions into a body, he clearly saw, that nothing did so plainly destroy the doctrine of merit and justification by works, as St. Austin's opinions: he found also in his works very express authorities against most of the corruptions of the Roman church: and being of an order that carried his name, and by consequence was accustomed to read and reverence his works, it was no wonder if he, without a strict examining of the matter, espoused all his opinions. Most of those of the church of Rome who wrote against him, being of the other persuasions, any one reading the books of that age would have thought that St. Austin's doctrine was abandoned by the church of Rome: so that when Michael Baius, and some others at Louvain, began to revive it, that became a matter of scandal, and they were condemned at Rome: yet at the council of Trent the Dominicans had so much credit, that great care was taken, in the penning their decrees, to avoid all reflections upon that doctrine. It was at first received by the whole Jesuit order, so that Bellarmine formed himself upon it, and still adhered to it: but soon after, that order changed their mind, and left their whole body to a full liberty in those points, and went all quickly over to the other hypothesis, that differed from the Semipelagians only in this, that they allowed a preventing-grace, but such as was subject to the freedom of the will.

Molina and Fonseca invented a new way of explaining God's foreseeing future contingents, which they called a *middle*, or *mean science*; by which they taught, that as God sees all things as possible in his knowledge of *simple apprehension*, and all things that are certainly future, as present in his knowledge of *vision*; so by this knowledge he also sees the chain of all conditionate futurities, and all the connections of them, that is, whatsoever would follow upon such or such conditions. Great jealousies arising upon the progress that the order of the Jesuits was making, these opinions were laid hold on to mortify them; so they were complained of at Rome for departing from St. Austin's doctrine, which in these points was generally received as the doctrine of the Latin church: and many conferences were held before pope Clement the Eighth, and the cardinals; where the point in debate was chiefly, What was the doctrine and tradition of the church? The advantages that St. Austin's followers had were such, that before fair judges they must have triumphed over the other: pope Clement had so resolved; but he dying, though pope Paul the Fifth had the same intentions, yet he happening then to be engaged in a quarrel with the Venetians about the ecclesiastical immunities, and having put that republic under an *interdict*, the Jesuits who were there chose to be banished, rather than to break the *interdict*: and their adhering so firmly to the papal authority, when most of the other orders forsook it, was thought so meritorious at Rome, that it saved them the censure: so, instead of a decision, all sides were commanded to be silent, and to quarrel no more upon those heads.

About forty years after that, Jansenius,* a doctor of Lou-

* Cornelius Jansenius, bishop of Ypres, a man of much learning and piety, flourished in the early part of the seventeenth century. He was the author of a celebrated work, entitled 'Augustinus,' the publication of which, after his death, revived the controversy respecting the nature and extent of grace, and disturbed the temporary calm into which the fierce contests between the Jesuits and Dominicans had, owing to the skilful management of Paul V., subsided. 'This celebrated work,' writes Mosheim, 'which gave such a wound to the Romish church, as neither the power nor wisdom of the pontiffs will ever be able to heal, is divided into three parts. The first is historical, and contains a relation of the Pelagian controversy, which arose in the fifth century. In the second, we find an accurate account and illustration of the doctrine of Augustin, relating to the constitution and powers of the human nature, in its original, fallen, and renewed state. The third contains the doctrine of the same great man, relating to the aids of sanctifying grace, procured by Christ, and to the eternal predestination of men and angels.'

The publication of this work was so detrimental to the cause of the Jesuits, by placing them in direct opposition to Augustin, that they left no means untried to procure the condemnation of it by the papal see. In this they succeeded by, in the first place, having the perusal of it prohibited by the Roman inquisitors, and in the next place by inducing Urban VIII. to issue a bull against it as a work infected with errors. This condemnation was, however, very far from reaching the end proposed—the overthrow of the system of Divine truth propounded in Jansenius's work; and many distinguished men (amongst them the doctors of Louvain) set at nought the papal bull by openly espousing the cause of Jansenius. Each party continued to defend their peculiar tenets with much zeal and no small degree of sophistry, by means of which the followers of Jansenius contrived to evade the fury

vain, being a zealous disciple of St. Austin's, and seeing the progress that the contrary doctrines were making, did, with great industry, and an equal fidelity, publish a voluminous system of St. Austin's doctrine in all the several branches of the controversy: and he set forth the Pelagians and the Semipelagians in that work under very black characters; and, not content with that, he compared the doctrines of the modern innovators with theirs. This book was received by the whole party with great applause, as a work that had decided the controversy. But the author having writ with an extraordinary force against the French pretensions on Flanders, which recommended him so much to the Spanish court, that he was made a bishop upon it: all those in France who followed St. Austin's doctrine, and applauded this book, were represented by their enemies as being in the same interests with him, and by consequence as enemies to the French greatness; so that the court of France prosecuted the whole party. This book was at first only prohibited at Rome, as a violation of that silence that the pope had enjoined; afterwards articles were picked out of it, and condemned, and all the clergy of France were required to sign the condemnation of them.

of the Jesuits, who were the more powerful party, and who scrupled not to have recourse to their familiar weapons, 'even the secular arm, and a competent number of dragoons.' The Jansenists endeavoured to establish the truth of their system by an appeal to miracles; and must have triumphed over their opponents, were it not that at that time the papacy was deeply interested in keeping itself apart from the truth laid down by Augustin, and which had been wielded with such force against it by Luther, and his followers. Accordingly, on the 31st of May, 1653, Innocent X., turning a deaf ear to the numerous entreaties of a large body of the clergy to suspend his decision, condemned by a bull these five propositions, extracted by his opponents from the book of Jansenius:—'1st. That there are divine precepts which good men, notwithstanding their desire to observe them, are, nevertheless, absolutely unable to obey; nor has God given them that measure of grace that is essentially necessary to render them capable of such obedience.—2d. That no person, in his corrupt state of nature, can resist the influence of divine grace, when it operates upon the mind.—3d. That in order to render human actions meritorious, it is not requisite that they be exempt from necessity, but only that they be free from constraint.—4th. That the Semipelagians err grievously in maintaining that the human will is endowed with the power of either receiving or resisting the aids and influences of preventing grace.—5th. That whosoever affirms that Jesus Christ made expiations, by his sufferings and death, for the sins of all mankind, is a Semipelagian.' The four first of these propositions were declared heretical, the fifth rash, impious, and injurious to the Supreme Being. An ingenious device was then set up, by means of which the Jansenists contrived, notwithstanding the pope's bull, to maintain their opinions, and yet remain within the pale of the papal church. This was by subscribing to the correctness of the pope's decision respecting these propositions; which was the *questio de jure*. The other, by denying that these propositions were in the book of Jansenius, on the ground that the pope had not declared himself in this point; this was the *questio de facto*. Alexander VII. put an end to this distinction by, in the year 1656, issuing a bull, in which it was positively declared, that the five propositions were the tenets of Jansenius, and were to be found in his book.

After this the Jesuits set upon their opponents with such fury and persecution, that those who refused to comply with the papal decree were cast into prison, or banished; others escaped by flight, and many took refuge under the wing of the Dutch government, and were thus enabled to smile at the storm, and defy the persecuting fury of the papal see.—[Ed.]

These articles were certainly in his book, and were manifest consequences of St. Austin's doctrine, which was chiefly driven at; though it was still declared at Rome, that nothing was intended to be done in prejudice of St. Austin's doctrine. Upon this pretence his party have said, that those articles being capable of two senses, the one of which was strained, and was heretical, the other of which was clear, and according to St. Austin's doctrine, it must be presumed it was not in that second, but in the other sense, that they were condemned at Rome, and so they signed the condemnation of them: but then they said, that they were not in Jansenius's book in the sense in which they condemned them.

Upon that followed a most extravagant question concerning the pope's infallibility in matters of fact: it being said on the one side, that the pope having condemned them as Jansenius's opinions, the belief of his infallibility obliged them to conclude that they must be in his book: whereas the others with great truth affirmed, that it had never been thought that in matters of fact either popes or councils were infallible. At last a new cessation of hostilities upon these points was resolved on; yet the hatred continues and the war goes on, though more covertly and more indirectly than before.

Nor are the reformed more of a piece than the church of Rome upon these points. Luther went on long, as he at first set out, with so little disguise, that whereas all parties had always pretended that they asserted the *freedom* of the will, he plainly spoke out, and said the will was not *free*, but *enslaved*: yet before he died, he is reported to have changed his mind; for though he never owned that, yet Melancthon, who had been of the same opinion, did freely retract it; for which he was never blamed by Luther. Since that time all the Lutherans have gone into the Semipelagian opinions so entirely and so eagerly, that they will neither tolerate nor hold communion with any of the other persuasion. Calvin not only taught St. Austin's doctrine, but seemed to go on to the Supralapsarian way; which was more openly taught by Beza, and was generally followed by the reformed; only the difference between the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians was never brought to a decision; divines being in all the Calvinists' churches left to their freedom as to that point.

In England the first reformers were generally in the Sublapsarian hypothesis: but Perkins and others having asserted the Supralapsarian way, Arminius,* a professor in Leyden,

* James Arminius, professor of divinity in the university of Leyden, was 'a man who joined to unquestionable piety and meekness of spirit, a clear and acute judgment; and who had obtained no slight eminence by the talent with which he had extricated the doctrines of Christianity from the dry and technical mode in which they had hitherto been stated and discussed. His celebrity placed him in a situation ill suited to his habits and temper. As a pupil of Beza, he had embraced the extreme views to which that divine had carried the tenets advocated by the powerful pen of Calvin. It happened that one Coornhert had advanced some opinions,

writ against him: upon this Gomarus and he had many disputes; and these opinions bred a great distraction over all the United Provinces. At the same time another political matter occasioning a division of opinion, whether the war should be carried on with Spain, or if propositions for a peace or truce should be entertained? it happened that Arminius's followers were all for a peace, and the others were generally for carrying on the war; which being promoted by the prince of Orange, he joined to them: and the Arminians were represented as men, whose opinions and affections leaned to popery: so that this, from being a doctrinal point, became the distinction of a party, and by that means the differences were inflamed. A

which, if not loose in themselves, were, at least, expressed in a very unguarded way. The ministers of Delft published a reply: in which the moderate and generally received Sublapsarian hypothesis was sustained; which gave little less offence to the high Calvinists than did the heterodox language of Coornhert. Arminius, therefore, as the most talented divine of the day, was applied to, in order to take up the pen, on both sides. On the one hand, his friend Martin Lydius, solicited him to vindicate the Supralapsarian views of his former tutor, Beza, against the reply of the ministers; and, on the other, he was invited by the synod of Amsterdam, to defend this same reply against Coornhert. Placed in this remarkable situation, Arminius felt compelled to enter into an examination of the whole question, and was induced to change his sentiments, and to adopt that view of the Divine dispensations which now bears his name.—*Allport*.

The sentiments of the Arminians, or Remonstrants, concerning the questions of predestination and grace, were comprehended in five articles, generally denominated the five points, and which have been the subject of much discussion in our own church. They are—1st. 'That God, from all eternity, determined to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus; and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist unto the end his Divine succours.

'2d. That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular;—that, however, none but those who believe in him can be partakers of this divine benefit.

'3d. That true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free-will; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or of doing any good thing; and that therefore it is necessary, to his conversion and salvation, that he be regenerated and renewed by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

'4th. That this Divine grace, or energy of the Holy Ghost, which heals the disorder of a corrupt nature, begins, advances, and brings to perfection, every thing that can be called good in man; and that, consequently, all good works, without exception, are to be attributed to God alone, and to the operation of his grace: that, nevertheless, this grace does not force the man to act against his inclination, but may be resisted and rendered ineffectual by the perverse will of the impenitent sinner.

'5th. That they who are united to Christ by faith are thereby furnished with abundant strength, and with succours sufficient to enable them to triumph over the seductions of Satan, and the allurements of sin and temptation; but that the question, 'Whether such may fall from their faith, and perfect finally this state of grace?' has not been yet resolved with sufficient perspicuity; and must, therefore, be yet more carefully examined by an attentive study of what the Holy Scriptures have declared in relation to this important point. "It is to be observed, that this last article was afterwards changed by the Arminians, who, in process of time, declared their sentiments with less caution, and positively affirmed that the saints might fall from a state of grace."—*Mosheim*.

The opinions of Arminius were condemned at the famous synod of Dort. Of the life of Arminius, and the proceedings of the synod of Dort, the reader will find a concise and interesting account in Allport's translation of Davenant on the Colossians.—[Ed.]

A R T.
XVII. great synod met at Dort; to which the divines were sent from hence, as well as from other churches. The Arminian tenets were condemned; but the difference between the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians was not meddled with. The divines of this church, though very moderate in the way of proposing their opinions, yet upon the main adhered to St. Austin's doctrine. So the breach was formed in Holland: but when the point of state was no more mixed with it, these questions were handled with less heat.

Those disputes quickly crossed the seas, and divided us: the abbots adhered to St. Austin's doctrine; while bishop Overal, but chiefly archbishop Laud, espoused the Arminian tenets. All divines were by proclamation required not to preach upon those heads: but those that favoured the new opinions were encouraged, and the others were depressed. And unhappy disputes falling in at that time concerning the extent of the royal prerogative beyond law, the Arminians having declared themselves highly for that, they were as much favoured at court, as they were censured in the parliament: which brought that doctrine under a very hard character over all the nation.

Twisse carried it high to the Supralapsarian hypothesis, which grew to be generally followed by those of that side: but that sounded harshly; and Hobbes grafting afterwards a fate and absolute necessity upon it, the other opinions were again revived; and no political interests falling in with them, as all prejudices against them went off, so they were more calmly debated, and became more generally acceptable than they were before. Men are now left to their liberty in them, and all anger upon those heads is now so happily extinguished, that diversity of opinions about them begets no alienation nor animosity.

So far have I prosecuted a short view of the history of this controversy. I come now to open the chief grounds of the different parties: and first, for the Supralapsarians.

They lay this down for a foundation, that God is essentially perfect and independent in all his acts: so that he can consider nothing but himself and his own glory: that therefore he designed every thing in and for himself: that to make him stay his decrees till he sees what free creatures will do, is to make him decree dependently upon them; which seems to fall short of infinite perfection: that he himself can be the only end of his counsels; and that therefore he could only consider the manifestation of his own attributes and perfection; that infinite wisdom must begin its designs at that which is to come last in the execution of them; and since the conclusion of all things at the last day will be the manifestation of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, we ought to suppose, that God, in the order of things designed that first, though in the order of time there is no first nor second in God, this

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XVII. being supposed to be from all eternity. After this great design was laid, all the means in order to the end were next to be designed. Creatures in the sight of God are as nothing, and, by a strong figure, are said to be less than nothing, and vanity. Now if we in our designs do not consider ants or insects, not to say straws, or grains of sand and dust, then what lofty thoughts soever our pride may suggest to us, we must be confessed to be very poor and inconsiderable creatures before God; therefore he himself and his own glory can only be his own end in all that he designs or does.

This is the chief basis of their doctrine, and so ought to be well considered. They add to this, that there can be no certain prescience of future contingents. They say it involves a contradiction, that things which are not certainly to be, should be certainly foreseen; for if they are certainly foreseen, they must certainly be: so while they are supposed to be contingent, they are yet affirmed to be certain, by saying that they are certainly foreseen. When God decrees that any thing shall be, it has from that a certain futurity, and as such it is certainly foreseen by him: an uncertain foresight is an act of its nature imperfect, because it may be a mistake, and so is inconsistent with the divine perfection. And it seems to imply a contradiction to say that a thing happens freely, that is, may be, or may not be, and yet that it is certainly foreseen by God. God cannot foresee things, but as he decrees them, and so gives them a futurity, and, therefore, this prescience antecedent to his decree must be rejected as a thing impossible.

They say further, that conditionate decrees are imperfect in their nature, and that they subject the will and acts of God to a creature: that a conditionate decree is an act in suspense, whether it shall be or not; which is inconsistent with infinite perfection. A general will, or rather a willing that all men should be saved, has also plain characters of imperfection in it: as if God wished somewhat that he could not accomplish, so that his goodness should seem to be more extended than his power. Infinite perfection can wish nothing but what it can execute; and if it is fit to wish it, it is fit also to execute it. Therefore all that style, that ascribes passions or affections to God, must be understood in a figure; so that when his providence exerts itself in such acts as among us men would be the effects of those passions, then the passions themselves are in the phrase of the scripture ascribed to God. They say we ought not to measure the punishments of sin by our notions of justice: God afflicts many good men very severely, and for many years in this life, and this only for the manifestation of his own glory, for making their faith and patience to shine; and yet none think that this is unjust. It is a method in which God will be glorified in them: some sins are punished with other sins, and likewise with a course of severe miseries: if we transfer this from time to eternity, the

A.R.T. XVII. whole will be then more conceivable; for if God may do for a little time that which is inconsistent with our notions, and with our rules of justice, he may do it for a longer duration; since it is as impossible that he can be unjust for a day, as for all eternity.

As God does every thing for himself and his own glory, so the scriptures teach us every where to offer up all praise and glory to God; to acknowledge that all is of him, and to humble ourselves as being nothing before him. Now if we were elected not by a free act of his, but by what he foresaw that we would be, so that his grace is not efficacious by its own force, but by the good use that we make of it, then the glory and praise of all the good we do, and of God's purposes to us, were due to ourselves: he designs, according to the other doctrine, equally well to all men; and all the difference among them will arise neither from God's intentions to them, nor from his assistances, but from the good use that he foresaw they would make of these favours that he was to give in common to all mankind: man should have whereof to glory, and he might say, that he himself made himself to differ from others. The whole strain of the scriptures in ascribing all good things to God, and in charging us to offer up the honour of all to him, seems very expressly to favour this doctrine; since if all our good is from God, and is particularly owing to his grace, then good men have somewhat from God that bad men have not; for which they ought to praise him. The style of all the prayers that are used or directed to be used in the scripture, is for a grace that opens our eyes, that turns our hearts, that makes us to go, that leads us not into temptation, but delivers us from evil. All these phrases do plainly import that we desire more than a power or capacity to act, such as is given to all men, and such as, after we have received it, may be still ineffectual to us. For to pray for such assistances as are always given to all men, and are such that the whole good of them shall wholly depend upon ourselves, would sound very oddly; whereas we pray for somewhat that is special, and that we hope shall be effectual. We do not and cannot pray earnestly for that, which we know all men as well as we ourselves have at all times.

Humility and earnestness in prayer seem to be among the chief means of working in us the image of Christ, and of deriving to us all the blessings of heaven. That doctrine which blasts both, which swells us up with an opinion that all comes from ourselves, and that we receive nothing from God but what is given in common with us to all the world, is certainly contrary both to the spirit and to the design of the gospel.

To this they add observations from Providence. The world was for many ages delivered up to idolatry; and since the Christian religion has appeared, we see vast tracts of coun-

tries which have continued ever since in idolatry: others are fallen under Mahometanism; and the state of Christendom is in the eastern parts of it under so much ignorance, and the greatest part of the west is under so much corruption, that we must confess the far greatest part of mankind has been in all ages left destitute of the means of grace, so that the promulgating the gospel to some nations, and the denying it to others, must be ascribed to the unsearchable ways of God, that are past finding out. If he thus leaves whole nations in such darkness and corruption, and freely chooses others to communicate the knowledge of himself to them, then we need not wonder if he should hold the same method with individuals, that he does with whole bodies: for the rejecting of whole nations by the lump for so many ages, is much more unaccountable than the selecting of a few, and the leaving others in that state of ignorance and brutality. And whatever may be said of his extending mercy to some few of those who have made a good use of that dim light which they had; yet it cannot be denied but their condition is much more deplorable, and the condition of the others is much more hopeful; so that great numbers of men are born in such circumstances, that it is morally impossible that they should not perish in them; whereas others are more happily situated and enlightened.

This argument taken from common observation becomes much stronger, when we consider what the apostle says, particularly in the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians, even according to the exposition of those of the other side: for if God *loved* Jacob, so as to choose his posterity to be his people, and rejected or *hated* Esau and his posterity, and if that was according to the *purpose* and design of his election; if by the same purpose the Gentiles were to be grafted upon that stock, from which the Jews were then to be cut off; and if the counsel or purpose of God had appeared in particular to those of Ephesus, though the most corrupted both in magic, idolatry, and immorality, of any in the east; then it is plain, that the applying the means of grace, arises merely from a great design that was long hid in God, which did then break out. It is reasonable to believe, that there is a proportion between the application of the means, and the decree itself concerning the end. The one is resolved into the unsearchable riches of God's grace, and declared to be free and absolute. God's choosing the nation of the Jews in such a distinction beyond all other nations, is by Moses and the prophets frequently said not to be on their own account, or on the account of any thing that God saw in them, but merely from the goodness of God to them. From all this it seems, say they, as reasonable to believe that the other is likewise free, according to those words of our Saviour's, 'I thank thee, O Father. Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid

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Rom. ix.

11.

Eph. i. 3—

6, 9—11.

ii. 1—9.

Deut. vii.

7, 8.

ix. 4—6.

x. 15, 16.

Matt. xi.

25, 26.

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21—23.

these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes:’ the reason of which is given in the following words, ‘Even so, Father, for it seemed good in thy sight.’ What goes before, of Tyre and Sidon, and the land of Sodom, that would have made a better use of his preaching, than the towns of Galilee had done, among whom he lived, confirms this, that the means of grace are not bestowed on those of whom it was foreseen that they would have made a good use of them; or denied to those who, as was foreseen, would have made an ill use of them; the contrary of this being plainly asserted in those words of our Saviour’s. It is further observable, that he seems not to be speaking here of different nations, but of the different sorts of men of the same nation: the more learned of the Jews, the wise and prudent, rejected him, while the simpler, but better sort, *the babes*, received him: so that the difference between individual persons seems here to be resolved into the *good pleasure of God*.

It is further urged, that since those of the other side confess, that God by his prescience foresaw what circumstances might be happy, and what assistances might prove efficacious, to bad men; then his not putting them in those circumstances, but giving them such assistances only, which, how effectual soever they might be to others, he saw would have no efficacy on them, and his putting them in circumstances, and giving them assistances, which he foresaw they would abuse, if it may seem to clear the justice of God, yet it cannot clear his infinite holiness and goodness; which must ever carry him, according to our notions of these perfections, to do all that may be done, and that in the most effectual way, to rescue others from misery, to make them truly good, and to put them in a way to be happy. Since therefore this is not always done, according to the other opinion, it is plain that there is an unsearchable depth in the ways of God, which we are not able to fathom. Therefore it must be concluded, that since all are not actually good, and so put in a way to be saved, that God did not intend that it should be so; for ‘who hath resisted his will? The counsel of the Lord standeth fast, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.’ It is true, his laws are his will in one respect: he requires all to obey them: he approves them, and he obliges all men to keep them. All the expressions of his desires that all men should be saved, are to be explained of the will of revelation, commonly called *the sign of his will*. When it is said, *What more could have been done?* that is to be understood of outward means and blessings: but still God has a secret will of his *good pleasure*, in which he designs all things; and this can never be frustrated.

Isa. v. 4.

From this they do also conclude, that though Christ’s death was to be offered to all Christians, yet that intentionally and actually he only died for those whom the Father had chosen

Rom. ix.
19.
Ps. xxxiii.
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Gal. ii. 21.

and given to him to be saved by him. They cannot think that Christ could have *died in vain*, which St. Paul speaks of as a vast absurdity. Now since, if he had died for all, he should have *died in vain*, with relation to the far greater part of mankind, who are not to be saved by him; they from thence conclude, that all those for whom he died are certainly saved by him. Perhaps with relation to some subaltern blessings, which are through him communicated, if not to all mankind, yet to all Christians, he may be said to have died for all: but as to eternal salvation, they believe his design went no further than the secret purpose and election of God, and this they think is implied in these words, ‘all that are given me of my Father: thine they were, and thou gavest them me.’ He also limits his intercession to those only; ‘I pray not for the world, but for those that thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all thine are mine, and mine are thine.’ They believe that he also limited to them the extent of his death, and of that sacrifice which he offered in it.

John xvii.
6, 9, 10.

It is true, the Christian religion being to be distinguished from the Jewish in this main point, that whereas the Jewish was restrained to Abraham’s posterity, and confined within one race and nation, the Christian was to be preached to *every creature*; universal words are used concerning the death of Christ: but as the words, ‘preaching to every creature,’ and to ‘all the world,’ are not to be understood in the utmost extent, for then they have never been verified; since the gospel has never yet, for aught that appears to us, been preached to every nation under heaven; but are only to be explained generally of a commission not limited to one or more nations; none being excluded from it: the apostles were to execute it in going from city to city, as they should be inwardly moved to it by the Holy Ghost: so they think that those large words, that are applied to the death of Christ, are to be understood in the same qualified manner; that no nation or sort of men are excluded from it, and that some of all kinds and sorts shall be saved by him. And this is to be carried no further, without an imputation on the justice of God: for if he has received a sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, it is not reconcileable to justice, that all should not be saved by it, or should not at least have the offer and promulgation of it made them; that so a trial may be made whether they will accept of it or not.

Mark xvi.
15.

The *grace of God* is set forth in scripture by such figures and expressions as do plainly intimate its efficacy; and that it does not depend upon us to use it, or not to use it, at pleasure. It is said to be a creation; ‘we are created unto good works, and we become new creatures:’ it is called a regeneration, or a *new birth*; it is called a quickening and a resurrection; as our former state is compared to a feebleness, a blindness, and a death. God is said, ‘to work in us both to will

Eph. ii. 10.
2 Cor. v. 17.
Phil. ii. 13.
Ps. cx. 3
Jer. xxxi.
33, 34.

ART.
XVII.Ezek.
xxxvi. 26,
27.
Rom. ix.
21.

and to do: His people shall be willing in the day of his power: He will write his laws in their hearts, and make them to walk in them.' Mankind is compared to a mass of clay in the hand of the *potter*, who of the same lump makes at his pleasure 'vessels of honour or of dishonour.' These passages, this last in particular, do insinuate an absolute and a conquering power in grace; and that the love of God constrains us, as St. Paul speaks expressly.

All outward coercion is contrary to the nature of liberty, and all those inward impressions that drove on the prophets, so that they had not the free use of their faculties, but felt themselves carried they knew not how, are inconsistent with it; yet when a man feels that his faculties go in their method, and that he assents or chooses from a thread of inward conviction and ratiocination, he still acts freely, that is, by an internal principle of reason and thought. A man acts as much according to his faculties, when he assents to a truth, as when he chooses what he is to do: and if his mind were so enlightened, that he saw as clearly the good of moral things, as he perceives speculative truths, so that he felt himself as little able to resist the one as the other, he would be no less a free and a rational creature, than if he were left to a more unlimited range: nay the more evidently that he saw the true good of things, and the more that he were determined by it, he should then act more suitably to his faculties, and to the excellence of his nature. For though the saints in heaven being made perfect in glory are no more capable of further rewards, yet it cannot be denied but they act with a more accomplished liberty, because they see all things in a true light, according to that, 'in thy light we shall see light:' and therefore they conclude that such an overcoming degree of grace, by which a man is made willing through the illumination of his understanding, and not by any blind or violent impulse, is no way contrary to the true notion of liberty.

Ps. xxxvi.

After all, they think, that if a debate falls to be between the sovereignty of God, his acts and his purposes, and the freedom of man's will, it is modest and decent rather to make the abatement on man's part, than on God's; but they think there is no need of this. They infer, that besides the outward enlightening of a man by knowledge, there is an inward enlightening of the mind, and a secret forcible conviction stamped on it; otherwise what can be meant by the prayer of St. Paul for the Ephesians, who had already heard the gospel preached, and were instructed in it; 'that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what was the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what was the exceeding greatness of his power towards them that believed.' This seems to be somewhat that is both internal and efficacious. Christ compares the union and influence that he communi-

Eph. i. 17,
18, 19.ART.
XVII.Acts vii.
51.
Eph. iv.
30.

cates to believers, to that union of a head with the members, and of a root with the branches, which imports an internal, a vital, and an efficacious influence. And though the outward means that are offered may be, and always are, rejected, when not accompanied with this overcoming grace, yet this never returns empty; these outward means coming from God, the resisting of them is said to be the 'resisting God, the grieving or quenching his Spirit;' and so in that sense we resist the grace or favour of God; but we can never withstand him when he intends to overcome us.

As for perseverance, it is a necessary consequence of absolute decrees, and of efficacious grace; for since all depends upon God, and that as 'of his own will he begat us,' so with him 'there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning: whom he loves he loves to the end;' and he has promised, that 'he will never leave nor forsake those to whom he becomes a God:' we must from thence conclude, that 'the purpose and calling of God is without repentance.' And therefore though good men may fall into grievous sins, to keep them from which there are dreadful things said in scripture, against their falling away, or apostasy; yet God does so uphold them, that, though he suffers them often to feel the weight of their natures, yet of all that are given by the Father to the Son to be saved by him, none are lost.

John xvii.
11, 12.
xviii. 8, 9.

Upon the whole matter, they believe that God did in himself and for his own glory *foreknow* such a determinate number, whom he pitched upon, to be the persons in whom he would be both sanctified and glorified: that, having thus foreknown them, he *predestinated* them to be holy, conformable to the image of his Son: that these were to be *called* not by a general calling in the sense of these words, 'many are called, but few are chosen;' but to be 'called according to his purpose:' and those he *justified* upon their obeying that calling; and he will in conclusion *glorify* them. Nor are these words only to be limited to the sufferings of good men; they are to be extended to all the effects of the love of God, according to that which follows, that 'nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.' The whole reasoning in the 9th of the Romans does so plainly resolve all the acts of God's mercy and justice, his *hardening* as well as his pardoning, into an absolute freedom, and an unsearchable depth, that more express words to that effect can hardly be imagined.

Matt. xx.
16.
Rom. viii.
29, 30.Rom. ix.
18.

It is in general said, that 'the children being yet unborn, neither having done good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; Jacob was loved and Esau hated;' that God 'raised up Pharaoh, that he might shew his power in him;' and when an objection is suggested against all this, instead of answering it, it is silenced with this, 'Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?' And all is illustrated with the

Ver. 11-

13.

Ver. 17.

Ver. 20.

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Ver. 22.

Exod. iv.
21. x. 20.
xi. 10.
xiv. 8.
Prov. xvi.
4.
Acts xiii.
48.
Rev. xiii.
8. iii. 5.
xx. 12.
xxi. 27.
2 Tim. i. 9.
Jude 4.
Rom. i. 26,
21.

figure of the potter; and concluded with this solemn question, 'What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?' This carries the reader to consider what is so often repeated in the book of Exodus, concerning God's 'hardening the heart of Pharaoh, so that he would not let his people go.' It is said, that God 'has made the wicked man for the day of evil:' as it is written on the other hand, that 'as many believed the gospel, as were appointed to eternal life.' Some are said to be 'written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, or according to God's purpose before the world began.' Ungodly men are said to be 'of old ordained to condemnation, and to be given up by God unto vile affections, and to be given over by him to a reprobate mind.' Therefore they think that reprobation is an absolute and free act of God, as well as election, to manifest his holiness and justice in them who are under it, as well as his love and mercy is manifested in the elect. Nor can they think with the Sublapsarians, that reprobation is only God's passing by those whom he does not elect; this is an act unworthy of God, as if he forgot them, which does clearly imply imperfection. And as for that which is said concerning their being fallen in Adam, they argue, that either Adam's sin, and the connection of all mankind to him as their head and representative, was absolutely decreed, or it was not: if it was, then all is absolute; Adam's sin and the fall of mankind were decreed, and by consequence all from the beginning to the end are under a continued chain of absolute decrees; and then the Supralapsarian and the Sublapsarian hypothesis will be one and the same, only variously expressed. But if Adam's sin was only foreseen and permitted, then a conditionate decree founded upon prescience is once admitted, so that all that follows turns upon it; and then all the arguments either against the perfection of such acts, or the certainty of such a prescience, turn against this; for if they are admitted in any one instance, then they may be admitted in others as well as in that.

The Sublapsarians do always avoid to answer this; and it seems they do rather incline to think that Adam was under an absolute decree; and if so, then though their doctrine may seem to those, who do not examine things nicely, to look more plausible; yet really it amounts to the same thing with the other. For it is all one to say, that God decreed that Adam should sin, and that all mankind should fall in him, and that then God should choose out of mankind, thus fallen by his decree, such as he would save, and leave the rest in that lapsed state to perish in it; as it is to say, that God intending to save some, and to damn others, did, in order to the carrying this on in a method of justice, decree Adam's fall, and the fall of mankind in him, in order to the saving of his elect, and

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the damning of the rest. All that the Sublapsarians say in this particular for themselves is, that the scripture has not declared any thing concerning the fall of Adam, in such formal terms, that they can affirm any thing concerning it. A liberty of another kind seems to have been then in man, when he was made after the image of God, and before he was corrupted by sin. And therefore though it is not easy to clear all difficulties in so intricate a matter, yet it seems reasonable to think, that man in a state of innocency was a purer and a freer creature to good, than now he is. But after all, this seems to be only a fleeing from the difficulty, to a less offensive way of talking of it; for if the prescience of future contingents cannot be certain, unless they are decreed, then God could not certainly foreknow Adam's sin, without he had made an absolute decree about it; and that, as was just now said, is the same thing with the Supralapsarian hypothesis; of which I shall say no more, having now laid together in a small compass the full strength of this argument. I go next to set out with the same fidelity and exactness the Remonstrants' arguments.

They begin with this, that God is just, holy, and merciful: that, in speaking of himself in the scripture with relation to those attributes, he is pleased to make appeals to men, to call them to reason with him: thus his prophets did often bespeak the Jewish nation; the meaning of which is, that God acts so, that men, according to the notions that they have of those attributes, may examine them, and will be forced to justify and approve them. Nay, in these God proposes himself to us, as our pattern; we ought to imitate him in them, and by consequence we may frame just notions of them. We are required to be holy and merciful as he is merciful. What then can we think of a justice that shall condemn us for a fact that we never committed, and that was done many years before we were born? as also that designs first of all to be glorified by our being eternally miserable, and that decrees that we shall commit sins, to justify the previous decree of our reprobation? If those decrees are thus originally designed by God, and are certainly effectuated, then it is inconceivable how there should be a justice in punishing that which God himself appointed by an antecedent and irreversible decree should be done: so this seems to lie hard upon justice. It is no less hard upon infinite holiness, to imagine that a Being of 'purer eyes than that it can behold iniquity,' should by an antecedent decree fix our committing so many sins, in such a manner that it is not possible for us to avoid them: this is to make us to be born indeed under a necessity of sin; and yet this necessity is said to flow from the act and decrees of God: God represents himself always in the scriptures as 'gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth.' It is often said, that 'he desires that no man should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth:' and this

Hab. i. 13.

Ex. xxxiv.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

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XVII.Ezek. xviii.
32
xxxiii. 11.

is said sometimes with the solemnity of an oath; 'As I live, saith the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of sinners.' They ask, what sense can such words bear, if we can believe that God did by an absolute decree reprobate so many of them? If all things that happen do arise out of the decree of God as its first cause, then we must believe that God takes pleasure both in his own decrees and in the execution of them; and, by consequence, that he takes pleasure in the death of sinners, and that in contradiction to the most express and most solemn words of scripture. Besides, what can we think of the truth of God, and of the sincerity of those offers of grace and mercy, with the obtestations, the exhortations, and expostulations upon them, that occur so often in scripture, if we can think that by antecedent acts of God he determined that all these should be ineffectual; so that they are only so many solemn words that do indeed signify nothing, if God intended that all things should fall out as they do, and if they do so fall out only because he intended it? The chief foundation of this opinion lies in this argument as its basis, that nothing can be believed that contradicts the justice, holiness, the truth, and purity, of God; that these attributes are in God according to our notions concerning them, only they are in him infinitely more perfect; since we are required to imitate them. Whereas the doctrine of absolute decrees does manifestly contradict the clearest ideas that we can form of justice, holiness, truth, and goodness.

From the nature of God they go to the nature of man; and they think that such an inward freedom by which a man is the master of his own actions, and can do or not do what he pleases, is so necessary to the morality of our actions, that without it our actions are neither good nor evil, neither capable of rewards or punishment. Mad men, or men asleep, are not to be charged with the good or evil of what they do; therefore at least some degrees of liberty must be left with us, otherwise why are we praised or blamed for any thing that we do? If a man thinks that he is under an inevitable decree, as he will have little remorse for all the evil he does, while he imputes it to that inevitable force that constrains him, so he will naturally conclude that it is to no purpose for him to struggle with impossibilities: and men being inclined both to throw all blame off from themselves, and to indulge themselves in laziness and sloth, these practices are too natural to mankind to be encouraged by opinions that favour them. All virtue and religion, all discipline and industry, must arise from this as their first principle; that there is a power in us to govern our own thoughts and actions, and to raise and improve our faculties. If this is denied, all endeavours, all education, all pains either on ourselves or others, are vain and fruitless things. Nor is it possible to make a man believe other than this for he does so plainly perceive that

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he is a free agent; he feels himself balance matters in his thoughts, and deliberate about them so evidently, that he certainly knows he is a free being.

This is the image of God that is stamped upon his nature; and though he feels himself often hurried on so impetuously, that he may seem to have lost his freedom in some turns, and upon some occasions: yet he feels that he might have restrained that heat in its first beginnings; he feels he can divert his thoughts, and master himself in most things, when he sets himself to it: he finds that knowledge and reflection, that good company and good exercises, do tame and soften him, and that bad ones make him wild, loose, and irregular. From all this they conclude that man is free, and not under inevitable fate, or irresistible motions either to good or evil. All this they confirm from the whole current of the scripture, that is full of persuasions, exhortations, reproofs, expostulations, encouragements, and terrors; which are all vain and theatrical things, if there are no free powers in us to which they are addressed: to what purpose is it to speak to dead men, to persuade the blind to see, or the lame to run? If we are under an impotence till the irresistible grace comes, and if, when it comes, nothing can withstand it, then what occasion is there for all those solemn discourses, if they can have no effect on us? They cannot render us inexcusable, unless it were in our power to be bettered by them; and to imagine that God gives light and blessings to those whom he before intended to damn, only to make them inexcusable, when they could do them no good, and they will serve only to aggravate their condemnation, gives so strange an idea of that infinite goodness, that it is not fit to express it by those terms which do naturally arise upon it.

It is as hard to suppose two contrary wills in God, the one commanding us our duty, and requiring us with the most solemn obtestations to do it, and the other putting a certain bar in our way, by decreeing that we shall do the contrary. This makes God look as if he had a *will* and a *will*; though a heart and a heart import no good quality, when applied to men: the one *will* requires us to do our duty, and the other makes it impossible for us not to sin: the *will* for the good is ineffectual, while the will that makes us sin is infallible. These things seem very hard to be apprehended; and whereas the root of true religion is the having right and high ideas of God and of his attributes, here such ideas arise as naturally give us strange thoughts of God; and if they are received by us as originals, upon which we are to form our own natures, such notions may make us grow to be spiteful, imperious, and without bowels, but do not seem proper to inspire us with love, mercy, and compassion; though God is always proposed to us in that view. All preaching and instruction does also suppose this: for to what purpose are men called upon, taught,

and endeavoured to be persuaded, if they are not free agents, and have not a power over their own thoughts, and if they are not to be convinced and turned by reason? The offers of peace and pardon that are made to all men are delusory things, if they are by an antecedent act of God restrained only to a few, and all others are barred from them.

It is further to be considered, say they, that God having made men free creatures, his governing them accordingly, and making his own administration of the world suitable to it, is no diminution of his own authority: it is only the carrying on of his own creation according to the several natures that he has put in that variety of beings of which this world is composed, and with which it is diversified: therefore if some of the acts of God, with relation to man, are not so free as his other acts are, and as we may suppose necessary to the ultimate perfection of an independent Being, this arises not from any defect in the acts of God, but because the nature of the creature that he intended to make free is inconsistent with such acts.

The Divine Omnipotence is not lessened when we observe some of his works to be more beautiful and useful than others are; and the irregular productions of nature do not derogate from the order in which all things appear lovely to the Divine Mind. So if that liberty, with which he intended to endue thinking beings, is incompatible with such positive acts, and so positive a providence as governs natural things and this material world, then this is no way derogatory to the sovereignty of his mind. This does also give such an account of the evil that is in the world, as does no way accuse or lessen the purity and holiness of God; since he only suffers his creatures to go on in the free use of those powers that he has given them; about which he exercises a special providence, making some men's sins to be the immediate punishments of their own or of other men's sins, and restraining them often in a great deal of that evil that they do design, and bringing out of it a great deal of good that they did not design; but all is done in a way suitable to their natures, without any violence to them.

It is true, it is not easy to shew how those future contingencies, which depend upon the free choice of the will, should be certain and infallible. But we are on other accounts certain that it is so; for we see through the whole scriptures a thread of very positive prophecies, the accomplishment of which depended on the free will of man; and these predictions, as they were made very precisely, so they were no less punctually accomplished. Not to mention any other prophecies, all those that related to the death and sufferings of Christ were fulfilled by the free acts of the priests and people of the Jews: they sinned in doing it, which proves that they acted in it with their natural liberty. By these and all the

other prophecies that are in both Testaments, it must be confessed, that these things were certainly foreknown; but where to found that certainty, cannot be easily resolved; the infinite perfection of the Divine Mind ought here to silence all objections. A clear idea, by which we apprehend a thing to be plainly contrary to the attributes of God, is indeed a just ground of rejecting it; and therefore they think that they are in the right to deny all such to be in God, as they plainly apprehend to be contrary to justice, truth, and goodness: but if the objection against any thing supposed to be in God lies only against the manner and the unconceivableness of it, there the infinite perfection of God answers all.

It is further to be considered, that this prescience does not make the effects certain, because they are foreseen; but they are foreseen because they are to be; so that the certainty of the prescience is not antecedent or causal, but subsequent and eventual. Whatsoever happens, was future before it happened; and since it happened, it was certainly future from all eternity; not by a certainty of fate, but by a certainty that arises out of its being once, from which this truth, that it was future, was eternally certain: therefore the Divine Prescience being only the knowing all things that were to come, that does not infer a necessity or causality.

The scripture plainly shews on some occasions a conditionate prescience: God answered David, that Saul was come to Keilah, and that the men of Keilah were to deliver him up; and yet both the one and the other was upon the condition of his staying there; and he going from thence, neither the one nor the other ever happened: here was a conditionate prescience. Such was Christ's saying, that those of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, would have turned to him, if they had seen the miracles that he wrought in some of the towns of Galilee. Since then this prescience may be so certain, that it can never be mistaken, nor misguide the designs or providence of God; and since by this both the attributes of God are vindicated, and the due freedom of the will of man is asserted, all difficulties seem to be easily cleared this way.

As for the giving to some nations and persons the means of salvation, and the denying these to others, the scriptures do indeed ascribe that wholly to the riches and freedom of God's grace; but still they think, that he gives to all men that which is necessary to the state in which they are, to answer the obligations they are under in it; and that this light and common grace is sufficient to carry them so far, that God will either accept of it, or give them further degrees of illumination: from which it must be inferred, that all men are inexcusable in his sight; and that 'God is always just and clear when he judges;' since every man had that which was sufficient, if not to save him, yet at least to bring him to a state of salvation. But besides what is thus simply necessary, and

¹ Sam. xxiii. 11, 12.

Matt. xi. 21. x. 15.

Psal 11.4.

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And thus the great designs of Providence go on according to the goodness and mercy of God. None can complain, though some have more cause to rejoice and glory in God than others. What happens to nations in a body may also happen to individuals; some may have higher privileges, be put in happier circumstances, and have such assistances given them as God foresees will become *effectual*, and not only those, which though they be in their nature *sufficient*, yet in the event will be *ineffectual*: every man ought to complain of himself for not using that which was sufficient, as he might have done; and all good men will have matter of rejoicing in God, for giving them what he foresaw would prove effectual. After all, they acknowledge there is a depth in this, of God's not giving all nations an equal measure of light, nor putting all men into equally happy circumstances, which they cannot unriddle: but still justice, goodness, and truth, are saved; though we may imagine a goodness that may do to all men what is absolutely the best for them: and there they confess there is a difficulty, but not equal to those of the other side.

From hence it is that they expound all those passages in the New Testament, concerning the *purpose*, the *election*, the *foreknowledge*, and the *predestination*, of God, so often mentioned. All those, they say, relate to God's design of calling the Gentile world to the knowledge of the Messias: this was kept secret, though hints of it are given in several of the Prophets; so it was a mystery; but it was then revealed, when, according to Christ's commission to his apostles, to 'go and teach all nations,' they went preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. This was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and it was the chief subject of controversy betwixt them and the apostles at the time when the Epistles were writ: so it was necessary for them to clear this very fully, and to come often over it. But there was no need of amusing people in the beginnings of Christianity, and in that first infancy of it, with high and unsearchable speculations concerning the decrees of God: therefore they observe, that the apostles shew how that Abraham at first, Isaac and Jacob afterwards, were chosen by a discriminating favour, that they and their posterity should be in covenant with God: and upon that occasion the apostle goes on to shew, that God had always designed to call in the Gentiles, though that was not executed but by their ministry.

With this key one will find a plain coherent sense in all St. Paul's discourses on this subject, without asserting antecedent and special decrees as to particular persons. Things that happen under a permissive and directing Providence, may be also in a largeness of expression ascribed to the will and

counsel of God; for a permissive and directing will is really a will, though it be not antecedent nor causal. The *hardening Pharaoh's heart* may be ascribed to God, though it is said that his *heart hardened itself*; because he took occasion, from the stops God put in those plagues that he sent upon him and his people, to encourage himself, when he saw there was a new respite granted him: and he who was a cruel and bloody prince, deeply engaged in idolatry and magic, had deserved such judgments for his other sins; so that he may be well considered as actually under his final condemnation, only under a reprieve, not swallowed up in the first plagues, but preserved in them, and raised up out of them, to be a lasting monument of the justice of God against such hardened impenitency. 'Whom he will he hardeneth,' must be still restrained to such persons as that tyrant was.

It is endless to enter into the discussion of all the passages cited from the scripture to this purpose; this key serving, as they think it does, to open most of them. It is plain these words of our Saviour concerning those 'whom the Father had given him,' are only to be meant of a dispensation of Providence, and not of a decree; since he adds, 'And I have lost none of them, except the son of perdition:' for it cannot be said, that he was in the decree, and yet was lost. And in the same period in which God is said 'to work in us both to will and to do,' we are required to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.' The word rendered, 'ordained to eternal life,' does also signify, fitted or predisposed to eternal life. That question, 'Who made thee to differ?' seems to refer to those gifts which in different degrees and measures were poured out on the first Christians; in which men were only passive, and discriminated from one another by the freedom of those gifts, without any thing previous in them to dispose them to them.

Christ is said to be the 'propitiation for the sins of the whole world;' and the wicked are said to 'deny the Lord that bought them;' and his death, as to its extent to all men, is set in opposition to the sin of Adam: so that 'as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.' The *all* of the one side must be of the same extent with the *all* of the other: so since *all* are concerned in Adam's sin, *all* must be likewise concerned in the death of Christ. This they urge further, with this argument, that all men are obliged to believe in the death of Christ, but no man can be obliged to believe a lie; therefore it follows that he must have died for *all*. Nor can it be thought that grace is so efficacious of itself, as to determine us; otherwise why are we required 'not to grieve God's Spirit?' Why is it said, 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. How often would I have gathered you under 37.

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Exod. vii.
22.

Exod. viii.
15, 19, 32.

Rom. ix.
18.

John xvii.
12.

Phil. ii. 12,
13.

Acts xiii.
48.

1 Cor. iv. 7.

1 John ii. 2.

2 Pet. ii. 1.

Rom. v. 18.

Acts vii.
51.

Matt. xxiii.
37.

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Isa. v. 4.

my wings, but ye would not? What more could I have done in my vineyard, that has not been done in it?' These seem to be plain intimations of a power in us, by which we not only can, but often do, resist the motions of grace.

Hos. xiii. 9.

John v. 40.

Ezek.

xxxiii. 11.

If the determining efficacy of grace is not acknowledged, it will be yet much harder to believe that we are efficaciously determined to *sin*. This seems to be not only contrary to the purity and holiness of God, but is so manifestly contrary to the whole strain of the scriptures, that charges sin upon men, that in so copious a subject it is not necessary to bring proofs. 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help:' and, 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life: why will you die, O house of Israel?' And as for that nicety of saying, that the evil of sin consists in a negation, which is not a positive being, so that though God should determine men to the action that is sinful, yet he is not concerned in the sin of it: they think it is too metaphysical to put the honour of God and his attributes upon such a subtilty: for in sins against moral laws, there seems to be an antecedent immorality in the action itself, which is inseparable from it. But suppose that sin consisted in a negative, yet that privation does immediately and necessarily result out of the action, without any other thing whatsoever intervening; so that if God does infallibly determine a sinner to commit the action to which that guilt belongs, though that should be a sin only by reason of a privation that is dependent upon it, then it does not appear but that he is really the author of sin; since if he is the author of the sinful action, on which the sin depends as a shadow upon its substance, he must be esteemed, say they, the author of sin.

And though it may be said, that sin being a violation of God's law, he himself, who is not bound by his law, cannot be guilty of sin; yet an action that is immoral is so essentially opposite to infinite perfection, that God cannot be capable of it, as being a contradiction to his own nature. Nor is it to be supposed that he can damn men for that, which is the necessary result of an action to which he himself determined them.

Rev. ii. and
iii.

Heb. vi.

Heb. x. 38.

Ezek. xviii.
24.

As for perseverance, the many promises made in the scriptures to them that *overcome*, that continue *stedfast and faithful to the death*, seem to insinuate, that a man may fall from a good state. Those famous words in the 6th of the Hebrews do plainly intimate, that such men may 'so fall away, that it may be impossible to renew them again by repentance.' And in that Epistle where it is said, 'The just shall live by faith;' it is added, 'but if he draw back (*any man* is not in the original), my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' And it is positively said by the prophet, 'When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in

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his sin that he hath sinned shall he die.' These suppositions, with a great many more of the same strain that may be brought out of other places, do give us all possible reason to believe that a good man may fall from a good state, as well as that a wicked man may turn from a bad one. In conclusion, the end of all things, the final judgment at the last day, which shall be pronounced according to what men have done, whether good or evil, and their being to be rewarded and punished according to it, seems so effectually to assert a freedom in our wills, that they think this alone might serve to prove the whole cause.

So far I have set forth the force of the argument on the side of the Remonstrants. As for the Socinians, they make their plea out of what is said by the one and by the other side. They agree with the Remonstrants in all that they say against absolute decrees, and in urging all those consequences that do arise out of them: and they do also agree with the Calvinists in all that they urge against the possibility of a certain prescience of future contingents: so that it will not be necessary to set forth their plea more specially, nor needs more be said in opposition to it, than what was already said as part of the Remonstrants' plea. Therefore, without dwelling any longer on that, I come now to make some reflections upon the whole matter.

It is at first view apparent, that there is a great deal of weight in what has been said of both sides: so much, that it is no wonder if education, the constant attending more to the difficulties of the one side than of the other, and a temper some way proportioned to it, does fix men very steadily to either the one or the other persuasion. Both sides have their difficulties, so it will be natural to choose that side where the difficulties are least felt: but it is plain there is no reason for either of them to despise the other, since the arguments of both are far from being contemptible.

It is further to be observed, that both sides seem to be chiefly concerned to assert the honour of God, and of his attributes. Both agree in this, that whatever is fixed as the primary idea of God, all other things must be explained so as to be consistent with that. Contradictions are never to be admitted; but things may be justly believed, against which objections may be formed that cannot be easily answered.

The one side think, that we must begin with the idea of infinite perfection, of independency, and absolute sovereignty: and if in the sequel difficulties occur which cannot be cleared, that ought not to shake us from this primary idea of God.

Others think, that we cannot frame such clear notions of independency, sovereignty, and infinite perfection, as we can do of justice, truth, holiness, goodness, and mercy: and since the scripture proposes God to us most frequently under

those ideas, they think that we ought to fix on these as the primary ideas of God, and then reduce all other things to them.

Thus both sides seem zealous for God and his glory; both lay down general maxims that can hardly be disputed; and both argue justly from their first principles. These are great grounds for mutual charity and forbearance in these matters.

It is certain, that one who has long interwoven his thoughts of infinite perfection with the notions of absolute and unchangeable decrees, of carrying on every thing by a positive will, of doing every thing for his own glory, cannot apprehend decrees depending on a foreseen free will, a grace subject to it, a merit of Christ's death that is lost, and a man's being at one time loved, and yet finally hated, of God, without horror. These things seem to carry in them an appearance of feebleness, of dependence, and of changeableness.

On the other hand, a man that has accustomed himself to think often on the infinite goodness and mercy, the long-suffering, patience, and slowness to anger, that appears in God; he cannot let the thought of absolute reprobation, or of determining men to sin, or of not giving them the grace necessary to keep them from sin and damnation, enter into his mind, without the same horror that another feels in the reverse of all this.

So that the source of both opinions being the different ideas that they have of God, and both these ideas being true; men only mistaking in the extent of them, and in the consequences drawn from them; here are the clearest grounds imaginable for a mutual forbearance, for not judging men imperiously, nor censuring them severely upon either side. And those who have at different times of their lives been of both opinions, and who upon the evidence of reason, as it has appeared to them, have changed their persuasions, can speak more affirmatively here; for they know, that in great sincerity of heart they have thought both ways.

Each opinion has some practical advantages of its side. A Calvinist is taught, by his opinions, to think meanly of himself, and to ascribe the honour of all to God; which lays in him a deep foundation for humility: he is also much inclined to secret prayer, and to a fixed dependence on God; which naturally both brings his mind to a good state, and fixes it in it: and so though perhaps he cannot give a coherent account of the grounds of his watchfulness and care of himself; yet that temper arises out of his humility, and his earnestness in prayer. A Remonstrant, on the other hand, is engaged to awaken and improve his faculties, to fill his mind with good notions, to raise them in himself by frequent reflection, and by a constant attention to his own actions: he sees cause to reproach himself for his sins, and to set about his duty to purpose: being assured that it is through his own fault if he

miscarries: he has no dreadful terrors upon his mind; nor is he tempted to an undue security, or to swell up in (perhaps) an imaginary conceit of his being unalterably in the favour of God.

Both sides have their peculiar temptations as well as their advantages: the Calvinist is tempted to a false security, and sloth: and the Arminian may be tempted to trust too much to himself, and too little to God: so equally may a man of a calm temper, and of moderate thoughts, balance this matter between both the sides, and so unreasonable it is to give way to a positive and dictating temper in this point. If the Arminian is zealous to assert liberty, it is because he cannot see how there can be good or evil in the world without it: he thinks it is the work of God, that he has made for great ends; and therefore he can allow of nothing that he thinks destroys it. If on the other hand a Calvinist seems to break in upon liberty, it is because he cannot reconcile it with the sovereignty of God, and the freedom of his grace: and he grows to think that it is an act of devotion to offer up the one to save the other.

The common fault of both sides is to charge one another with the consequences of their opinions, as if they were truly their tenets. Whereas they are apprehensive enough of these consequences, they have no mind to them, and they fancy that by a few distinctions they can avoid them. But each side thinks the consequences of the other are both worse, and more certainly fastened to that doctrine, than the consequences that are urged against himself are. And so they think they must choose that opinion that is the least perplexed and difficult: not but that ingenuous and learned men of all sides confess, that they feel themselves very often pinched in these matters.

Another very indecent way of managing these points is, that both sides do too often speak very boldly of God. Some petulant wits, in order to the representing the contrary opinion as absurd and ridiculous, have brought in God, representing him, with indecent expressions, as acting or decreeing, according to their hypothesis, in a manner that is not only unbecoming, but that borders upon blasphemy. From which, though they think to escape by saying that they are only shewing what must follow if the other opinion were believed; yet there is a solemnity and gravity of style, that ought to be most religiously observed, when we poor mortals take upon us to speak of the glory or attributes, the decrees or operations, of the great God of heaven and earth: and every thing relating to this, that is put in a burlesque air, is intolerable. It is a sign of a very daring presumption, to pretend to assign the order of all the acts of God, the ends proposed in them, and the methods by which they are executed. We, who do not know how our thoughts carry our bodies to obey and second our minds, should not imagine that we can conceive how God

may move or bend our wills. The hard thing to digest in this whole matter, is reprobation: they who think it necessary to assert the freedom of election, would fain avoid it: they seek soft words for it, such as the passing by or leaving men to perish: they study to put that on Adam's sin, and they take all the methods they can to soften an opinion that seems harsh, and that sounds ill. But howsoever they will bear all the consequences of it, rather than let the point of absolute election go.

On the other side, those who do once persuade themselves that the doctrine of reprobation is false, do not see how they can deny it, and yet ascribe a free election to God. They are once persuaded that there can be no reprobation but what is conditionate, and founded on what is foreseen concerning men's sins: and from this they are forced to say the same thing of election. And both sides study to begin the controversy with that which they think they can the most easily prove; the one at the establishing of election, and the other at the overthrowing of reprobation. Some have studied to seek out middle ways: for they observing that the scriptures are writ in a great diversity of style, in treating of the good or evil that happens to us, ascribing the one to God, and imputing the other to ourselves, teaching us to ascribe the honour of all that is good to God, and to cast the blame of all that is evil upon ourselves, have from thence concluded, that God must have a different influence and causality in the one, from what he has in the other: but when they go to make this out, they meet with great difficulties; yet they choose to bear these rather than to involve themselves in those equally great, if not greater difficulties, that are in either of the other opinions. They wrap up all in two general assertions, that are great practical truths, *Let us arrogate no good to ourselves, and impute no evil to God*, and so let the whole matter rest. This may be thought by some the lazier, as well as the safer way: which avoids difficulties, rather than answers them; whereas they say of both the contending sides, that they are better at the starting of difficulties than at the resolving of them.

Thus far I have gone upon the general, in making such reflections as will appear but too well grounded to those who have with any attention read the chief disputants of both sides. In these great points all agree: that mercy is freely offered to the world in Christ Jesus: that God did freely offer his Son to be our propitiation, and has freely accepted the sacrifice of his death in our stead, whereas he might have condemned every man to have perished for his own sins: that God does, in the dispensation of his gospel, and the promulgation of it to the several nations, act according to the freedom of his grace, upon reasons that are to us mysterious and past finding out: that every man is inexcusable in the sight of God: that

all men are so far free as to be praiseworthy or blameworthy for the good or evil that they do: that every man ought to employ his faculties all he can, and to pray and depend earnestly upon God for his protection and assistance: that no man in practice ought to think that there is a fate or decree hanging over him, and so become slothful in his duty, but that every man ought to do the best he can, as if there were no such decree, since, whether there is or is not, it is not possible for him to know what it is: that every man ought to be deeply humbled for his sins in the sight of God, without excusing himself by pretending a decree was upon him, or a want of power in him: that all men are bound to obey the rules set them in the gospel, and are to expect neither mercy nor favour from God, but as they set themselves diligently about that: and finally, that at the last day all men shall be judged, not according to secret decrees, but according to their own works. In these great truths, of which the greater part are practical, all men agree. If they would agree as honestly in the practice of them, as they do in confessing them to be true, they would do that which is much more important and necessary, than to speculate and dispute about niceties; by which the world would quickly put on a new face, and then those few, that might delight in curious searches and arguments, would manage them with more modesty and less heat, and be both less positive and less supercilious.

I have hitherto insisted on such general reflections as seemed proper to these questions. I come now in the last place to examine how far our church hath determined the matter, either in this Article or elsewhere: how far she hath restrained her sons, and how far she hath left them at liberty. For those different opinions being so intricate in themselves, and so apt to raise hot disputes, and to kindle lasting quarrels, it will not be suitable to that moderation which our church hath observed in all other things, to stretch her words on these heads beyond their strict sense. The natural equity or reason of things ought rather to carry us, on the other hand, to as great a comprehensiveness of all sides, as may well consist with the words in which our church hath expressed herself on those heads.

It is not to be denied, but that the Article seems to be framed according to St. Austin's doctrine: it supposes men to be under a *curse and damnation*, antecedently to *predestination*, from which they are delivered by it; so it is directly against the Supralapsarian doctrine: nor does the Article make any mention of reprobation, no, not in a hint; no definition is made concerning it. The Article does also seem to assert the efficacy of grace: that in which the knot of the whole difficulty lies, is not defined; that is, whether God's eternal purpose or decree was made according to what he foresaw his creatures would do, or purely upon an absolute will,

in order to his own glory. It is very probable, that those who penned it meant that the decree was absolute; but yet since they have not said it, those who subscribe the Articles do not seem to be bound to any thing that is not expressed in them: and therefore since the Remonstrants do not deny but that God having foreseen what all mankind would, according to all the different circumstances in which they should be put, do or not do, he upon that did, by a firm and eternal decree, lay that whole design in all its branches, which he executes in time; they may subscribe this Article without renouncing their opinion as to this matter. On the other hand, the Calvinists have less occasion for scruple; since the Article does seem more plainly to favour them. The three cautions, that are added to it, do likewise intimate that St. Austin's doctrine was designed to be settled by the Article: for *the danger of men's having the sentence of God's predestination always before their eyes, which may occasion either desperation on the one hand, or the wretchedness of most unclean living on the other*, belongs only to that side; since these mischiefs do not arise out of the other hypothesis. The other two, of *taking the promises of God in the sense in which they are set forth to us in holy scriptures, and of following that will of God that is expressly declared to us in the word of God*, relate very visibly to the same opinion: though others do infer from these cautions, that the doctrine laid down in the Article must be so understood as to agree with these cautions; and therefore they argue, that since absolute predestination cannot consist with them, that therefore the Article is to be otherwise explained. They say the natural consequence of an absolute decree is either presumption or despair: since a man upon that bottom reckons, that which way soever the decree is made, it must certainly be accomplished. They also argue, that because we must receive the promises of God as conditional, we must also believe the decree to be conditional; for absolute decrees exclude conditional promises. An offer cannot be supposed to be made in earnest by him that has excluded the greatest number of men from it by an antecedent act of his own. And if we must only follow the revealed will of God, we ought not to suppose that there is an antecedent and positive will of God, that has decreed our doing the contrary to what he has commanded.

Thus the one side argues, that the Article as it lies, in the plain meaning of those who conceived it, does very expressly establish their doctrine: and the other argues, from those cautions that are added to it, that it ought to be understood so as that it may agree with these cautions: and both sides find in the Article itself such grounds, that they reckon they do not renounce their opinions by subscribing it. The Remonstrant side have this further to add, that the universal extent of the death of Christ seems to be very plainly affirmed

in the most solemn part of all the offices of the church: for in the office of Communion, and in the Prayer of Consecration, we own that Christ, *by the one oblation of himself once offered, made there a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.* Though the others say, that by *full, perfect, and sufficient*, is not to be understood that Christ's death was intended to be a complete sacrifice and satisfaction for *the whole world*, but that in its own value it was capable of being such. This is thought too great a stretch put upon the words. And there are yet more express words in our Church Catechism to this purpose; which is to be considered as the most solemn declaration of the sense of the church, since that is the doctrine in which she instructs all her children: and in that part of it which seems to be most important, as being the short summary of the Apostles' Creed, it is said, *God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind*: where *all* must stand in the same extent of universality, as in the precedent and in the following words; *The Father who made me and all the world; the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God*; which being to be understood severely, and without exception, this must also be taken in the same strictness. There is another argument brought from the office of Baptism, to prove that men may fall from a state of grace and regeneration; for in the whole office, more particularly in the Thanksgiving after the Baptism, it is affirmed, that the person baptized is *regenerated by God's holy Spirit*, and is *received for his own child by adoption*: now since it is certain that many who are baptized fall from that state of grace, this seems to import, that some of the regenerate may fall away: which though it agrees well with St. Austin's doctrine, yet it does not agree with the Calvinists' opinions.

Thus I have examined this matter in as short a compass as was possible; and yet I do not know that I have forgot any important part of the whole controversy, though it is large, and has many branches. I have kept, as far as I can perceive, that indifference which I proposed to myself in the prosecuting of this matter; and have not on this occasion declared my own opinion, though I have not avoided the doing it upon other occasions. Since the church has not been peremptory, but that a latitude has been left to different opinions, I thought it became me to make this explanation of the Article such: and therefore I have not endeavoured to possess the reader with that which is my own sense in this matter, but have laid the force of the arguments, as well as the weight of the difficulties, of both sides, before him, with all the advantages that I had found in the books either of the one or of the other persuasion. And I leave the choice as free to my reader as the church has done.

ARTICLE XVIII.

Of obtaining Eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ.

They also are to be accursed, that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth; so that he be diligent to frame his Life according to that Law, and the Light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

THE impiety, that is condemned in this Article, was first taught by some of the heathen orators and philosophers in the fourth century, who, in their addresses to the Christian emperors for the tolerance of *paganism*, started this thought, that (how lively soever it may seem, when well set off in a piece of eloquence,) will not bear a severe argument: that God is more honoured by the varieties and different methods of worshipping and serving him, than if all should fall into the same way: that this diversity has a beauty in it, and a suitability to the infinite perfections of God; and it does not look so like a mutual agreement or concert, as when all men worship him one way. But this is rather a flash of wit than true reasoning.

The *Alcoran* has carried this matter further, to the asserting, that all men in all religions are equally acceptable to God, if they serve him faithfully in them. The infusing this into the world, that has a show of mercy in it, made men more easy to receive their law; and they took care by their extreme severity to fix them in it, when they were once engaged: for though they use no force to make men Musselmans, yet they punish with all extremity every thing that looks like apostasy from it, if it is once received. The doctrine of Leviathan, that makes *law* to be *religion* and *religion* to be *law*, that is, that obliges subjects to believe that religion to be true, or at least to follow that which is enacted by the laws of their country, must be built either on this foundation, that there is no such thing as revealed religion, but that it is only a political contrivance: or that all religions are equally acceptable to God.

Others having observed that it was a very small part of mankind that had the advantages of the Christian religion, have thought it too cruel to damn in their thoughts all those who have not heard of it, and yet have lived morally and virtuously, according to their light and education. And some, to make themselves and others easy, in accommodating their religion to their secular interests, to excuse their changing,

and to quiet their consciences, have set up this notion, that seems to have a largeness both of good nature and charity in it; looks plausible, and is calculated to take in the greatest numbers: they therefore suppose that God in his infinite goodness will accept equally the services that all his creatures offer to him, according to the best of their skill and strength.

In opposition to all which, they are here condemned, who think that every man shall be saved by the *law* or *sect* which he professeth: where a great difference is to be observed between the words *saved by the law*, and *saved in the law*; the one is condemned, but not the other. To be *saved by a law* or *sect*, signifies, that by the virtue of that *law* or *sect* such men who follow it may be *saved*: whereas to be *saved in a law* or *sect* imports only, that God may extend his compassions to men that are engaged in false religions. The former is only condemned by this article, which affirms nothing concerning the other. In sum; if we have fully proved that the Christian religion was delivered to the world in the name of God, and was attested by miracles, so that we believe its truth, we must believe every part and tittle of it, and by consequence those passages which denounce the wrath and judgments of God against impenitent sinners, and that promise mercy and salvation only upon the account of Christ and his death: 'We must believe with our hearts, and confess it with our mouths: we must not be ashamed of Christ, or of his words, lest he should be ashamed of us, when he comes in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels.' This, I say, being a part of the gospel, must be as true as the gospel itself is; and these rules must bind all those to whom they are proposed, whether they are enacted by *law* or not; for if we are assured that they are a part of the *law of the King of kings*, we are bound to believe and obey them, whether human laws do favour them or not; it being an evident thing, that no subordinate authority can derogate from that which is superior to it: so if the laws of God are clearly revealed, and certainly conveyed down to us, we are bound by them, and no human law can dissolve this obligation. If God has declared his will to us, it can never be supposed to be free to us to choose whether we will obey it or not, and serve him under that or under another form of religion, at our pleasure and choice. We are limited by what God has declared to us, and we must not fancy ourselves to be at liberty after he has revealed his will to us.

As to such to whom the Christian religion is revealed, there no question can be made, for it is certain they are under an indispensable obligation to obey and follow that which is so graciously revealed to them: they are bound to follow it according to what they are in their consciences persuaded is its true sense and meaning. And if for any secular interest they choose to comply with that which they are convinced is an important error, and is condemned in the scripture they do

Rom. x.
9, 10.
Mark viii.
38.

A R T. XVIII. plainly shew that they prefer lands, houses, and life, to the authority of God, in whose will, when revealed to them, they are bound to acquiesce.

The only difficulty remaining is concerning those who never heard of this religion; whether, or how, can they be saved? St. Paul having divided the world into Jews and Gentiles, called by him those who were in the law, and who were without law; he says, those 'who sinned without law,' that is, out of the Mosaical dispensation, 'shall be judged without law,' that is, upon another foot. For he adds, when 'the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law (that is, the moral parts of it), these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves (that is, their consciences are to them instead of a written law); which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' This implies that there are either seeds of knowledge and virtue laid in the nature of man, or that such notions pass among them, as are carried down by tradition. The same St. Paul says, 'How can they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher?' which seems plainly to intimate, that men cannot be bound to believe, and by consequence cannot be punished for not believing, unless the gospel is preached to them. St. Peter said to Cornelius, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.' Those places seem to import, that those who make the best use they can of that small measure of light that is given them, shall be judged according to it; and that God will not require more of them than he has given them. This also agrees so well with the ideas which we have both of justice and goodness, that this opinion wants not special colours to make it look well. But, on the other hand, the pardon of sin, and the favour of God, are so positively limited to the believing in Christ Jesus, and it is so expressly said, that

Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15.

Rom. x. 14.

Acts x. 34, 35.

Acts iv. 12.

'there is no salvation in any other;' and that 'there is none other name (or authority) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;' that the distinction which can only be made in this matter is this, that it is only on the account, and in the consideration of the death of Christ, that sin is pardoned, and men are saved.

This is the only sacrifice in the sight of God; so that whosoever are received into mercy have it through Christ as the channel and conveyance of it. But it is not so plainly said, that, no man can be saved unless he has an explicit knowledge of this, together with a belief in it. Few in the old dispensation could have that: infants and innocents, or idiots, have it not; and yet it were a bold thing to say, that they may not

be saved by it. So it does not appear to be clearly revealed, that none should be saved by the death of Christ, unless they do explicitly both know it, and believe in it: since it is certain, that God may pardon sin only upon that score, without obliging all men to believe in it, especially when it is not revealed to them. And here another distinction is to be made, which will clear this whole matter, and all the difficulties that arise out of it.

A great difference is to be made between a fœderal certainty of salvation, secured by the promises of God, and of this new covenant in Christ Jesus, and the extent to which the goodness and mercy of God may go. None are in the fœderal state of salvation but Christians: to them is given the covenant of grace, and to them the promises of God are made and offered; so that they have a certainty of it upon their performing those conditions that are put in the promises. All others are out of this promise, to whom the tidings of it were never brought; but yet a great difference is to be made between them, and those who have been invited to this covenant, and admitted to the outward profession, and the common privileges of it, and that yet have in effect rejected it: these are under such positive denunciations of wrath and judgment, that there is no room left for any charitable thoughts or hopes concerning them: so that if any part of the gospel is true, that must be also true, that they are under condemnation, for 'having loved darkness more than light,' when the light shone upon them, and visited them. But as for them whom God has left in darkness, they are certainly out of the covenant, out of those promises and declarations that are made in it. So that they have no fœderal right to be saved, neither can we affirm that they shall be saved: but, on the other hand, they are not under those positive denunciations, because they were never made to them: therefore since God has not declared that they shall be damned, no more ought we to take upon us to damn them.

Instead of stretching the severity of justice by an inference, we may rather venture to stretch the mercy of God, since that is the attribute which of all others is the most magnificently spoken of in the scriptures: so that we ought to think of it in the largest and most comprehensive manner. But indeed the most proper way is, for us to stop where the revelation of God stops; and not to be wise beyond what is written; but to leave the secrets of God as mysteries too far above us to examine, or to sound their depth. We do certainly know on what terms we ourselves shall be saved or damned: and we ought to be contented with that, and rather study to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,' than to let our minds run out into uncertain speculations concerning the measures and the conditions of God's uncovenanted mercies: we ought to take all possible care that we ourselves come not into

A R T. XVIII.

John iii. 19.

A R T. XVIII. condemnation, rather than to define positively of others, who must, or who must not, be condemned.

It is therefore enough to fix this according to the design of the Article, that it is not free to men to choose at pleasure what religion they will, as if that were left to them, or that all religions were alike; which strikes at the foundation, and undermines the truth, of all revealed religion. None are within the covenant of grace but true Christians; and all are excluded out of it, to whom it is offered, who do not receive and believe it, and live according to it. So, in a word, all that are saved, are saved through Christ; but whether all these shall be called to the explicit knowledge of him, is more than we have any good ground to affirm. Nor are we to go into that other question; whether any that are only in a state of nature, live fully up to its light? This is that about which we can have no certainty, no more than whether there may be a common grace given to them all, proportioned to their state, and to the obligations of it. This in general may be safely believed, that God will never be wanting to such as do their utmost endeavours in order to the saving of their souls: but that, as in the case of Cornelius, an angel will be sent, and a miracle be wrought, rather than such a person shall be left to perish. But whether any of them do ever arrive at that state, is more than we can determine; and it is a vain attempt for us to endeavour to find it out.

ARTICLE XIX.

Of the Church.

The Visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful Men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's Ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.*

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

THIS Article, together with some that follow it, relates to the fundamental difference between us and the church of Rome: they teaching that we are to judge of doctrines by the authority and the decisions of the church; whereas we affirm, that we are first to examine the doctrine, and according to that to judge of the purity of a church. Somewhat was already said on the sixth Article relating to this matter: what remains is now to be considered.

The whole question is to be reduced to this point, whether we ought to examine and judge of matters of religion, according to the light and faculty of judging that we have; or if we

* The word church is ambiguous, having, both in holy scripture and common use, divers senses, somewhat different: for

1st. Sometimes any assembly or company of Christians is called a church; as when mention is made of *the church in such a house* (whence *Tertullian* saith, *where there are three, even laics, there is a church*).

2d. Sometimes a particular society of Christians, living in spiritual communion, and under discipline; as when, *the church at such a town; the churches of such a province*; the churches, all the churches, are mentioned: according to which notion *St. Cyprian* saith, that there is a church, where there is a *people united to a priest, and a flock adhering to their shepherd*: and so *Ignatius* saith, that *without the orders of the clergy a church is not called*.

3d. A larger collection of divers particular societies combined together in order, under direction and influence of a common government, or of persons acting in the public behalf, is termed a church: as the church of *Antioch, of Corinth, of Jerusalem, &c.*, each of which, at first, probably might consist of divers congregations, having dependencies of less towns annexed to them; all being united under the care of the bishops and presbytery of those places; but however soon after the apostles' times, it is certain that such collections were, and were named churches.

4th. The society of those who at present, or in course of time, profess the faith and gospel of Christ, and undertake the evangelical covenant, in distinction to all other religions; particularly to that of the Jews; which is called the synagogue.

5th. The whole body of God's people that is, ever hath been, or ever shall be, from the beginning of the world to the consummation thereof, who, having (formally or virtually) believed in Christ, and sincerely obeyed God's laws, shall finally, by the meritorious performances and sufferings of Christ, be saved, is called the church.—*Barrow on the Unity of the Church*. The reader ought also to consult *Pearson on the Creed, Art. IX.*; and *Bishop Taylor's discourse 'Of the Church, &c.*—[Ed.]

are bound to submit in all things to the decision of the church? Here the matter must be determined against private judgment, by very express and clear authorities, otherwise the other side proves itself. For we having naturally a faculty of judging for ourselves, and using it in all other things, this freedom being the greatest of all our other rights, must be still asserted, unless it can be made appear that God has in some things put a bar upon it by his supreme authority.

That authority must be very express, if we are required to submit to it in a point of such vast importance to us. We do also see that men are apt to be mistaken, and are apt likewise willingly to mistake, and to mislead others; and that particularly in matters of religion the world has been so much imposed upon and abused, that we cannot be bound to submit to any sort of persons implicitly, without very good and clear grounds that do assure us of their infallibility: otherwise we have just reason to suspect that in matters of religion, chiefly in points in which human interests are concerned, men may either through ignorance, and weakness, or corruption, and on design, abuse and mislead us. So that the authorities or proofs of this infallibility must be very express; since we are sure no man nor body of men can have it among them, but by a privilege from God; and a privilege of so extraordinary a nature must be given, if at all, in very plain, and with very evident characters; since without these human nature cannot and ought not to be so tame as to receive it. We must not draw it from an inference, because we think we need it, and cannot be safe without it, that therefore it must be so, because, if it were not so, great disorders would arise from the want of it. This is certainly a wrong way of arguing. If God has clearly revealed it, we must acquiesce in it, because we are sure, if he has lodged infallibility any where, he will certainly maintain his own work, and not require us to believe any one implicitly, and not at the same time preserve us from the danger of being deceived by him. But we must not presume, from our notions of things, to give rules to God. It were, as we may think, very necessary that miracles should be publicly done from time to time, for convincing every age and succession of men; and that good men should be so assisted as generally to live without sin: these and several other things may seem to us extremely convenient, and even necessary; but things are not so ordered for all that.* It is also certain, that if God has lodged such

* This is one of the chief arguments in favour of infallibility on which the Romanist erects his building. He first concludes that there must be a living, speaking, infallible judge in the church; and then wisely, and not less modestly, concludes in favour of his pope, or pope and councils. In his reply to Cressy, Whitty thus answers this assumption:

‘He, through the whole chapter, slyly supposes, and sometimes asserts, a necessity of an infallible judge, as if without such a one the way to salvation were uncertain, and controversies endless.

1. But he should first prove, that God hath appointed an infallible judge, and therefore it is necessary there should be one, and not conclude that he hath ap-

an infallibility on earth, it ought not to be in such hands as do naturally heighten our prejudices against it. It will go against the grain to believe it, though all outward appearances looked ever so fair for it: but it will be an inconceivable method of Providence, if God should lodge so wonderful an authority in hands that look so very unlike it, that of all others we should the least expect to find it with them.

If they have been guilty of notorious impostures, to support their own authority, if they have committed great violences to extend it, and have been for some ages together engaged in as many false, unjust, and cruel practices, as are perhaps to be met with in any history; these are such prejudices, that at least they must be overcome by very clear and unquestionable proofs: and finally, if God has settled such a power in his

pointed one, because he conceives a necessity of it. I could name a hundred privileges, that Mr. C. could conceive to be highly beneficial to the church, which yet God never granted to it; and if we may deduce infallibility from the necessity or convenience of it to secure us in our way to heaven, and decide our controversies, then why may we not conclude, that somebody else beside your pope and council is infallible? Is it not more conducive to these ends, that every bishop should be infallible? more still, that every preacher? and more yet, that every individual Christian? Would not these infallibly secure them from all danger of erring? Might not God send some infallible interpreter from heaven to expound all obscure and doubtful places of scripture? Might not the apostles have left us such a commentary? Might not God (if he had pleased) have spoken so perspicuously in scripture, that there should be no need of an infallible interpreter to make it plainer? But if from the advantage and use of these dispensations we should infer their actual existence, the conclusion would confute the premises.

‘2. The plea for an infallible guide, to secure us from wandering out of the way to heaven, is invalidated by the plainness and easiness of the way, which we cannot miss unless we will; so that he who will keep his eyes open, is in no more danger of losing his way than in the walks of his own garden; for we know the conditions which God hath made necessary to salvation are clear and easy, unless God should bind us upon pain of damnation fully to know and believe articles obscure and ambiguous, and so damn men for not believing that, the truth whereof they could not discover, which is highly repugnant both to his revealed goodness and justice. We, therefore, distinguish between points fundamental and points not fundamental, those being clearly revealed, and so of a necessary belief; to determine their sense, there is no more need of a judge, than for any other perspicuous truth. What need of a judge to decide whether scripture affirms that there is but one God? that this God cannot lie? that Jesus was crucified and rose again? that without faith and obedience we cannot come to heaven? These, and such like, are the truths we entitle fundamental, and if the sense of these need an infallible judge, then let us bring Euclid’s elements to the bar, and call for a judge to decide whether twice two make four. Then for points not fundamental, their belief being not absolutely necessary to salvation, we may err about them, and not err damnably, and so this plea for an infallible judge is wholly evacuated. And with no more difficulty may we baffle the other, taken from its necessity to determine controversies; for if any man oppose fundamental doctrines, or any other evident truths, our church can censure him, without pretending to be infallible. What need of an infallible judge to convict him of heresy, that shall deny the resurrection of the dead? (which yet some of your own popes have not believed, if some of your own historians may be believed.) Therefore, doctrines not fundamental, being not clearly revealed, our church doth not take upon her to determine these, but if any disputes arise about such points, it is her work to silence and suppress them; and when she gives her judgment of that side she thinks most probable, though she doth not expect that all her children should be so wise as to be of her opinion, yet she expects they should be so modest, as not to contradict her, which is as effectually available to end controversies as is your pretended infallibility.’

—[Ed.]

A R T. church, we must be distinctly directed to those in whose hands
XIX. it is put, so that we may fall into no mistake in so important
a matter. This will be the more necessary, if there are different
pretenders to it: we cannot be supposed to be bound to believe
an infallibility in general, unless we have an equal evidence
directing us to those with whom it rests, and who have the
dispensing of it. These general considerations are of great
weight in deciding this question, and will carry us far into some
preliminaries, which will appear to be indeed great steps to-
wards the conclusion of the matter.

There are three ways by which it may be pretended that
infallibility can be proved: the one is the way of Moses and
the prophets, of Christ and his apostles, who, by clear and un-
questionable miracles publicly done, and well attested, or by
express and circumstantiated prophecies of things to come, that
came afterwards to be verified, did evidently demonstrate that
they were sent of God: wheresoever we see such characters,
and that a miracle is wrought by men who say they are sent of
God, which cannot be denied nor avoided; and if what such
persons deliver to us is neither contrary to our ideas of God,
and of morality, nor to any thing already revealed by God;
there we must conclude that God has lodged an infallible au-
thority with them, as long and as far as that character is
stamped upon it.

That is not pretended here: for though they study to per-
suade the world that miracles are still among them, yet they
do not so much as say that the miracles are wrought by those
with whom this infallibility is lodged, and that they are
done to prove them to be infallible. For though God should
bestow the gift of miracles upon some particular persons
among them, that is no more an argument that their church
is infallible, than the miracles that Elijah or Elisha wrought
were arguments to prove that the Jewish church was infal-
lible. Indeed the public miracles that belonged to the whole
body, such as the cloud of glory, the answers by the Urim
and Thummim, the trial of jealousy, and the constant plenty
of the sixth year, as preparatory to the sabbatical year, seem
more reasonably to infer an infallibility; because these were
given to that whole church and nation.* But yet the Jewish

* This line of argument, here alluded to by our author, is the most easy and
satisfactory answer to the absurd pretence of the papal church to infallibility.
They cannot urge any one scripture from the New Testament containing promises
to the Christian church (which too they unwarrantably limit to themselves), to which
the Jew cannot reply by the production of similar, and, in some instances, much
more enlarged promises made to his church. If, for instance, the man who refuses
to hear the church is to be accounted a heathen and publican, (Matt. xviii. 17.)
the man that did presumptuously, and would not hearken to the Jewish priest, was
commanded to be put to death. (Deut. xvii. 12.) The same argument will hold
good in all the other scriptures advanced by the papal church in her behalf. Now,
although they have no right to appeal to scripture until the authority and in-
fallibility of their church be first proved, since, according to their doctrine, it is
the peculiar province of the Roman church to, in the first place, decide what is

church was far from being infallible all that while; for we see
they fell all in a body into idolatry upon several occasions: A R T.
XIX.

scripture, and in the second, what is the meaning or sense of any particular verse
or passage—yet, giving them full permission to make use of that book which they
are so prone to insult by calling it obscure, insufficient, and a dead letter—what do
they prove? The infallibility of the Jewish church! 'For if,' writes Dr. Whitby,
'Roman Catholics conclude from these ambiguous and obscure places for the in-
fallibility of councils, or the major part of the church-guides concurring with the
pope in any sentence or decree, although these places do not speak one syllable of
any pope or major part of the church-guides, and much less of the Romish prelates,
and less of their *infallible* assistance; what ovations and triumphs would they have
made, had it been said expressly of their cardinals and councils, as it is said of
Jewish priests, that they were *set for judgment and for controversy*? had God fixed
his glorious presence at Rome, as he did at Jerusalem, and settled there a *seat of*
judgment, and a continual court of highest judicature, as was that Sanhedrin, which
in Jerusalem was settled? had he dwelt in St. Peter's, as he dwelt in the temple?
had he left with them, as he did with the Jewish priests, a standing oracle, a *Urim*
and a *Thummim*, to consult with upon all occasions? So that this plea being much
stronger for the infallibility of the superiors of the Jewish church, than for the in-
fallibility of the whole western church, or any of its councils, the Roman doctors
must acknowledge, either that they fallaciously urge it against Protestants, or must
confess that it stands also good against the Christian, and is a confirmation of all
those traditions which were condemned by our Saviour, and a sufficient plea for all
those errors and corruptions, which, as the prophets do complain, were generally
taught and practised by the church-guides in the declining ages of the Jewish
church: for if these arguments be good now, they were so then; and if they were
good then, for aught that I can see, the high-priest, and the major part of the
church rulers of the Jews, were always in the right; and Christ, and his apostles,
with the holy prophets, must be in the wrong.†

To avoid the force of this argument, which so completely turns the weapons of
the papacy against itself, some of that party have devised this reply—more inge-
nious than solid or satisfactory: That the Jewish church was infallible, but that
its infallibility disappeared and centred in the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater au-
thority, when he appeared on earth. To this argument, if it can be called one,
of which the Editor has known, indeed heard, priests of the Roman church avail
themselves, the answer is easy, and more than ever shews the difficulties in which
they, who use it, are placed. 1st. The Jewish church did sin in matters funda-
mental before the coming of Christ—'They err in vision, they stumble in judg-
ment,' and the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means,
was the testimony of God concerning the church-guides. Apostacy from the truth
and idolatry were sins of the Jewish church. But, 2d., if they were infallible until the
appearing of the Saviour on earth, which the Bible proves that they were not, how
were the people assured of the departure of this high privilege from their own
church-guides (whom they were to obey under pain of death), and of its lodg-
ment in the Lord Jesus? This is the point. How did the Saviour convince them?
By his doctrine and by miracles. The former was an appeal to their private
judgment—the latter to their senses; and if these be allowed, the papal system
against the right of private judgment, and in favour of transubstantiation, is dem-
olished. Thus they cannot evade the force of this argument against infallibility
without destroying their own building. We cannot but conclude this article in
the words of Whitby:—'If this be truly the result of the most specious pretences
of the Roman party to draw our souls into their deadly snares, if all their fairest
pleas do make for Judaism, more naturally than they do for popery; if what they
urge, to prove the Protestant divines to be deceivers of the people, doth more
strongly prove our blessed Jesus a deceiver, which is the highest blasphemy; I
hope that no true lover of this Jesus will be much tempted by such pleas to enter-
tain a good opinion of the Romish faith: it being certainly that faith, which can-
not be established but on the ruins of Christianity, nor embraced by any Protestant,
but with the greatest hazard, if not the ruin, of his soul.'—[Ed.]

† Whitby: Sermon on John vii. 47—49, which every student ought not merely
to read, but well digest. It is to be found in his Commentary, at the end of the
gospel of St. John.

those public miracles proved nothing but that for which they were given, which was, that Moses was sent of God, and that his law was from God, which they saw was still attested in a continuance of extraordinary characters. If infallibility had been promised by that law, then the continuance of the miracles might have been urged to prove the continuance of the infallibility; but that not being promised, the miracles were only a standing proof of the authority of their law, and of God's being still among them. And thus though we should not dispute the truth of the many legends that some are daily bringing forth, which yet we may well do, since they are believed to be true by few among themselves, they being considered among the greater part of the knowing men of that church, as arts to entertain the credulity and devotion of the people, and to work upon their fears and hopes, but chiefly upon their purses: all these, I say, when confessed, will not serve to prove that there is an infallibility among them, unless they can prove that these miracles are wrought to prove this infallibility.

The second sort of proofs that they may bring, is from some passages in scripture, that seem to import that it was given by Christ to the church. But though in this dispute all these passages ought to be well considered and answered, yet they ought not to be urged to prove this infallibility, till several other things are first proved; such as, that the scriptures are the word of God; that the book of the scriptures is brought down pure and uncorrupted to our hands; and that we are able to understand the meaning of it: for before we can argue from the parts of any book, as being of divine authority, all these things must be previously certain, and be well made out to us: so that we must be well assured of all those particulars, before we may go about to prove any thing by any passages drawn out of the scriptures. Further, these passages suppose that those to whom this infallibility belongs are a church: we must then know what a church is, and what makes a body of men to be a church, before we can be sure that they are that society to whom this infallibility is given: and since there may be, as we know that in fact there are, great differences among several of those bodies of men called churches, and that they condemn one another as guilty of error, schism, and heresy; we are sure that all these cannot be infallible: for contradictions cannot be true. So then we must know which of them is that society where this infallibility is to be found. And if in any one society there should be different opinions about the seat of this infallibility, those cannot be all true, though it is very possible that they may be all false: we must be then well assured in whom this great privilege is vested, before we can be bound to acknowledge it, or to submit to it. So here a great many things must be known, before we can either argue from, or apply, those passages of

scripture in which it is pretended that infallibility is promised to the church: and if private judgment is to be trusted in the inquiries that arise about all these particulars, they being the most important and most difficult matters that we can search into, then it will be thought reasonable to trust it yet much further.

It is evident, by their proceeding this way, that both the authority and the sense of the scriptures must be known antecedently to our acknowledging the authority or the infallibility of any church. For it is an eternal principle and rule of reason, never to prove one thing by another, till that other is first well proved: nor can any thing be proved afterwards by that which was proved by it. This is as impossible, as if a father should beget a son, and should be afterwards begotten by that son. Therefore the scriptures cannot prove the infallibility of the church, and be afterwards proved by the testimony of the church. So the one or the other of these must be first settled and proved, before any use can be made of it to prove the other by it.

The last way they take to find out this church by, is from some notes* that they pretend are peculiar to her, such as the name *catholic*; *antiquity*; *extent*; *duration*; *succession of bishops*; *union among themselves, and with their head*; *conformity of doctrine with former times*; *miracles*; *prophecy*; *sanctity of doctrine*; *holiness of life*; *temporal felicity*; *curse upon their enemies*; and *a constant progress or efficacy of doctrine*; together with the confession of their adversaries: and they fancy, that wheresoever we find these, we must believe that body of men to be infallible. But upon all this, endless questions will arise, so far will it be from ending controversies, and settling us upon infallibility. If all these must be believed to be the marks of the infallible church, upon the account of which we ought to believe it, and submit to it, then two inquiries upon every one of these notes must be discussed, before we can be obliged to acquiesce in the infallibility: First, whether that is a true mark of infallibility, or not? And next, whether it belongs to the church which they call infallible, or not? And then another very intricate question will arise upon the whole, whether they must be all found together? or, how many, or which, of them together, will give us the entire characters of the infallible church?

In discussing the questions, whether every one of these is

* In order to the full understanding of this point, the reader must refer to *Gibson's Preservative against Popery*, vol. 1, in which 'the notes of the church as laid down by Cardinal Bellarmine are examined and confuted.' This examination of the notes, &c., may also be found in a small quarto, published in 1687, entitled 'A brief Discourse concerning the Notes of the Church, with some Reflections on Cardinal Bellarmine's Notes.' The quarto edition contains also two papers not found in Gibson's collection; 'A vindication of the discourse concerning the Notes;' and 'A defence of the confuter of Bellarmine's second note of the church, *Antiquity*, against the cavils of the adviser.'—[Ed.]

a true mark, or not, no use must be made of the scriptures; for if the scriptures have their authority from the testimony, or rather the decisions, of the infallible church, no use can be made of them till that is first fixed. Some of these notes are such as did not at all agree to the church in the best and purest times; for then, she had but a little extent, a short-lived duration, and no temporal felicity: and she was generally reproached by her adversaries. But out of which of these topics can one hope to fetch an assurance of the infallibility of such a body? Can no body of men continue long in a constant series, and with much prosperity, but must they be concluded to be infallible? Can it be thought that the assuming a name can be a mark? Why is not the name *Christian* as solemn as *catholic*? Might not the philosophers have concluded from hence against the first Christians, that they were, by the confession of all men, the *true lovers of wisdom*; since they were called philosophers much more unanimously than the church of Rome is called catholic?

If a conformity of doctrine with former times, and a sanctity of doctrine, are notes of the church, these will lead men into inquiries of such a nature, that if they are once allowed to go so far with their private judgment, they may well be suffered to go much further. Some standard must be fixed on, by which the sanctity of doctrine may be examined; they must also be allowed to examine what was the doctrine of former times: and here it will be natural to begin at the first times, the age of the apostles. It must therefore be first known what was the doctrine of that age, before we can examine the conformity of the present age with it. A succession of bishops is confessed, to be still kept up among corrupted churches. An union of the church with its head cannot be supposed to be a note, unless it is first made out by some other topics, that this church must have a head; and that he is infallible: for unless it is proved by some other argument that she ought to have a head, she cannot be bound to adhere to him, or to own him; and unless it is also proved that he is infallible, she cannot be bound absolutely, and without restrictions, to adhere to him. Holiness of life cannot be a mark, unless it is pretended that those in whom the infallibility is are all holy. A few holy men here and there are indeed an honour to any body; but it will seem a strange inference, that because some few in a society are eminently holy, that therefore others of that body who are not so, but are perhaps as eminently vicious, should be infallible. Somewhat has been already said concerning miracles: the pretence to prophecy falls within the same consideration; the one being as wonderful a communication of omniscience, as the other is of omnipotence. For the confession of adversaries, or some curses on them; these cannot signify much, unless they were universal. Fair enemies will acknowledge what is good among

their adversaries: but as that church is the least apt, of any society we know, to speak good of those who differ from her, so she has not very much to boast as to others saying much good of her. And if signal providences have now and then happened, these are such things, and they are carried on with such a depth, that we must acquiesce in the observation of the wisest men of all ages, that 'the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong: but that time and chance happeneth to all things.'

Ecc. ix.
11.

And thus it appears, that these pretended notes, instead of giving us a clear thread to lead us up to infallibility and to end all controversies, do start a great variety of questions, that engage us into a labyrinth, out of which it cannot be easy for any to extricate themselves. But if we could see an end of this, then a new set of questions will come on, when we go to examine all churches by them: Whether the church of Rome has them all? And if she alone has them so, that no other church has them equally with her or beyond her?

If all these must be discussed before we can settle this question, which is the true infallible church? a man must stay long ere he can come to a point in it.

Therefore there can be no other way taken here, but to examine first, what makes a particular church: and then since the catholic church is an united body of all particular churches, when the true notion of a particular church is fixed, it will be easy from that to form a notion of the catholic church.

It would seem reasonable by the method of all creeds, in particular of that called the Apostles' Creed, that we ought first to settle our faith as to the great points of the Christian religion, and from thence go to settle the notion of a true church: and that we ought not to begin with the notion of a church, and from thence go to the doctrine.

The doctrine of Christianity must be first stated, and from this we are to take our measures of all churches; and that chiefly with respect to that doctrine, which every Christian is bound to believe: here a distinction is to be made between those capital and fundamental articles, without which a man cannot be esteemed a true Christian, nor a church a true church; and other truths, which, being delivered in scripture, all men are indeed obliged to believe them, yet they are not of that nature that the ignorance of them, or an error in them, can exclude from salvation.

To make this sensible: it is a proposition of another sort, that Christ died for sinners, than this, that he died at the third or at the sixth hour. And yet if the second proposition is expressly revealed in scripture, we are bound to believe it, since God has said it, though it is not of the same nature with the other.

Here a controversy does naturally arise that wise people are

unwilling to meddle with, what articles are fundamental, and what are not?

The defining of fundamental articles seems, on the one hand, to deny salvation to such as do not receive them all, which men are not willing to do.

And, on the other hand, it may seem a leaving men at liberty, as to all other particulars that are not reckoned up among the fundamentals.

But after all, the covenant of grace, the terms of salvation, and the grounds on which we expect it, seem to be things of another nature than all other truths, which, though revealed, are not of themselves the means or conditions of salvation. Wheresoever true baptism is, there it seems the essentials of this covenant are preserved: for, if we look on baptism as a federal admission into Christianity, there can be no baptism where the essence of Christianity is not preserved. As far then as we believe that any society has preserved that, so far we are bound to receive her baptism, and no further. For unless we consider baptism as a sort of a charm, that such words joined with a washing with water make one a Christian; which seems to be expressly contrary to what St. Peter says of it, that 'it is not the washing away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, that saves us;' we must conclude, that baptism is a federal thing, in which, after that the sponsions are made, the seal of regeneration is added.

From hence it will follow, that all who have a true baptism, that makes men believers and Christians, must also have the true faith as to the essentials of Christianity; the fundamentals of Christianity seem to be all that is necessary to make baptism true and valid. And upon this a distinction is to be made, that will discover and destroy a sophism that is often used on this occasion. A true church* is, in one sense, a society that

* It is of vital importance that the controversialist should study this question, 'What constitutes any church a true church?' Many Protestants have, in their zeal without knowledge, denied the title of true church to the church of Rome, thereby entangling themselves in difficulties. If the papacy be not a true church, how, as Calvin asked, can Antichrist sit in the temple of God? Or how, we might add, can she be charged with being the mother of harlots, if she have not some claim to be the bride? Her sin is not that she directly denies or overturns the truth of Christ, but that she makes void his truth by adopting a new creed, thus indirectly and far more effectually overturning the foundation of faith. When Bishop Hall published his 'Old Religion,' he was assailed by many as favouring popery, because he called the Roman a true church, they not knowing, or not considering, the exact meaning of the word true; nor what an advantage is given to the enemy by denying the Roman to be a church. Hall submitted the matter to his friend Bishop Davenant, who returned the following answer, in which the question is handled in a concise and masterly manner, and for which the Editor is indebted to the Rev. J. Allport's valuable life of Davenant, prefixed to his translation of that bishop's exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians.

'To the Right Rev. Father in God, Joseph, Lord Bishop of Exon, these.

'MY LORD,

'You desire my opinion concerning an assertion of yours, whereat some have taken offence.

'The proposition was this, "That the Roman church remains yet a true visible church."

preserves the essentials and fundamentals of Christianity: in another sense it stands, for a society, all whose doctrines are true, that has corrupted no part of this religion, nor mixed any errors with it. A true man is one who has a soul and a body, that are the essential constituents of a man: whereas, in another sense, a man of sincerity and candour is called a true man. Truth in the one sense imports the essential constitution, and in the other it imports only a quality that is accidental to it. So when we acknowledge that any society is a true church, we ought to be supposed to mean no other, than

'The occasion, which makes this an ill-sounding proposition in the ears of Protestants, especially such as are not thoroughly acquainted with school distinctions, is the usual acceptance of the word "true" in our English tongue; for, though men skilled in metaphysics hold it for a maxim, *Ens, Verum, Bonum convertuntur*; yet, with us, he, which shall affirm such a one is a true Christian, a true gentleman, a true scholar, or the like, he is conceived not only to ascribe truthness of being unto all these, but those due qualities or requisite actions whereby they are made commendable or praiseworthy in their several kinds. In this sense the Roman church is no more a true church in respect of Christ, or those due qualities and proper actions which Christ requires, than an arrant whore is a true and loyal wife unto her husband.

'I durst, upon mine oath, be one of your compurgators, that you never intended to adorn that strumpet with the title of a true church in this meaning. But your own writings have so fully cleared you herein, that suspicion itself cannot reasonably suspect you on this point.

'I therefore can say no more respecting your mistaken proposition, than this: If, in that treatise wherein it was delivered, the antecedents or consequents were such as served fitly to lead the reader into that sense, which under the word true comprehended only truth of Being or Existence, and not the due qualities of the thing or subject, you have been causelessly traduced. But, on the other side, if that proposition comes *ex abrupto*, or stands solitary in your discourse, you cannot marvel though, by taking the word true according to the more ordinary acceptance, your true meaning was mistaken.

'In brief, your proposition admits a true sense; and, in that sense, is, by the learned in our reformed church, not disallowed: for, the being of a church does principally stand upon the gracious action of God, calling men out of darkness and death unto the participation of light and life in Christ Jesus. So long as God continues this calling unto any people, though they as much as in them lies, darken this light, and corrupt the means which should bring them to light and salvation in Christ; yet, when God calls men unto the participation of life in Christ by the word and by the sacrament, there is the true being of a Christian church, let men be never so false in their exposition of God's word, or never so untrusty in mingling their own traditions with God's ordinances.

'Thus, the church of the Jews lost not her being of a church when she became an idolatrous church.

'And thus, under the government of the Scribes and Pharisees, who voided the commandments of God by their own traditions, there was yet standing a true church, in which Zacharias, Elizabeth, the Virgin Mary, and our Saviour himself was born, who were members of that church, and yet participated not in the corruptions thereof.

'Thus, to grant that the Roman was, and is, a true visible Christian church, though in doctrine a false, and in practice an idolatrous church, is a true assertion; and of greater use and necessity in our controversy with papists about the perpetuity of the Christian church, than is understood by those who gainsay it.

'This, in your Reconciler, is so well explicated, as, if any shall continue in traducing you in regard of that proposition so explained, I think it will be only those, who are better acquainted with wrangling than reasoning, and deeper in love with strife than truth. And, therefore, be no more troubled with other men's groundless suspicions, than you would be in like case with their idle dreams. Thus I have enlarged myself beyond my first intent. But my love to yourself, and the assurance of your constant love unto the truth, enforced me thereunto. I rest always, your loving brother,

'Jan. 30, 1628.

JOHN SARUM.—[Ed.]

that the covenant of grace in its essential constituent parts is preserved entire in that body; and not that it is true in all its doctrines and decisions.

The second thing to be considered in a church is, their association together in the use of the sacraments. For these are given by Christ to the society, as the rites and badges of that body. That which makes particular men believers, is their receiving the fundamentals of Christianity: so that which constitutes the body of the church, is the profession of that faith, and the use of those sacraments, which are the rites and distinctions of those who profess it.

In this likewise a distinction is to be made between what is essential to a sacrament, and what is the exact observance of it according to the institution. Additions to the sacraments do not annul them, though they corrupt them with that adulterate mixture. Therefore where the sponsions are made, and a washing with water is used with the words of Christ, there we own that there is a true baptism: though there may be a large addition of other rites, which we reject as superstitious, though we do not pretend that they null the baptism. But if any part of the institution is cut off, there we do not own the sacrament to be true: because it being an institution of Christ, it can no more be esteemed a true sacrament, than as it retains all that, which by the institution appears to be the main and essential part of the action.

Upon this account it is, that since Christ appointed bread and wine for his other sacrament, and that he not only blessed both, but distributed both, with words appropriated to each kind, we do not esteem that to be a true sacrament, in which either the one or the other of these kinds is withdrawn.

But in the next place, there may be many things necessary, in the way of precept and order, both with relation to the sacraments, and to the other public acts of worship, in which though additions or defects are erroneous and faulty, yet they do not annul the sacraments.

We think none ought to baptize but men dedicated to the service of God, and ordained according to that constitution that was settled in the church by the apostles; and yet baptism by laics, or by women, such as is most commonly practised in the Roman church, is not esteemed null by us, nor is it repeated: because we make a difference between what is essential to a sacrament, and what is requisite in the regular way of using it.

None can deny this among us, but those who will question the whole Christianity of the Roman church, where the midwives do generally baptize: but if this invalidates the baptism, then we must question all that is done among them: persons so baptized, if their baptism is void, are neither truly ordained, nor capable of any other act of church-communion. Therefore men's being in orders, or their being duly ordained, is not

necessary to the essence of the sacrament of baptism, but only to the regularity of administering it: and so the want of it does not void it, but does only prove such men to be under some defects and disorder in their constitution.

Thus I have laid down those distinctions that will guide us in the right understanding of this Article. If we believe that any society retains the fundamentals of Christianity, we do from that conclude it to be a true church, to have a true baptism, and the members of it to be capable of salvation. But we are not upon that bound to associate ourselves to their communion: for if they have the addition of false doctrines, or any unlawful parts of worship among them, we are not bound to join in that which we are persuaded is error, idolatry, or superstition.

If the sacraments that Christ has appointed are observed and ministered by any church as to the main of them, according to his institution, we are to own those for valid actions: but we are not for that bound to join in communion with them, if they have adulterated these with many mixtures and additions.

Thus a plain difference is made between our owning that a church may retain the fundamentals of Christianity, a true baptism, and true orders, which are a consequent upon the former, and our joining with that church in such acts as we think are so far vitiated, that they become unlawful to us to do them. Pursuant to this, we do neither repeat the baptism, nor the ordinations, of the church of Rome: we acknowledge that our forefathers were both baptized and ordained in that communion: and we derive our present Christianity or baptism, and our orders, from thence: yet we think that there were so many unlawful actions, even in those rituals, besides the other corruptions of their worship, that we cannot join in such any more.

The being baptized in a church does not tie a man to every thing in that church; it only ties him to the covenant of grace. The stipulations which are made in baptism, as well as in ordination, do only bind a man to the Christian faith, or to the faithful dispensing of that gospel, and of those sacraments, of which he is made a minister: so he who, being convinced of the errors and corruptions of a church, departs from them, and goes on in the purity of the Christian religion, does pursue the true effect both of his baptism, and of his ordination vows. For these are to be considered as ties upon him only to God and Christ, and not to adhere to the other dictates of that body in which he had his birth, baptism, and ordination.

The great objection against all this is, that it sets up a private judgment, it gives particular persons a right of judging churches: whereas the natural order is, that private persons ought to be subject and obedient to the church.

This must needs feed pride and curiosity, it must break all

A R T. order, and cast all things loose, if every single man, according
XIX. to his reading and presumption, will judge of churches and communions.

On this head it is very easy to employ a great deal of popular eloquence, to decry private men's examining of scriptures, and forming their judgments of things out of them, and not submitting all to the judgment of the church. But how absurd soever this may seem, all parties do acknowledge that it must be done.

Those of the church of Rome do teach, that a man born in the Greek church, or among us, is bound to lay down his error, and his communion too, and to come over to them; and yet they allow our baptism, as well as they do the ordinations of the Greek church.

Thus they allow private men to judge, and that in so great a point, as what church and what communion ought to be chosen or forsaken. And it is certain, that to judge of churches and communions is a thing of that intricacy, that if private judgment is allowed here, there is no reason to deny it its full scope as to all other matters.

God has given us rational faculties to guide and direct us; and we must make the most of these that we can: we must judge with our own reasons, as well as see with our own eyes: neither can we, or ought we to resign up our understandings to any others, unless we are convinced that God has imposed this upon us, by his making them infallible, so that we are secured from error if we follow them.

All this we must examine, and be well assured of it, otherwise it will be a very rash, unmanly, and base thing in us, to muffle up our own understandings, and to deliver our reason and faith over to others blindfold. Reason is God's image in us; and as the use and application of our reason, as well as of the freedom of our wills, are the highest excellencies of the rational nature; so they must be always claimed, and ought never to be parted with by us, but upon clear and certain authorities in the name of God, putting us implicitly under the dictates of others.

We may abuse the use of our reason, as well as the liberty of our will; and may be damned for the one as well as the other. But when we set ourselves to make the best use we can of the freedom of our wills, we may and do upon that expect secret assistances. We have both the like promises, direction to the like prayers, and reason to expect the same illumination, to make us *see*, know, and comprehend the truths of religion, that we have to expect that our powers shall be inwardly strengthened to love and obey them. David prays that God may 'open his eyes,' as well as that he may 'make him to go in his ways.' The promises in the prophets concerning the gospel dispensation carry in them the being taught of God, as well as the being made to walk in his ways; and

Ps. cxix.
18, 35.
Is. liv. 13.
Jer. xxxi.
33, 34.

'the enlightening the mind, and the eyes of the mind' to know, is prayed for by St. Paul, as well as that 'Christ may dwell in their hearts.'

A R T.
XIX.
Eph. i. 18.
iii. 17.

Since then there is an assistance of the Divine grace given to fortify the understanding, as well as to enable the will, it follows that our understanding is to be employed by us in order to the finding out of the truth, as well as our will in order to the obeying of it. And though this may have very ill consequences, it does not follow from thence, that it is not true. No consequences can be worse than the corruption that is in the world, and the damnation that follows upon sin; and yet God permits it, because he has made us free creatures. Nor can any reason be given why we should be less free in the use of our understanding, than we are in the use of our will; or why God should make it to be less possible for us to fall into errors, than it is to commit sins. The wrath of God is as much denounced against men that 'hold the truth in unrighteousness,' as against other sins: and it is reckoned among the heaviest of curses, to be given up to 'strong delusions, to believe a lie.' Upon all these reasons therefore it seems clear, that our understandings are left free to us as well as our wills; and if we observe the style and method of the scriptures, we shall find in them all over a constant appeal to a man's reason, and to his intellectual faculties.

Rom i. 18.
24, 26.
2 Thess. ii.
11.

If the mere dictates of the church, or of infallible men, had been the resolution or foundation of faith, there had been no need of such a long thread of reasoning and discourse, as both our Saviour used while on earth, and as the apostles used in their writings. We see the way of authority is not taken, but explanations are offered, proofs and illustrations are brought to convince the mind; which shews that God, in the clearest manifestation of his will, would deal with us as with reasonable creatures, who are not to believe but upon persuasion; and are to use our reasons in order to the attaining that persuasion. And therefore upon the whole matter we ought not to believe doctrines to be true, because the church teaches them; but we ought to 'search the scriptures,' and then, according as we find the doctrine of any church to be true in the fundamentals, we ought to believe her to be a true church; and if, besides this, the whole extent of the doctrine and worship, together not only with the essential parts of the sacraments, but the whole administration of them and the other rituals of any church, are pure and true; then we ought to account such a church true in the largest extent of the word *true*; and by consequence we ought to hold communion with it.

Another question may arise out of the first words of this Article, concerning the visibility of this church; Whether it must be always visible? According to the distinction hitherto made use of, the resolution of this will be soon made. There seem to be promises in the scriptures, of a perpetual duration

A R T.
XIX.Math.
xxviii. 20.
Matt. xvi.
18.

of the Christian church: 'I will be with you always, even to the end of the world:' and, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church.' The Jewish religion had a period prefixed, in which it was to come to an end: but the prophecies that are among the prophets, concerning the new dispensation, seem to import not only its continuance, but its being continued still visible in the world. But as the Jewish dispensation was long continued, after they had fallen generally into some very gross errors; so the Christian church may be visible still, though not infallible. God may preserve the succession of a true church, as to the essentials and fundamentals of faith, in the world, even though this society should fall into error. So a visible society of Christians in a true church, as to the essentials of our faith, is not controverted by us. We do only deny the infallibility of this true church, and therefore we are not afraid of that question, *Where was your church before Henry the Eighth?** We answer, It was

* To confound the two questions (the falling of a church from its *being* and its *visibility*), is as absurd as to maintain that 'the stars fall every day, and the sun every night.' Some churches may fall from their purity, but yet not from their being or visibility. Some may so fail as to fulfil the threat, 'I will remove thy candlestick out of its place,' and there be left not so much as the name of a Christian church. With us in these kingdoms the church for a time fell from its purity, but not from its being or visibility, for even in the most corrupt ages there were many true Christians, who too frequently were called to seal their testimony with their blood. In order then to entangle us in any difficulty by the question, 'Where was your religion before Henry the Eighth?' Romanists ought to prove that England was obliged, not merely by the bonds of love which ought to bind all pure churches together, but, *jure divino*, to communicate with the papal see; and to receive, with brutish submission, all its degrading additions to Christianity, as the 'true catholic faith out of which no man can be saved.'

Henry VIII. resisted and overturned the pope's usurped authority over these dominions. The church then, being delivered from her oppressor, ceased to teach the papal additions and novelties, and returned to the primitive truth, by continuing to teach what popery herself is compelled to acknowledge as the catholic faith.

This is simply and powerfully stated by Sir H. Lynde, in his 'Via Tuta,' in reply to the question, 'Where was your religion before Luther?'

He then that shall question us, where our church was before Luther? let him look back into the primitive church; nay, let him look into the bosom of the present Roman church, and there he shall find and confess, that, if ever antiquity and universality were marks of the true church, of right and necessity they must belong to ours. Look into the four creeds, which the church of Rome professes, (the Apostles', the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the creed of pope Pius IV.) and you shall find that three of those creeds are taught and believed by our church; and these, by our adversaries' confession, were instituted by the apostles, and the fathers of the primitive church, *not created by Luther*. Look into the seven sacraments, which the church of Rome holds, and you shall acknowledge that two of these sacraments are professed by us; and these, by our adversaries' confession, were instituted by Christ, *not broached by Luther*. Look into the canon of our Bible, and you shall observe, that the books of canonical scripture which our church allows, were universally received in all ages, and are approved at this day by the church of Rome for canonical scripture, *not devised by Luther*. Look into our book of Common Prayer, and compare it with the ancient liturgies, and it will appear that the same forms of prayer (for substance) were read, and published in a known tongue, in the ancient churches, *not broached by Luther*. Look into the ordination, and calling of pastors, and it will appear, that the same essential form of ordination, which at this day is practised in our church, was used by the apostles and their successors, and *not devised by Luther*. If therefore the three creeds, the two principal sacraments of the church, the books of canonical scripture, the ancient liturgies, the ordination of pastors: if, I say, all these were an-

where it is now, here in England, and in the other kingdoms A R T. of the world: only it was then corrupted, and it is now pure. XIX. There is therefore no sort of inconvenience in owning the constant visibility of a constant succession and church of *true* Christians: *true* as to the essentials of the covenant of grace, though not *true* in all their doctrines. This seems to be a part of the glory of the Messiah, and of his kingdom, that he shall be still visibly worshipped in the world by a body of men called by his name. But when visibility is thus separated from infallibility, and it is made out that a church may be a true church, though she has a large allay of errors and corruptions mixed in her constitution and decisions; there will be no manner of inconvenience in owning a constant visibility, even at the same time that we charge the most eminent part of this visible body with many errors and with much corruption.

So far has the first part of this article been treated of: from it we pass to the second, which affirms, that as the other patriarchal and apostolical churches, such as Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so the church of Rome has likewise erred, and that not only in their living, and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of *faith*.

It is not questioned but that the other patriarchal churches

ciently taught, and universally, in all ages, in the bosom of the Roman church, even by the testimonies of our adversaries themselves, is it not a silly and senseless question to demand of us, where our church was before Luther? The positive doctrine which we teach, is contained in a few principal points, and those also have antiquity, and universality, with the consent of the Roman church. The points in controversy, which are *sub judice* and in question, are, for the most part, if not all, *additions obtruded upon the church*, and certainly, from those *additions and new articles of faith*, the question, truly and properly, results upon themselves: where was your church (that is, where was your *Trent doctrine*, and articles of the *Roman creed*, received *de fide*) before Luther? If, therefore, our doctrine lay involved in the bosom of the Roman church (which no Romanist can deny), if I say, it became hidden, as good corn covered with chaff, or as fine gold overlaid with a greater quantity of dross, was it therefore new and unknown, because popery sought, by a prevailing faction, to obscure it? Was there no *good corn* in the granary of the church, for many years' space, until Luther's days, because it was *not severed from the chaff*? No *pure gold*, because our adversaries *would not refine it by the fire of God's word*? If the chaff and dross be ours, or if our church savour of nothing but novelty and heresy (as some of these men pretend), *let them remove from the bosom of their own church, that new and heretical doctrine*, which they say was never heard of before Luther; and tell me if their church will not prove a *poor and senseless carcass, and a dead body without a soul*. Take away the three creeds, which we profess, our two sacraments, the books of canonical scripture, and tell me, if such light chaff and new heresies (as they now style them) were removed, whether their *twelve new articles, their five* (improperly called) *sacraments, their Apocryphal scriptures, their unwritten verities and traditions, will be able to make a true visible church*? Nay, more; the church of Rome does not only acknowledge those things which we hold, but the most ingenious members of it are *ashamed also of those additions of theirs, which we deny*. As for instance, we charge them with the worship of images (contrary to Exod. xx. 4, 5): they deny it, or at least excuse their manner of adoration; but they condemn not us for not worshipping. We accuse them for praying in an unknown tongue (contrary to 1st Cor. xiv.): they excuse it, that God knows the meaning of the heart; but they do not condemn us for praying with the spirit, and with the understanding. We condemn them for adoring the elements of bread and wine in the sacrament, because it contradicts God's word, and depends upon the intention of the priest: they excuse it, that they adore upon condition, if the consecrated bread be Christ; but they do not condemn

ART. XIX. have erred; both that where our Saviour himself first taught, and which was governed by two of the apostles successively, and those which were founded by St. Peter in person, or by proxy, as church-history represents Alexandria and Antioch to have been. Those of the church of Rome, by whom they are at this day condemned both of heresy and schism, do not dispute this. Nor do they dispute that many of their popes have led bad and flagitious lives: they deny not that the canons, ceremonies, and government of the church, are very much changed by the influence and authority of their popes: but the whole question turns upon this, Whether the see of Rome has erred in matters of faith or not? In this those of that communion are divided: some, by the church or see of Rome, mean the popes personally; so they maintain, that they never have, and never can fall into error: whereas others, by the see of Rome, mean that whole *body* that holds communion with Rome, which they say cannot be tainted with error; and these separate this from the personal infallibility of *popes*: for if a pope should err, they think that a general council has authority to proceed against him, and to deprive him: and thus, though he should err, the *see* might be kept free from error. I shall upon this Article only consider the first opinion, reserving the consideration of the second to the Article concerning general councils.

us for adoring Christ's real body in heaven. We accuse them for taking away the cup from the lay people: they excuse it, but they do not condemn us for following Christ's example, and receiving in both kinds. And what is *remarkable* and *comfortable* to all believing Protestants, we charge them with flat idolatry in the adoration of the sacrament, of relics, of saints, of images. And, howsoever they excuse themselves in distinguishing their manner of adoration, yet, I say, *to our endless comfort* be it spoken, *they cannot charge us, in the doctrine of our church, no, not with the least suspicion of idolatry.*

Others would trace the church in the footsteps of the various churches and individuals that have been persecuted by the papal see.

This course is adopted and well handled by Mournay, count de Plessis, in his address to 'the Friends and Followers of the Church of Rome,' at the beginning of his 'Mystery of Iniquity, the History of the Papacy,' in which he points out where our church was all the time preceding the Reformation, and ably retorts, calling on them to shew where their church was in 'those six hundred years next after Christ.'

The former part he winds up in the following beautiful sentence, which, although this note is unavoidably long, the Editor cannot deny himself and the reader the pleasure of quoting and perusing:

'And now thou knowest where our church was in all this time. Thou, rude and simple as thou art, thinkest, perhaps, when thou seest the sun to set in the west, that it is swallowed up in the ocean, and quite extinguished, wherein indeed, when it sets to thee, it riseth to others, and returns again to thee in his due time, and misseth not a minute; the river Rosny, when it entereth into the Lake of Lozanna, thou thinkest it is quite devoured, but that lively and running water cutteth and divideth that dead and standing pool, making way through her swallowing depths: our church in like manner hath made her way through many ages, hath run into the lake, yet not overwhelmed, but hath past through the bottomless gulfs thereof with glory and triumph; and many rivers meeting her, she passeth through many countries, and at the last falls into her ocean, the church of Christ into God, the bottomless sea of all goodness, and there is drowned, losing herself to find herself in Him.'

The reader should also, on this point, read Stillingfleet's Rational Account of the Grounds of the Protestant Religion; art. 'the Reformation of the Church of England justified.'—[En.]

As to the popes their being subject to error, that must be confessed, unless it can be proved, that, by a clear and express privilege granted them by God, they are excepted out of the common condition of human nature. It is further highly probable that there is no such privilege, since the church continued for many ages before it was so much as pretended to; and that in a time when that see was not only claiming all the rights that belonged to it, but challenging a great many that were flatly denied and rejected: such as the right of receiving appeals from the African churches; in which reiterated instances, and a bold claim upon a spurious canon, pretended to be of the council of Nice, were long pursued: but those churches asserted their authority of ending all matters within themselves. In all this contest infallibility was never claimed; no more than it had been by Victor, when he excommunicated the Asian churches for observing Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon, and not on the Lord's-day after, according to the custom of the Roman as well as of other churches.

When pope Stephen quarrelled with St. Cyprian about the rebaptizing of heretics, Cyprian and Firmilian were so far from submitting to his authority, that they speak of him with a freedom used by equals, and with a severity that shewed they were far from thinking him infallible. When the whole east was distracted with the disputes occasioned by the Arian controversy, there was so much partiality in all their councils, that it was decreed, that appeals should be made to pope Julius, and afterwards to his successors; though here was an occasion given to assert his infallibility, if it had been thought on, yet none ever spoke of it. Great reverence was paid to that church, both because they believed it was founded by St. Peter and St. Paul, and chiefly because it was the imperial city; for we see that all other sees had that degree of dignity given them, which by the constitution of the Roman empire was lodged in their cities: and so when Byzance was made the imperial city, and called New Rome, though more commonly Constantinople, it had a patriarchal dignity bestowed on it; and was in all things declared equal to Old Rome, only the point of rank and order excepted. This was decreed in two general councils, the second and the fourth, in so express a manner, that it alone before equitable judges would fully shew the sense of the church in the fourth and fifth century upon this head. When pope Liberius condemned Athanasius, and subscribed to semi-Arianism, this was never considered as a new decision in that matter, so that it altered the state of it. No use was made of it, nor was any argument drawn from it. Liberius was universally condemned for what he had done; and when he repented of it, and retracted it, he was again owned by the church.

We have in the sixth century a most undeniable instance of the sense of the whole church in this matter. Pope

Honorius was by the sixth general council condemned as a Monothelite; and this in the presence of the pope's legates, and he was anathematized by several of the succeeding popes. It is to no purpose here to examine whether he was justly or unjustly condemned; it is enough that the sense both of the eastern and western church appeared evidently in that age upon these two points; that a pope might be a heretic; and that, being such, he might be held accursed for it: and in that time there was not any one that suggested, that either he could not fall into heresy, since our Saviour had prayed that St. Peter's *faith might not fail*; or that, if he had fallen into it, he must be left to the judgment of God; but that the holy see (according to the fable of P. Marcellin) could be judged by no body. The confusions that followed for some ages in the western parts of Europe, more particularly in Italy, gave occasion to the bishops of Rome to extend their authority.

The emperors at Constantinople, and their exarchs at Ravenna, studied to make them sure to their interests, yet still asserting their authority over them. The new conquerors studied also to gain them to their side; and they managed their matters so dexterously, that they went on still increasing and extending their authority; till being much straitened by the kings of the Lombards, they were protected by a new conquering family, that arose in France in the eighth century; who, to give credit both to their usurpation of that crown, and to the extending their dominions into Italy, and the assuming the empire of the west, did both protect and enrich them, and enlarged their authority; the greatness of which they reckoned could do them no hurt, as long as they kept the confirmation of their election to themselves. That family became quickly too feeble to hold that power long, and then an imposture was published, of a volume of the *Decretal Epistles* of the popes of the first ages, in which they were represented as acting according to those high claims to which they were then beginning to pretend. Those ages were too blind and too ignorant to be capable of searching critically into the truth of this collection; it quickly passed for current; and though some in the beginning disputed it, yet that was soon borne down, and the credit of that work was established. It furnished them with precedents that they were careful enough not only to follow, but to outdo. Thus a work, which is now as universally rejected by the learned men of their own body as spurious, as it was then implicitly taken for genuine, gave the chief foundation during many ages to their unbounded authority: and this furnishes us with a very just prejudice against it, that it was managed with so much fraud and imposture; to which they added afterwards much *cruelty* and *violence*; the two worst characters possible, and the least likely to be found joined with infallibility: for it is reasonable enough to apprehend, that, if God had lodged

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such a privilege any where, he would have so influenced those who were the depositaries of it, that they should have appeared somewhat like that authority to which they laid claim; and that he would not have forsaken them so, that for above eight hundred years the papacy, as it is represented by their own writers, is perhaps the worst succession of men that is to be found in history.*

But now to come more close, to prove what is here asserted in this part of the Article. If all those doctrines which were established at Trent, and that have been confirmed by popes, and most of them brought into a new creed, and made parts of it, are found to be gross errors; or if but any one of them should be found to be an error, then there is no doubt to be made but that the church of Rome hath erred; so the proof brought against every one of these is likewise a proof against their infallibility. But I shall here give one instance of an error, which will not be denied by the greater part of the church of Rome. They have now for above six hundred years asserted, that they had an authority over princes, not only to convict and condemn them of heresy, and to proceed against them with church-censures; but that they had a power to depose them, to absolve their subjects from their oaths of allegiance, and to transfer their dominions to such persons as should undertake to execute their sentences. This they have often put in execution, and have constantly kept up their claim to it to this day. It will not serve them to get clear here, to say, that these were the violent practices of some popes: what they did in many particular instances may be so turned off, and left as a blemish on the memories of some of them.

* The ancient canons are more reverently regarded in the church of England, than in the church of Rome; for how well you have observed them in former ages, let your own Baronius testify. "How foul (saith he) was then the face of the holy Roman church, when most potent, and withal most filthy, harlots did bear all the sway at Rome? at whose lust sees were changed, bishops appointed, and (which is horrible to be heard, and not to be uttered) whose lovers, the false popes, were thrust into the seat of Peter, which were not to be written in the catalogue of the Roman bishops, but only for the noting of the times: for who may say they were lawful popes which were thus, without right, thrust in by such strumpets? No where we find any mention of clergy choosing, or giving consent afterward; all canons were put to silence; the pontifical decrees were choked, ancient traditions proscribed, and the old customs, sacred rites, and former use in choosing the high bishop, utterly extinguished." And for later times, your own learned friends also complain as followeth. Budeus: "The holy canons and rules of church discipline, made in better times to guide the life of clergymen, are now become leaden rules, such as Aristotle saith the rules of Lesbian buildings were. For as leaden and soft rules do not direct the building with an equal tenor, but are bowed to the building at the lust of the builders; so are the popes' canons made flexible as lead or wax, that now this great while the decrees of our ancestors, and the popes' canons, serve not to guide men's manners, but (that I may so say) to make a bank and get money." Franciscus de Victoria, doctor of the chair at Salamanca in Spain: "We see daily so large, or rather so dissolute dispensations proceed from the court of Rome, that the world cannot endure them. Neither is it only to the offence of the little ones, but of the great ones also. No man seeketh a dispensation but he obtaineth it: yea, at Rome there are which give attendance to see if any be willing to crave dispensation of all things established by law; all that crave it have it." Mason: *On the Orders of the Church of England.*—[En.]

A R T.
XIX.Dictat.
Papæ.
Epist.
Greg. VII.
lib. ii.
Post. Epist.
55. in Act.
Concil. et
Epist. de-
cret. ac
Constitut.
Sum. Pon-
tif. tom. vi.
Par. 1714.
Extravag.
de Major.
et Obed.
lib. i. c. 1.

But the point at present in question is, whether they have not laid claim to this, as a right belonging to their see, as a part of St. Peter's authority descended to them? whether they have not founded it on his being *Christ's vicar*, who was the 'King of kings, and Lord of lords; to whom all power in heaven and in earth was given?' Whether they have not founded it on Jeremy's 'being set over nations and kingdoms, to root out, pluck down, and to destroy?' and on other places of scripture; not forgetting, that the first words of the Bible are, 'In the beginning,' and not 'In the beginnings;' from which they inferred, that there is but one principle, from whence all power is derived: and that God made 'two great lights, the sun to rule by day;' which they applied to themselves.

This, I say, is the question: Whether they did not assume this authority as a power given them by God? As for the applying it to particular instances, to those kings and emperors whom they deposed, that is, indeed, a personal thing, whether they were guilty of heresy, or of being favourers of it, or not? And whether the popes proceeded against them with too much violence or not?

The point now in question is, Whether they declared this to be a doctrine, that there was an authority lodged with their see for doing such things, and whether they alleged scripture and tradition for it?*

Now this will appear evident to those who will read their bulls: in the preambles of which those quotations will be found, as some of them are in the body of the canon law; and it is decreed in it, that the belief of this is *absolutely necessary to salvation*.

This was pursued in a course of many ages. General councils, as they are esteemed among men, have concurred with the popes both in general decrees asserting this power to be in them, and in special sentences against princes: this became the universally received doctrine of those ages: *No university nor nation declaring against it; not so much as one divine, civilian, canonist, or casuist, writ against it*, as Card. Perron truly said. It was so certainly believed, that those writers, whom the deposed princes got to undertake their defence, do not in any of their books pretend to call the doctrine in general in question.

Two things were disputed: one was, Whether popes had a direct power in temporals over princes; so that they were as much subject to them as feudatory princes were to their superior lords? This, to which Boniface the Eighth laid claim, was indeed contradicted. The other point was, Whether those particulars for which princes had been deposed, such as the giving the investiture to bishoprics, were heresies or not? This was much contested: but the power, in the case

* The reader will find this question very fully and ably discussed in the Introduction to Barrow's 'Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy.'—[Ed.]

A R T.
XIX.

of manifest heresy, or of favouring it, to depose princes, and transfer their crowns to others, was never called in question. This was certainly a definition made in the chair, *ex cathedra*: for it was addressed to all their community, both laity and clergy: plenary pardons were bestowed with it on those who executed it: the clergy did generally preach the croisades upon it. Princes, that were not concerned in him that was deposed, gave way to the publication of those bulls, and gave leave to their subjects to take the cross, in order to the executing of them: and the people did in vast multitudes gather about the standards that were set up for leading on armies to execute them; while many learned men writ in defence of this power, and not one man durst write against it.

This argument lies not only against the infallibility of popes, but against that of general councils likewise; and also against the authority of oral tradition: for here, in a succession of many ages, the tradition was wholly changed from the doctrine of former times, which had been, that the clergy were subject to princes, and had no authority over them or their crowns. Nor can it be said, that that was a point of discipline; for it was founded on an article of doctrine, whether there was such a power in the popes or not? The prudence of executing or not executing it, is a point of discipline and of the government of the church: but it is a point of doctrine, whether Christ has given such an authority to St. Peter and his followers. And those points of speculation, upon which a great deal turns as to practice, are certainly so important, that in them, if in any thing, we ought to expect an infallibility: for in this case a man is distracted between two contrary propositions: the one is, that he must obey the civil powers, as set over him by an ordinance of God; so that if he resist them, he shall receive in himself damnation: the other is, that the pope being Christ's vicar, is to be obeyed when he absolves him from his former oath and allegiance; and that the new prince set up by him, is to be obeyed under the pain of damnation likewise.

Here a man is brought into a great strait, and therefore he must be guided by infallibility, if in any thing.

So the whole argument comes to this head; that we must either believe that the *deposing power* is lodged by Christ in the see of Rome; or we must conclude, with the Article, that they have erred; and by consequence, that they are not infallible: for the erring in any one point, and at any one time, does quite destroy the claim of *infallibility*.

Before this matter can be concluded, we must consider what is brought to prove it: what was laid down at first must be here remembered, that the proofs brought for a thing of this nature must be very express and clear. A privilege of such a sort, against which the appearances and prejudices are so strong, must be very fully made out, before we can be

bound to believe it: nor can it be reasonable to urge the authority of any passages from scripture, till the grounds are shewn for which the scriptures themselves ought to be believed.

Those who think that it is in general well proved, that there must be an infallibility in the church, conclude from thence, that it must be in the pope: for if there must be a living speaking judge always ready to guide the church, and to decide controversies, they say this cannot be in the diffusive body of Christians; for these cannot meet to judge. Nor can it be in a general council, the meeting of which depends upon so many accidents, and on the consent of so many princes, that the infallibility will lie dormant for some ages, if the general council is the seat of it. Therefore they conclude, that since it is certainly in the church, and can be nowhere else but in the pope, therefore it is lodged in the see of Rome. Whereas we, on the other hand, think this is a strong argument against the infallibility in general, that it does not appear in whom it is vested: and we think that every side does so effectually confute the other, that we believe them all as to that; and think they argue much stronger when they prove where it cannot be, than when they pretend to prove where it must be.*

* So far from the church of Rome, which, if we believe its own testimony, is most united, being agreed in this matter, the very seat of infallibility, the only means according to them of preserving unity, is itself the great cause of strife and division. When they are urged to point out where this infallibility may be found and consulted, they are at their wits' end. One says that it is lodged in the pope when he speaks *ex cathedra*. No, says another, who is entangled in this inextricable difficulty—that popes have contradicted popes, and that too while professing to speak in the full plenitude of their authority. Another will have it to be in general councils; but the same difficulty meets us here. Another asserts that it is vested in councils when confirmed by popes; but we are not more fortunate here, for councils confirmed by popes have taught and decreed contrary to councils confirmed by popes. No wonder then that Chillingworth should exclaim—'I, for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot but upon this rock only (the Bible). I see plainly and with mine own eyes, that there are popes against popes, councils against councils, some fathers against others, the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the church of one age against the church of another age,' and, he might have added, the church of the council of Trent diametrically opposite to the word of God.† If therefore Romanists themselves cannot agree as to the seat of this infallibility, it is too much to ask Protestants to submit to such an uncertain authority.

But indeed it is quite evident that Romanists themselves have not been able to find out this infallible tribunal, for notwithstanding all their boasting, what advantage do they possess over the members of any other church? They have not preserved themselves from internal divisions; for no communion was ever more distracted. If they say, 'our divisions are about non-essential points,' we may reply, according to Chillingworth, that those who differ from us, do so in points fundamental, or they do not. If in points fundamental, they cannot possibly belong to our church. If they differ from us in points not fundamental, why may not we have our differences as well as you? But how can that communion be undivided when, as we have said, the centre or seat of unity is itself the cause of strife?

Again, the church of Rome has not furnished its members with an infallible exposition of the word of God, which, to any reasonable mind, would appear to be the

This, in the point now in hand, concerning the pope, seems as evident as any thing can possibly be: it not appearing, that, after the words of Christ to St. Peter, the other apostles thought the point was thereby decided, who among them should be the greatest. For that debate was still on foot, and was canvassed among them in the very night in which our Saviour was betrayed. Nor does it appear, that after the effusion of the Holy Ghost, which certainly inspired them with the full understanding of Christ's words, they thought there was any thing peculiarly given to St. Peter beyond the rest. He was questioned upon his baptizing Cornelius: he was not singly Acts xi. 2 appealed to in the great question of subjecting the Gentiles to —18. the yoke of the Mosaical law; he delivered his opinion as one of the apostles: after which St. James summed up the matter, and settled the decision of it. He was charged by St. Paul as Acts xv. 19. guilty of dissimulation in that matter, for which St. Paul with- Gal. ii. 11 stood him to his face: and he justifies that in an Epistle that is —14. & i. confessed to be writ by divine inspiration. St. Paul does also i, 12 17. in the same Epistle plainly assert the equality of his own authority with his; and that he received no authority from him, and owed him no dependence: nor was he ever appealed to in any of the points that appear to have been disputed in the times that the Epistles were written. So that we see no cha-

great end for which such a privilege as that of infallibility would have been bestowed upon any church. In this important matter, that church which claims to be the interpreter of holy writ has grossly neglected the edification of its members.

Well is this vain pretence thus exposed by Chillingworth: 'Besides, what an impudence it is to pretend, that *your church is infallibly directed concerning the true meaning of the scripture*, whereas there are thousands of places in scripture, which you do not pretend certainly to understand, and about the interpretation whereof your own doctors differ among themselves; if your church be infallibly directed concerning the true meaning of scripture, why do not your doctors follow her infallible direction? And if they do, how comes such difference among them in their interpretations?

'Again, Why does your church thus put her candle under a bushel, and keep her talent of interpreting scripture infallibly, thus long wrapt up in napkins? Why sets she not forth infallible commentaries or expositions upon all the Bible? Is it, because this would not be profitable for Christians, that scripture should be interpreted? It is blasphemous to say so. The scripture itself tells us, *All scripture is profitable*. And the scripture is not so much the words as the sense. And if it be not profitable, why does she employ particular doctors to interpret scriptures fallibly? unless we must think, that fallible interpretations of scripture are profitable, and infallible interpretations would not be so!

But again; this infallible tribunal has not furnished even an authorized version of the Bible! There were so many disagreeing editions of the Vulgate, which the council of Trent decreed should be held as authentic, that, in order to remedy this confusion, Sixtus V., in the year 1590, published an edition which he declared to be the authentic Vulgate, which had been the object of search by the council of Trent; and pronounced an anathema against any who should presume to alter it, *etiam minima aliqua particula*. Notwithstanding this, his successor Clement VIII., in less than three years, caused it to be suppressed, and published another authentic edition, which differs from that of Sixtus V.† in only two thousand places! Upon these infallibility-destroying changes and contradictions, Dr. James thus writes:—

'There is a great controversy between us and the papists concerning the version

† The reader should furnish himself from history with some facts proving each of the positions above mentioned.

† The reader may see this question of the variations of the Vulgate and the several editions, &c. &c., treated in the Editor's letters to a Romish priest.—See Page's 'Three Letters to a Romish Priest,' pp. 43—49.

acters of any special infallibility that was in him, besides that which was the effect of the inspiration, that was in the other apostles as well as in him: nor is there a tittle in the scripture, not so much as by a remote intimation, that he was to derive that authority, whatsoever it was, to any successor, or to lodge it in any particular city or see.

The silence of the scripture in this point seems to be a full proof that no such thing was intended by God: otherwise we have all reason to believe that it would have been clearly expressed. St. Peter himself ought to have declared this: and since both Alexandria and Antioch, as well as Rome, pretend to derive from him, and that the succession to those sees began in him, this makes a decision in this point so much the more necessary.

When St. Peter writ his second Epistle, in which he mentions a revelation that he had from Christ, of his *approaching dissolution*, though that was a very proper occasion for declaring such an important matter, he says nothing that relates to it, but gives only a new attestation of the truth of Christ's divine mission, and of what he himself had been a witness to in the mount, when he saw 'the excellent glory, and heard the voice out of it.' He leaves a provision in writing for the following ages, but says nothing of any succession or see: so

2 Pet i. 17.

of Jerome. That Jerome was learned, and that he put forth a version, is received by Protestants and papists; but what this is, and where it is, is disputed. But let us grant that the edition papists now use, called the Vulgate, is the same which Jerome handed down, yet when we have so many of our adversaries acknowledging various editions of the Vulgate, improved and corrected by Stephanus, Hentenius, the doctors of Louvain ("Louvaniensibus"), Sixtus V., and Clement VIII., may we not ask, what copy they wish to be received, amidst so many disagreeing editions, for the true, legitimate, authentic, and undoubted? If they praise the industry of Stephanus, they condemn the labours of Hentenius; if they approve Hentenius, the labours of the Louvain doctors are useless; if the Louvain were diligent (and they certainly were), what need of the double labour of Sixtus V.? Some may say, all the other editions must lie by, and Sixtus V.'s be received, because he is pope, and as such, in a matter of faith, he neither can deceive, nor be deceived. But Sixtus and Clement are opposed. Sixtus says, Clement denies; Clement says, Sixtus denies. (*O Concordia discors!*) Sixtus put forth his edition to last for ever! edit. anno 1590. In 1592, Clement VIII. published a new edition so contrary to Sixtus', that you would not know it to be the same. Which must be received—which believed? §

Thus, it is evident that, in all things, the Romanist, although deceived by this ignis fatuus of infallibility, is cast upon a sea of uncertainty, and can find no rest but in the adoption of the principles of our church. For whether we consider the notes of the church—these he must examine and judge of by his private reason: or the seat of his church's infallibility—this likewise he must search for by his private judgment, amongst the many and distracting controversies to which it has given rise: or does he search for an infallible commentary? he has no such thing—no way of ascertaining the meaning of scripture but that which is common to us: or for even an authorized version of the word of God? his church has here likewise forsaken him, and by decreeing the Vulgate to be the authentic, without authorizing any edition of the same, has consigned him to either ignorance or despair.

We may then indeed conclude with Burnet, that Romanists 'argue much stronger, when they prove where it (infallibility) cannot be, than when they pretend to prove where it must be,' or what it has done for its deceived votaries.—[Ed.]

that here the greatest of all privileges is pretended to be lodged in a succession of bishops, without any one passage in scripture importing it.

Another set of difficulties arise, concerning the persons who have a right to choose these popes in whom this right is vested, and what number is necessary for a canonical election: how far simony voids it, and who is the competent judge of that; or who shall judge in the case of two different elections, which has often happened. We must also have a certain rule to know when the popes judge as private persons, and when they judge infallibly: with whom they must consult, and what solemnities are necessary to make them speak *ex cathedra*, or *infallibly*. For if this infallibility comes as a privilege from a grant made by Christ, we ought to expect, that all those necessary circumstances to direct us, in order to the receiving and submitting to it, should be fixed by the same authority that made the grant. Here then are very great difficulties: let us now see what is offered to make out this great and important claim.

The chief proof is brought from these words of our Saviour, when upon St. Peter's confessing, that 'he was the Christ, the Son of the living God;' he said to him, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock* I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou

Matt. xvi.
16, 18, 19.

* 'But, for as much as they seem to make greatest account of these words of Christ, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," therefore, for answer hereunto, understand thou good Christian reader, that the old Catholic fathers, have written and pronounced, not any mortal man as Peter was, but Christ himself, the Son of God, to be this rock. Gregorius Nyssenus saith, "Tu es Petrus," &c. &c. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." He meaneth the confession of Christ: for he had said before, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." So saith St. Hilary, "Hæc est una felix fidei Petra, quam Petrus ore suo confessus est."—"This is that only blessed rock of faith that Peter confessed with his mouth." Again he saith, "Upon this rock of Peter's confession is the building of the church." So Cyrillus, "Petra nihil aliud est, quam firma et inconcussa discipuli fides."—"The rock is nothing else, but the strong and assured faith of the disciple." So likewise Chrysostome, "Super hanc petram, id est, in hac fide, et confessione ædificabo ecclesiam meam."—"Upon this rock, that is to say, upon this faith and this confession I will build my church." Likewise St. Augustin, "Petra erat Christus super quod fundamentum etiam ædificatus est Petrus."—"Christ was the rock, upon whose foundation Peter himself was also built." And addeth further besides, "Non me ædificabo super te, sed te ædificabo super me."—"Christ saith unto Peter, I will not build myself upon thee: but I will build thee upon me." All these fathers be plain, but none so plain as Origen; his words be these: "Petra est, quicunque est discipulus Christi: et super talem petram constructur omnis ecclesiastica doctrina. Quod in super unum illum Petrum tantum existimas ædificare totam ecclesiam, quid dicturus es de Johanne filio Tonitru, et apostolorum unoquoque? Num audebis dicere quod adversus Petrum unum non prevalituræ sint portæ inferorum? Au soli Petro dantur a Christo claves regni cælorum?"—"He is the rock, whosoever is the disciple of Christ: and upon such a rock all ecclesiastical learning is built. If thou think that the whole church is built only upon Peter, what then wilt thou say of John, the son of the thunder, and of every of the apostles? shall we dare to say, that the gates of hell shall not prevail only against Peter? or are the keys of the kingdom of heaven given only unto Peter?" By these few it may appear, what right the pope hath to claim his authority by God's word, and, as Mr. Harding saith, *De jure divino*. Jewell's reply to Harding.—[Ed.]

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shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' This begins with an allusion to his name; and discourses built upon such allusions are not to be understood strictly or grammatically. By the *Rock* upon which Christ promises to *build his church*, many of the fathers have understood the *person of Christ*, others have understood the *confession of him*, or *faith in him*, which indeed is but a different way of expressing the same thing. And it is certain that, strictly speaking, the *church* can only be said to be founded upon Christ, and upon his doctrine. But in a secondary sense it may be said to be founded upon the apostles, and upon St. Peter as the first in order; which is not to be disputed.

Now though this is a sense which was not put on these words for many ages; yet when it should be allowed to be their true sense, it will not prove any thing to have been granted to St. Peter but what was common to the other apostles; who are all called the 'foundations upon which the church is built.' That which follows, of the *gates of hell* not being able to *prevail against the church*, may be either understood of death, which is often called *the gate to the grave*; which is the sense of the word that is rendered *hell*: and then the meaning of these words will be, that the church, which Christ was to raise, should never be extinguished, nor die, or come to a period, as the Jewish religion then did: or, according to the custom of the Jews, of holding their courts and councils about their gates, by the gates of hell may be understood, the designs and contrivances of the powers of darkness, which should never prevail over the *church* to root it out, and destroy it; for the word rendered *prevail* does signify an entire victory: this only imports, that the church should be still preserved against all the attempts of hell, but does not intimate that no error was ever to get into it.

By the words *kingdom of heaven*, generally through the whole gospel, the dispensation of the Messiah is understood. This appears evidently from the words with which both St. John Baptist and our Saviour began their preaching, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;' and the many parables and comparisons that Christ gave of the kingdom of heaven, can only be understood of the preaching of the gospel. This being then agreed to, the most natural and the least forced exposition of those words must be, that St. Peter was to open the dispensation of the gospel.* The proper use of a

* 'And in relation to this promise of our Lord, as well as the completion of it by the conversion of the Gentiles, it seems to be that this apostle doth, in the synod met at Jerusalem, speak thus, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, ἀφ' ἡμεῶν ἀρχαίων, God chose me out among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word." (Acts xv. 7.) He therefore was assuredly the person who first preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and by doing so opened the kingdom of heaven to them: he was the person chosen by Christ to perform this work. . . . Nor is this exposition any new fancy of my own; it is as ancient

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key is to open a door: and as this agrees with these words, 'he that hath the key of the house of David, that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth;' and with the phrase of the 'key of knowledge,' by which the lawyers are described; for they had a key with writing tables given them, as the badges of their profession: so it agrees with the accomplishment of this promise in St. Peter, who first opened the gospel to the Jews, after the wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost: and more eminently when he first opened the door to the Gentiles, preaching to Cornelius, and baptizing him and his household, to which the phrase of the *kingdom of heaven* seems to have a more particular relation. This dispensation was committed to St. Peter, and seems to be claimed by him as his peculiar privilege in the council at Jerusalem. This is a clear and plain sense of these words. For those who would carry them further, and understand by the kingdom of heaven our eternal happiness, must use many distinctions; otherwise, if they expound them literally, they will ascribe to St. Peter that which certainly could only belong to our Saviour himself. Though at the same time it is not to be denied, but that under the figure of keys, the power of discipline, and the conduct and management of Christians, may be understood. But as to this, all the pastors of the church have their share in it; nor can it be appropriated to any one person. As for that of *binding and loosing*, and the confirming in *heaven* what he should do in *earth*, whatever it may signify, it is no special grant to St. Peter: for the same words are spoken by our Saviour elsewhere to all the apostles: so this is given equally to them all. The words *binding and loosing* are used by the Jewish writers, in the sense of affirming or denying the obligation of any precept of the law that might be in dispute. So according to this common form of speech, and the sense formerly given to the words *kingdom of heaven*, the meaning of these words must be, that Christ committed to the apostles the dispensing his gospel to the world, by which he authorized them to dissolve the obligation of the Mosaical laws; and to give other laws to the Christian church, which they should do under such visible characters of a divine authority, empowering and conducting them in it, that it should be very

as Tertullian, who saith, (*De Pudicitia*) that Christ did personally confer this honour on St. Peter, saying, "Upon thee will I build my church." "Sic enim exitus docuit, in ipso ecclesia extructa est, i.e. per ipsum, ipse clavem imbut."—"So the event doth teach, the church was built on him, that is, by him, he hanelled the first key:" he preached that sermon by which three thousand Jews were brought into the faith; he laid the first foundation of a church among the Gentiles; he first, by baptism, gave them entrance into the kingdom of heaven. . . . This being so, it is evident that in this matter St. Peter neither hath nor can have a successor; and that it is absurd to claim a title of succession to this prerogative of St. Peter; this being in effect to say, that the foundations of the church of Christ are not yet laid, and to pretend to a commission to perform at present what was fully done above a thousand six hundred years ago.' *Whitby*.—[Ed.]

Eph. ii. 20.
Rev. xxi.
14.Matt. iii. 2.
v. 17. and
xiii. 11, 19,
24—48.Rev. iii 7.
Luke xi.
52.

A R T. evident, that what they did on earth was also ratified in heaven. These words, thus understood, carry in them a clear sense, which agrees with the whole design of the gospel. But whatsoever their sense may be, it is plain that there was nothing given peculiarly to St. Peter by them, which was not likewise given to the rest of the apostles. Nor do these words of our Saviour to St. Peter import any thing of a successive infallibility that was to be derived from him with any distinction beyond the other apostles: unless it were a priority of order and dignity; and whatever that was, there is not so much as a hint given, that it was to descend from him to any see or succession of bishops.

Luke xxii. 32.
John xxi. 15, 16, 17. As for our Saviour's praying that St. Peter's 'faith might not fail,' and his restoring him to his apostolical function, by a thrice repeated charge, 'Feed my sheep, Feed my lambs,' that has such a visible relation to his fall, and to his denying him, that it does not seem necessary to enlarge further on the making it out, or on shewing that these words are capable of no other signification, and cannot be carried further.

The importance of this argument, rather than the difficulty of it, has made it necessary to dwell fully upon it: so much depends upon it, and the missionaries of the church of Rome are so well instructed in it, that it ought to be well considered; for how little strength soever there may be in the arguments brought to prove this infallibility, yet the colours are specious, and they are commonly managed both with much art and great confidence.